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INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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COMRADELY GREETINGS TO THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY

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CALL FOR THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY

To All Sections and Members of the iSt:

On behalf of the International Executive Committee and in accordance with the decisions of the Interim Secretariat meeting of 26 February 1979 (which codified the consultations at a preceding series of IEC group meetings, one in Frankfurt on 11 February and another in the Bay Area on 19 February), the Interim Secretariat hereby calls for the first International Conference of the international Spartacist tendency. The conference will convene on Thursday, 30 August 1979, and continue through Friday, 31 August. (The International Conference is being held in conjunction with the international summer camp, which runs from Saturday morning, 25 August, through Saturday morning, 1 September. The Spartacist League/Britain may hold its national conference at the camp. The conferences of the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands and the Ligue Trotskyste de France will be held prior to the camp.)

Proposed Agenda

The I.S. proposes to the IEC that the conference agenda include the following points:

- Perspectives of the iSt
- Fusion with the Lega Trotskysta d'Italia
- Status of application for membership in the iSt from the Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon
- Report of the findings of the trial body in the Logan case
- Reports and commissions on national conferences, Spartacist, trade-union questions, student work
- Adoption of organizational rules
- Election of the International Executive Committee

Pre-Conference Discussion

The iSt pre-conference discussion period formally opens with the date of this conference call. The principal political points of presently predictable potential controversy have been already presented in the motion on Iran adopted at the TLD National Conference of 10 February 1979 and subsequently endorsed by an IEC group meeting in Frankfurt and then reprinted in Spartacist No. 26, and in the "Motion from the IEC Group Meeting in the Bay Area, 19 February 1979" on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam and attached to I.S. minutes of 26 February 1979. The major organizational question posed in the tendency in the recent period is documented in the International Discussion Bulletin No. 10, Parts I and II, "On the Logan Regime." In addition the I.S. greetings to the TLD urgent National Conference and the TLD perspectives document are available in the Group II mailing of 15 February 1979 and will be reprinted. Also quite relevant to the international pre-conference discussion is the material contained in Young Spartacus No. 73, May 1979 on the National Conference of the Spartacus Youth League (SYL) and the perspectives outlined there for the SL/U.S. and the SYL. The I.S. is also preparing a concise perspectives document and other accumulated material is being prepared for an internal bulletin, including discussion on

trade-union related questions, the proposed motion for fusion with the Lega Trotzkysta d'Italia and correspondence with the Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon.

Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletins

Pre-conference discussion bulletins may be published by and for a particular national section and such national discussion bulletins are open to all members of that particular section to write on subjects listed in the proposed agenda for the International Conference, or on subjects proposed for the section's national conference or on other questions. However, the International Discussion Bulletin is necessarily not indiscriminately open to contributions from individual members. Rather, a faction constituted according to the organizational rules of a section does have a right to publish in the International Discussion Bulletin. Any other contributions will be published in the International Discussion Bulletin at the discretion of the I.S. and in consultation with the relevant sectional leaderships, and the amount of non-factional material published from any particular section will tend to be roughly proportional to that section's weight in the international.

The task of translation of all conference materials even only into the three major languages of the tendency is unfortunately hopelessly beyond our technical means at this point. It is the responsibility of the I.S. to insure that where necessary the sections translate this conference call and the eventual perspectives document, but the International Discussion Bulletins will be published in English, which is the closest thing to a lingua franca that exists in our tendency. Every section does have some capacity for translation into English and therefore other contributions to the International Discussion Bulletins should be translated into English and the original and the translation should be sent to the I.S. in New York. Where this is not possible the I.S. cannot guarantee a translation and thus inclusion in the bulletins, but will at a minimum circulate the document in the original language. In view of these technical limitations comrades should remember that it is possible to economically and succinctly state the essence of a political position (viz., the motions on China/Vietnam and Iran), and it is this sort of economically presented position which will be in general within the capacity of the I.S. to translate and include in the bulletins. The attendant argumentation may constitute insuperable translation and production difficulties and in this case, in order to insure that important questions are thoroughly aired, we will lean very heavily in a compensatory way on verbal proceedings at the Conference. In view of the need to provide high quality translations for the International Conference it may be necessary to restrict consecutive verbal translations at the summer camp.

Electing Delegates

The I.S. establishes the following uniform rules common to full and sympathizing sections for electing delegates to the International Conference.

Voting at the Conference will be on the basis of one comrade/one vote with delegates casting votes for the number of members in good standing that they represent. Each section will determine its own ratio of delegates to party members in good standing--e.g., in the SL/U.S. it may be one delegate for every fifteen members in good standing (with each delegate then casting 15 votes at the Conference) while e.g., in the TLD the ratio might be one to five (with each delegate then casting five votes). No delegate shall cast more than $4/3$ rounded off to the next lowest whole number of the number of votes allotted to each delegate by the established ratio or less than $2/3$ rounded off to the next lowest whole number. Thus in the case of a hypothetical section with 28 members which established a one-to-five delegate ratio, the section would have six delegates, five with five votes each and one with three votes. In the case of a hypothetical section of 26 members, which established a one-to-five delegate ratio, the section would have five delegates, four with five votes each and one with six votes.

When voting for a slate of delegates, in the event of ties where differentiation is needed or if some candidate(s) fails to get an absolute majority of votes for the available delegateships, run-offs must be held. In no case will "bulleted" ballots be counted; i.e., all ballots must show votes for the total number of delegate slots available.

Only full party members of the 1st in good standing who have paid an International Conference assessment of the equivalent of U.S. \$10 may be counted to calculate the number of votes allotted to each section; only such members in good standing may vote for or run as delegates. To qualify as a full member a comrade, if new, must both have been admitted to full membership prior to 13 August and have been admitted to candidate membership prior to the date of the conference call. Good standing is defined as not being in arrears in sustaining pledge, i.e., a member must be fully paid up for the month prior to that in which voting for delegates takes place. The number of delegated membership votes allotted to each section at the Conference will be determined at the time of voting for political positions and delegates in each section.

Before or not later than the week of 13-19 August, each section must convene a plenum or, where practical, a national conference for the selection of delegates. (If the national conference must be a delegated one, delegates for the national conference will be elected according to the organizational rules of the section. The fullest explanation of an example of procedures for electing delegates to a national conference is the "Call for the Third National Conference of the Spartacist League of the U.S.," IDB No. 15, August 1972.) At this meeting, the national treasurer must certify the number of comrades in that section who are in good standing and have paid their conference assessment. In sections where there are more than one local committee or organizing committee and a national conference is not practical, certification of individuals should be done by the local treasurers; at the time of the national plenum or national conference the national treasurer will have tallied the total number of members in good standing from the local treasurers. The total

number of comrades in the section who are certified in good standing by the treasurer will constitute the basis for the number of delegated membership votes allotted to each section at the International Conference. The national treasurer must then communicate this total number to the I.S. no later than Saturday, 25 August, for international certification.

Only a vote for a position defined by an international, national or local written document, statement or amendment shall be considered a basis on which to elect delegates to the International Conference. Negative votes, abstentions, not voting or absence from the meeting do not serve as affirmative positions upon which to elect delegates, and in these cases the votes of these comrades would be divided proportionately among all established tendencies.

In the absence of any factional division, voting will be on the basis of the following compilation of documents:

1. "Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International," 1963;
2. "Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League," 1966;
3. "Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency," July, 1974;
4. the brief summary of a programmatic model for a principled internationalist regroupment published in the article "Reforge the Fourth International," Workers Vanguard No. 143, 4 February 1977;
5. the motion on Iran adopted at the TLD National Conference of 10 February 1979 and subsequently endorsed by an IEC group meeting in Frankfurt and then reprinted in Spartacist No. 26, Winter 1979;
6. the "Motion from the IEC Group Meeting in the Bay Area, 19 February" on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam and attached to the I.S. minutes of 26 February 1979.

When international delegates are elected at a plenum instead of a national conference only the positions of full Central Committee members are decisive in establishing divisions; the Central Committee will then appoint a list of delegates to the International Conference proportionately divided according to the factional divisions indicated by this vote on positions by the full members of the Central Committee. Thus in this situation only factional divisions reflected on the Central Committee will be represented by delegates at the International Conference.

Proxy voting by absent members in the election of delegates is prone to ambiguity or manipulation and should not be encouraged. For example, if the member's absence is for reason of work, then evidence that the worker would be fired for the absence from the job should be required to validate a proxy vote. If the comrade claims illness then concrete evidence of incapacitating illness must be presented. Vacations are manifestly voluntary absences. Moreover, an unambiguous written statement of position must be presented by the absent member. It is impermissible for locals, factions or anyone else to place binding instructions upon delegates as to positions or votes to be taken at the International Conference. To

proceed otherwise would fundamentally undermine the purpose of a conference. The delegates must be free to change their minds in the course of debates.

Comrades who are otherwise qualified to vote, but who are away from their section as a result of a specific working party assignment, may cast a written proxy vote in the last section of which they were or remain members. Members-at-large of the 1st (i.e., not of an established section, for example, the at-large comrades in Sweden) may not vote for delegates, but may request speaking rights at the Conference.

The motion passed at the Fifth National Conference of the SL/U.S. should be viewed as a guideline:

"Party conferences traditionally extend fraternal delegate rights to the members of the outgoing Central Committee. It is politically appropriate that the seeking of full rather than fraternal delegate status be inverse to CC rank."

Implementation of this guideline (which was written for a section with dozens of cadres who are not necessarily full Central Committee members but who have more than 10 years in the Marxist movement) in the different sections is subject to widely variant considerations, including possibilities of attendance, financial limitations, and especially the availability of comparably qualified comrades other than the section leadership and/or outgoing IEC. In any case, fraternal delegate status will in general at most be extended to comrades of a section leadership who cast decisive votes in that section's leading body, i.e., full members of the Central Committee or the equivalent body. A quite limited number of alternate delegates may also be elected, not more than one for each two delegates and in decreasing proportion as the size of the whole delegation is larger, keeping in mind financial feasibility and the desirability of relatively qualified delegates.

Unresolved disputes about the number of members in good standing, etc., together with full documentation should be referred to the International Conference for final decision.

Factional Division

Factional division in selecting delegates must be based upon counterposing written declarations of position against one another in voting. After the vote for defining positions those who voted for each position shall caucus separately to select their delegates, following which the national conference or plenum as a whole shall certify the results and issue delegates' credentials.

In order to get even one delegate, i.e., to be entitled to get a position on the floor of the Conference and to command the time and attention of the delegates, a faction must represent either 10% of the total number of voting certified members in a particular section or five comrades, whichever is least in that particular section.

It should be noted that while the delegate and representational procedures are based on the need for the most efficient and the most democratic discussion and debate, several of the provisions and most of the arithmetical concretizations are not in their specific expression norms as such. For example, the provision allowing for five comrades or less from a particular section to command factional rights at an international conference is extremely generous and is an unusual feature growing out of the relative smallness of many of our sections.

Additional Notes

1. The I.S. has voted a conference assessment of the equivalent of U.S. \$10 on all members, full and candidate, to be paid by the time of voting on positions and delegates. The comrades from Canada, the U.S., France and Germany have a reasonably comparable standard of living, but are the comrades who must travel to get to the Conference. The generally poorer British comrades do not have to travel such distances and therefore the equivalent conference assessment is appropriate. This conference assessment from the North American comrades will also go toward defraying the expenses, where necessary, of black comrades from the SL/U.S. North American locals should collect the fees and immediately forward them in their entirety to the SL/U.S. **Central Office**, and other sections should segregate the fees and make them available to the IEC. Sympathizers attending the Conference shall also pay the assessment.
2. All members of the iSt are invited and strongly urged to attend the International Conference as visitors. A section's National Office should establish a procedure for approving invitations to sympathizers; in the SL/U.S. sympathizers' attendance may be proposed by local committees subject to the review and approval of the **Central Office**. Attendance by representatives of other tendencies should be handled by the I.S.
3. At the Conference only regular delegates or seated alternates and fraternal delegates will normally have speaking rights. All **delegates** with speaking rights will have equal time to speak in the round whatever their status or the weight of their vote. In voting, delegates or their seated alternates will cast decisive votes; fraternal delegates will cast consultative votes. Standard Leninist practice is for sessions on organizational and personnel questions to be closed to all but full, seated alternate and fraternal delegates.

--Interim Secretariat
24 May 1979

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPENDICES
TO THE CONFERENCE CALL

The two following documents, "The Fourth International in Danger" by Natalia Sedova-Trotsky, G. Munis and Benjamin Peret and "Facts in Their True Light" by the International Secretariat were reprinted in the Socialist Workers Party Internal Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 1, February 1948. These documents are included in this bulletin because taken together they provide some glimpse into the practices and considerations which guided delegate election/faction representation procedures for the World Congress of the Communist International and the Fourth International. It is not proposed that the iSt replicate the specific procedures of either of these two precedents, but the documents will be of interest to comrades because they do illuminate by contrast some of the premises underlying the procedures outlined in the "Call for the First International Conference of the International Spartacist Tendency."

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN DANGER

by Natalia-Sedova Trotsky,
G. Munis, Benjamin Peret

At the Plenum held at the end of March, 1947, the IEC adopted regulations relative to the holding of the World Congress of the Fourth International, the bureaucratic character of which, inspired by old Stalinist maneuvers, represent a most alarming symptom. The IEC, indeed, has divided the world into three categories: countries of great, moderate and slight importance. What is the criterion which inspired such an outrageously arbitrary division? No one has deigned to share it with anyone in the International.

We imagine that the IEC is going to tell us that it was guided by the example of the First Congress of the late Communist International. But are we participants in the same situation as in 1919, of a real imitation of the First Congress of the CI? At the time of the First Congress the Russian Revolution had just triumphed, the Bolshevik Party numbered hundreds of thousands of members, though in the rest of the world the Communist Parties were still only little groups, for the most part comparable to ours today; so much so that the Bolsheviks were led to diminish the weight of their party in the young international in order by the free play of an apparent democracy to avoid the latter's automatically becoming a majority against the rest of the world and imposing its uncontested will upon it. It was a question of permitting the entire world to express itself even against the Russian party, that is to say, of assuring the operation of an effective as possible democracy in the International. Is this the same end that the IEC seeks today? We categorically affirm that it is not, and we are going to demonstrate that the I.S. and the IEC with their division of the world into three categories have in mind completely opposite ends. While the CI aimed at the weakening of the strong parties and the strengthening of the weak parties in order to assure a maximum of democracy, our IEC aims at the strengthening of the strong parties and the weakening of the weak parties in order to maintain itself in power.

The Criterion of the Big Three

Let us ask once again: What criterion was used in making this division of the world? The numerical importance of the sections? No, obviously, since Germany, where the section has just been reconstituted, figures in the first category, though it is of necessity very weak because of its recent formation, while Italy, whose section numbers nearly as many members as France, is placed in the second. We can say as much of the Russian section--which must obviously be insignificant--when it is compared with any other section in countries of "moderate importance." It is, then, not a numerical criterion which governed the division; moreover, we will see further on that the consideration of numbers was taken into account and not for reasons of democracy. Besides, even if it were, this criterion would be fallacious. Let us suppose that the Bolivian section numbers 200 members and that the country has 3,000,000 inhabitants; let us admit, also, that the American section in claiming 1,600 members

in a country of 150,000,000 is not exaggerating and that this figure is the exact expression of the truth. It is clear that the 200 Bolivian comrades have much more importance in the political life of their backward country than the 1,600 American comrades in theirs. For the relation of forces to be apparently the same, the American section would have to have 10,000 members. Further, this relation of forces would only be superficially equal, since 200 comrades in Bolivia, a backward country, play an infinitely greater role--they have demonstrated it--than 10,000 members of the American section would be able to play in the U.S., an advanced country and the principal imperialist country of the entire world.

Nor is it the revolutionary importance of the countries considered on the arena of the world class struggle which has motivated this division, since it seems that neither the United States nor England will be called upon to play a decisive role in the revolutionary wave which is becoming manifest, while Spain, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Indo-China, North Africa, Indonesia, Poland, Hungary, etc., all excluded from the first category, are obviously destined to play an important revolutionary role in the immediate future.

These reasons set aside, there remains only the criterion of the Big Three, which has doubtlessly inspired the division of the world. It is, in fact, only the importance on the world capitalist arena which has guided the IEC in its choice.

The Majority as a Measuring Rod

To rest content with this declaration, however, would be to consider only one side of the question, its external aspect; in addition, the adopting of such a criterion shows an unconscious submission to imperialist influence and to the Russian counter-revolution, which must be ceaselessly combated.

It is known that the questions which will be discussed at the World Congress, whether the IEC or the I.S. wishes it or not, concern the politics of our sections during the imperialist war and in relation to the nationalist resistance movements, the problem of the Russian counter-revolution and world Stalinism, the tactic of the Fourth International in regard to Stalinism and reformism (united front, SP-CP-CGT Government) and our pre-war transitional program. But, as if by chance, a good number of sections in "countries of great importance," some of them subjected to a bureaucratic leadership, others badly informed, or not informed at all, on the problems to be discussed, have up to now through their majorities, put themselves on record in favor of the conservative position of the I.S. and the IEC.

The resolution of the IEC decides in parts 5 and 6 of paragraph 3: "To give three delegates to each organization of from one to 150 members if they belong in Category A, two delegates if they belong in Category B, one delegate if they belong in Category C.

"For 150 to 500 members, and with an approximate minimum of 300 members--one additional delegate. For 500 to 1,000 members, and with an approximate minimum of 750 members--another delegate, and so on successively."

Here let us insert a piece of figuring, which, for all of its being of necessity approximate, will be nonetheless edifying.

Let us study the following tables:

Table No. 1

<u>Countries of first importance</u>	<u>Maximum estimate of number of members</u>	<u>Delegates granted by IEC</u>	<u>Majority delegates (approximate estimate)</u>	<u>Minority delegates (approximate estimate)</u>
U.S.	1,600	6	5	1
Russia	several members	3	3	0
China	100	3	2	1
India	600	4	3	1
England	400	4	4	0
France	1,000	5	4	1
Germany	50	3	1	2
Totals	3,750	28	22	6

Table No. 2

<u>Countries of moderate importance</u>	<u>Maximum estimate of number of members</u>	<u>Delegates granted by IEC</u>	<u>Majority delegates (approx. estimate)</u>	<u>Minority delegates (approx.)</u>	<u>Delegates from the sections on basis of countries of first importance</u>		
					<u>Total</u>	<u>Maj</u>	<u>Min</u>
Spain	60	2	1	1	3	1	2
Italy	800	4	1	3	5	1	4
Holland	50	2	2	0	3	3	0
Belgium	50	2	2	0	3	2	1
Austria	50	2	0	2	3	0	3
Greece	500	3	2	1	4	2	2
Canada	50	2	2	0	3	2	1
Mexico	60	2	0	2	3	0	3
Brazil	50	2	1	1	3	1	2
Argentina	50	2	2	0	3	2	1
Chile	300	3	2	1	4	2	2
Bolivia	200	2	0	2	3	1	2
Indo-China	300	3	2	1	4	3	1
Totals	2,500	31	17	14	44	20	24

Table No. 3

Countries of slight importance	Maximum estimate of number of members	Delegates granted by IEC	Majority delegates (approx.)	Minority delegates (approx.)	Delegates from sections on basis of countries of first importance		
					Total	Maj.	Min.
Norway	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Denmark	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Switzerland	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Bulgaria	50	1	0	1	3	0	3
Ireland	50	1	0	1	3	0	3
Palestine	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Egypt	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Cyprus	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Cuba	100	1	0	1	3	0	3
Peru	50	1	0	1	3	0	3
Uruguay	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
Australia	50	1	1	0	3	2	1
So. Africa	300	2	1	1	4	2	2
Totals	950	14	9	5	40	18	22

From these tables it immediately stands out that seven countries (of the first category) will receive 28 delegates, while 26 countries (of the second and third category) will receive 45 delegates. In other words, seven countries of "first importance" will receive from 35% to 38% of the votes at the Congress. They will then lack only nine delegates to assure themselves control of the Congress. Of course, our Table No. 1 indicates six minority delegates. Even assuming that our estimate of the minority representation from the countries of "first importance" is not exaggerated, the six minority delegates that we note will be easily compensated for by support of the sections from countries of "moderate" and of "slight importance." Further, Tables No. 2 and No. 3 clearly show this. It can be seen, therefore, that the division adopted by the IEC inevitably and bureaucratically assures it the majority in the World Congress, a majority which it will sit tight on while avoiding discussion of the major problems which are posed before our International.

It should be observed also that in the second table the 13 sections of "moderate importance" include Spain, whose revolutionary experience--even if it did not have more members than the Russian section--is particularly valuable for our epoch since it marks a decisive turn in the history of the Russian counter-revolution and of Stalinism, while the Russian experience, with all its enormous value, refers precisely to a period which the Spanish revolution brought to a close. Similarly found in this list, which is as outrageously arbitrary as the first, is Italy, which offers immense revolutionary possibilities, if a clear policy is followed in regard to revolutionary anti-Stalinist organizations (Bordighists, anarchists, left-socialists), Greece, whose admirable revolutionary combativity ought to give the IEC cause for reflection, Poland and other countries occupied by Russia, which the IEC totally forgets and which offer immense possibilities for action against the Stalinist reaction on condition that the demand is not made to defend the "degenerated workers state" which oppresses them. Finally comes Indo-China, where support to our section has been forgotten for so long and where even to

demand who assassinated Ta-Thu-Thau has been forgotten in order to support, without serious criticism, the Stalinist government of Ho-Chi-Minh, greetings from whom were so warmly hailed by The Militant and La Verité.

It has been seen that the resolution of the IEC creates an important majority in favor of the present leadership which the vote of countries of "slight importance" would not be able to modify even if they were able to send all the delegates the IEC grants them and if they all voted against the present leadership. But that is still based on the most favorable hypothesis, for it is impossible for the poor Latin American sections to send the 10 or 12 delegates given them by the IEC. Moreover, the prohibition against proxy votes in actuality denies a number of sections in countries of "moderate" or "slight" importance the possibility of making themselves heard and of voting at the Congress, which does not prevent the IEC from demanding in advance the acceptance of the decisions which will be made by the World Congress and of desiring to prohibit all discussion after the Congress. The majority thus cunningly worked out by the I.S. and the IEC is thereby reinforced. Better yet, with this system, not a single opposition can hope to convince the Congress. What except ideological defeat and organic strangulation can the International expect from a leadership which has taken such decisions?

In fact, according to the system which the IEC means to impose, even if the method were rectified by giving the same basis of representation to all the sections so as to agree with the countries of "first importance" it can be seen (Tables No. 2 and No. 3) that a majority is assured for the present International leadership by the fact that the western European, North American and Canadian sections will be almost the only ones able to send all the delegates accorded them. How can it actually be supposed that Mexico, Poland, Peru, Indo-China and other countries will find the necessary means to send two or three delegates? We have difficulty in believing that this represents ignorance on the part of the International leadership; on the contrary, we believe that a question of deliberate calculation is involved, for it could not have imagined that the International would accept such an arbitrary division without protest. But the tendencies which seized the leadership thanks to the conditions immediately following the war calculated that the sections in countries of "moderate" or "slight" importance would demand in principle to be placed on an equal footing with countries classed as those of "first importance." In most cases they would not be able to send the delegates granted them even if the IEC did justice to their objections--and justice probably would have been rendered in order to preserve the democratic facade.

The preceding tables show that only five sections have a membership equal to or greater than 500 persons, while seven range between 100 and 400 members, and 21 have only 50 members or less. If it is really desired to follow the First Congress of the CI, which diminished the weight of the strong sections and increased the weight of the weak ones, a sole method of representation would be genuinely democratic: one delegate for 1 to 25 members and another delegate for 25 additional members or fraction of 25, up to a maximum of four

delegates. To this method of representation must be added still another major democratic regulation: the transfer of majority and minority votes from one section or another or to individuals having a common position so that minorities can participate in the World Congress. To forestall the creation of artificial minorities which might threaten to swamp the Congress, it is important, therefore, to demand that minorities represent at least 20% of the members of their section in order to vote.

It can be seen by the following comparative table that the method of representation which we propose assures a very much greater guarantee of democracy at the projected Congress. We have not included in it, however, the figures on minority representation:

<u>Sections</u>	<u>Total number of members</u>	<u>Delegates according to the IEC</u>	<u>Delegates according to our proposal</u>
America	1,600	6	4
Russia	several members	3	1
China	100	3	4
India	600	4	4
England	400	4	4
France	1,000	5	4
Germany	50	3	2
Spain	60	2	3
Italy	800	4	4
Holland	50	2	2
Belgium	50	2	2
Austria	50	2	2
Greece	500	3	4
Canada	50	2	2
Mexico	60	2	3
Brazil	50	2	2
Argentina	50	2	2
Chile	300	3	4
Bolivia	200	2	4
Indo-China	300	3	4
Norway	50	1	2
Denmark	50	1	2
Switzerland	50	1	2
Bulgaria	50	1	2
Ireland	50	1	2
Palestine	50	1	2
Egypt	50	1	2
Cyprus	50	1	2
Cuba	100	1	4
Peru	50	1	2
Uruguay	50	1	2
Australia	50	1	2
So. Africa	300	2	4
Totals	7,220	73	91

It can be seen that our proposal assures a more democratic representation at the Congress, the economic weaknesses of the distant and poor sections being compensated for by a larger representation for the small sections in general and especially the sections which will not be able to send their delegates to the Congress much less vote, while the IEC acts inversely and systematically discriminates against them in order to favor its combinations. This resolution of the IEC constitutes an immediate and mortal danger to the whole International. It must be revoked.

We are witnessing, as has been seen, an attempted bureaucratic seizure of the International leadership by elements interested in stifling a loyal discussion which would provoke their overthrow. It cannot be a question of anything else. Let us recall under what conditions the Pre-Conference of April, 1946 was convened and the motives for its convocation.

The I.S. and the IEC, which had been designated at the emergency conference of 1940 had only a vegetative political existence and led an almost non-existent organic activity during the whole war, the functioning of these bodies having been paralyzed by personal and political struggles in the atmosphere of the American section. As early as 1944 the Spanish Group in Mexico demanded the convening of a World Congress. Its request found not a single echo. The following year the IEC was consulted on the possibility of the convening of a pre-conference with limited objectives. This pre-conference proposal was accepted, for it was the only possible way of resolving the situation of an I.S. which was incapable, because of its internal divisions, of organizing a real discussion and preparing a genuine World Congress. It was then explicitly understood that this gathering would have as its task the selection of new leading bodies whose principal mission would be to animate and extend the international discussion in view of the World Congress. Then--total silence. After that, no one in the International was informed of the place and the date of meeting of the projected pre-conference, no discussion or even exchange of views preceded it, the agenda was unknown to almost the whole International. Members of the IEC were uninformed while the French police were perfectly informed. Everything was organized in the dark by leaders interested in assuring themselves the hegemony in this gathering. The composition of the pre-conference, in addition, was as little democratic as possible, which was excusable given the conditions under which it was convened. But its non-democratic, not to say, anti-democratic character ought to have encouraged the leading bodies which it had elected to compensate for their origin by measures authentically democratic. It is precisely the opposite which we have witnessed. Hardly had it got together when this pre-conference proclaimed itself a conference under the pretext of throwing dust in the eyes of the outside world and issued a manifesto which claimed to introduce the international discussion which it was charged with opening. Then the I.S. and the IEC began to threaten expulsion and to legislate as if they were the product of a genuine conference delegated full powers by the International; in a word, they began to prepare the future World Congress majority, totally forgetting their principal mission: the loyal organization of a full

discussion of all the problems posed before our International and the working class movement. They have even so completely forgotten their task that in all the discussion bulletins published under their guidance, more than a year after the pre-conference, of all the principal problems which confront our movement, only one, the Russian problem, has been extensively treated, and it still reflects only the official opinion. To our knowledge, only extracts from a thesis of the anti-defensist minority have been published. Can that be called a full and loyal discussion in preparation for a World Congress after seven years of a war which has produced changes of major importance? No, the discussion has, in its entirety, still to be organized.

The Strangulation of Minorities

We affirm that the I.S. and the IEC are seeking to prepare their majority at the World Congress. In addition to the calculations which we have already unmasked what shows it clearly is the minute care they have taken to secure a maximum limitation of representation for minorities, both in number and in power. The next to the last part of paragraph three of the resolution of the IEC says:

"Minorities will be proportionally represented in cases where the number of delegates permits it. In other cases, all minorities constituting approximately a quarter of their sections at least will be represented with a consultative vote."

First of all, proportional representation of minorities, if it is placed alongside of the arbitrary representation of the sections criticized earlier, is only a snare. What minorities could be proportionally represented? Obviously those of countries of first importance and yet not all, since that of the American section would have only the satisfaction of revealing its theses. The resolution clearly suggests: "In cases where the number of delegates permits it." For it is obviously not the Peruvian, Polish or Austrian sections, for example, which will have a sufficient number of delegates so that one of them can represent the minority. These sections in countries "of first importance," in addition to the privilege of importance, find themselves granted an additional privilege by the IEC, the luxury, so to speak, of one or more minorities. Precisely among these sections is numbered that of the most imperialist country in the world, and the PCI of France, where the Craipeau majority and the Frank minority have no serious political differences. Moreover, why is a fourth and not a third or fifth of the members required and why is only a consultative vote given? The resolution does not deign to inform us. What it signifies, we may already know. The reason probably is that there is not a single section at the present moment, thanks to the good offices of the I.S., where the minority represents a quarter of the membership, except the French minority led by Frank, who is under the guardianship of the present world leadership.

Nevertheless, the present International leadership is going to be obliged to permit a little discussion to take place, in order to save appearances. The minorities will more or less have the illusion of a discussion, but from now until the end of the year they will not

have the time to develop and group themselves, since the I.S. and the IEC have evaded all discussion of the major questions; these minorities will therefore not have the time to win a quarter of the members of their sections. Moreover, even if they reached that proportion, most of the non-European sections would be incapable, as we have already stated, of sending all the majority delegates to which they were entitled, not to speak of the minority delegates. Thus, the stifling of the discussion organized for more than a year by the International leadership, was designed to prevent the growing of an opposition in our movement. The demand for a quarter now gives the coup de grace to minorities in preventing them from being represented at the World Congress. And in case that were not sufficient, now comes the prohibition against proxy votes, and, in consequence, the forestalling of the growth of new formed oppositions, who are prevented from being heard and from voting. For a long time the I.S. has declared that the next World Congress must above all be a Congress of serious sections of the International. We now know what it understands by that: the sections which support or accept its opportunism, its ideological conservatism, and its organic bureaucratism.

Finally, to crown its work, the IEC in its resolution refuses to call the Congress legally on the pretext that the legal convening is "totally unrealizable under present conditions" and "would prevent the presence at the Congress of a series of sections and comrades." We cannot accept that statement; in fact, what prevents the convening of a legal Congress which would hold secret sessions in the course of which illegal comrades would be heard? The fear of bourgeois and Stalinist repression? But from how many countries has the authorization to hold a legal Congress been asked? Obviously, from not a single one. First of all, authorization must be asked everywhere for permission to hold a legal congress before taking refuge in conspiratorial methods. Secrecy, added to the restrictive methods already criticized, **permits** the leadership to combine and maneuver and assures that it will retain the leadership of the International. We confront you--and, with us, the whole International will demand the withdrawal of your resolution, the beginning of a real discussion of major problems, and the preparation of a democratic congress.

For a Genuine World Congress

For the World Congress to represent real progress for the Fourth International, it is first of all necessary for it to be convened under such conditions that not a single comrade will have the slightest reason for thinking of maneuvering by the leadership. The theses of minorities must appear equally with those of majorities and must be distributed under the direction of the International leadership.

For the Congress to adopt resolutions which are necessary for the social revolution all minorities must be represented.

We therefore ask:

1. That the sections be represented on the basis of one delegate for every 25 members and additional fractions of 25 up to a max-

imum of four delegates for each section, minorities being represented in the same manner. However, only minorities representing at least 20% of the membership of their section will have the right to vote. Others will have only a consultative vote. It is in this fashion that the democratic example given us by the CI at its birth will be followed. (At the emergency conference of 1940 Comrade Munis representing Spain was authorized to represent Mexico, Argentina, and Chile on the recommendation of L.D.)

2. Sections and minorities will have the right to transmit their vote to sections, minorities, or comrades outside their section.

3. Organizations close to the Fourth International with differences on this or that point of our program will be invited to the Congress with the same rights as the official sections, on condition of recognizing the fundamental principles of the International, even if fusion with the official sections has not been realized before the opening of the Congress.

4. The agenda will comprise:

- a. Examination of the politics of the principal parties during the imperialist war and their position in regard to the national resistance movements during the Nazi occupation;
- b. Character of the war between China and Japan;
- c. Balance sheet of the Spanish civil war;
- d. Support or abandonment of the unconditional defense of Russia and the question of world Stalinism (SP-CP-CGT government, united front with Stalinism, etc.);
- e. Outmoding of, or timeliness of, the transitional program and the manner of application of the parts of the program which remain valid;
- f. Problem of the tactics of the construction of revolutionary parties;
- g. Colonial question;
- h. Nature of the present historic period and immediate revolutionary perspectives.

This agenda is not at all exclusive. All questions of general interest which this or that section or group of comrades would like to present for the examination of the Congress will be discussed there.

We call upon the whole International to express themselves on the preceding proposals.

If the World Congress meets under the conditions decided by the IEC, and even under better conditions, without a thorough preliminary discussion of the problems which confront our movement (see our open letter to the French PCI) the Congress will constitute a mortal blow for the Fourth International. The situation demands the energetic intervention of the sections and of comrades within the sections. The IEC must immediately withdraw its resolutions; otherwise

the Fourth International will be bureaucratically asphyxiated.

For the revocation of the decision of the IEC or the resignation of the International leadership!

For a free discussion in the International!

For a genuine Congress of the International organized on democratic bases!

Long live the Fourth International!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

Mexico, D.F.
June 27, 1947

N.B. Sections, groups of comrades, or individuals who share our criticisms and proposals are asked to communicate their complete or partial agreement immediately to the I.S. and to the following address: G. Munis, Apartado Postal 8942, Mexico, D.F.

FACTS IN THEIR TRUE LIGHT [excerpted]

by the International Secretariat

Comrade Munis in the next place finds that the basis of representation at the World Congress established by the Third Plenum of the IEC is founded on Machiavellian calculations in order to capture the majority of the World Congress. His rich imagination constructs tables to "prove" that the IEC has "cut a majority to measure."

In order to arrive at this, he becomes involved in some intricate arithmetic, citing some very inexact membership totals and gratuitously assigning "majority" and "minority" delegates. All this would indeed be comic if it were not set down in a document signed by militants, among whom are to be found venerated militants of the Fourth International.

Your "round" figures as well as your "percentages" of "majority" and "minority" delegates, Comrade Munis, for example, those on France, Germany, India, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Indo-China, China, not to mention others, are radically wrong and the conclusions which you draw from them are castles in Spain.

This will be clearly demonstrated at the World Congress and the findings of the credentials committee will be announced to the responsible delegates. For the moment it suffices to inform the entire International of one detail, truly indicative of the "maneuverist" nature of the IEC; at the discussion on the basis of representation to the World Congress, at the Third Plenum of the IEC, the proposal was made to consider Comrade Natalia as the representative at the Congress of the Russian section of the Fourth International. This proposal was adopted unanimously. This has not prevented Comrade Munis from seeing in the inclusion of the Russian section in the list of sections to be represented at the World Congress, an additional "maneuver" on the part of the IEC to capture the "majority." By "unmasking" this "maneuver" he now risks losing precious votes for his own "majority." For, in reality, he counterposes a majority made to fit his own ends to the "majority" which he has computed for others.

Let us just observe the "objectivity" which distinguishes his last table, arbitrary from beginning to end. In it Germany figures with two delegates, but Cuba with four. Canada with two delegates, but South Africa with four. Holland and Belgium with two delegates, but Mexico with three and Chile with four delegates each.

The same goes for the question of representation of minorities and the transfer of mandates. The concept of the democratic element in the regime of democratic centralism in our International means in reality for Comrade Munis, doing away more or less with the rights of the majority. Thus in place of the proportional representation of minorities as conceived by the IEC, Comrade Munis demands representation for any minority having at least 20% of the members of its section.

Democracy, according to Comrade Munis, consists, for example, in the case of a section having two representatives for 4/5 of its members, in granting one additional representative for a minority grouping of 1/5 of this organization, and thus subordinating not only the real majority of this section, but also any other section which, lacking the advantage of having a minority, could be represented by only two delegates.

Comrade Munis' proposal is a premium gratuitously offered the minorities. The IEC does not exclude minorities from the Congress. All minorities "constituting approximately at least a fourth of the membership of a section will be represented." They will have deliberative votes provided the number of delegates granted to that section permits it. In all other cases they will have consultative votes.

But even on this point the IEC was not rigid. In its discussions it was made clear that in the case of serious and politically important minorities, the IEC will be very flexible in recommending to the World Congress that these minorities be represented with the right to vote.

On the question of minorities, the IEC endeavors to give proof of an unbureaucratic flexibility. It is probable that the presence of Comrade Munis at the World Congress will be an example of it, since at present his tendency is far from representing even 20% of the Spanish section.

Finally, Comrade Munis is continually forgetting that whatever the deliberations taken up to now by the IEC on the question of the organization of the Congress, they will not prevent the Congress from definitively resolving all questions as the highest body. No one is prevented from coming to the Congress and bringing his case before it. What could be more democratic than permitting it to pass judgment on any case presented to it?

Comrade Munis also rebels against the fact that the transfer of mandates to members of the International other than those of a section is not permitted. He sees in this also an additional "maneuver" to assure a solid majority. This was necessary in order to prevent the various tendencies from making a deliberate campaign to capture mandates, based not on political clarification, but on sympathies, confidence, and other factors of this kind.

In such a competition it is the leading apparatus itself, Comrade Munis, which possesses enormous advantages and is capable, thanks to the numerous connections which it maintains with all sections of the International, to accumulate an overwhelming number of mandates.

On this point as well, we have refrained from exploiting our advantages.

It is more than reasonable to suppose that the first mentioned accusations of Comrade Munis, to the effect that the International

stifled discussion and sabotaged the distribution of the documents published independently by him, reflects his own incredulity that, once his positions become known, a strong Munis tendency does not manifest itself throughout the International. Now he takes an inventory. What he seeks in reality in this crusade against the preparations for the World Congress is to avoid having to submit to its decisions and discipline, since he is aware that the overwhelming majority of our international movement rejects his political positions and characterizes them as sectarianism, without any influence in the International. By disqualifying this Congress in advance, the preparation and organization as well as the democratic nature of which surpasses immeasurably anything of the kind that has been done before in our movement, he is in reality preparing his withdrawal from the International. There is perhaps still time for Comrade Munis to recover himself.

--The International Secretariat
December 1947

TALK ON PARTY HISTORY
[uncorrected draft transcript]

by Robertson

European Summer Camp
4 August 1977

...I think that there will be much more historiography in the next period about the Spartacist tendency. Hopefully we're beginning to be hated more widely.

Along the lines of the main theme of comrade Pearlman's piece [in Intercontinental Press] of our creeping irrelevancy, [which] I listed--and this is actually a kind of a beginning of a sketch of the history of the SL, the ever-widening pools of our irrelevancy: the press, which used to be thoroughly irregular and infrequent when I was editor and now has besides many other organs 12 irrelevant weekly pages; our irrelevance in the process of regroupment such that in those regroupment processes where we lose following a split and do not get a main chunk, we still get a 5 percent broker's fee; our irrelevant geographic extensions so that now we have some presence in the Midwest; the urgent need to become irrelevant by building a couple of branches in the South; our trade-union irrelevance which we are trying to extend in a decisive way into the center of the auto industry in Detroit with black trade unionists; our irrelevance in work among women. I'm trying to think if there is in fact another journal as Women and Revolution, thus verifying our unique hostility to women; our total irrelevance bordering on racism on the black question, which is why at a time of membership stagnation and slight decline we have a steady recruitment of young black comrades. The SL/U.S. has of course been the springboard for the international extension of the Spartacist tendency, although with a very powerful component from the old New Zealand section. So that again our anti-international irrelevance is revealed by a tendency of under 500 on the planet which publishes theoretical journals in four languages. That's a very considerable achievement, comrades. I think that a rather good tendency of 5,000 might break its back trying to do that. And of course the irrelevance that is revealed by the comrades gathered in this room in southern France. These are very considerable achievements. Of course party history should concentrate more on such matters as our giant successes in Israel and Italy. Because we're talking about real history and it just occurs to me what I think our greatest failure was--and I mean a real failure and not something that one could not have known at the time --the rather small and rather respectable Students for a Democratic Society in 1964 dropped its anti-communist clauses--the Port Huron statement I think.

So the comrades Hunter and Henry promptly made a memorandum for our Spartacist group that we should make a serious entry. The memorandum for the entry was adopted and a circular was sent around to our 35 or 45 members of rather marginal human character. Our younger comrades wanted to throw up when they saw this thing because they may have been largely marginal in some ways but they did not want to join a flower power organization. And furthermore we've always had far too few students--I think we have about eight of them now in the United States. Fifteen. That's part of our character as our opponents

have described us as an overwhelmingly student organization. So the net result is that out of this complex of reasons, and even though we did participate in a number of regional and all of the national SDS gatherings, the basic radicalization of the American student movement growing out of the black question and out of the Vietnam War passed us by during its height.

In the sequel, literally thousands of student militants drawn to an oversimplified and crude approximation of our line were regrouped around the Progressive Labor organization. Finally in the period 1970, '71 and '72, we got our cut. By then usually one step removed from the old SDS, in the form of Maoist collectives that had decided to read and feminist collectives that had turned to the working class. So that we experienced an explosive growth going from a low of 41 members--40, 40 was the magic figure. I could never purge the organization down to 40 members although we've tried. This was a straightforward consequence of something that I probably won't get back to so I'll give it to you out of sequence, and that is, the Ellens-Turner fight occurred in 1968 and Ellens said that our membership was half social democratic and Turner said that we had no collective leadership. And there's a certain empirical measure of truth in this. We were in a stagnant period. By the time eight months of faction fighting was over, they were out and we had a Bolshevik membership and a collective factionally forged leadership. A whole series of bulletins exist on this fight and the comrades should certainly avail themselves of them. Both Ellens and Turner now orbit around the SWP which caused me to suggest to a comrade that we might deal with our various factional opponents of years gone by with an article for the press called "Where Are They Now?"

And here's a good point. This is not the history of the SL, but its tactics in faction fighting. When you get differences you temporize for a while and argue and see what the direction is. In a Bolshevik organization even malcontents not only can but must help draw the party wagon. And if you can--and the majority always has more possibilities--one should not spit out factional opponents until they are used up and wrung-out people, because then they will not have the strength, programmatic certainty and energy to build a competing organization. One observes this in connection with those who are too preemptory like Gerry Healy. In fact I think that the real title of this talk is "Leninism Is a Very Powerful Weapon." And now I want to move to the beginning of the talk.

How does one begin a history? In this case, only one way. It's imposed by the material: the Russian Revolution. There have been three great international events in this century, two world wars and one world revolution. The world wars are of course the exhibition of the death throes of the old order, and the world revolution, which is actually the second world revolution (the first occurring in 1848) although contained, was the promise of the new social order. But the Russian Revolution was an act--it was a fact that was a beacon to the discontented and oppressed, the returned young soldiers--but that does not mean that it was thereby simply understood. Lenin wrote State and Revolution which is a fundamental statement of the nature

of the social order and the principal program of communism, and for pedagogic reasons I must add to remind the comrades who are not aware that the second half of this material is contained in the polemic of The Renegade Kautsky and the Proletarian Revolution. But the second half of Leninism is codified in the supreme manual on tactics, Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder. Enthusiasm for new and promising events or ways of approaching things is all too common and cheap. I've seen it now several times in my own political life. So that every kind of accidental and irrelevant figure grouped around the October Revolution--the name Angelica Balabanoff comes immediately to mind--former mistress of Mussolini, and Emma Goldman with her "Disillusionment With Russia," "My Further Disillusionment with Russia," "My Even Further Disillusionment With Russia," etc., etc., etc. But at least these were sincere idealists who broke from vegetarianism to communism. But of course there are a number of down-right scoundrels just looking for a berth, and these were of course, taken all together, the people who had the literary and verbal skills and who presumed to speak for the millions of class-conscious workers and youth who grouped around the communist banner. So Lenin felt constrained to write in Left Wing Communism roughly the following: "Oh comrades of the Communist International, please praise us a bit less and learn from us a bit more."

And you see, logically, my next point would be "What is to be learned from the Bolsheviks" but that leads us simply, qualitatively too far afield. But no comrade who has not absorbed the essence of these lessons can be a cadre in our tendency.

Now to leap ahead a bit and to deal with the American Section of the Communist International: it had factions in it. Roughly it had one basic line of division but it had somewhat more splintering in the leadership than just the basic axis of division. Shachtman has claimed that Cannon always believed that his faction in the Communist Party was predestined to become Trotskyist. If this is true, and there is some evidence for it, I think that it is mainly wrong and, of course, satisfyingly self-serving. I would reformulate it another way, that the Cannon faction in the American party could most easily have become Trotskyist. There was nothing inevitable about it. Of course only about half of the Cannon faction did become Trotskyist. It was not the Cannon faction, it was the Cannon-Dunne faction, and Dunne had the great misfortune in 1928 to be on assignment in Outer Mongolia. He found it convenient to remain with Stalin, although his four younger brothers went with Cannon. Now the comrades should understand that this break of part of the Cannon faction to Trotskyism was not an isolated provincial act even though the Communist Party of the U.S. was not very large. And it's not only because the American party has to the present day played a role in the CI out of proportion to its size. So that when Brezhnev went to Washington the extraordinary occurred -- the leader of the American Communist Party going down to the Russian Embassy to have a friendly chat. The Euro-communist split took place in the United States in 1957 and I'm pleased to say that the Communist Party of the U.S. is loyal to Russia. I have nothing good to say about its other policies or about Russia but I am pleased by that.

But what is most important is that a faction came out of the CP, not a few journalists and students. Veteran communists and militants in the class struggle. This is merely unique in the experience of the Trotskyist breakaways from the Stalinizing Communist International. A country-by-country examination of the process of Stalinization of the CI will reveal that most of the principal founding leaders of the sections refused to follow Stalin. But even though they left on more or less principled bases they tended to exit as individuals or in the base for as I say it [tended] to be merely journalists and students. But the Cannonite faction was a hardened chunk of communists--it was a little embryo of a party already. Now I said that was almost unique. What makes the situation of the Cannon faction completely unique is that if you make an examination of what happened with the rise of fascism and then of the Second World War, no other section had the possibility of continued existence without discontinuity. So it is for these two more or less accidental circumstances that the American comrades of our tendency have something important to say to the other comrades of the tendency. And what we have to say is not American, it is Russian. There's a joke which our South Slavic comrades are fond of and it bears repeating itself: a Montenegrin brigand for years and years burned, looted, raped, stole, did all the bad things when Montenegro was Turkish. Finally he was caught and taken before the local officer of the Turkish army. He knew that he was in for it but he was a brave man and when the Turk demanded to know "Why do you steal? We Turks, we fight for honor;" the Montenegrin replied, "Every man fights for what he does not have." Needless to say the end was then slow. Now there's a point to this and it has to do with the question of continuity. The reason that we stress the continuity of international communism and Trotskyism is because we have so little. Yes, it is very nice indeed to have learned things from a couple of old comrades who were at the Congresses of the CI in the historic period. Although I was mainly trained by the men who were trained by those men. And the old ones were re-educated in their fights and their discussions, public and private, with Trotsky and Lenin and Zinoviev. But it's very thin, comrades, this continuity. And it seems to me and has always seemed to me that to be a good communist requires two components, each of which is necessary. One is akin to the university students, that is the mastery of the texts: to know, to read, to study, to be able to have the historic precedents through booklearning at one's fingers. And the other is analogous to the apprenticeship program where you learn by doing under the direction and supervision of those who know better than you. And without components of both I do not think it's possible to build the Bolshevik party without having to start all over again which is unlikely.

I'm trying to think of what the characteristics are of those who simply learn by doing. It seems to me they tend to get lost within the framework of national communist practice. The Germans--I forget the name of the man--the Leninbund fellow, showed a lot of this kind of weakness. Hugo Urbahns. And those for whom communism is the working out of erudite crossword puzzles have their own weaknesses and I think of Isaac Deutscher--a very talented Polish communist journalist with a little circle of students who thought that Trotsky was a bright and good communist.

So if the Cannon faction, the portion that became Trotskyist, was compact it was within a year of its independent existence as a Trotskyist group faced with a new division. I'd like to present a hypothesis that should serve to organize the history of the American Trotskyist movement in the 1930's.

Only assholes and maniacs expect to be great theoreticians. It would make a nice banner. I believe that the way that theoretical, self-consistent extensions of Marxism take place is by having to be confronted by new problems and to wrestle with them. I think that the Spartacist tendency, for example, has given a correct and sufficient explanation theoretically of the extension of the deformed workers states through two paths. And while we have continued to work this out, the gist of this theoretical understanding was obtained about 1960 in the light of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions and without very much difficulty regarding the Red Army overrunning East Europe.

But we have always been perplexed by the history of American Trotskyism before the 1940 split. And finally we obtained a full file of the bulletins of the Communist League of America from the period 1930 through 1934. I'd better make the archival point now. We have a party archivist as his principal party assignment. He's the comrade who obtained these bulletins. We are now trying to concentrate and organize this material so it will be available for the international tendency; I'll speak a little later on some aspects of the work in order to stimulate your salivary glands.

When I was a wee lad, the mythical experience of the American Trotskyist movement was the first Shachtman-Cannon fight. The documents were not available and highly tendentious accounts of it were circulated by word of mouth. Using an elliptical article by Shachtman in 1954, Wohlforth and Marcus developed a whole weird scenario about it, including how Trotsky was really against Cannon at that time. This was used, of course, was created for the purpose of an attack on the American Trotskyist continuity in order to show that Wohlforth or in the other case, Marcus, were the first real American Marxists. Since these men, Wohlforth and Marcus, were theoreticians of the kind that I have described.... So we read this material in context and critically. The original fight lineup was between Cannon, Swabeck, Vince Dunne on one side; Shachtman, Glotzer, Abern and later Maurice Spector from Canada on the other side. The fighting was very intense, subterranean, cliquish. It grew out of the very sterile and isolated existence of the American Trotskyists in the face of a relatively very strong and monopolistic Stalinized Communist Party, and in the depths of the great depression when the working class was still paralyzed with fear and misery, and it was mainly an argument about practical perspectives then with no clear-cut rights and wrongs. The final class confrontation was just then taking place in Germany leading to the Nazi victory at a time in which the party did not have the money to pay for a single telephone and it was very hard to bring out a monthly newspaper. Comrade Shachtman brought out the newspaper three times a week. Comrade Swabeck had been in charge of a great deal of work among communists in the coal mines and Cannon and

Swabeck wanted to make tours in order to organize Trotskyist coal mine fractions. We are a very rich tendency financially and we know that if you do one thing you cannot do another. This was far more true for the Communist League of America. So they fought. Bitterly. Trotsky intervened seeking to minimize and liquidate the fight.

I suppose that in a sense, Shachtman won the fight on perspectives and Cannon won the regime. But the interesting thing is that Shachtman alone of the leaders of his group went over to the Cannon faction and the most intransigent mass worker of the Cannonites, Hugo Oehler, went out as an ultraleftist. Now always when you have an idea you present it in its logical and rational fashion. But the blinding flash of recognition that I had was that the Abernites were Shachtmanites without Shachtman. Number Two Abernite was Al Glotzer, also known as Gates. He was and is to this day long past the death of Shachtman, the most loyal Shachtmanite.

Now there's a document that we ought to reproduce as part of our archival program. It is written in 1935 by Max Shachtman [Shachtman, "Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism? (Internal Problems of the Workers Party)," Workers Party Internal Bulletin, February 1936, No. 3, sections 1 and 2, pp. 1-70]. It is 70 pages long and it runs through two bulletins. It's called "Marxist Clarity and Rotten Combinations" or something like that. With that document, Shachtman saved the party as a Trotskyist party against Oehlerites, Musteites and Abernites. The Oehlerites went out, the Abernites shut up and the Musteites decomposed. It was later in 1939 and 1940 that document was taken as the beginning of the Trotskyist history in America by both sides--the Cannonites and the Shachtmanites. Both sides amnestied and disappeared the previous party history of six years. And that is why that period remained a period of mystery for us younger Trotskyists.

I do not envy the situation in retrospect of comrade Cannon through the 1930's. Let me give you an example that would be tolerated for about 13 minutes in the Spartacist League that he had to live with for ten years. The famous admonishment of Cannon by Trotsky is in this: the resident committee in New York was split 50-50 between--in the early 1930's--Cannon and Shachtman, and Cannon had a majority on the National Committee. As had happened several times, there was then a plenum of the National Committee and in the middle of the plenum with counterposed documents, the Shachtman group withdrew their document and voted for the Cannon document. The day after the plenum, of course, the Shachtmanites went back on their withdrawal, and the paralysis in the resident committee in New York continued. So Cannon proposed to co-opt a comrade for his side in order to obtain a majority on the resident committee. It is this nice old comrade Sam Gordon in England. So they had a referendum in the party and Cannon lost (leading to our fundamental world historical opposition to referenda in the party) and Shachtman wrote Trotsky saying, "Look, we all agree. How dare this other guy want to pack the committee when there is unity here!" I don't think we would have let him withdraw their document. It would have been published. Or we would have introduced another motion: "Motion: That the people who brought

in this document and now withdraw it are, well, in some political language, shits." And then they don't vote for that one then, you see. You get some motion that has the division. You see the advantage of continuity, comrades! So Trotsky wrote Cannon and said: "Don't be so heavy with administrative measures. Try to patch it up. I know that Shachtman misbehaved very badly on his European trip but the unity of the organization is very important." One must agree with Trotsky. The unity of the organization is very important. But so is the foundation of the unity very important. One wants to keep Shachtman if at all possible but not on his own terms.

And then of course the Abern group simply went underground its excessive sensitivity to popular opinion, political motion in a journalistic way and yet it did not yet have a programmatic exhibition of weakness. And an organizational split at that time with heavy cliquist overtones and without significant political clarity would have been very bad. But at the same time a bomb was built inside the American Trotskyist movement and there was no real collectivity or unity in the Trotskyist leadership. At every crucial point there had to be negotiation among the independent powers in the leadership. This gives depth to Cannon's observation in The Struggle For a Proletarian Party when he said, "Abern says that the question of leadership has never been satisfactorily resolved. He ought to know. He's been trying for ten years."

[small gap due to tape change]

And it was Shachtman in whom those elements in the party who had a more--and this is not invidious--a petty-bourgeois political and journalistic involvement felt trust. Now the point of the study of party history is in order not to have to repeat it. The 1940 split had world historic implications because it was a surrogate for the division in the entire Fourth International, many sections of which could not have an internal life then. The 1940 split was very good and on very clear-cut political lines--far better than the 1903 split between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, which was a dispute formally over a point in the organizational rules in which the Mensheviks won and which the Bolsheviks retained the Menshevik position formally until the Russian Revolution. But the 1903 split was far, far better than the 1872 denouement between Marxism and Anarchism at the Hague Congress. Which was resolved by Marx expelling Bakunin for stealing from the petty cash. It was a true charge because Bakunin was among other things a New Leftist who naturally steals from the petty cash.

So the whole of our history is determined in essence by the struggle to assimilate the meaning of the Russian Revolution. As one studies the history of the organized socialist labor movement of all countries, those that had a labor movement in 1917 experienced a qualitative break and leap in the character of the vanguard. And these qualitative breaks happen very, very rarely in the life of a working class. That is why in most countries we can expect until there is such a break again to be condemned no matter how successfully to a propaganda-group existence. Aside from Iran which tends to reproduce the experience of tsarist Russia, our best chance is to be

present in a situation of a popular front leading to a counterrevolution. This is what makes the default of Andres Nin so tragic in the 1930's, because at one point the Spanish Trotskyists had more weight in the proletariat than the official Stalinist party, and it is why in our party the small number of Chilean emigres are so important objectively. There is little prospect that the Chilean military regime will endure as Franco did.

I think that my talk now becomes from the area of historic generalizations more to the level of personal narrative in that I begin now to speak of things that I've personally experienced. And the comrades must understand that for the first 10 years of the political life of which I talk, my vantage point was the very narrow one of a stagnating, disintegrating Shachtmanite branch in the Bay Area in California--not a very wide porthole to the world. The predictions of the SWP and of Trotsky about the Shachtmanite split were not generally borne out in the space of time expected. It took not 17 months but 17 years for the course of the Workers Party sketched by Trotsky to be fulfilled. The reason is that the forces that left the SWP with Shachtman were not those that constituted the new Workers Party. About half of the people who left the SWP used the faction fight as an opportunity to flee from ostensibly Marxist politics. Burnham, MacDonald, Spector and, to a large extent, Abern. So that the forces that constituted the Workers Party were much to the left of the split. Furthermore, any petty-bourgeois appetites of the typical Shachtmanite who was an unemployed college-educated youth were thwarted by his being immediately drafted into the army. Which leads to another interesting consequence, that women ran the Workers Party during the Second World War--young women, whereas draft-protected geriatric men who did exist in the SWP ran it, and that led to the big difference and a big difference in my training. So that we always knew that the SWP was male chauvinist and the WP was not.

But the degeneration into the social democracy of the Workers Party was merely postponed; it was already completely programmatically prepared. As soon as the war was over, the young men all became graduate students and eventually college professors. They seem to consist of every college professor in America today. This was mainly voluntary, but in part it was involuntary because the Shachtmanites had gone into the new war industries in the trade-union fractions whereas the SWPers continued with high seniority in the older industrial sector. Not that this made a difference for long because the cold war came within two years. And while we never had fascism or anything close to it in the United States, I think it is probably very hard for European socialist militants to realize the pervasive impact of the cold war domestically. Can you imagine the removal from all industry of every known and undercover communist? And communist was defined as anybody who was a subscriber to a radical newspaper or who was thought to have socialist sympathies. But it was done in a cold way, from above. You were simply eliminated and became an unperson, running a typing service or some other marginal activity. Most of the membership of the far left quit, not because of the repression, but because of the apparent complete irrelevance and isolation of the ideas of the far left. So that if you would use a

communist, Moscow, brainwashed torture codeword like "imperialism" in any bar or classroom, four or five people would phone the FBI. So that we would sit in a very small room looking at each other once a week wondering who was going to quit next, with nobody reading our press and nothing happening. This was a very unpleasant period but it did have two positive aspects: in the Bay Area which had been historically a left-wing branch of the Shachtmanites some of us in the left got into a fight with the right Shachtmanites and it was very hard to maintain the party principle under these conditions. It was a very slow faction fight; it lasted five years without interruption. Ah, Pascal. Sometimes they can also last 17 hours without interruption. I only broke Rachmatov in the 17th hour. But I'm getting too old for this Gulag stuff. I'm not used to speaking without opponents in the room. I don't really think Pascal is that much of an opponent but one must have opposition. Surely Wolfgang, you can make an opposition. That's the problem with being over-trained factionally. The other very good thing about the cold war is that it was a most marvelous time to build one's Marxist library. People would give you whole boxes of valuable books by Trotsky that were no longer available. Sometimes they would even be found in the morning in front of the party headquarters like abandoned babies.

So when I came out of the Communist Party and declared myself a Trotskyist expectantly to some Trotskyist comrades they said "Life is not that simple; there are two Trotskyite parties in America" and I said, "Oh, what's the difference?" And I tell this anecdote so that you'll catch something of the flavor. And the answer was, I'd asked "What's the difference" and they told me that one party is against Stalin and against Russia and one party is against Stalin and for Russia, and I said "The latter sounds nicer to me," and they said "Oh, but that's old fashioned." So I did as I was told, which is the importance of being there at these critical moments because I was part of a split of about half a dozen comrades coming out of the Communist Party and going to Trotskyism. You have to be there, you see, to shape the direction. So I absorbed, loyally--intellectually loyally--the theory, the Shachtmanite theory of bureaucratic collectivism and tried to apply it, and all I can say in my defense is that it's head and shoulders above the theory of state capitalism. But in 1951 the Shachtmanites came out with the theory of the democratic war against Stalinism, possibly led by an American president, Walter Reuther head of the UAW. You see, they broke from the Third Camp before I did. And I remember a big Italian football player from Brooklyn College, number two to Max Martin (Dombrow) saying "Maybe a socialist half of the world will have to atom bomb the Stalinist half of the world." And I recall replying "But if there's a revolution in Russia, maybe a socialist half of the world will have to atom bomb a capitalist half of the world." The resulting consternation suggested that we had differences in the party. But just because Shachtman was abandoning the Third Camp didn't mean that I did. I became an absurd ultraleftist Shachtmanite, and there's a document around that I'll peddle to you for a high price if you want to see it. So after five years of faction fighting with people who thought that the British Labour Party was a legitimate workers government they couldn't stand these small

meetings any longer, and we got rid of enough of them to become the large majority in our little fraction. The second volume of the Deutscher trilogy had just been published and we had a public forum on it in our area. I spoke at the meeting and the leader of the right wing was present. It was a considerable exhibition of internal differences in public, and the real difference was again the Russian Question--the Russian Revolution. It had to do with the situation in the Soviet Union after 1920 when the Bolsheviks were left suspended in power with the working class largely dispersed in a sea of peasants, backwardness, bureaucracy and an ex-tsarist apparatus. I said I agree with Plekhanov's long parliament. We will try to maintain a fortress of the state power, do what we can domestically and work for a revolution in another country. Garber said, "Democracy! We will have free elections, install the Mensheviks and right-SR running dogs for counterrevolution." What we did not say although it was the logical corollary was that I would reply "The Cheka will collect you" and he would reply "But my friends from the capitalist powers will liberate me." Instead we snarled the maximum insults at one another. He said to me "You belong in the SWP" and I said "You belong in the SP." And four years later that's where we were.

The Khrushchev revelations shattered the Communist Party of the U.S. leading to the exhibition of Eurocommunism, and the Hungarian revolution had profound impact on the anti-Stalinist left. I had already determined to go to the SWP but I had no hope about it; after the Cochrane-Pablo split we thought it was just a fossil that had little meetings with the bust of Trotsky that they always had in the meetings and that it was kind of like a lodge for the old boys. But I thought that at least this is honorable and the terrible thing was winning the local majority because it turned out to be nothing; we were still locked in by the national newspaper which we had to sell, the Shachtman press, which was worse and worse and I thought I would rather be in an honorable irrelevant memorial association to Trotsky. But it was not easy because I had spent many years working very hard to destroy the attempts of the Cannon organization to build a chapter at the university where I did my political work. I was one of their principal opponents. So that when I let it be known to one of the leading local cadres of the SWP that I was ready to work for their presidential election campaign, I had made some false assumptions of their effectiveness and I assumed that there would be two contactors on my door that night. But they just went right on hating me. And here is an important conclusion from the experiences of party life: when you have an opponent--a member of an opponent organization--and you always think of him as a good guy because he doesn't fight you, he doesn't keep you up all night to break your back, he drinks with you, he gives you little bits of party gossip, if we recruit him, he will be as bad a member for us. And the corollary of the vicious, savage son-of-a-bitch that tries to rip you to pieces who then opens up, that means it also makes a good member.

So along came the Hungarian revolution just then, right on top of this. And I must report that so far as I can determine the original document of the new course of the left Shachtmanite opposition toward the SWP is missing. I can't find it in the file. No longer

ultraleft Third Campism, but a series of half good programmatic points leading to the conclusion of our little conspiracy that we are in motion from the ISL to the SWP without making or breaking organizational bonds at this time. We had become demoralized and the left-wing forces were relatively dispersed. But I have never been able to understand how Wohlforth, three times a majority, three times managed to lose in factional battles. My experience is that it is practically impossible for a majority to lose. Having acquired a perspective and thereby being remoralized we went immediately to the graveyard and paid up back dues and a small rightwing Shachtmanite youth organization became within three weeks eighteen to four for the left wing. Because we were the historic majority. All of the ex-members were ours. That's what five years of intransigent fighting had given us. And we intervened in a very good way in the Communist Party regroupment process. The time is nearly running out so I will become more scattered.

But while I didn't know that the SWP was very uncomfortable with their new acquisition, and on being run out of town to New York, the new Trotskyist youth organization which we had built was dismantled and the youth from the leftwing of the Communist Party who would have otherwise been Maoist were driven out. And here's another lesson from party history and I think it will have to be the last one. You do not destroy a factional opponent by wiping out his local organization and sending him to the party center. A year later I was back in the Bay Area organizing into a left opposition against the SWP majority many of the people who'd run me out of town--including Geoff White! There's so much to say and I want to wrap this up now. So I'll just give you a couple of completely disconnected observations.

In the founding of our opposition in the SWP on the Cuban Question we had three leading comrades, Mage, Robertson and Wohlforth. Mage, who spent a long time in Europe, was a fluent French speaker and totally assimilated to the Lambertists. Wohlforth was early captured and used as an agent by Healy. And I was always a Cannonite. Thus, you see, in that sense it was indeed an IC tendency. International Committee from the split in 1953--International Secretariat, International Committee. But we were very impressed by the British production of the Labour Review in the early 1960's. I remember saying, and I still say it, that Slaughter wrote the finest Marxist material in that period since the death of Trotsky. It was an abnormal situation for the Healy organization in England, but that's another question.

The other thing that I want to talk about on the last point then is the archival materials which we must struggle to make available to the cadres of our tendency. There are many unproduced Marxist Bulletins comrades, especially in the series number 3: it runs through about 3 parts up to about 5 or 6, the materials. There's also the mythical Marxist Bulletin No. 6 on the East European revolution. We have brought out in xerox the bulletins of the first five years of the American Trotskyist movement. We have in the works several hundred pages of the most characteristic minutes of the American Communist Party in the late 1920's including the factional

circulars from all sides. And most close to production is about 100 pages of the material on the early years of the Trotskyist movement in the U.S.--the original Cannon-Shachtman fight, in three parts: the Trotsky material is already available in the Trotsky Writings, but buried; the Cannon material is available in the CLA bulletins; and regarding the third part, I have to say in defense of comrade Cannon something that he said: that raised in the school of the Communist International when he became a Trotskyist his conception of party democracy was not perfect and we're going to publish the typescript copies of the Shachtman opposition which somehow never found their way into the early Trotskyist internal bulletins.

[End of Presentation]

Summary

[uncorrected draft transcript]

Well, these are random remarks now. Arnie asked as far as I can reconstruct from my notes about why some people didn't make it. And the answer is "Too many fights per human being, like Geoff White." He was since Morris Stein and perhaps higher ranking than Morris Stein the highest level Communist Party leader ever to be recruited to the Trotskyist movement after the initial split. He was a Smith Act victim who while handcuffed to a federal marshall being taken from one place to another for trial, they stopped, he had been in the underground in the deep South, and he picked up a copy of a local bourgeois newspaper and read about the Khrushchev report. He stopped being a loyal member at that moment of the CP/U.S. and, through the intermediary of a generous defense campaign by the SWP and the reading of Deutscher, became a rightwing member of the SWP. And I was a leftwing member of the SWP. He was more able and better connected than I and he saw to it that my operation in our common local area was destroyed and I was deported. A year later we were the leaders of our faction. Rather an argument I think against holding old grievances. Already he felt damaged and would not move to the center and become the national chairman with me as the national secretary, which is the way it should have been because he looks like Gregory Peck, very wholesome American, unlike me. I should explain that he has some weight with the American bourgeoisie--the New York Times printed his contribution to the 25th anniversary statement of Harvard graduates uniquely as the typical American for the bourgeoisie. Like you, Bill. Only more so. You know what Harvard is. 25 years later. The typical American. You see, you should understand when he joined the Harvard Communist Party group there were 24 Jews and Geoffrey with a "G" White. He was immediately elected the president. Geoffrey. And then state chairman of a Communist Party and then into the underground in the South. But though he was already weak he was tenacious and it was only the breakdown in 1966 with Healy which fundamentally demoralized him. Always a man of honor, he had no intention of buying those lying pigs for anything. But he wanted to go away then. And I'll tell you, like Shane Mage and like David Cunningham, one of the characteristics of this tendency, as a communist tendency, is that we never disappeared the contributions of people who have departed or defected. And I'll tell you a thing sociologically. Many

of us that composed the initiation of this tendency came through or from the Shachtmanites. But I don't think that catches the essential origins as well as something else. In the SWP there have been in recent decades very few former members of the Communist Party. We took 75 percent. It was very hard in the '30's and '40's to become a Trotskyist from the CP. Thus Ed Lee was one of the three comrades out of three hundred in 1946 who came over to Trotskyism--of the 300 who split from the CP to the left. And our tendency won Ed Lee, won me, won David Cunningham, won Harry Turner and won Geoff White. There were three other CPers in the SWP that I can think of and we would have won the niece of one. So these poor Marcyites, contrary to their understanding, we have had--not a difficult political time because we were principled people--but a difficult emotional time with our opposition to the China/Russia border wars and a very funny reaction to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But it did facilitate a cool detachment in viewing the Chinese faction fights. Because emotionally we believed that of course those little islands in the Amar River are Russian! And that Czechoslovakia will do as is determined in Moscow because it was bought with Russian blood! Naturally this is only emotional and not a political response.

OK, one other point. The Spartacist League of the U.S. has been built through regroupment and recruitment and in the flowing continuity of the history of Trotskyism, it has not been built the way that a pearl is built. When you unfold all the layers of a pearl, at the bottom you find a piece of hard quartz. The first act in the creation of the Spartacist League was sexual, that is to say, two components came together in a regroupment. And the sexual experience of accretion has continued since. Some comrades don't understand this and since they come in as outsiders, right, in a regroupment, they continue to feel themselves strangers. This is a pathological reaction that is false and I encourage all the comrades to examine where all the rest of us came from. It was all sexual.

Yes, comrade Rolf spoke on Germany, and I can only refer the comrades to an extremely concentrated statement which appears in the document for the "Declaration for the Early Organizing of the International Trotskyist League." I have not heard those several points controverted. A single sentence and the comrades will have to take it as they will because there's not enough time to elucidate. But, in the old Comintern there was a saying that the German section, outside the Russians, was the biggest and the Polish was the best. One of the weaknesses of comrade Cannon which I've seen in writing was that his nostalgia for one quality in the old Second International of the solidarity of all of the working class independent of tendency, and he said that while Leninism has given us scientific precision, how nice it was in the old days when the Wobs and the Socialist Party all got together when there was a good cause against the bosses. Different times, different generations, I have no feeling whatsoever for this sentiment and must resist the attraction of Zinoviev's statement instead: "Sure there's room for more than one party in Russia; one in power and the rest in jail."

I want to point out a quality about the history of the American Trotskyist movement that is not apparent later on. One of the

consequences from the cold war is the deep separation between the radical movement and the labor movement. And this permits the most eccentric petty-bourgeois phenomena masquerading as radical. That's the underlying sociology behind my remark about the assholes and the madmen. And I have been in both Shachtman's and Cannon's parties and I have to testify that these were men who believed that they were ordinary mortals with whom it was possible to make an argument. They were not leaders maximo. It is the difference also found in the Moscow Stalinists as against the Maoists. The Chinese Stalinists have a state constitution that is more totalitarian than the rule of the pope in Rome. In Rome, the pope appoints the cardinals who appoint the pope. In China, though it doesn't work out like this in practice, in constitutional law the pope appoints the pope. But with the Moscow Stalinists, let's take a not too appetizing example, Walter Ulbricht. I read how he introduced his personal proposals to the SEB. I think it's still called that. He said, "Comrades I have been charged by the Central Committee to present to you on its behalf the following proposals." To quote a great homosexual--one of my favorite sayings is: "Hypocrisy is the acknowledgment that vice gives to virtue."--Oscar Wilde. Moscow has shame. Peking does not. And in case you've lost the point, I'll come back to it. In the historic SWP and WP it was possible to function in a Marxist fashion with normal cadres and leadership whatever the course of development.

Just two more points. Comrade Wolfgang asked how does one become a Cannonite anyhow. In the Education for Socialists bulletin of the SWP, there is a very good account by Joe Hansen. Like many youth of the time, he started out as an Abernite. Parenthetically, just in passing, this gives the total lie to the Healyites' claims of being an agent, this kind of history. I signed that statement that he's not an agent based on my personal observation and working relationships with him over the last twenty years. But this goes into the first twenty years. See, there was an unappetizing quality in the old SWP of an odd kind of division of psychological labor. Marty Abern had the quality to be a real and a good cliquist unlike most would-be cliquists. He was a really warm and likable man. Cannon was a pretty cold and aloof character. And they were very much at odds. But Cannon had the powerful answers. He recruited you, he grabbed you. The things that he said stayed in your mind and they shaped you. You are won--perhaps against your will, you are won. Wohlforth, exaggerating Shachtman, called Cannon a vulgar window smasher. I can show you the tactics that Cannon propounded that were extremely subtle, powerful, effective and as I like to put it, yes, Cannon had his limits, he was not a great international leader; he merely could have led a revolution in his country. Which, of course, for these theoreticians, is nothing.

Finally, I think it should be left at this. If I said that the American Trotskyist movement to the extent that it has virtue is a reflection of the Russian communist movement, we should think about those who are then left out. The fate of the senior cadre in Europe in the period 1937 to 1956. If the Americans have to make an exorbitant contribution to the reconstruction of the continuity of the international communist movement, it is because 150 European senior

cadre were killed in this period at the hands of the fascists and the Stalinists.

And as a last remark, I would observe that this cleared the road for Pablo who did not start out as an unconditionally bad man.

MOTION ON IRAN

[The following motion was adopted at the Fourth Organizational Plenum of the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands on 10 February 1979 that included substantial representation from the Ligue Trotskyste de France and the Spartacist League/Britain. This motion was subsequently endorsed by an IEC Group Meeting in Frankfurt on 11 February 1979 and then printed in Spartacist No. 26, Winter 1979 (English edition).]

The slogan "Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs" expresses the strategic Marxist perspective for the outcome of the Iranian revolution: a life without the shah and without the mullahs. In addition the slogan correctly counterposed us as the revolutionary Marxists to the theocratic reactionaries presently leading the mass movement. There is a weakness to the slogan in that it expresses a historical perspective but lacks a tactical element; also, at the time that the slogan was first promulgated the shah was still in power, and the slogan implied an equivalency between the shah and the mullahs. In the hands of revolutionary Marxists the slogan was used to express the correct program; in other hands it could be used to mask a sectarian program. As a general propaganda slogan from afar, it warned powerfully and angularly of the catastrophic consequences of tailing after Khomeini. That is why it earned the enmity not only of Muslim fundamentalists but also of the opportunist leftists, who almost without exception joined the mullah camp.

In the hands of revolutionary Marxists the slogan "Down with the shah, Break with the mullahs" could be used correctly, but in other hands the loopholes in the formulation would allow this slogan to be used to express an opportunist program, including seeking to work from the inside of the camp of the mullahs, seeking the non-existent "progressive" wing of the mullahs. In short, this slogan, in the hands of opportunists, is an expression of the stagist theory of the revolution.

The third slogan "Down with the shah, No support to the mullahs" avoids the pitfalls of both of the previous slogans, and although it expresses our program less angularly and forcefully than the first slogan, cuts through the possible misuse of either of the other slogans.

--Heinen
Jan Norden
J.M. Robertson

MOTIONS ON CHINA/VIETNAM

[These motions were passed at Interim Secretariat meeting (Series 3, No. 11), 26 February 1979.]

Motion: To endorse the motion on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam from the IEC group meeting in the Bay Area of 19 February 1979 (attached); to recommend the thrust of the press release for the SL/U.S. demonstration outside the Chinese Mission to the U.N., 20 February 1979 (see WV No. 226); to note the felt desire of the comrades to include at least two more slogans, one noting the link-up of China and Iran and the other condemning Carter's anti-Soviet human rights campaign; and to note that our chant at the demonstration "Soviet Union Honor Your Treaty--Defend Vietnam" capsized our tilt.

passed

Motion from the IEC Group Meeting in the Bay Area, 19 February 1979:

To recommend the content and thrust of these slogans to the international tendency on an urgent basis, particularly and most immediately in New York where the Chinese Mission to the United Nations is and which is the center of the media.

China Out of Vietnam Now!
 Only History Can Decide the Viet-Cambodian Question!
 Soviet Union: Honor Your Treaty With Vietnam!
 China: Do Not Be American Imperialism's Catpaw!
 For Political Revolution Throughout the Sino-Soviet Blocs
 Against the Nationalist Bureaucracies!

...and a general anti-capitalist slogan for socialist revolution.

passed unanimously

MOTION ON THE OTR

[The following motion was passed at Interim Secretariat meeting (Series 3, No. 7), 27 August 1978.]

Motion (OTR): The I.S. endorses the following motion of 18 June 1978 signed by the OTR, representatives of the LTF, and the I.S. European representative:

OTR Motion:

1. To recognize that the OTR is not now functioning as an organization as such;
2. That this is due not primarily to existing and unresolved political questions but to the objective difficulties of exile and lack of forces;
3. That we therefore suspend the organizational functioning (with the exception of finances) of the OTR for the time being;
4. And that individual comrades of the OTR continue to carry out political work and discussion under the direction of the I.S. and in collaboration with the LTF.

passed

[The following statement is a translation of an addendum by Nestor to the 18 June 1978 motion.]

I signed the motion since it shows the real situation in which the OTR finds itself, but I understand that the options are not clear, to be more specific, that an objective is lacking. In this sense I proposed the following amendments:

Point 2: The OTR has not been able to achieve the minimal tasks which it set out for itself at the meeting in the European summer camp of 1977. Due to the existence of political differences within the leadership, centering on the perspectives [of the OTR] and extending to questions such as the collective functioning of the leadership, education, the role of the organization of the international and external work; the objective pressures of exile and the lack of forces have also played a role as politically disorganizing factors.

Point 4: We thus propose to make possible an organizational framework for discussion and political work which would lay the necessary basis for a regroupment at a qualitatively higher level which is necessary for the OTR in order to assume its responsibilities of political leadership.

MOTION ON THE OTR

[The following motion, drafted by the I.S. on 3 January 1979, was adopted by the Ligue Trotskyste de France on 20 January 1979.]

1. Over the past period the conditions which made necessary the decision taken last June to suspend the organizational functioning of the OTR have persisted and intensified.
2. At present we cannot foresee the resumption of activities by the OTR without the addition of new cadres which would make it possible to qualitatively transcend the previous narrow framework. While we cannot now foresee what form a renewed organizational framework for the Latin work in Paris would take, we remain committed to advancing this work.
3. As a result of the suspension of activities, comrades of the OTR are now without an organizational framework for their activities and in which they can express their democratic rights as militants of the iSt. This situation is not acceptable for any but a brief period. We therefore recommend that as an interim measure, these comrades exercise their rights and obligations as members of the LTF. Latin work outside the immediate activities of the LTF will continue to be under the direction of the I.S.
4. This should be viewed as an exceptional measure in the face of an otherwise hopeless situation. Particularly in view of the disastrous OCI experience with dual membership (simultaneously in an exile group and the local national section), and recognizing the problems which inevitably arise given the current size and state of the iSt, we continue to view as the norm the establishment of a separate organization of exiled comrades whose work is fundamentally directed toward the exile milieu and the region of origin (as opposed to our policy of integrating immigrants into the local national section). Where such an organization coexists in the same country as a section of the international, the exile group should be involved to the extent possible in the activities and life of the national section. However, in the present circumstances of the OTR comrades, the primary task is to integrate them into an ongoing organizational framework in order to insure their survival, functioning and development as militants and cadres of the tendency.

STATEMENT BY ADRIAN, NORDEN, SHARPE AND SARA

Paris
14 February 1979

At the time of the fusion of the Chilean Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria with the international Spartacist tendency in August 1977 we noted that the tasks facing the OTR substantially exceeded the capacity of this handful of militants, creating possibly insurmountable contradictions even with maximum application of the limited resources of the iSt. It was these contradictions (absence of forces, limited literary capacity and the general pressures of exile) which led to the breakdown that made necessary the suspension of the organizational functioning of the OTR, as stated in the joint resolution by the OTR and LTF leaderships and the European representative of the interim secretariat of 18 June 1978. For the principal leader of the OTR, comrade Ivan, these contradictions, compounded by the enormous problems caused by his blindness, led to a demoralization over a period of months resulting in personally destructive behavior and now in the last month his reiterated verbal resignation from the iSt.

Even though facing a catastrophic personal situation and inability to function politically, comrade Ivan was not inevitably forced to decisively compromise his political integrity. Instead of admitting that he had come to a personal/political impasse, however, he launched a series of vicious accusations of bureaucratism directed against the iSt, reflecting his own bonapartist conceptions of leadership and federalist resistance to integration in the iSt which he was never able to overcome. In addition he instigated other comrades of the OTR to resign from the tendency and is now refusing to pay his substantial debts to the organization while implying non-payment to him of monies from the Partisan Defense Committee campaigns for his medical treatment and technical aids, although he is well aware that these sums have been paid in full. Given this outbreak of attacks against the iSt, we have no choice but to accept his resignation with aggravation, recognizing that this represents a setback, however predictable, for the regroupment perspectives of the iSt in Latin America and a personal tragedy for ex-comrade Ivan.

[translation]

STATEMENT BY NESTOR

Paris

21 February 1979

In view of the recent resignation from the iSt by comrade Ivan, I feel it is important to emphasize my agreement with the whereases of the declaration of the I.S. concerning the destructive intentions of comrade Ivan; his unfounded accusations of bureaucratism against the international, which have instigated other members of the OTR to resign; and his refusal to settle his debt with the iSt, including making slanders about misuse of PDC funds.

At the same time I believe we must accept the resignation of comrade Ivan; he has said that he will put down his positions in writing, and quite apart from the fact that I have great doubts about this [that he will actually write something], it is on this plane that any possible discussion should take place from now on. The departure of this comrade represents an enormous regression, both politically and personally, for him and for us a defeat and a very considerable weakening.

It is not enough to recognize the setback--we must draw the lessons of what has occurred. It is in this sense that I did not sign the declaration of the Interim Secretariat [14 February 1979], since it placed the causes of the breakdown fundamentally in the contradictions [facing the OTR]: lack of forces, limited writing ability, and the pressures of exile in general.

My position continues to be the same as that which guided my action in the leadership of the OTR. These contradictions have played an important role, quite a negative one for the construction of the OTR as a propaganda group, but the principal causes of this collapse lay in the existence of political differences, essentially methodological ones, within the leadership [of the OTR].

To face reality squarely means today being fully aware of the enormous difficulties confronting a handful (even more limited than that) of militants in exile in order to undertake propaganda work aimed at Latin American emigrants. Trotsky said, in a letter to Cannon, that ten internationalists could do good work while thousands of centrists could only aggravate the confusion. The above does not in any way lessen the need to undertake a balance sheet of the OTR, in particular concerning the relations with the iSt.

CC DOCUMENT FOR THE FOURTH ORGANIZATIONAL
PLENUM OF THE TLD

6 February 1979

I. The recent series of crises affecting the middle cadre of the TLD, including most of the alternate and candidate members of the CC, is the product of the confrontation of these comrades' attitudes--in particular an idealistic conception of what constitutes a political leader, and voluntarism as the answer to any problem--with the more general situation of our work.

It is both necessary and obvious to note that the TLD is not immune to the pressure of the depoliticization and rightward movement of the German left.

II. While the TLD has maintained the program of revolutionary Trotskyism in its public work, the pressure of the rightward drift in West German society has shown itself in a number of ways. Although the fact that we receive the political line of our tendency biweekly in Workers Vanguard contributed to nipping political deviations in the bud, there have been a number of proto-deviations in the recent period.

Softness toward the CISNU and the mullahs, a tendency to dissolve communist propaganda work on the campuses in defense campaigns, the impulse to precipitously support Pol Pot as presumed leader of a Cambodian struggle for national independence against Vietnam, as well as a more general tendency to capitulate to the populist/reformist framework which has recently dominated the new left scene.

There is, of course, ample historical precedent for the fact that our student members have demonstrated particular instability. They are most regularly and massively exposed to the fads of left petty-bourgeois "public opinion."

III. The two major areas of expansion which the TLD set as priorities in summer, 1978--a monthly press and implantation of cadres in a major industrial plant--remain valid. However, we must differentiate as to our present capacities:

1. It has become clear that we do not have the resources to put out a monthly press without strengthening the editorial staff through regroupment or recruitment. The attempt to do so would lead to senseless destruction of cadre who are not replaceable under present circumstances.

2. The TLD possesses the minimal personnel requirements for a limited implantation in a major industrial plant. This step involves many dangers, and our resources are probably only just adequate. Industrial implantation will expose us to the pressure of the trade-union bureaucracy as well as of a layer of old "new leftists" who have gone into the factories to commune with the workers.

IV. Berlin: The indications of qualitatively collapsing morale in the Berlin executive combined with incipient bureaucratic paranoia are the product of both objective and subjective factors:

1. A weakly-led, small local branch began to exhibit symptoms of demoralization under the pressure of the large but rightward-moving milieu.
2. After the move of the center out of Berlin, a process that was tough and painful for the remaining Berlin OC, it attempted to maintain a level of political activity in the old manner.
3. A capable but politically inexperienced female organizer was caught between two male executive members who in their struggle over the question of who would become "political leader" in Berlin neglected their real task of keeping Fort Apache in Trotskyist hands.

V. There is no "patent solution," magical transformation or even an immutable five-year-plan which will solve our problems or determine the development of the TLD. Although personnel transfers are indicated in an attempt to retain the affected cadre, it must be recognized that the transfers will also create new, parallel problems.

We must combat both of the equally false conceptions which have found expression in the TLD, on the one hand that objective conditions are to blame, that individual will consequently plays no role in human history, as well as the self-destructive internalization on the other hand, "It's all my fault."

In a slow, difficult, but not particularly dangerous political period, we must combine revolutionary will and a sense of reality in order to swim against the stream as conscious, active revolutionary communists.

To the layer of secondary leadership and middle-level cadre who have gone through more or less severe crises in the recent past, we can only repeat that the path of political development can only proceed via crises which can be resolved negatively as well as positively.

GREETINGS FROM THE I.S. TO THE COMRADES OF THE TLD
AT THEIR FOURTH ORGANIZATIONAL PLENUM

9 February 1979

There is a certain political dynamic which occasionally manifests itself in the 1st which one can call the Harry Turner Syndrome. In 1967 there was a lot going on in the U.S.--the black civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, SDS. And in the face of this social volatility, the SL/U.S. was organizationally stagnant--frozen out of the black movement by nationalism, unable to find a path into the trade unions or a way to effectively seize the opportunities opening up in the student movement **and** lacking even a bi-monthly press. Harry Turner and Jim Robertson, both PB members, were walking down the street one day near the office in New York and Turner said, "Well, comrade Robertson, we seem to have no viable perspectives and our membership is shrinking. What do we do now?" And Jim said, "Gee, Harry, I don't know." And Turner, astonished and distressed that "The Leader" didn't have an answer, went into opposition. The moral of this story should be clear. Omniscience and oracularity are characteristics of religious/cult dictators and not of communist leaderships. And sometimes there is no solution, even to problems which are clearly delineated. Sometimes everything that must be done cannot be done.

And, comrades, willpower and hard work are necessary but not sufficient responses by revolutionaries to such frustrations. Furthermore, revolutionary will is not sapped only by great historical defeats or repression. Consider the case of Gerhard K., the late chairman of the TLD. Constantly driving himself to live up to his own, self-inflicted and impossibly voluntarist image of a national chairman, one day he just decided that it was no longer possible or necessary to build a vanguard party. For weaklings, historical pessimism, going off to "cultivate their garden," is the eventual outcome of not being able to sustain the contradiction that sometimes what must be done cannot be done.

So, you need a monthly press, but your most senior political leader is immersed in a bizarre defense of reactionary religious obscurantism in Iran, a position, which if maintained, places him outside the bounds of Marxist program; and the potential of your projected editor has been stagnant while he wallows in chronic passivity. You do not have a national chairman. You need to crack the Maoists and have managed an important but painfully slow, steady accumulation of cadres from the Spartacusbund and now the GIM. Your crucial second local in Berlin is a morass of petty squabbling, bruised egos and insecurities. You need trade-union fractions in the Ruhr; and every year that you do not have a local in Hamburg means valuable cadres lost to Trotskyism. So, big deal, you have real problems. Are you comrades aware that in 1968 our members from coast to coast in the U.S. were still selling the Spartacist headlined "Facing 1967"? And that instead of increasing the frequency of the press we had a year long faction fight; that in the five year period of the height of the New Left, 1967-1971, there were exactly 10 issues of Spartacist? One does not make a virtue out of limitations and missed opportunities, but neither does one abandon oneself to self-indulgent despair and recriminations.

The members of the TLD have shown repeatedly that they can and will summon the tenacity, discipline and will for an assault on a clearly defined target, whether it be Frankfurt, the Spartacusbund or the GIM, or Ernest Mandel. But a different kind of fortitude is required for a perspective of repetitive and agonizing frustrations, when the intelligence is sufficient to clearly pose the right goal but the solutions are simply not available. Such a situation requires the kind of consciousness and determination to frankly face contradictions and painful choices rather than to hide from them by alternating between ersatz voluntarist solutions and guilt, between perfectionism and despair.

Among some comrades in the TLD there is a tendency to substitute hero-worship toward individuals for the difficulties of building a stable collective in the TLD; when hard times come, the concomitant is to again avoid responsibility by foisting all blame on the leadership of which these comrades have failed to become an integral part.

You want to know what real hard times are? You may be having some kind of crisis of expectations, but the TLD will continue to recruit from the GIM, for example. Cannon describes a much more difficult period than that which the TLD is now facing, the "dog days" of the American Trotskyists after their expulsion from the CP:

"In those days we were continually pestered by impatient people in our ranks. The difficulties of the time pressed heavily upon us. Week after week and month after month we appeared to be gaining hardly an inch. Discouragement set in, and with it the demand for some scheme to grow faster, some magic formula. We fought it down, talked it down, and held our group on the right line, kept its face turned to the one possible source of healthy growth: the ranks of the Communist workers who still remained under the influence of the Communist Party.

"Those were the real dog days of the Left Opposition. We had gone through the first six months with rather steady progress and formed our national organization at the conference with high hopes. Then recruitment from the party membership suddenly stopped. After the expulsion of the Lovestoneites, a wave of illusion swept through the Communist Party. Reconciliation with Stalinism became the order of the day.... At a time when tens and hundreds of thousands of new elements were beginning to look toward the Soviet Union, going forward with the Five Year Plan, while capitalism appeared to be going up the spout; here were these Trotskyists, with their documents under their arms, demanding that you read books, study, discuss, and so on. Nobody wanted to listen to us....

"That was the hardest time. And then, naturally, the movement slid into its inevitable period of internal difficulties, frictions and conflicts. We had fierce quarrels and squabbles, very often over little things. There were reasons for it. No small isolated movement has ever been able to escape it. A small isolated group thrown in upon itself, with the weight of the whole world pressing down upon it, having no contact with the workers mass movement and getting no sobering corrective from it, is bound in the best case to have a hard time....

And under those harsh conditions, which persisted for years, everything weak in any individual was squeezed to the surface; everything petty, selfish and disloyal."

--History of American Trotskyism

Since the departure of Gerhard, the whole IEC has in effect served as the chairman of the TLD, and you have carried out tasks which in the fall of 1976 one would have been willing to bet would be impossible: moved to Frankfurt, thus establishing a genuine national organization; maintained a second local, soundly trounced the Spartacusbund; begun to nibble away at the GIM; established a sound financial footing and begun to financially contribute to the I.S.; and integrated several comrades into leading positions in the organization. Faced with these slow but stable successes, some failures and large impossibilities, a wave of what would seem to be a volatile morbidity is sweeping through the layer of second-level cadres and creating a general malaise in the TLD which is presently without evident political expression or reflection. Well, malaise was fashionable for a period among the French Sartrian intelligentsia, and perhaps the almost entirely petty-bourgeois social composition of the TLD membership accounts for so many comrades seemingly willing to flirt with a posture so suffused with glorified self-pity and impotent rage.

But, comrades, you are German communists. If malaise and panic eat at the cadres of the TLD when at least the problems, choices and impossibilities are posed straightforwardly, how much worse will be the confusion and loss of will at the face of decisive political fights which are not so clearly sketched out, or whose implications are not immediately predictable: like Trotsky in the Bolshevik Party immediately after 1923, when the indicated political struggles were without precedent or available analysis; or the Cannon-Shachtman fight in the early 1930's, in which Trotsky urged forbearance because the disputed issues--press frequency vs. trade-union work--did not seem to warrant the intense personal animosity and factional moves and it took eight more years for the factional alignments then delineated to find decisive programmatic expression in the 1940 split; or the Revolutionary Tendency and its relation to the International Committee after 1962 when the programmatic concomitant of Healy's bad organizational practices had not yet found expression and his maneuvers, the geographical distance and unfamiliarity precluded the possibility of an early test of the RT's suspicions.

Against Ersatz Solutions

Do not lose sight of your present strategic political goal in a discussion of organizational nuts and bolts. That goal is: general recognition as the Trotskyists by Maoists and the most politically conscious fraction of trade-union militants. To secure such a recognition on the German left, you need certain organizational underpinnings: 1) a stable monthly KK with adequate editorial and production forces; 2) a Berlin local with sufficient forces to be stable, that is, an estimated equivalent of 12 comrades; 3) a comparable third local, for example, in Hamburg or the Ruhr. This

menu or something comparable is what will generate the necessary strategic political impact, but at least in our limited view from New York, to outline this menu is to rub your noses in the impossible, since these necessary organizational underpinnings cannot presently be constructed.

If the TLD does not soon have a monthly press, it will miss opportunities, and the momentum of regroupment work toward the GIM will be interrupted and damaged. You need a monthly, but there is no perspective in the immediate future for anything except an unstable bi-monthly. Of course, we could force a monthly, but to do so too early would be inevitably destructive of the comrades whose talents will eventually be the basis for an adequate editorial and production staff. However, German Spartacist must have a modest but real existence, and it must be sold. Now it barely exists at all. Especially with the TLD locked in combat with the GIM, German Spartacist is a concrete prefigurement of the TLD's goal of wresting the mantle of Trotskyism from the USec and reforging the Fourth International.

Although certain personnel switches might be unavoidable, a flurry of transfers will bring inevitable frictional losses or worse as comrades exhaust themselves with another move and adjustment period; furthermore, at this time there is no new personnel configuration which solves both the problems of maintaining a second local and maintaining the center. The same or very similar problems will surface no matter whose are the voices on the Berlin end of the telephone wire.

Comrades, you must outline your immediate tasks in the hard, cold light of a recognition of the limitation of yours and the international's forces. And then just do your work, taking your pleasures in between times when you can. The TLD is now an unstable, sub-propaganda group and that is not a viable position--you will either go forward or backward. But, you are German communists, not vapid New Lefters who give "the three best years of your lives" to the revolution but then give up when the marching music and the chanting recede into the background for a period. It is necessary to persist in a steadfast fashion toward the goal of building the German communist vanguard.

LTF GREETINGS TO THE FOURTH ORGANIZATIONAL PLENUM OF THE TLD
 [translation of verbal presentation]

by Lesueur

Comrades know that the past year was the year of the popular front. Consequently, over a period of two months we made it to between three and four forums a week essentially to say to people: "Please, don't vote for the popular front." Obviously, we knew well that this was a bit like crying in the wilderness. Nevertheless we did have some success: we recruited someone who could have become a cadre, and also his companion. Cranac'h was recruited in January or February last year. We weren't expecting success during the popular-front period; but we said to ourselves, anyhow, after the popular-front period there would be fallout that would work in our favor. We were the best; we were the only ones that had the correct position. Then we didn't after all get anything else, and in addition we had the Cranac'h resignation in October and that of H. a month ago. Nevertheless, it was necessary to do it.

At the same time comrades know that we have five comrades in the [public employees service]. It is perhaps an error to have concentrated so many comrades without any possibility of starting trade-union work for a fairly long time, because this leads to deformations in the following way: approximately at least once a week an LTF comrade is confronted by a question of a picket line. And everyone knows that in France there are never or very, very rarely physical picket lines. So when there is a call for a phony strike, we have to decide whether or not there is a picket line. And the problem that arises is that now comrades are starting to think--and not only in that work location, by the way, but above all there--that to be sick is the best way to avoid crossing picket lines. This is a deformation that comes from isolation and the fact that the organization is not able to respond.

I forgot one success from the last year. We recruited the "Morton" [man who knows everyone] of Villetaneuse, which is the university where we have been intervening for three years, and thus have the possibility of setting up the beginnings of a real university fraction. I think he came into the organization at the end of October or the beginning of November. He handed in his resignation last week. He had good excuses, two good ones: one is fear of the third world war; and the other, fear of his wife. We don't know which fear was more important to him.

Just to give a better idea of the organization's problems now: Last week the LTF for the first time in its existence set up its first picket line at the university. It was a very, very good thing. There were just a few problems. There are comrades in the LTF who feel the isolation so strongly that they thought that if we set up a picket, it can't be a real picket. You know, formally the LTF was founded in June 1975 and since then we have recruited some people; but we are so far outside of reality. And all of a sudden we set up a picket: it can't be a real picket line. And so there were some wobbles and, among other things, this was translated into the fact

that a part of our picket line crossed the picket line to go "get information inside the campus" on the employees' strike. Since then we've had several good discussions on the question.

I would like to add some remarks on our political adversaries. On the Pabloists it's fairly easy: they are simply totally demoralized. There is nothing left, at least for the moment, no further leftward movement. At the congress which they held a few weeks ago, they were unable to achieve a majority vote on a single resolution. The Central Committee is constituted on a proportional basis with no majority for any tendency. The tendency following Mandel on the question of the USec/OCRFI rapprochement has obtained 20 seats (that's Krivine); the tendency following Mandel except on the point of the USec/OCRFI rapprochement also has 20 seats; and the Lambertiste tendency inside the LCR, representing 20 percent of the LCR, has ten seats. The Moreno group has one seat. The point is that they are going to have to hold another congress in two or three months. And also, happily, they decided to end their [daily] paper. Too bad we had nothing to do with it.

The most important question is that of the OCI. The OCI is the only organization in France that has undergone continual and enormous expansion over the last year. It probably now has 5,000 members or more. It's probably preparing to publish a daily newspaper. It's holding a congress this weekend, and the slogan for the congress is "For a mass OCI with 10,000 members." It's quite possible they will make it. The problem is that these are "Lenin Levies" upon "Lenin Levies" which pose ever more sharply the question of the nature of the OCI--centrist or reformist. And this poses a problem for us also in that when we run across an OCI militant today, he's more open than those of the old OCI; in other words, he certainly agrees to discuss except his political level is not much higher than the average member of the French Communist Party. And this poses another problem for the organization, namely to maintain a perspective of regroupment and not recruitment in an isolated situation. At the same time you have a political crisis inside the OCI from which they continue to suffer. One of the recent supplements to Informations Ouvrières ran a balance sheet of the OCI Political Bureau meeting in which one speaker explained, "Two thirds of the members of the Central Committee don't know how to defend the policy of the united front." And you know what the united front means for the Lambertistes! This very likely means that Lambert & Co. are getting ready for a thoroughgoing change in the OCI leadership; i.e., to have a leadership which corresponds to the OCI as it is today. What are the old cadres going to do? They can do a lot of things. The problem is that we are probably not going to gain from it because we don't have the weight to attract those people. It's a possibility, it's not guaranteed; so we are going to struggle to try to recruit them. Now, when you look at our weight and the fact that the cadres who are going to be or have already been eliminated have already swallowed a number of things for nearly ten years now or almost ten years--just to make realistic predictions--we have little chance of intersecting anything, even out of this crisis.

We have in the LTF, essentially, some comrades who have been in for five years and others for three years, and they haven't seen very much happen--no marvelous recruitment, no regroupments, not one. This is why we are beginning to have the seeds of a crisis among comrades who are asking themselves, at bottom, does the organization exist or not? Is it a real organization or not? Which is to say that on a certain level we have things which are reminiscent of your problems [in the TLD] although they do not take the same form, as I understand it.

I forgot one other thing: there is a circular by the Political Bureau of the OCI prohibiting all militants from discussing with "Sparts" because they are enemies; we're obviously trying to get hold of this circular.

Just to close, there's one other subject: it seems that there are the beginnings of a resurgence of the class struggle in France. Last week in Nantes-Saint Nazaire there was a demonstration of 15,000 workers against unemployment; and three times, despite the cops and the CRS [national police] the workers tried to storm the police station.

--Lesueur
10 February 1979

REMARKS TO THE FOURTH ORGANIZATIONAL PLENUM OF THE TLD
[unedited transcript]

by Robertson

At the time of the founding of the Spartacist League of Britain I gave some greetings, and I noted at that time that there was a certain bittersweet quality about those greetings. Because it was clear that the British section was already significant and was going to grow, and I thought back to the period when what passed for the international Trotskyist movement was split between the International Committee and the International Secretariat, which is to say the English speakers and everybody else, and the inevitable deformations that are pregnant there for revisionism and ultimately opportunism. And it seemed clear that the specific gravity of the English-speaking component of our organization was going to grow, not lessen, with growth. The French section is locked into a historic impasse about which I want to speak a little later, and there are in fact rich possibilities in Germany for which our forces are qualitatively insufficient to exploit.

With this background it was natural, therefore, that when there appeared to be a crisis in morale in the German section that the international leadership wanted to react strongly. You comrades must not and will not leave us alone on this planet trapped into the English-speaking sections, because if you do, the contribution of our Trotskyist insights will largely be without effect or impact. We are grossly deficient, as it is, in too many parts of the world, and if we are locked out of Europe we become a joke, or--in order to torture the translator [into German], I had a word--we become a dead duck.

But what to do? What are we to do, faced with this malaise? I'm afraid that all that we can do is try to present [gap - end of tape]. And that is what the written greetings of the International Secretariat seek to do. In a rough way it seems to us that the perspectives that the German section ought to pursue are clear: you must become known to the German left and advanced sections of the proletariat as the revolutionary pole, however small. This requires certain conditions at a minimum.

It is an arithmetical commonplace that two branches represent not only isolation but also a condition of perpetual organizational instability. You must have a qualitatively stronger Berlin branch, you must have a presence in the Ruhr and/or in Hamburg, naturally a weekly newspaper and some significant exemplary trade-union work based on effective communist cadres. This, then, permits the possibility of some effective regroupment in this Maoist current which is unique in Germany, because only really in Germany are the Maoists militant and the "Trotskyists" cowards. That's what the GIM has done for you. And anything less than this sort of a menu is insufficient. And there are, given something on this order of the character of the organization and its extension, rich possibilities then for a Marxist group in Germany to grow. But of course your situation is vastly worse than that. So is it any wonder with rich possibilities and an incapacity to meet them there should be discontent, especially as the months turn into years?

So how do you go forward? I don't know. But I know this: that it is necessary to have the determination, because the possibilities are there, and it is necessary to look for those episodic [events]--as in the breaking of an ice floe when there's a little opening, and then shoot through. Not, almost surely, on the trade-union side, but rather on the side of political regroupment, which always represent themselves as targets of opportunity. With the Maoists it is much harder, because there is not even the semblance of a common language and history [between us and them]. But in this country they represent the big challenge. And given the course that the Chinese state has been pursuing, there have to be opportunities from point to point. The German bourgeoisie is in an alliance with the American bourgeoisie. The Chinese deformed workers state ardently seeks an alliance with the Americans. You ought to be able to crucify the German Maoists on that. The particulars are, of course, to be worked out.

And so, what can we do for you from the international? Well, we made a suggestion for not just a series of personnel transfers, which was what was in the wind a few weeks ago. Surely in Berlin the local leadership has not done well, and it's been full of friction. But there are very few comrades, and even fewer with not many years of experience, who could function well under the particular pressures of weakness there. So it's not really a solution to pull out or watch the disintegration of those who are in Berlin and rotate in some new people. And the new people, then, reasonably, in six months will be at each other's throats, too. There are certain lessons regarding Berlin, that is, to really feel, right down to your toenails, that it is in fact not the center of our tendency that it was before and adjust accordingly. So we thought perhaps to suggest the confrontation that we have here today, that is to say an emergency national conference, and to bring as concentrated an international delegation as we could to discuss with you. But there will be no rabbits pulled out of hats today, simply an attempt to present a balance sheet of our real situation, the real capacities and weaknesses of our leadership in Germany and what the opportunities are.

When I was trying to think through before coming here how to make some more concrete observations about the German situation, I found that not possible, and instead I have something to say to the French comrades. I previously mentioned that it appears that the LTF is in a historic impasse and raised the question of how to get out of it. In a sense the French comrades have it easier. Because there is practically no present component of the subjective factor, the active will. Their situation is hopeless, independent of their will. Whereas the German situation half turns on the will of the German comrades.

But here is what is likely objectively to happen in France. In the recent history--which seems to go back about 200 years--in France about every ten years there's some kind of explosion. And this places our French comrades under a very, very heavy and difficult kind of responsibility. Because the next time around they are going to be taken by surprise, probably with the phone lines out, and we will have to act with great vigor and correctness. (And parenthetically we'd better be happy we're not Healyites, because they can't function

except as disciplined, robot-like extensions of the Healyite center.) Then, comrades, if our French section does creditably in a known way, we will be able to play a role in what is inevitably the ensuing regroupment from among these centrist and left-reformist forces, with the possibility of perhaps picking up a few hundred members and then becoming a factor in French left political life. But in the meantime we must most likely remain sealed off by these very large centrist and left-reformist forces from the great bulk of the French working class. That's not an enviable perspective for the French section in the short run. We will see how well the French section bears up.

There is a sociological difference, I gather, broadly between the French and German sections in its membership composition. Our German human material, I believe in the main, or have been led to believe in the main, come from middle-class, not leftist, family backgrounds and are therefore--they are themselves--in the first generation acting as Marxists, whereas for our French comrades most of them manage to have at least one great-grandparent who was shot as a Communist, and their grandmothers are communists. So therefore the French comrades exist in less tension between their professed beliefs and their activities and their family backgrounds. Whereas the demands on the nervous systems of the German comrades are much heavier. And all I can do besides this is to recommend that the comrades do pay attention to the written greetings from the International Secretariat.

And finally I have a suggestion for the sections of the international to consider, based on the observation that the international summer camp begins to shape up ever more as quite a large and representative gathering of our international tendency. And that is in the form of a question: why not elect an International Executive Committee this summer on an internationally centralized basis instead of this semi-federated one that we have now? Such an election would be far from perfect, because I think that we would be defective in the documentation and discussion, but it would overcome the semi-federated quality of the present IEC, which among other things implicitly excludes from consideration qualified comrades from sympathizing sections. I said "which implicitly"... well actually explicitly, excludes from consideration qualified comrades from sympathizing sections, and I particularly noticed that there were abuses in this connection in the earlier leadership meetings of the Spartacist League of Britain of comrades of leading international caliber who did not have the formal requirements. And furthermore it would give us the chance to reduce the specific gravity of the Spartacist League of the U.S. on the IEC. So that's just a consideration that we might begin to bat around the organization now.

I wish I could end on some high and exhilarating note for the German section, but I don't know one. You guys just better do it.

-- Robertson
10 February 1979

LETTER TO WORKERS VANGUARD

by Lesueur

Paris
8 April 1979WV Editorial Board

Dear Comrades,

I am writing this letter, after discussion with the comrades on the exec and some others, on the two articles on France in the last WV [No. 228].

This letter is painful to write because it is difficult for us to understand what happened in New York: why these two articles with a political line which is not that of the written report and the phone report of Saturday, March 24 on the so-called march on Paris-- a political line which is contradicted [by those reports]? The corollary of this is: why weren't we consulted? Is it pleasant to find out from reading WV that your Ed Board doesn't have the same opinion as we do, but that it didn't see fit to let us know?

We have read and reread thoroughly the reports which we sent/ phoned; we cannot find a single fundamental ambiguity on the major points: we have never called for a general strike; we wrote thus on the march on Paris: "[it] has only one goal: to deflect the desire of the steel workers for a common response in the direction of a limited and totally controlled demonstration" [written report]. The telephone report left no ambiguity whatsoever: no, it was not a question of a new "13 May 1968." We never said that the French revolution had begun, but that there had been a possibility at the time of the confrontations in Lorraine and Denain. We also never said or wrote that: "the working class replied with a wave of strikes and other actions: rotating strikes, episodic closing of the railroads, television 'blackout', etc." (We vote against rotating strikes in general assemblies; we devoted a paragraph of our report to the question of the...absence of the television "blackout," etc.) We would not have given instructions to the comrades in the factories of Denain or Longwy to vote for the march on Paris, nor to present a resolution for "a genuine march on Paris [to] be built to muster forces for an unlimited general strike."

It is difficult to enumerate all the points of precise disagreement with the articles because we are proceeding from a totally different analysis of the situation--without even mentioning the form of the march article: "as if you were there." Why such a style in a paper which comes out biweekly, when moreover the article says it is necessary to wait for the hours that follow in order to know if the revolution has begun, and which in addition is obliged to take into account the opinion of the Stalinists...from the day after the article was written. You would have been able to phone us "[in the] next few hours": we believe that we would have been able to "tell you." Why in these two articles magnify all the spectacular diversionary actions of the Stalinists and Social Democrats and present them as the will of the workers? (It is this which ends up producing falsifications about the TV "blackout" and the uncritical support for rotating strikes.)

With this logic it is thus normal that you would minimize the chauvinist side of the demonstration [and] push the fact that the workers sang the "Internationale" (although they do that in every demonstration); it is therefore also normal that you let go by in silence the fact that the cops dispersed half the demonstration and that you place on the same level of importance the number of wounded cops and the systematic window-breaking, by manipulated and provocateur autonomes, under the indulgent eye of the cops.

It is not true that the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie have the same opinion about the wreckers--in particular at Longwy the Stalinists themselves were consciously "outsiders." We further do not understand the following sentence directly lifted from the arsenal of Edmond Maire: "Currently there is no doubt that the march on Paris was in part an electoral maneuver." It is certainly a maneuver which has caused the reformists to lose votes!

There are plenty more points to raise, but particularly we must raise the sentence on the entry of Spain into the Common Market which is highly ambiguous and should be the object of a "correction."

It is difficult for us to understand that you did not see the contradiction between the articles and our reports. Does the desire to see an insurrectionary situation at any cost make one blind? Usually, with this kind of article, WV has correctly habituated us more to prudence and reticence. We had never suspected before reading the articles that there were such different understandings of the situation, and we couldn't have done it or known it.

If we didn't mention a call for a general strike in our reports, do you believe that it was because we'd "forgotten"?

We do not understand. The notes which I have on the report which I telephoned (and which unfortunately I did not tape) say: "The aim of this demonstration to which the centrists have rallied was to serve as an escape valve for the tensions in the steel industry."

Do you believe that we would be unable to recognize an insurrectionary situation and inform you of it?

Bitter greetings,

JL

I.S. MOTIONS

[The following motions were passed at Interim Secretariat meeting (Series 3, No. 12), 18 April 1979.]

Motion: The I.S. deploras the gross negligence which permitted the article on France to be printed in Workers Vanguard in flagrant disregard for the need for consultation with the I.S. Secretary in Paris and the leadership of the LTF, resulting in simply bypassing correct procedure when it should have been apparent that a line difference was involved. In the case of substantive political dispute between WV and the French section, the responsible procedure would have been to publish nothing while pursuing a discussion between the I.S. and the LTF. The I.S. looks forward to further exchanges on the substantive political issues raised by the discussion.

Motion: To expedite a trip to France by comrade Gordon to discuss this issue in person with the LTF in addition to sending a letter to be written by Norden.

passed unanimously
(voted en bloc)

by Norden

New York
1 May 1979

Dear Jean,

I am responding to your letter of 8 April sharply criticizing the two articles in WV No. 228 on the French steel workers' struggle, both in order to respond to various points which you raise and to open up a discussion that promises to be extremely important for all the European sections of the ISt. The underlying issue, I believe, is whether we let our isolation deform our political outlook, placing us in the position of outside observers, simple critical commentators, rather than seeking to point the way forward for the actual development of the class struggle. The answer to this question will determine our capacity to effectively intervene in the periodic crises which have molded French politics, and thereby to break the hammerlock of the several sizable pseudo-Trotskyist groups.

On the question of consultation you are 100 percent correct in your complaint. There was a discernible political difference between the reports you sent in and the articles as published. I had noticed in the written report by Dampièrre a characterization (which seemed to me one-sided) of the "diversionary march on Paris," and her remark (which I thought too categorical) in the cover letter that a general strike "is not posed at the present time," although it could be later. In discussing the article with Susan and William, we were not sure that there was a substantive line difference in evaluating the situation and the tasks posed, but there was something there that should have been checked out. Thus when there was reluctance among the SL/B leadership to call for a general strike during the round of public workers strikes this January-February it led to a flurry of NY-London phone consultations. But in this case I was concentrating on getting the necessary materials together and how to formulate various questions, and in the rush of production we forgot to call Paris to check out possible differences. I certainly agree that it is unpleasant in the extreme to find out that WV has a difference with the LTF which it didn't even bother to ask you about before going into print. If we had done as we should and verified that a line difference did indeed exist, the correct procedure would have been to pull the article and discuss first. This flagrant disregard of the need for consultation is all the more aggravating as such coordination is the key concern with international articles in WV. Consequently we passed a motion at the 18 April I.S. meeting deploring the gross negligence which led to this procedural atrocity (motion appended).

Turning to the substantive political issues involved, before going into particulars we should sort out what is really at issue. Your letter is very angry--you send "bitter greetings"--and you have a long list of points of disagreement of various degrees of centrality. Why such a strong reaction and such a scatter-gun approach? I think you point toward the reason when you write that "we proceed from a totally different analysis of the situation." Or, more

precisely, we are looking at the events from a different vantage point. What I will try to do below is to order the differences, focusing on the line disputes which are key and which, I think, will greatly clarify the question of "tone." But then we have to ask what these positions add up to, for it is the underlying political posture which is at the heart of this dispute. To put it in a nutshell, when you put together all of your very strong objections, they shade dangerously toward a sectarian abstentionist policy.

There are, to begin with, several questions which appear to be mainly factual or based on faulty logical inferences. On minimizing the chauvinist side of the March 23 demonstration, we followed the telephone report (which was virtually our only source of information at that point) and were in no way less severe on the Stalinists' attempts to whip up anti-German nationalist sentiment. Taken together with the mentions of PCF chauvinism in the main article and the attack on it in the concluding programmatic section (anti-"bocheism" is the socialism of fools), I would say that if anything the two articles were even harder on this question than the reports. On whether it was a PCF electoral maneuver, what cost the Stalinists in the elections was not the demonstration but the violence, over which they were livid. The reference to a television blackout was a mistake; I was mixing up the seizures of local transmitters and the national PCF strike. We did, however, mention that the cops dissolved half the demonstration.

As to the question of provocation this seems to be considerably more complicated. Judging from the complaints by the police "unions," the accounts in L'Humanité and Le Monde, and your report there was certainly something highly suspicious about the government's orders not to stop the window-smashing; likewise there is plenty of evidence of plainclothes cops roaming around, including in the crowds of autonomes. Given the apparently startling increase in police provocation, I would like to discuss this further as we get a better picture. However, on the basis of what I have seen about the March 23 demonstration, I think I would have a different emphasis than you--not dismissing the "autonomes" as simply "provocateurs et manipulés," but rather as serving the government's [interests] and facilitating cop disruption with their provocative actions.

This brings me to the question of Spanish entry into the Common Market, which you view quite seriously (suggesting a correction in WV) and which comrade Sharpe has also raised again concerning the EEC "elections" leaflet. Sharpe complained over the phone that we had in effect come out for Spanish entry. This is simply wrong. We merely criticized the PCF for its chauvinist campaign against Spanish entry. We can condemn that unequivocally without in any way implying that Trotskyists in Spain would be for entry. It seems at first glance to be a case of a common logical non sequitur: for example, one can condemn the police for not protecting leftist offices against fascist attack without implying that we call on the cops to protect the workers movement. But subsequent exchanges suggest that there may indeed be a misunderstanding on this question. It should be clear that no matter what the arguments, even if the words steel and

win are never mentioned, any campaign in France against Spanish entry is necessarily chauvinist. The phrase inserted in the EEC elections leaflet saying we are against "extension" of the Common Market was a bad compromise, for extension comes down to meaning Spanish/Greek entry, which is a different question depending on the country you are in: in Spain it is a question of entering an imperialist alliance, and Spanish revolutionaries would be against entry; in France it is national chauvinism keeping out potential competitors. In Britain in 1973 we opposed British entry while criticizing the "little England" chauvinism of the left Labourites' campaign against the EEC; perhaps you are thinking of this as a parallel situation. It is, in Spain or Greece. But in France we are neither for nor against per se, and a revolutionary deputy would abstain on the question if it came up in parliament. Moreover, we are actively opposed to calling on the French bourgeois state to keep Spain out, and doubly so against mobilizing the French workers against Spanish entry.

So much for the secondary questions. The most vehement initial reaction to the WV articles came over the issue of tone: Sharpe reported by phone that the Paris comrades were "up in arms" over the "triumphalism" of our account. I agree that there is a tone problem, though not what you are pointing to: it is journalistic rather than political in nature. We were worried at the time of writing that the "you are there" style of the march on Paris article was contradictory: on the one hand it says with a great sense of anticipation, the next few hours will tell; and then at the end it concludes, oh well, the bureaucrats managed to head things off again. The style was chosen in order to use some of the quite good material in the March 24 report, with which we were very pleased, because it seemed that the French comrades had made a real effort to capture and convey the flavor of that demonstration. Perhaps in retrospect the journalistic device didn't work, but it would have been politically wrong only if such a march could not have ended any other way than it did. And I think that is what you want to say by referring to it as the "diversionary march on Paris" and "so-called demonstration." Similarly concerning the working-class militancy in the steel workers struggles. You ask: "Why do you magnify in the two articles all the spectacular diversionary actions of the Stalinists and social democrats and present them as the will of the workers?" We certainly did report these actions positively, though hardly in a "triumphalist" fashion. We repeatedly said that the bureaucrats were trying to avoid an explosion by keeping the workers divided, using guerrilla (coup de poing) actions, appealing to chauvinism, etc., and saying that such actions were no substitute for national strike action. E.g.:

"Trying to stay on top of things, the local unions call a demonstration...."

"Using their traditional tactics of 'capturing' the leadership of a movement...."

"Once again they try to bring things back under control by calling a one- and two-hour work stoppage...."

"These are spectacular actions, to be sure, but essentially guerrilla...tactics. While an impressive sign of the workers' militancy, they cannot substitute for mass mobilization and strike action throughout the industry."

The point is made several more times as well about the march on Paris. What you object to is not that we didn't say what the reformists were trying to do to mislead the movement, but that we see the mass participation and militancy as evidence of the workers' will to fight. They are, emphatically so.

It is quite askew to dismiss these as simply "spectacular diversionary actions by the Stalinists and social democrats" (your emphasis). The Stalinists certainly sought to divert the struggle, as we said, but the repeated instances of militant action, and the strong participation by large numbers of workers in some of the key confrontations in Denain and Longwy, and the repeated efforts by the bureaucrats to divert these actions (e.g., attacks on police stations), make it crystal clear that the union tops were under tremendous pressure from the ranks. You see only the intentions of the labor fakers, and miss the mood of the masses. Even the fact that the one-day steel strike was 90 percent effective is an indication of militancy and solidarity. We all know well that in France, Italy or Spain it frequently happens that the bureaucrats call a strike or a march and no one shows up. Obviously the workers who participated in the numerous actions did see them as striking against the steel bosses, and there was a real danger of them getting out of hand. Comrade Sharpe suggested we look at the article in WV No. 35 on "French Stalinists Call Token General Strike" to see what we said there, namely that the "general strike" was an attempt to divert mass discontent into a safe, ineffective day of "action." But although there had been a fair number of strikes in preceding months, the level of mobilization and militancy was far less than what was going on in the north of France this winter and spring. From all points of the political spectrum there have been statements to the effect that there has been nothing at this level since 1968. The way we treated the December 1973 demonstration was quite correct, but inadequate for the potentially more explosive situation in March 1979. The bureaucrats certainly recognized this. They built the '73 demo very big because they were quite sure they could control it; this time around both CGT and CFDT were scared to death that the march on Paris would get out of hand, which is why they both sabotaged it.

Your letter tacitly assumes that knowing the Stalinists' and social democrats' intentions is a sufficient basis for judging whether there is working-class militancy and an opening for intervention by revolutionaries. But it is not uncommon to find militant actions indicating the mood of the masses even where bureaucratic control is strong. Look at the Little Steel strikes in the U.S. during the 1930's: they were very bitter, very militant, indicated that the steel workers wanted to fight--yet they were rigidly controlled from the top. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee was entirely appointed by John L. Lewis, who didn't permit an election on anything until well into the '40s. And certainly there has been as much militancy among French steel workers in the last few months as during the 1977-78 American coal miners strike. No doubt lower-level CFDT bureaucrats are behind much of the guerrilla action; in the U.S. coal strike, virtually every mass picketing, caravan or other action shutting down scab mines was run by union officials, from local

presidents to international executive board members. We noted during that strike that our line had the greatest receptivity among lower-level UMWA officials, precisely because they were the most union-conscious and were trying to win the strike--for which we had a program. At the time we were talking with several local presidents and vice presidents, and even one IEB (international executive board) member, about Trotskyism and class-struggle unionism. (I recall that the former Trotskyist Faction members in Britain reportedly felt our policy on the miners strike was economist because we didn't agitate for the whole Transitional Program. Yet overall I would consider our campaign exemplary of how to intervene from the outside in a hot struggle where the revolutionary program has a real cutting edge to set the base against the tops.) Of course, there are some cases where we would denounce an action or demonstration called by the bureaucrats as simply a diversion--e.g., "Buy American" ("construissez français") rallies. But take the case of the April 1975 AFL-CIO "march on Washington" for jobs, certainly much more of a "diversion" than the recent march on Paris. While denouncing the fact that its whole stated purpose was to push for the Democrats' phoney "full employment" bill, we wrote: "A massive turnout in Washington will be as much a message to the quisling labor bureaucrats as to the ruling class, and should be encouraged" (WV No. 67). In general what we want to say of such actions is that they are not enough, and that they are stabbed in the back by the bureaucrats' sabotage, inaction, capitulations to the bourgeoisie, etc.

I could multiply the historical examples, but it seems clear that what lies behind the tone question is a difference in line over what policy the revolutionaries should adopt toward actions initiated by the bureaucracy. In your letter you write: "We would vote against the rotating strikes in the union membership meetings;...we would not have given instructions to our comrades in the factories of Denain or Longwy to vote for the march on Paris, nor to present a resolution for 'a genuine march on Paris [to] be built to muster forces for an unlimited general strike'." We would have exactly the opposite position: after criticizing the inadequacies, duplicities, etc. of the bureaucrats' proposals, and after presenting counter-proposals of our own, if the latter are removed from consideration and it is a question of voting for or against a rotating strike, guerrilla actions or a march on Paris, our normal response would be to vote for. Because we must make it crystal clear that forced to choose between an inadequate response and no response, we are for some response rather than passivity. While as a matter of course we vote against the bureaucrats' strike settlements, we vote for the strike vote, even knowing they are going to sabotage it. Take the march on Paris: voting for the march organized by the Stalinist bureaucrats (after presenting a motion for a real march, linked to a national steel strike and posed as a platform to launch a general strike--provided our comrades had a high enough profile in the plants, since otherwise we would simply vote for) does not mean we capitulate to the treacherous policy of Séguy & Co. Our action does not end with the vote: we would continue to try to transform the bureaucrats' action into a class-struggle march. As it became clear that the Paris region would not be mobilized we would have sought to counter

this sabotage, for instance by taking a sizable column of steel workers to the gates of Renault-Billancourt in order to bring out the Renault workers. And a sizable Trotskyist group might have tried to hold speeches at the end of the march if militarily possible, against the Stalinists' plans and no doubt leading to a clash with the police.

What about the guerrilla tactics and revolving strikes, do we give them uncritical support? The articles clearly said that the "coup de poing" actions were no substitute for a national steel strike, and in a very sketchy run-down of other strike action cited the heavy participation as an index of working-class solidarity, which they were. What about the seizure of a bank and TV transmitters, the attacks on police stations? One can discuss the wisdom of participating, but we would not oppose them unless it was crazy adventurism. On rotating strikes, we would certainly seek to counterpose our motions for militant and effective action to the bureaucrats' motions for ineffective action. But they will do their best to avoid this counterposition, and will seek to get our motions off the floor, so that it is generally a question of for or against their motion. And in that position we cannot adopt a policy of all or nothing. Besides, we always stay out and respect the picket lines anyway, and we denounce those who cross for sabotaging the strike. So why should we abstain or vote against such a strike? The OCI, at least, is consistent: they vote against and then cross the picket lines. In the U.S., when the bureaucrats put up their strike votes, unless the purpose is utterly reactionary (e.g., exclusion of blacks, stopping imports) our standard response is to vote for them. It would be a terrible mistake not to--otherwise you hand the labor traitors a powerful weapon, allowing them to get up and denounce us as "those guys who voted against (or abstained) on every struggle we have waged for the past x years." In France the "revolving strike" is the standard strike tactic; we criticize its inadequacies and call for all-out strikes. But you cannot turn your back on them.

If you are against the revolving strikes, against the coup de poing actions, against the march on Paris and believe that it is premature to prepare for a general strike...then what are you for? Your letter doesn't say, but the cover letter by Dampière says a national steel strike would be posed. That is true, as we said. But a program for the crisis facing French steel workers that was limited to a national strike of that one industry would be economist and far from adequate. The steel layoffs were part of a much broader economic and political crisis affecting many other sectors of the proletariat. Given the Common Market structure, a French steel strike would just mean more German steel would be purchased instead; and given the trade-union structure, a European-wide steel strike at present is extremely unlikely. Meanwhile the Giscard/Barre austerity policies also affect postal workers, rail workers, numerous small enterprises unable to obtain credit, etc., and have led to a series of work stoppages in various parts of the country. It is clearly a situation that calls for a general strike for a sliding scale of wages and hours, for expropriation of steel and smashing the austerity policies.

One must, of course, formulate such calls carefully. We could demand a general strike now, a general strike, prepare for a general strike, etc. I find astounding the statement, which we have heard vehemently from comrade Sharpe over the telephone several times, that the Paris comrades are convinced that we called in the French articles in WV No. 228 for an "insurrectionary general strike." Not at all. Here's what we said:

"Trotskyist revolutionaries would seek to reach the demonstrators with the demand that a genuine 'march on Paris' be built to muster forces for an unlimited general strike for expropriation of the steel trusts and against the capitalist government's austerity policies and layoffs--for full employment and protection against inflation by a sliding scale of wages and hours. It was necessary to combat popular-front illusions that this could be solved simply by putting the reformists and their bourgeois bloc partners in the ministerial chairs--for a 'new '68' that goes all the way, workers to power! What the steel workers need now is not simple militancy--that they have plenty of already--but a perspective for victory."

Now what is an insurrectionary general strike? It is when you call for a general strike that would simply (or principally) be the vehicle for the taking of power. E.g., what the French Trotskyists were calling for shortly before the liberation of Paris from the Germans in 1945. But here the slogan "for a 'new '68' that goes all the way, workers to power" is clearly presented as a "perspective for victory" and the alternative "governmental" slogan to the reformists' call for putting the popular front in power. It is not presented as one of the demands of the general strike. If you believe that this amounts to a call for an insurrectionary general strike then we have a serious and deep difference. For what that must mean is that it would be correct to call for a general strike that does not pose the question of state power. Trotsky was categorical in his writings on France in 1934 that any genuine general strike poses the question of state power. Perhaps "a 'new '68' that goes all the way" sounds a little bloodcurdling (the formulation was chosen because at the present time it is impossible to put forward a specific concretization of the workers government slogan, and it was necessary to include a slogan indicating the revolutionary perspective for any such monumental class mobilization). But even when we called in 1974 during the British miners strike for a "defensive general strike," we linked it to a call for a "Labour/TUC government." That may sound more innocuous, but in fact for such an extraparliamentary government based on the organized working class to come about would mean "a 1926 general strike that went all the way"--i.e., revolution. What we called for in the articles was to prepare a general strike, i.e., less than what we called for in Britain in February (where several major strikes against the government were already in progress), with the perspective of taking that struggle forward to a revolutionary showdown.

Trotsky was quite categorical. "Whatever may be the slogans and the motive for which the general strike is initiated, if it includes the genuine masses, and if these masses are quite resolved to

struggle, the general strike inevitably poses before all the classes in the nation the question: Who will be the master of the house?" ("Once Again: Whither France?" March 1935). What would it mean to call for a general strike without putting forward this revolutionary perspective? For a responsible leadership, one which takes its program seriously, it would mean in the case of winning on the stated demands (i.e., when the bourgeoisie has its back against the wall and is willing to grant extreme concessions in order to hold onto a straw of power) calling on the workers to end the strike. Shades of June 1936! (It is, of course, sometimes necessary even for Bolsheviks to call off a strike, but when it is on the brink of disaster, not the brink of total victory.) To limit the agitation for a general strike to the goals of expropriation of steel, an end to the government austerity program and a sliding scale of wages and hours, without speaking of the question of which class rules, would be an economist-reformist deformation of the general strike demand. I suggest re-reading also the article in WV No. 39, "Why We Call for a General Strike in Britain Now," which quotes Trotsky's 1935 article, "The ILP and the Fourth International," on this point:

"The working class masses want to struggle. But the leadership applies the brakes, hoodwinks and demoralizes the workers. A general strike can flare up just as the movements flared up in Toulon and Brest. Under these conditions, independently of its immediate result, a general strike will not of course be a 'putsch' but a necessary stage in the mass struggle, the necessary means for casting off the treachery of the leadership and for creating within the working class itself the preliminary conditions for a victorious uprising. In this sense the policy of the French Bolshevik-Leninists is entirely correct, who have advanced the slogan of general strike, and who explain the conditions for its victory."

* * * * *

But I think it is not a question of formulations. You, and evidently other comrades as well, had a very strong reaction against the positive tone of the two articles in WV No. 228 toward the militant actions of the steel workers, the call for a real march on Paris, the call for a general strike. You ask, "Does the wish to see at any price an insurrectionary situation blind one?" Perhaps you sensed that the Americans, seeing things from afar, are impressionistically enthusiastic about any sign of militancy, whereas you see clearly how the bureaucrats were trying to manipulate and derail the struggle. But you will recall that we were also quite enthusiastic about the militancy of the American coal miners in 1977-78 and the possibility for a general strike opened up by the 1974 British miners strike. At bottom what we have here, it appears to me, is a significant difference in perspective. It looks as if the comrades in Paris have had their vision narrowed by the tremendous weight of the Stalinist and social-democratic apparatuses. There is a sense in your letter that the bureaucracy is all-powerful and will continue to be so until the day a revolutionary explosion breaks out, or at least a mass working-class rebellion aimed explicitly against the reformist misleaders.

The idea that a militant struggle pregnant with revolutionary possibilities could develop at first inside the limits imposed by the bureaucrats and then escape their control seems impossible (unless we are a major factor, and obviously we are a long way from that). Yet this pattern is quite normal for the gestation of great class battles. Look at the origins of the 1926 British general strike.

As I read your letter, the belief that the bureaucrats control everything is behind all the line differences and tone questions you raise. After all, if it was just a question of the CGT-CFDT-PCF-PS leaders' intentions, then the bureaucratically called march on Paris could simply be written off as "a maneuver to divert the struggle." What Trotskyist would want to support that? The same goes for rotating strikes, guerrilla actions, etc. But in the end, with this view you place yourselves in the posture of outside critics who simply denounce from the sidelines. Of course in terms of our direct intervention in the class struggle, that is largely the position we are in for good objective reasons. But we should not let this affect our political perspective. This problem has come up elsewhere in Europe over the last couple years, although in not nearly so sharp a manner. In particular there were two articles on trade-union questions in Germany, one on the 1978 dock and printers strikes, which was killed from NY, and the second being the steel strike article in the latest KK. Beyond numerous line problems, the central deficiency with both was their purely denunciatory character. We adopt the posture of being in a debating society with the union tops, and the job of the communists is just to say "sellout" every time the bureaucrats do or say something. I pointed out to comrade Silvia in a post-mortem on the second article how painstakingly the demands of our trade-union articles are formulated, in order to find a way to drive a wedge between the bureaucrats and the ranks. We are co-participants in the class struggle along with the working masses, and we must take the responsibilities of leadership by providing active guidance to advance that struggle each step of the way. If there is a genuine lesser evil, then we must be for it, while naturally pointing out all its inadequacies.

We are worried that the comrades' isolation and inability to influence events may have led to adopting positions that could develop into a sectarian-passive posture, something akin to the attitude of Monatte which Trotsky criticized in 1929: "...the character of Monatte...of standing aside, of waiting, of criticizing. At times this is absolutely unavoidable. But as a basic line of conduct, it becomes a kind of sectarianism that has a close affinity to Proudhonism, but nothing in common with Marxism" ("The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism," October 1929). I think that such a posture may also have been encouraged by our view of where we stand among those who lay claim to the Trotskyist mantle in France: with the universe defined by the two poles of OCI pseudo-orthodoxy and LCR liquidationism, we tend to view ourselves as "super-OCIers," with the main difference between us and Lambert being that he has sold out the principles he used to stand for. And the OCI certainly has a good dose of this kind of abstentionist sectarianism. Thus in Portugal in 1975 they simply dismissed the comissões de trabalhadores (workers commissions) as

dominated by the MFA, whereas we saw them as both tied to the military hierarchy and encompassing a potential to give rise to soviet-type organizations; they simply ignored or denounced the workers commissions whereas we called for a struggle to make them all-inclusive and to break from the officer corps. An even more telling example is the attitude of the OCI toward the March 23 march on Paris. In an interview with the LCR's Rouge (6-12 April), Lambert calls it a "counter march on Paris," opposes the occupation of TV stations by the Longwy CFDT and says that OCI militants in the FO were "not for" a march. The LCR interviewer effectively points out how Lambert's passive attitude is part of a non-aggression pact with Bergeron (head of FO). What the LCR does, of course, is just become the "best builders of the march" in the name of strategic "unity" with the Stalinist and social-democratic betrayers.

Sharpe said on the phone that he thought our ban on doing trade-union work in France had an influence on the position taken by the Paris comrades on the steel struggle. Certainly our basic line directed at the steel workers and the rest of the French proletariat should not be changed depending on our own capabilities. But it may be a correct observation that in a situation where we had recruited a layer of respected trade-union cadres who could not wage even a limited fight in the union without immediately posing a struggle for the leadership, our inability to express ourselves fully has led us to view the act of voting "no" as the sole remaining act of moral redemption which we are still permitted. But sometimes it is necessary for good union militants to vote "yes" when the bureaucrats half-heartedly propose an action, in order to expose their defeatist treachery and take the struggle forward. I think also on the basis of a couple long conversations with William that our comrades' experience in the unions may have had a broader political influence on their view of Stalinism. William remarked in the I.S. meeting that he thought that you were making the same mistake over the march on Paris that he made over Vietnam-China. In that case he was hesitant about the way we made the question of Soviet defensism central (among other things vis-à-vis the "Honor Your Treaty" demand), saying that in France everything in the experience of a class-struggle militant teaches them that Stalinism is the main enemy. His activity in the bank workers union, he said, consisted overwhelmingly of clashes with the Stalinists. And certainly for a generation whose formative political experience was to watch in total frustration as the PCF-CGT effectively throttled the May 1968 upsurge, it is not hard to jump to the conclusion that the bureaucracy is all-powerful and "counterrevolutionary through and through and to the core." Hopefully it will not take a new Hungary '56 to convince them that the Stalinist bureaucracy is the main obstacle and not the main enemy, that it is contradictory in character and has feet of clay.

The fact that this question looms large in our work in Europe is itself the expression of a changing political situation. We are coming out of a period in which the main thing that characterized us was our class opposition to the popular front as opposed to the variegated capitulations to it by the centrists. At the present time there is no such overriding issue as the focus of working-class

struggle has turned to the unions. While we don't want to go overboard, we have projected raising very limited initiatives in the trade-union field, and we must certainly deal in the press with such critical struggles as that of the steel workers. This is not simply a perspective of slow, step-by-step accumulation. In writing the article we were keeping uppermost in our minds comrade Robertson's observation at the TLD special conference in February that France seems to have a major crisis every ten years ('36-'47-'58-'68) and our ability to crack the centrists depends on staying on top of such a crisis and in a rapidly changing situation proving our ability to lead the struggle forward with the right slogans at the right times. The steel crisis is far more than an economic struggle in one sector; it poses a political crisis for the government (even a special legislative session) and provides an opportunity for exposing the reformist misleaders in struggle and in front of a large group of several thousand workers already fed up with the do-nothingism of Séguy, Maire, Bergeron & Co. While demoralization seems to be setting in (notwithstanding flashes of militancy) in the steel regions, I believe the perspective and central demands raised in the WV No. 228 articles on France were correct.

There is another sense in which the Paris comrades' reaction to the march on Paris/steel struggle may be "overdetermined" by past frames of reference. I suspect that when asked how a pre-revolutionary situation would come about in France, most would reply: "Like '68." Of course, that might well happen, and unlike the newly respectable centrists who prefer the popular-front perspective of the 1978 elections, we looked back to the powerful revolt by workers and student youth of ten years ago, saying that what we need is something like that only that goes on to victory, under the leadership of a Trotskyist party. But 1968 isn't the only model. In fact, by focusing on this one could easily get the impression that pre-revolutionary situations come out of nowhere, like a desert whirlwind. In thinking about the 1979 steel struggle I have been struck by the parallels to the 1963 French coal miners strike, in which a struggle begun by the CGT bureaucrats got out of hand when they could not force the miners back to work after their token two-day strike. (To make the point again: we would have criticized the two-day proposal as not enough, then voted for, praised the militancy of the miners and agitate that they turn the bureaucrats' token gesture into an "unlimited" strike and push for a general strike of all French labor.) Although it began as a simple wage ("revendicative") strike, it quickly produced a crisis of the Gaullist regime, threatening to pull out the PCF's tacit support which had propped up the Fifth Republic ever since '58. I don't want to say that the steel workers struggle today is the same, only to point to the general possibility of potentially revolutionary struggles arising from within a bureaucratically controlled mobilization. The Lambertistes at that time called for a general strike in solidarity with the miners ("General Strike of the Entire Working Class, All Together and Right Away" was the headline of one of their union leaflets) and...a march on Paris. And in commenting on the strike, La Verité (July 1963) wrote:

"And yet, despite the views of the apparatuses, the miners unleashed their movement. Spontaneously? If we can correctly call the explosive strikes ['grèves de débordement'] of 1947 (Renault), 1953 and 1955 spontaneous movements, it is clear that the outbreak of the miners strike is not similar to that type of action. Actually it was despite the trade-union leaderships who opposed [the strike] that the workers and, together with them, the revolutionaries, took up the movements we have just described. The continuation of the miners strike on March 4 was decided within the framework of the [union] organizations but independently of the leadership."

In closing let me say that I like the slogan, "For a new '68 that goes all the way." It grew out of William's objections to our headline, "The German Kill." Hell, he said, next it will be "The French Fuck." He was right.

Comradely greetings,

Jan Norden

LETTER TO THE LTD'I

by Sharpe

Paris
5 April 1979Lega Trotskysta d'Italia
Rome

Dear Comrades,

In this letter I want to summarize what we believe are some of the results and lessons of the discussion we had on the question of terrorism and in particular the Rossa affair in Rome at the beginning of February. At first, we were not sure what the exact scope and implication of this question were, but the more we discussed the problem, the more it seems to us that it is a potentially crucial issue, not only because it is a central question in Italy today, but even more important because the underlying methodology seems to us linked to the question of democratic rights and thus to what seems to be the core of our disagreements. Of course, this discussion must be seen in the context of our tentative proposal for a fusion at our summer camp at the end of August.

During the course of the debate in Rome, we brought up a number of specific examples to illustrate our general methodology on the question of terrorism. This is the crucial question: to have a unified methodology which enables the Bolshevik organization to take consistent positions in widely differing cases, even if they may at first seem contradictory. If we do indeed have the same methodology on this (or any other) question, then we can dispute particular cases within a common framework. If, on the other hand, we do not share the same underlying method, then agreement on any specific case will be fortuitous, and neither we nor you would be able to deduce general conclusions from a given conjunctural overlap of particular positions. A good example of this fact is that when we were in Italy in early February, M. argued that the question of indiscriminate terrorism was not a crucial part of the iSt's position on terrorism. With this attitude, agreement on a line in a particular case of indiscriminate terrorism would be politically meaningless in terms of political relations between our organizations, and the question of overall programmatic agreement.

I believe that there has been a tendency on your part to minimize the importance of agreement concerning methodology. With the possible exception of the question of democratic rights, you have argued that apparently slight differences are in fact unimportant, whereas the question we always ask--especially with a group such as the LTD'I, which we still do not know very well and is not fully formed politically--is: are these apparently small differences in fact small or is there a different method from which they stem. If the latter is the case, then cases will inevitably arise where

the differences will be important. By hammering out agreement on basic method, we can prevent the small differences from growing into large ones--or in any event see their real nature more clearly.

For us, the problem of indiscriminate terrorism, far from being "unimportant," is a crucial element in a Marxist analysis of the question of terrorism today. It is the issue which provides political clarification between the Trotskyists and petty-bourgeois enthusiasts of "armed struggle" on the one hand and liberals who believe that all terrorism is simply "evil" on the other. Without this conception one is condemned, like the USec, to forever trying to choose the "progressive" side and therefore constantly wavering and bending to the winds of public opinion. Compare the USec's defense of the indefensible Munich attack in 1972 and its cowardly refusal to defend members of the RAF at the time of the Schleyer kidnapping in 1977.

* * * * *

A truly Marxist position on terrorism cannot be centrally based on the "specific conditions" of some particular country. To a Marxist, the argument of "national exceptionalism" always arouses suspicion. It is however true that terrorist groupings have somewhat different characteristics in various countries. Thus, for example, in Germany one of the important elements in the RAF is both its lack of contact with the German working class and its belief that ultimately the "German people" are "fascist." This means that there are many fewer barriers against mass terrorism for the RAF (in particular the new generation) than in Italy. And the Japanese Red Army is even further removed from any connection with working-class politics than the RAF. In Latin America, the situation is again different--we have defined Latin American guerrillaist groups such as the ERP as "Stalinism under the gun." But these different characteristics cannot change our basic evaluation of certain acts of terrorism.

In Italy, as you have pointed out, the terrorist tradition dates at least from the Stalinist partisans during World War II, and possibly even earlier. On the one hand, this fact indicates the terrorists' roots in the Italian working class, but it is also an important indication of the fact that today in Italy terrorism is necessarily reformist--essentially a means of pressuring the PCI. This too is linked to the World War II period, when there were leftist Resistance groupings such as Bandiera Rossa in Rome and Stella Rossa in Torino. Despite physical battles between these groups and the PCI, the bulk of the "dissidents" were eventually incorporated into the PCI.

As you yourselves clearly state, the Red Brigades are a Stalinist grouping which has tried to capitalize on the traditions of the Stalinist Resistance during World War II as an alternative to current PCI policies. (The nature of some of the other groups is less clear to us.) At bottom, this is an appeal to return to the "good old days," but not a break with the Stalinist world view.

More generally, it is a reflection of the fact that in both France and Italy the milieu to the left of the CP accepts the basic definition of social reality which is offered by the Stalinists. In Italy this often takes the form of the feeling among leftists that there are two worlds in Italy: that of "the workers movement" and that of the rest of society. This is also reflected in the French CP's claim to be the party of the working class, and in Italy by broad acceptance of the Stalinist-spread notion that there are "islands of workers power" such as the big CP-run cooperatives in areas in the "red" regions or the dockers' "Compagnie" in ports like Genova and Livorno.

The statement that "that's the way things are done in the workers movement in Italy (or France)" which we frequently encounter simply means that that has traditionally been the way the Stalinists have done things. A similar phenomenon can be seen in England or Germany in relation to the mass social-democratic parties. There have been many small but indicative examples with comrades of the LTd'I. The first time I was in Perugia, I noticed comrades tearing posters of other groups off the walls. When I pointed out, rather shocked, that this was a violation of workers democracy, and that perhaps Stalinist groups did it but we didn't, I was told that "all the groups do it." Spartacist traditions and practices in the United States were worked out in opposition to commonly held views of society. We have found elsewhere in Europe that our practice and norms must similarly be worked out in opposition--or at the very least by a critical rethinking--of "accepted" i.e., Stalinist or social-democratic norms.

From the acceptance of the Stalinists' definition of social reality directly flows what is best characterized as a "strategic united front" with the Stalinists against the bourgeoisie. If the world is divided into two camps, Stalinist and bourgeois, and if the "left" represents islands of workers power and workers democracy (ruled by the Stalinists!), then "obviously" one normally blocs with the Stalinists against the bourgeoisie. This is but a peculiar Italian equivalent of the "family of the left" notion which centrists are constantly pushing and the Pabloists try to pressure the Stalinists into accepting with respect to them.

This is not to claim that these views are necessarily full-blown in the LTd'I, nor that once recognized for what they are they would not be rejected. However, they are quite common on the Italian left and it would be surprising if important elements were not still present in comrades' minds. Further, this "theoretical" framework (if it can be so dignified) is also the basis for a conception which has been expressed in our discussion on democratic rights, albeit in an apparently ultra-leftist form. If there are "islands" of workers control (mini deformed workers states?) and if the Stalinist conception of "the left" defines reality, then it is logical to believe that workers democracy operates within these "islands" while bourgeois democratic rights apply only outside of "the left." Thus M.'s argument in Frankfurt that the Reale law in no way represented an attack on the democratic rights of the "average citizen." In this

conception the left decides on what concerns it and bourgeois democratic rights are of little or no interest to the working class.

A counterpart to the Stalinoid view of "the left" is the view that the bourgeois state is some kind of fascist/bonapartist instrument, a view which further reinforces the absolute separation between bourgeois democratic rights and workers democracy. This kind of framework logically leads to the view which M. at one point seemed to be arguing in February, namely that left groups in fact could not do anything for which we would not defend them against the bourgeoisie. I do not know whether this was meant to be a serious position or not, but it is a logical, if absurd, outgrowth of the general approach to social reality typical of the Italian left.

As we pointed out in Rome, the view that we always defend working-class militants against prosecution by the bourgeois state leads inescapably to the extreme case: that Raymond Mercader, the assassin of Leon Trotsky, should also have been defended against the bourgeois state. For after all, is this not "simply" a case of violence within the workers movement and are we not opposed to state intervention in the internal affairs of the workers movement? Comrades, do you really want to have to defend that position?

Thus there are two apparently contradictory but in fact closely linked complementary positions: first, that one always defends individuals "on the left" against the bourgeoisie, and second (apparently ultra-left) that bourgeois democratic rights are of little or no interest to the working class. This latter view is also linked to the simple rejection of the general framework pushed by the Stalinists. Lumping the PCI together with the bourgeois parties, as the Bordighists do, can be seen in part as an effort to reject the CP's reformism (which may partly explain the Bordighists' relative strength in Italy). As you know, we have in the past speculated at various times that you have derived some of your positions from the feeling that you can't possibly have the same position as the centrists or the PCI, depending on the case. This is yet another illustration of the importance of the question of methodology: it is inevitable that on some issues our position will formally agree with those of the centrists or reformists--and in fact we should be prepared to turn such cases to our advantage. But capitulation to a milieu or gut-level rejection of it are but two sides of the same coin.

* * * * *

This is the context in which we must decide whether or not to defend perpetrators of terrorist acts against prosecution by the state in particular cases. It must be clear that acts of indiscriminate terrorism are totally indefensible (including vis-à-vis the bourgeois state. The most one would want to do is to call for a fair trial): the attack on Israeli athletes in Munich in 1972, the attack on the airport at Lod, blowing up bus loads of Israeli school children, IRA bombings of protestant bars, etc. (cf. the article on IRA bombings in Spartacist Britain No. 8).

There are also a large number of cases which are obscure and which we do not want to take a public position on. The assassination of Rossa is no doubt one of these cases. Despite the declarations of the Red Brigades against the CP, and despite certain complicating factors, it is as yet unclear whether the assassination of Rossa was directed essentially against Rossa who informed to the police or Rossa in his quality as CP trade-union leader. It will take some time before we can determine this question--that is, before the evolution (if there is one) of the Red Brigades on this question becomes clear.

A similar recent case is the conviction of R.P. for the kidnaping of an Austrian industrialist, Palmers, to raise money for the RAF. While we would clearly defend the other two persons who were convicted, R. apparently "sang" to the police in an effort to get a lower sentence (or perhaps simply to get them to stop beating him up), although this is a bit unclear.

There was also a case in the U.S. which aroused a controversy within our organization: the Mohawk-Skyhorse case. In this case, two American Indians were arrested for the murder of a white taxi driver. While on the one hand they belonged to the American Indian Movement (AIM), of which other leaders had been persecuted and framed up by the FBI, the evidence available to us (including evidence presented as part of their defense) by no means made it clear that they were in fact innocent. There was a lengthy debate on the case in our internal bulletins: I would particularly refer you to the contribution by McAllister in the internal Discussion Bulletin No. 29, which takes up this and a number of other cases.

Finally, there is the case of Abu Daoud (cf. the article in Workers Vanguard No. 142, 28 January 1977). Abu Daoud was the presumed organizer of the Munich massacre--an indefensible act. However, when he was arrested by the French police in January 1977, it was as a semi-official representative of the PLO and in a period of an intense anti-Palestinian witchhunt. We therefore welcomed the French government's decision to free him to Algeria instead of extraditing him to West Germany.

* * * * *

The precise scope of these differences, and thus the consequences which flow from them, have still not been fully thrashed out. However, as I said in Rome in February, the LTd'I draft concerning our relations, although qualitatively insufficient in certain respects, was nevertheless the best document you have so far produced. The essential question is that of the movement of your organization --and it does appear to us that you have steadily, if unevenly at times, moved in a direction which implies fusion with the iSt.

Our current views on our relations are summarized in the proposed draft fusion motion which, assuming that the motion of the LTD'I toward the iSt continues, we plan to present for discussion at our international summer camp.

Comradely greetings,

John Sharpe
for the iSt

DRAFT FUSION MOTION.

[Attachment to letter by Sharpe to the LTd'I, 5 April 1979.]

The international Spartacist tendency and the Lega Trotskysta d'Italia agree to fuse, with the LTd'I becoming the Italian sympathizing section of the iSt, in accordance with the following:

1. There have been and **remain** considerable areas of unclarity or difference in the recent period--in particular, the question of the importance to the proletariat of championing bourgeois-democratic rights (expressed concretely over the Reale referendum); the question of indefensible terrorism on the part of organizations of the left-of-PCI milieu; the question of the class nature of the Cambodian state; [more]. We recognize that these disputes and confusions may indicate important areas of unresolved methodological and programmatic difference which may introduce an element of instability in the fused international organization. In particular in the light of our experience with Fosco, there is good reason to be concerned about undertaking a fusion when important areas of political divergence have not been fully explored.

2. Nonetheless, in the light of the demonstrated effort of the LTd'I comrades to determine perspectives and carry out work loyally as supporters of the iSt, we believe that the continuing discussion process and the differences that are sure to arise can best be resolved within the framework of a common discipline. In particular, we note the Rome relocation undertaken in the closest collaboration with the iSt leadership and the demonstrated seriousness of the LTd'I in making its main political task in this preparatory period the familiarization of its cadres with the evolved political positions of the iSt (particularly the production by the LTd'I of several internal bulletins of Italian translations of iSt materials for its members' study). These efforts constitute impressive measures of the seriousness and good will of the Italian comrades and are grounds for guarded optimism about the LTd'I's ability to continue to develop toward iSt politics within the framework of a common international organization.

--5 April 1979

LETTER TO THE SYL
FROM THE MARXIST YOUTH

The Marxist Youth
Sri Lanka

December 5, 1978

Secretary
The Spartacus Youth League
United States

Dear Comrade,

I write this letter on behalf of the Marxist Youth. Our organization is the youth section of the Revolutionary Workers Party with which the SL/U.S. maintain contacts. The Central Committee of our organization decided that I should write to you and establish contacts with the Spartacus Youth League.

Our organization was formed in April 1978 with an active cadre of about 15 youth. We have experienced a moderate increase in our numbers up to about 25 during the last six months. We publish a bi-monthly youth bulletin in Sinhalese (The Marxist Youth) with a circulation of 500 copies. I send herewith the numbers 1 & 2 of this bulletin for your information. I regret that I could not supply a translation.

As you know Ceylon had been a hot bed of youth radicalism in the early 1970s. This radicalism still continues. This has created great opportunities for authentic Trotskyists to win radical youth to their programme and policies. This requires necessary to wage a principle struggle against Popular Frontism, Maoism and "Social Revolutionary" deviations, etc. At present we operate as a nucleus of a revolutionary youth organization. We concentrate our efforts to educate our cadre and to activise them in the direction of expanding our present cadre.

We wish to share your experience in building a Trotskyist youth organization. We would be grateful if you could send us your literature and publications. In exchange we can send you political literature published in this country in English.

With fraternal greetings,

Laksiri Fernando
(For The Marxist Youth)

LETTER TO THE MARXIST YOUTH
FROM THE SYL

Spartacus Youth League
New York

16 February 1979

The Marxist Youth
Sri Lanka

Dear Comrades:

Thank you very much for your friendly letter which we received in December. We are sorry that it has taken us so long to reply, but we have been making some readjustments in our editorial and composition departments of our monthly paper, Young Spartacus, and coupled with the Christmas and semester breaks at university, we have not been able to answer properly.

We were very glad to receive information about your organization, and we are looking forward to receiving your publications. While we understand the difficulties of providing translations, would it be too much trouble for you to write in the English translation of the headlines of your newspaper so that we may get some ideas about the current issues in Ceylon that your group seeks to intervene in?

Just as we draw much of our authority and credibility from the history and on-going work of the SL/U.S. (we are politically subordinate though organizationally independent, and function as a disciplined part of a common movement), so do you carry great political authority because of your relationship with comrade Samarakkody. His principled and courageous stand with regard to the massacre of the JVP in 1971 provides an honorable communist precedent for your comrades of which you should be very proud. The SL/U.S. gladly maintains fraternal relations with comrade Samarakkody, despite certain programmatic differences of which you are probably aware.

We have instructed the SYL circulation department to start sending you Young Spartacus regularly, and enclosed with this letter is the latest issue.

Under separate cover we are sending pamphlets that we have produced as well as other materials relating to the work of our organization.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Fraternally,

Oliver Stephens
for the Spartacus Youth League

LETTER TO THE SYL
FROM THE MARXIST YOUTH

The Marxist Youth
Sri Lanka

20 March 1979

Spartacus Youth League
New York

Dear Comrades:

We received your encouraging reply (16.2.79) to our letter with thanks. We enclose herewith No. 3 of our Bulletin Marxist Youth. The English translations of the headlines with brief summaries of (two) editorial notes are attached.

To your specific inquiry about our relationship with the RWP/ comrade Samarakkody: Yes, we certainly draw our political authority from the RWP and comrade Samarakkody. We are part and parcel of one and the same movement. As you have spelled it out very clearly--we are politically subordinate though organizationally independent from the Party. As a matter of fact (not of principle) three members of our central committee are also from the political committee of the RWP.

We draw our experiences from positive traditions of early Trotskyism in Sri Lanka (especially their principle struggle and internationalist stand during the Second World War) and from comrade Samarakkody's struggle against the coalition in 1964 and his principled stand with regard to the youth massacre of 1971.

We write this letter in the midst of campus repression. Twenty-six students from the Dumbara Campus (part of the Peradeniya University) out of 600 students, 170 students from Vidyodaya University (now named as Jayawardenapura University) out of about 3000 students and 8 student leaders at the Peradeniya University have been expelled/suspended. Boycott of lectures continues at Dumbara and Vidyodaya (near Colombo) against expulsions, police intimidation and the use of outside UNP thuggery.

A comrade of our organization has been accused and attacked in Parliament by a government MP for instigating students against the Government.

The present student repression started with the implementation of the new University Bill which was passed in Parliament in November (1978). The clause 118 of this Act empowers the authorities with draconian powers, i.e., the abolition of student bodies, prohibition of political activities within the campus at any time as they wish. This clause declared contradictory with the present (dictatorial) presidential constitution by the Court. However, it was passed by using the government's two thirds majority in Parliament. The government-controlled newspapers have now launched a vicious campaign against university students.

In our recently issued leaflet we put forward our programme for the crisis and called upon the students to defeat the government's suppression through organized all university struggle based on the support of the working class and the Joint Trade Union Committee. We proposed the immediate formation of an inter-university joint committee of all leftist student organizations. Our sympathisers (although very few in campuses) fight for this programme.

We hope to have our first annual conference in early May. This will be a modest gathering. We will draw a balance sheet of our past year's activities and will discuss our perspectives for the coming year. One important problem we face is that at present we have no Tamil comrades and no women members in our organization. We will make our members' attention to win Tamil comrades to our organization.

Looking forward to receive an early reply.

Fraternally,

Laksiri Fernando
for the Marxist Youth

*Due to certain difficulties at our party press we now publish Marxist Youth quarterly.

LETTER TO THE IST FROM THE RWP

Ceylon
Revolutionary Workers Party
10 April 1979

Secretary
The International Spartacist Tendency
New York

Dear Comrade,

As you are well aware, the International Spartacist Tendency and the Revolutionary Workers Party have been doing their utmost to resolve the differences between the two organisations through correspondence and discussion. Although both sides were able to get a clearer picture of the differences between them as a result of these discussions, differences were not resolved as expected.

Thereafter, there followed a state of stagnation during the last three years. No meaningful step was taken during this period to continue the discussion.

It is now the considered view of our party, adopted at the conference held on 10 February 1979, that the further postponement of realising the working together in a single international organisation by our two organisations, which have common positions on the basic problems in regard to the task of re-building the Fourth International, on account of certain differences regarding a few positions, will not be a help but a road-block in the way, not only to re-building the Fourth International, but also of resolving the said differences.

Agreements as well as differences between our organisations were clearly noted in the resolution submitted to the conference (copy of which is appended herewith). After a lengthy discussion, this resolution was adopted. In terms of the resolution, the Revolutionary Workers Party should seek to join the International Spartacist Tendency.

Accordingly, it is our request that you commence discussions with us as soon as possible on the question of admitting the Revolutionary Workers Party into the International Spartacist Tendency. While we uphold the iSt program, we hope to have the differences ironed out through further discussion within the iSt in the best traditions of democratic centralism.

Yours fraternally,

Tulsiri Andradi
Secretary
Revolutionary Workers Party

INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY
AND RWP

When the SWP(U.S.) sought to effect a link up between the International Committee and the Pabloist International, a principled oppositionist tendency within this party suffered expulsion for its opposition. It was this tendency that has emerged as the iSt.

From about the time of its founding, the RWP has had considerable discussion with the iSt on the problems of the building of the Fourth International [FI].

Both parties recognise the basic agreements between them as well as basic disagreements. There were further discussions regarding differences.

In regard to the building of the Fourth International, if the basic differences between the two organisations are such as not to prevent both groups functioning within a single international organisation, it is now necessary for the RWP to consider the question whether it would not be possible to have these differences settled within a common organisation.

Accordingly, it is necessary to correctly assess the basic agreements as well as disagreements and also to assess the gap in regard to the differences. It is on the basis of such an assessment that the party will have the need to take necessary steps for the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

Agreements

1. Both organisations agree that the Fourth International that was launched in 1938 no longer exists. What exists today are several organisations claiming to be the Fourth International. Although all these organisations say that they are based on the Transitional Program, the truth is they have abandoned it.

The method of these groups is the method of Pabloism which destroyed the Fourth International in the 1950s. These organisations do not practice democratic centralism. In its place, they practice either centralism without democracy or democracy without centralism. Thus these organisations not only do not represent the Fourth International, it is also not possible to rebuild the democratic centralist Fourth International within the framework of these organisations on the basis of the Transitional Program by defeating Pabloism which destroyed the FI.

Both groups accept that unprincipled unity achieved in the name of unity is not only of no assistance to the formation of the Fourth International, but is an obstacle for the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

Both groups believe that the rebuilding of the Fourth International must be based on a principled struggle to create splits in the revisionist groups, and by achievement of unity on a principled basis.

2. Both parties have the same assessment regarding the nature of these organisations and the tendencies that have developed within them.

3. Both agree on the nature of Pabloism. Both organisations agree that Pabloism is the response to post-war expansionism of Stalinism. The USec position that there is nothing called Pabloism within the United Secretariat, and the IC position that Pabloism is a revisionism which has no links within the Trotskyist movement, and which has organic links with both reformism and Stalinism, are rejected by both organisations.

4. The IC position that the capitalist class needed a revisionism within the Trotskyist movement, for carrying out betrayals similar to that of Stalinists and reformists, and that Pabloism came into being as a result of that need, is rejected by both organisations as an overestimation of the strength of the groups which call themselves Trotskyist, and for the very reason, as an overestimation which will disorient the struggle for rebuilding the FI.

The paranoid campaign launched by the IC in the name of destroying Pabloism, through falsehoods, distortions and slanders that Pabloists are police agents, is vehemently denounced by both sides.

The rebuilding of the Fourth International can be undertaken not through such un-Marxist methods. On the contrary, it can be achieved only through getting at the roots of Pabloism and by carrying on a struggle against it and by establishing the Marxist method as the method of the Fourth International.

5. Both parties reject the division of the world into separate sectors--developed capitalist countries, colonial and semi-colonial, and workers states, sectors separated one from the other; the assessment on such a basis of the revolutionary tactics in these countries is also rejected. Both groups take the world as an integral whole, unified by the capitalist world market, and formulate their revolutionary tactics in conformity with that view.

6. The rejection by the Pabloists of the basic Marxist position of the leading role of the working class, and their faith in non-working-class forces, and raising them to the position of new vanguards, is rejected by both groups.

It is flowing from such wrong positions that the Pabloists project the "theory of achieving successful revolutions through 'blunted instruments'." In contradistinction to the Pabloists, the ISt and RWP call for the building of revolutionary parties in all countries.

7. Both groups accept that the Soviet Union, China, Eastern European countries, Vietnam, Cambodia, North Korea and Cuba are degenerated or deformed workers states.

In regard to the IC, its position is that Cuba is not a workers state; the USec position is that it is a healthy workers state.

And whilst sections of the USec identify Vietnam as a healthy workers state, others came to accepting Vietnam as a workers state only much later.

Whilst accepting these as degenerate and deformed workers states, both the iSt and RWP insist on the need for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracies in these states.

8. Whilst calling for the unconditional defence of the workers states, both reject political support or agreement with these bureaucracies under cover of such defence of these states. Further, whilst the oppositionists' right to struggle against the bureaucracies in these states is recognised by both groups, yet uncritical support for such oppositionists by the USec is rejected. And, in this regard, there are several occasions when the USec took up positions alongside the imperialists against the Soviet Union in their campaigning.

As for the IC, it took a thoroughly opportunist position, and equated the expelling of Solzhenitsyn to the expulsion of Trotsky from the Soviet Union.

Whilst both groups expose the limits, deficiencies and defects of these oppositionists and expose the anti-working-class character of these people, we project the different road through the projection of the program of the political revolution.

9. Both groups reject the Pabloist position that it is possible to realise a healthy workers state through supporting one section of the bureaucracy against another. The political line accepted by both groups is opposition to all sections of the bureaucracy and the independence of the working class.

10. Both groups are opposed to Popular Fronts (differences regarding this question are discussed separately).

The above are listed as agreed questions. If these agreed issues are considered in relation to the below-mentioned differences, it would be possible to see whether both groups could function within a single international tendency. What is basic in this regard are the issues on which there is agreement between the groups. And it would be seen that, apart from the below-mentioned differences, there is basic agreement between the groups on all other issues.

Differences

1. Self-Determination of Nations

The SL accepts the right of nations to self-determination. But on the basis of the below-mentioned facts, in practice, the SL has fallen into a position of not recognising that right.

The iSt projects the view that though national movements were progressive in the 19th century, they are reactionary in the epoch of the 20th century. The iSt fails to make a distinction between

national movements in backward countries and developed countries. The iSt equates national movements in backward countries with national movements in developed countries. The RWP does not accept this view.

In this context, the iSt states that national movements are utopian. The RWP points out that from the 1905 experience of Norway and Sweden to the 1971 Bangladesh experience, the right of nations to self-determination has been confirmed as applicable.

The iSt position is that although it is possible to support the struggle for self-determination of nations, and although such struggles have the right to get assistance even from imperialists, if in the process the struggle for this right comes under the subordination of imperialists, it is necessary to withdraw support in such a context. Through such reasoning, in regard to the Bangladesh struggle, as soon as the Indian army intervened, the iSt took the view that the struggle for self-determination changed into a struggle for the realisation of the needs of the Indian capitalist class. In terms of this reasoning, the iSt withdrew support for the Bangladesh national struggle.

The RWP which accepted the position that the national struggle must be subordinated to the needs of the class struggle, rejects the SL position that the moment imperialism intervenes, there is no struggle for national self-determination. This position of the iSt is completely wrong has been proved by the very Bangladesh struggle.

Whilst the iSt takes the correct view, that despite the bourgeois or petty bourgeois leadership of national movements, it is necessary to support such struggles, yet the possibilities of betrayal of such movements by these leaderships, is used by the iSt as an argument not to give such support in practice.

The iSt rejects the right of self-determination of nations to "interpenetrated peoples."

For the above reasons, when struggles for self-determination take place, the iSt raises slogans calling upon all sections who are in the struggle to take the road of socialist revolution, leaving aside the national question. The RWP considers this as a position which leads the revolutionaries away from their tasks in such struggles and as a position which interprets the theory of Permanent Revolution in a completely incorrect way.

As a result of these positions, the iSt underestimates the role of imperialism in backward countries where bourgeois democratic revolution has not been completed.

2. Critical Support for Working-Class Parties in Popular Fronts during Elections

Like the iSt, the RWP stands categorically opposed to Popular Fronts, yet on the question of tactics to be adopted in order to break the masses from coalition politics, there are differences.

The iSt position is that as long as working-class parties do not form coalition with bourgeois parties, it is possible to give critical support. But, where working-class parties have gone into coalition with bourgeois parties (and since of late where such parties adopt positions in the perspective of forming coalition government) in such cases, no critical support could be given. In such situations, according to the iSt, it is the task of revolutionary parties to raise slogans directed to such parties to break with the bourgeoisie--critical support can be given only if such parties break from capitalist parties.

The RWP rejects this position of the iSt. However, that Popular Fronts are formed to realise capitalist aims, we accept completely. But, we cannot forget that within such Popular Fronts are found two classes.

The RWP points out that when working-class parties form coalition governments, the contradiction within such working-class parties are not suppressed. Though superficially it appears that this contradiction is not in existence, Marxists do not allow what appears on the surface to deceive them.

Even as Popular Fronts arise and are formed to resolve the contradictions within bourgeois society, between the working-class and the bourgeoisie, in a bourgeoisie way, even so, the break-up of such coalitions take place when such contradictions cannot be resolved within the framework of coalition as long as capitalism continues, yet, whilst Popular Fronts exist, the task of revolutionaries is to take this contradiction into consideration in order to help the working class to break the framework of the Popular Front that has been set up by their leaders. That is the reason why revolutionaries ask the working class to support working-class parties in coalition politics.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the line of various revisionists that Popular Front helps the masses to radicalise the masses. While giving critical support to working-class-based parties in coalitions during elections, the RWP will explain the nature of Popular Fronts and the treacherous role of the working-class leaders.

3. Propaganda Group

The iSt says it is a propaganda group. Although it is a fact that at the commencement, take the form of propaganda groups this is not exactly what the iSt state.

It is in conformity to this characterisation of themselves as a propaganda group that the iSt intervenes nationally and internationally during revolutionary struggles. For example, even in a general strike situation, as the iSt is still a propaganda group, it projects the general strike slogan as a limited general strike, thus narrowing its scope. This concept, the RWP does not accept.

When we examine the points of agreement and disagreement, although the differences are substantial, from the point of view of the task of rebuilding the Fourth International, they are not so weighty as will make it impossible to function within one organisation.

On the basic question regarding the rebuilding of the Fourth International, there is agreement between the two organisations. While there is no such agreement with any other group claiming to be Trotskyist, there is no likelihood of getting agreement with others on these issues--not even a possibility.

In assessing the differences between the two parties, this should be done without forgetting the urgency of the rebuilding of the Fourth International (responsibility) or giving priority to local and national issues. We must give priority to the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

In regard to our differences, in point of fact, we continue to consider that we are right in regard to our positions. The iSt has gone wrong on these positions, as a result of their over-zealousness in opposing the revisionist concepts on these questions which Pabloism advanced when it destroyed the FI. This can be characterised as a bad orthodoxy. On the other hand this bad orthodoxy is the result of their earlier connections with the International Committee.

On the basis of the principled agreements between the iSt and ourselves, the beginning to function within the framework of one international organisation as Trotskyists we would have taken a great leap forward. Through such action, it would become possible, through discussion and through experience, to resolve the differences.

Accordingly, on the basis of democratic centralism, the party should take steps to organisationally unite with the iSt. Within a month of adopting this document it is necessary to prepare a letter informing the iSt in this regard.

--Revolutionary Workers Party
of Ceylon
Adopted at their conference
held on 10 February 1979

CABLES

SPARTACIST
NEW YORK

REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY
SRI LANKA

APRIL 21 RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF 10 APRIL TODAY. OUR LETTER IN REPLY
WILL FOLLOW WITHIN 3 DAYS THANK YOU

JAMES ROBERTSON FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY

* * * * *

SPARTACIST
NEW YORK

EDMUND SAMARAKKODY
SRI LANKA

APRIL 21 RECEIVED RWP LETTER OF 10 APRIL TODAY. OUR LETTER IN REPLY
WILL FOLLOW WITHIN 3 DAYS THANK YOU

JAMES ROBERTSON FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY

LETTER TO THE RWP
FROM THE I.S.

New York
28 April 1979

Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon

Dear Comrades:

We received the resolution from your February conference, "International Spartacist Tendency and RWP," and the 10 April cover letter on 21 April and since then we have intently consulted with the International Executive Committee in New York and elsewhere as well as we could in line with getting out a quite rapid response.

We believe that there are two crucial questions:

1. You have yourselves raised the question of international democratic centralism which, within the framework of our international propagandist existence, can and does have variants internationally. We have commented on this question extensively in the letter to Comrade Samarakkody from Comrade Robertson of 27 October 1973 and can cite some current illustrations. Obviously the geographical distance between the Interim Secretariat and, for example, the Australian section, precludes frequent collaboration, and if disputes arise over the SL/ANZ's programmatic or tactical response to events in Australia, the discussion must necessarily be difficult and possibly carried on in part after the fact. Even more so with Comrade Ahmad in India whose isolation is intense and whose work is largely limited to important literary intervention into the USec, but with whom communication is technically painfully slow and fraught with security difficulties. The consequence is that he is mostly on his own, relying mainly on our press and infrequent collaboration by mail. On the other hand, in the face of an event of surpassing importance like the recent Chinese invasion of Vietnam, all iSt sections were quickly mobilized to produce in the shortest possible time translations or adaptations of articles and statements which had originated from the Center.

We can demonstrate by contrast the iSt's practice by recalling the qualitative departures from Leninism that Gerry Healy attempted to impose on our tendency fifteen years ago. We have enclosed for your information the three draft "proposals for unification" which were the result of a meeting with Healy in Montreal in 1965. The final version represents what was provisionally arrived at and then repudiated by Healy at the London Conference in 1966. What we insisted on from Healy is what we would expect you in turn to insist on from us.

2. As with all sections and candidates for fusion we would need to have a mutual sense of assurance--in a programmatically definable way--that the Ceylonese comrades seek proletarian revolution in Ceylon and also in South Asia.

If these two considerations exist--the determination to act in concert internationally and the programmatically expressed appetite to seek proletarian revolution--then there is a basis for a valid fusion.

The nuances and differences which remain between us are not to be ignored by any means. However, they are subject to continuing historical experience and discussion in the light of these two basic considerations.

Therefore, we believe that it is crucially important, given the possibilities that exist, to send a delegation of comrades from the iSt to Ceylon at the earliest opportunity. Several months ago we decided to hold the first delegated International Conference of the iSt during the coming August. In view of the shortness of time before the conference, we urge you to respond immediately to this proposal. We would be able to make the necessary arrangements for a trip by mid-May.

We eagerly await your early reply.

Comradely,

Susan Adrian
James Robertson

For the I.S. of the iSt

cc: International Executive Committee

I. MONTREAL PROPOSALS FOR UNIFICATION

(drafted by G. Healy, accepted by ACFI, and presented to the Spartacist delegation to the Montreal Conference on 28 October 1965.)

1. That the American Committee for the Fourth International and the Spartacist agree to work for a unification of their forces after the International Conference of International Committee forces which will be held in April 1966. At that Conference there will be a Commission on the American question where both tendencies will be able to participate.
2. A Negotiating Committee of two comrades from each tendency should be immediately set up. The purpose of the Negotiating Committee is to prepare the groundwork for unification.
3. Basing itself on the agreement between the ACFI and the Spartacist on the International Resolution for the 1966 International Conference the Negotiating Committee is empowered to draft a perspective for the building of the revolutionary party in the U.S. Any differences which may arise during the drafting of this document should be set aside in a separate memorandum for consideration by the American Commission at the International Conference. It is to be understood that both tendencies will do their best to arrive at the maximum agreement in the drafting of this document.
4. Discussion on all past differences should be suspended until after the unification, when a quarterly internal bulletin may be produced for the discussion of these differences in an educational way.
5. The Negotiating Committee would be responsible for the organisation of all joint work between the two tendencies. It would discuss bringing in plans for the appearance of a regular printed paper and for the organisation of branches and the composition of leading committees of the fused organisation. The Negotiating Committee would be empowered to produce a draft Constitution based on the principles of democratic centralism, allowing full rights for all minority tendencies.

II. DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE PROPOSALS FOR UNIFICATION

(drawn up by the Spartacist delegation caucus on 29 October 1965 and presented the following day in reply to the initial Healy proposals.)

1. strike second "forces" [in 1.].
2. strike "Negotiating Committee" wherever it appears in paragraphs 2., 3., and 5.; replace with "Joint Unity Committee". Add at end [of 2.] "The JUC is to consider all proposals for public action by either of the two groups in order to coordinate their work as fully as joint agreement permits."

3. following the second sentence [of 3.], add the following: "If the differences prove to be so extensive as to make this method unwieldy two separate drafts may be submitted to the American Commission. In either case this Commission would report back its recommendations for consideration by the Unification Conference of the two American groups."
4. remove existing paragraph [4.] and replace as follows: "Discussion on all past differences should be restricted to at most an internal literary form until after the Unification Conference when it would be decided whether to continue an educational discussion in this form or table this subject entirely until the next preconference discussion period."

III. ADOPTED PROPOSALS FOR UNIFICATION

(final version drawn up by Healy following discussion with the Spartacist delegation on 30 October 1965. The second paragraph of the new section 4. contains the essential clarification insisted on by Spartacist of the power of the proposed American Commission of the International Committee, hence establishing the authority of the American section toward its own tactical functioning and internal administration. The first paragraph of the new 4. contains Healy's qualification, agreed with by Spartacist, setting in turn the limits of the autonomy of a national section. This draft was then accepted by the ACFI representatives and formally signed the next day.)

1. The American Committee for the Fourth International and the Spartacist agree to work for a unification of their forces after the International Conference of the International Committee which will be held in April 1966. At that Conference there will be a Commission on the American question where both tendencies will be able to participate.
2. A Joint Unity Committee of two comrades plus an alternate from each tendency should be immediately set up. The purpose of the JUC is to prepare the groundwork for unification. The JUC is to consider all proposals for public action by either of the two groups in order to coordinate their work as fully as joint agreement permits.
3. Basing itself on the agreement between the ACFI and the Spartacist on the International Resolution for the 1966 International Conference, the Joint Unity Committee is empowered to draft a perspective for the building of the revolutionary party in the U.S. Any differences which may arise during the drafting of this document should be set aside in a separate memorandum for consideration by the American Commission at the International Conference. It is to be understood that both tendencies will do their best to arrive at the maximum agreement in the drafting of this document.
4. The American Commission would be empowered to insist that the resolution or resolutions on perspectives, which was to be presented to the Unification Conference, accepted the principles embodied in

the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the resolutions and documents agreed to by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International and the International resolution on perspectives adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International Conference April 1966.

Tactical disagreements on work in the U.S. would not be an obstacle to unity provided they did not contravene the above decisions. They would be left up to the majority of delegates at the Unification Conference to decide. The International Committee of the Fourth International reserves the right to make its political position on these matters known to the delegates at the Unification Conference if it considers this necessary.

5. Discussion on all past differences should be suspended until after the unification, when a quarterly internal bulletin may be produced for the discussion of these differences in an educational way. It is understood that all internal documents, which are now in the course of preparation by either group, should be completed and distributed in a manner that would, as far as possible, avoid worsening the relations between the groups.

6. The Joint Unity Committee would discuss bringing in plans for the appearance of a regular printed paper and for the organization of branches and the composition of leading committees of the fused organization. The JUC would be empowered to produce a draft Constitution based on the principles of democratic centralism, allowing full rights for all minority tendencies.

Montreal, 31 October 1965

T.W., for ACFI J.R., for Spartacist

LETTER FROM STOCKHOLMStockholm
12 May 1979New York
Paris
Frankfurt

Dear Comrades,

Well it seems like it is a good time to write down some thoughts I have been having about the Swedish Station, its past and its future. This should perhaps help in any discussions there might be on the Swedish Station at the summer camp. This is Bob writing this and Eva should probably make some remarks about her thoughts on the question also.

Well, I would like to talk a little bit first about the crisis-ridden last year in the Swedish Station. It is much easier to do it now when looking back than when all this stuff was happening. One gets a more subjective picture of events when things are happening, whereas one can be more objective after having time to think about it.

I think that one of the major things that caused the crisis was when Peo, our political leader, our data bank for political history and Spartacist politics, began moving away from us. This was especially true for myself, since Peo and I had begun working together in the winter of 1976; it was him I really counted on for help in getting a political orientation. Anything that I did not know--which was a lot--I could go to Peo and usually get an answer. So when he began doing funny things, which at first I could not see, my unconscious reaction was one of complete political insecurity. That I could go out and scream and intervene at meetings was mainly because I had Peo in back of me telling me what to say. Now that was not going to be there any more. Now I think Eva also was reacting in the same way. The best expression of this that I remember was that she had the feeling that when Peo left she would be standing there as the organizer with Christer and myself, wondering how it was going to be to control an impossible situation: Christer with his attitude toward party work and his political deviations of mass work, leaflets, newspapers, etc.; myself feeling more and more politically insecure. And this could have led to almost anything at that time. But, on the other hand, Peo's leaving forced me into forcing myself to read and study and talk to myself about our politics, and what we would say here and what we would say there. Plus the fact that we still had people coming in then: Doris had come and Sinikka had been here. Plus trips out to France and Germany helped enormously in that I could in a very short time begin to have a more complete self-confidence in myself and to the best of my ability defend our politics here. This is not to say that I have become a Leon Trotsky overnight, because more than likely I probably will make some whoppers of mistakes in the future, but I feel that now more than before I am conscious on a lot more levels than I have ever been before, and able to go out and fight our political opponents without immediately looking over my shoulder to see if Peo is standing there.

I feel that as long as there is regular input by mail and tapes that any real political disasters can be avoided, including my burning out. For I know much more now than before about what we are fighting for and how we want to get there (it might not work but we can fight like hell). I do not feel completely isolated any longer because, believe it or not, I feel that politically I am integrating at an enormous pace into the tendency. I know that what I am saying is being said also in Paris, London, the States and elsewhere. I know that when a contact whom we met in Uppsala says that he met us on the West Coast and they said exactly the same thing to him. I know, because when meeting Peo and talking with him he no longer can just say something and I believe it. I am thinking critically about some of the funny things he has been saying lately, especially on the party question. When he talks about history I can complement him with various points because now I am reading it for myself. Of course, at the same time I am aware of my chronic optimism on just about everything and of my tendencies--sometimes uncontrollable--to become a youth activist. But in becoming politically conscious I understand now that in this period in Sweden we want to go after the jugular vein of the fake Trotskyists and win the most subjectively revolutionary militants to our program. This of course does not mean that we no longer go to important demonstrations and sell our press, or the other things that are important in getting our propaganda out; it is just that if we are going to succeed it will be over the politically dead bodies of the fake Trotskyists in the near future here in Sweden. If not dead at least tearing them a little....

Comradely greetings,

Bob