

New York  
22 June 1971

IKD  
Berlin

Dear Comrades,

(1) We received only 3 days ago your proposed draft leaflet directed to the participants at the international youth meeting at Essen for the 3-4 July organized by the International Committee youth formations.

Since you indicated that you must have our opinion no later than 26 June, we now have before us a competent written translation into English as the result of intensive work by a highly qualified sympathizer.

We are strongly in agreement with the main thrust of your statement: in particular two points. First we agree that the OCI's dependence on the "Transitional Program" has a literary and abstract character since the Marxist program never stands still but must undergo continuous development in the context of the proletarian class struggle. Second we agree with your critique of seeking to approach the undifferentiated oppressed youth as at bottom a conciliation to a petty-bourgeois outlook.

However we do not believe that we can jointly sign with you the leaflet as it stands. And there is no time permitted for any discussion or adjustment. We believe that there are two programmatic defects in the present draft. Partly because we are more aware of differences between the SL and IKD in the light of our discussions with you in Europe last winter following our joint Brussels intervention against the United Secretariat, but much more importantly because what is now proposed is a joint intervention aimed at the International Committee and in particular the Lambertistes, who stand much to the left of the U.Sec., precise programmatic clarity is of the utmost importance since weakness under these circumstances would permit the left centrists of the OCI to deflect valid criticism of their concepts and work.

Your leaflet takes as good coin the Conference call for revolutionary youth to unite in their "struggle against imperialism and the [Stalinist] bureaucracy". In fact you twice repeat this same formulation without either qualifying or deepening it. As this formulation stands it insufficiently separates the Trotskyist program from varieties of "third campist" revisionists, especially as it has not been coupled with the position of unconditional defense of the Sino-Soviet states against imperialism. Moreover "imperialism" should be delineated as the current stage of capitalism lest it be viewed as Stalinist and New Leftist ideologists do as an autonomous phenomenon against which even sections of the capitalist class can be mobilized. This formulation projected by the OCI for the Conference is perhaps another reflection of their conciliation to petty-bourgeois youth strata which your leaflet in a decisive way characterizes.

Of more immediate concern is the presentation at the conclusion of your draft of your position that the Fourth International has ne-

ver actually existed, that it was only proclaimed some 30 years ago, leading to one of your two concluding slogans "For the Construction of the IV International!" rather than our view calling for its re-birth or reconstruction. As you know we do not share your outlook and necessarily differ fundamentally on the significance of the struggle against Pabloist revisionism which acquires vastly different significance depending on whether or not there was in fact an international Trotskyist movement in which such a struggle would take place.

(2) We received your 37-page single-spaced contribution for the international discussion bulletin about 6 weeks ago. Since then we have heard from our principal German translator who also received a copy. He objects strongly to translating a document of such length and also notes that as a historical review of the Fourth International it is off to one side from the immediate topics about which the British RCL has written and about which we have projected our own contribution, namely the strategy of the revolutionary Marxists toward organized reformist-led sections of the working class in relation to the building of mass revolutionary workers parties. But of course any discussion participant can submit any contribution it chooses to. We had at our tri-group discussions in London in November originally projected issues of the bulletin numbering perhaps 20 pages each, and we of the SL in particular were insistent and secured general understanding that we could only undertake to translate some 6 pages per month from German. Thus you will see that your document would monopolize, according to this norm, some 6 months of our German translation capacity. So as things stand your contribution has frozen the production of the bulletin. There are a number of options open. Perhaps you would want to cut the contribution you submitted to a third of its size or to serialize it; perhaps you would want to print the Spartacus program for the building of a communist youth organization which you just sent us; or perhaps you have some other proposal in mind.

(3) Our comrade Moore has just been appointed the European representative of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League. He will be mainly functioning in central Europe and his presence will surely facilitate our relations. He will make himself known to you when he is able.

Fraternally,

James Robertson

cc: RCL  
SL/NZ  
Moore