

May 18, 1971

Dear Comrade Wohlforth,

We are writing you in reply to the letter we recently received and which, we assume, was discussed by the Political Committee (PC) of the Workers League (WL). We were taken aback by the approach you and the PC took towards our organization. There was hardly a single point you made with which we agreed or felt was historically accurate. Take for example your evaluation of Comrade Treiger's methodological approach in his cover letter and in what we will refer to as a "Letter to a Maoist". Your position that since there was no discussion of the Fourth International in Treiger's main letter and since, at least in our opinion, we have "...definitely consolidated around Trotskyism and ...intend to begin investigation into the Fourth International in a more developed way", we "...separate out 'Stalinism' and 'Trotskyism' from the actual development of the Third International and the Fourth International", and therefore "...go over to the idealist outlook of Deutscher who abstracts Trotsky the 'hero' and his 'ideas' out of and opposed to Trotsky's actual struggle to construct the Fourth International". From this, we gather, you implied our methodological approach will lead us to oppose the Fourth International. Nothing could be more wrong! What your position shows is that you completely misunderstand the nature of Treiger's "Letter to a Maoist". Let us explain. True, there was no formal discussion of the Fourth International in "Letter to a Maoist", whose main purpose was to confront a Maoist organization in San Francisco with the basic truths of Marxism which were distorted for so long by the Stalinists. However, to draw the conclusion you did means to completely miss the spirit if not the letter of Treiger's document. The entire document is a restatement of the Marxist position of proletarian internationalism, analyzes the bankruptcy of the Maoist international "strategy" and poses the question of why the CCP has never attempted to build a new International to all Maoist organizations. It further shows that the failure of the Chinese to develop a new International is an excellent exposure of their departure from internationalism. This stand of ours can only mean that we see an international party of the working class as absolutely indispensable without which there can be no proletarian revolution. Moreover, "Letter to a Maoist" in stating: "The ideas embodied in the Transitional Program [which was developed during the first four congresses of the Third International--G.R.] find their historic continuation in the 1934 program of the Fourth International", clearly indicates that we saw the program of the Fourth International as the theoretical continuation of Leninism. We purposely avoided the question of the Fourth International as it stands today because of our insufficient research at that time. The statement "...we intend to begin an investigation into the Fourth International in a more developed way" only means that there is still much ground to cover before we are soundly familiar with Trotskyist strategy and tactics and with the state of the present International. Nothing else can be read into this position.

Concerning the action on April 24th. We were dismayed by your attempting to avoid the question of our differences on the nature of the rally by implying that we called for our own demonstration.

What else could this statement of yours mean? "This is why it is completely wrong for you to call for a demonstration on April 24th which does not mention either the labor party or the fight for the general strike." And once again. "You say the Maoist October League and the Maoist Long March declined having joint action with you and we assume also us on April 24th." [my italics--G.R.] At no time did we call for a demonstration independent of the WL demonstration. If so, where was this rally of ours? Where did it take place? The Bulletin report of the San Francisco events by Jeff Sebastian stated the following: "...the Workers League and supporters broke from the march, and... proceeded to the park where an independent meeting was held and addressed by Workers League spokesmen and by representatives of the Communist Workers [sic] Collective in Los Angeles." The Bulletin completely contradicted this fantastic notion of yours. Our position was calling for "All out support of the Workers League call for a United Front rally of the working class against the war." The error we made was that we misunderstood the nature of the WL's proposed action. This was mainly due to our misreading of the April 5th Bulletin editorial. Instead of realizing that it was supposed to be a rally of the WL and its supporters, we thought (also because of the loose usage of "joint action" on the part of some comrades of the WL) what was intended was a call for a united front working class action against the war. On this point we were totally wrong. However, this does not mean you can simply pass over our differences on the form the rally should take by falsely implying we called our own rally. That just will not do!

With regard to our not mentioning "...either the labor party or the fight for the general strike." We didn't have a consolidated collective position at that time (nor, incidentally, do we now) on these specific demands of the Transitional Program. The reason for this is we have not yet evaluated the history of the labor party demand in light of the present U.S. conditions. Thus we don't know whether it is correct to call for a labor party in opposition to a workers party or vice versa. Same is true for the general strike call. Under what conditions, circumstances, etc., does one call for a general strike? This is why we didn't take a position on these demands. However, in no way did our abstention on these questions prevent us from supporting the rally at which these slogans were raised.

We further object to your position that we cannot have joint discussions or joint actions with the WL while maintaining relations of any sort with Spartacist. Our group is now in the process of thoroughly investigating the present anti-Pabloite Trotskyist organizations and are not about to conclude that Spartacist "...is completely hostile to the Fourth International and bears no relationship whatsoever to Trotskyism" just on your word. We may conclude your analysis of their organization is correct, however, we feel, this conclusion must be made on the basis of our own independent investigation. Nevertheless Spartacist has shown a healthy attitude toward encouraging and aiding our investigation (which is more than we can say about your approach). That is why we will continue holding discussions with them. For these reasons, we sincerely hope the PC of the WL reconsiders its present organizational position to-

wards our group. If however, the PC decides to keep its present policy, we will still continue to investigate the WL in spite of any roadblock you may throw up in our way.

Further. We oppose the sectarian position you expressed toward the Maoists and other working class tendencies. "In any event we will not have joint actions with Maoists. Maoism today means bodies of revolutionaries lining the streets of Dacca and floating down the rivers of Ceylon. We do not understand how you can say you have 'consolidated around Trotskyism' while at the same time you seek joint actions with the supporters of the butchers of the Bengalis and even with the Liberation Union...". First of all you make a methodological error in seeing these organizations as finished party formations rather than groupings going through tremendous change. The October League and the Long March are based in Los Angeles and have between fifteen to twenty members each. The "semi-Trotskyist" Liberation Union is also a strictly local organization made up of Maoists and "Trotskyists" and has no more than thirty to forty members. Because of the crisis of world capitalism and the capitulation of the Chinese Stalinists to imperialism, many of these groups (as we did) are in fact looking to Trotskyism to lead them out of the Stalinist swamp. Your position would objectively hinder this development. Secondly, refusing to hold joint actions with Maoists on the basis that they support the foreign policy of the Chinese government is absolutely ludicrous. The Stalinists, Pabloites, Social-Democrats, and trade unionists all currently support either the existing Stalinist states or some kind of reactionary capitalist government. Furthermore, all of them have at one time or another either objectively or subjectively supported the annihilation of revolutionary struggles and are thus responsible for the deaths of thousands of revolutionaries. However, does this mean that you categorically refuse to engage in joint actions with any of these types of organizations? We feel the logic of your position must lead to either a sectarian liquidation of the united front reminiscent of Third Period Stalinism or to a series of opportunist zig-zags--now condemning joint action, now pragmatically entering into it.

From your position on our relations with Spartacist and from your approach to joint action with other working class tendencies, we can make the following evaluation of what seems to be your tactical approach. The WL has no intention of engaging in action with any tendency that does not objectively recognize it as the leading Leninist party. How else can your approach toward our organization be explained? What purpose could your "proposal" at the end of the letter possibly serve than to make us immediately acknowledge the leading role of the WL in the U.S. revolution? What other explanation can there be for your bombastic declaration in the April 5th Bulletin editorial "...either McGovern-Hartke or the Workers League..."? Here is a manifestation in practice of the sectarian danger of which we spoke. There is nothing wrong in principle in calling your own rally. But when you do so vaguely speaking of joint action, not building a united front and then counterposing your organization and your few supporters to everyone else, then we can only conclude that this represents nothing but an extreme example of "left-wing" childishness. Such an approach if persisted in

can only hinder the development of the WL into a mass Bolshevick-Leninist party.

Finally, we must make it absolutely clear to you that we will not capitulate to your pressure tactics. In no way will we be forced into a position of holding discussions with only the WL on your "principled party grounds". For us to take such a step would mean that we concluded that the International Committee of the Fourth International and the WL were the continuators of Trotskyism in our time. The next step could only be discussions on organizational merger after which fusion would take place. Needless to say, so far there is no basis for us to reach such a conclusion.

In concluding, we hope that for the above stated reasons you consider re-evaluating your methodological approach toward us and towards other working class tendencies in general. Hope to hear from you soon.

With communist greetings,

George Rep
for the Communist Working
Collective