

# Marxist Bulletin 9

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includes:

Toward Rebirth  
of the  
Fourth International

Declaration of  
Principles of the  
Spartacist League

Provisional  
Organizational  
Rules and Guidelines

Memorandum on the  
Transformation of the  
Spartacist League

Black and Red—Class  
Struggle Road to  
Negro Freedom

## **Basic Documents of the Spartacist League**

# BASIC DOCUMENTS OF THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE

## PART I

Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International.....	1
Draft resolution on the world movement submitted to the July 1963 SWP Convention by the Revolutionary Tendency	
Spartacist Statement to International Conference.....	5
Spartacist delegation remarks on the Political Report at the International Committee Conference in April 1966 in London	
Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League.....	8
Adopted at the Founding Conference, September 1966	
Black and Red—Class-Struggle Road to Negro Freedom.....	12
Adopted at the Founding Conference, September 1966	

## PART II

Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League.....	20
Resolutions adopted by the Second National Conference, 30 August-1 September 1969	
Provisional Organizational Rules and Guidelines.....	44

## PART III

Preface	
Introduction.....	48
"Toward Construction of the Leninist Vanguard!," report on the Third National Conference, from <i>Workers Vanguard</i> No. 15, January 1973	
Memorandum on the Transformation of the Spartacist League.....	52
Adopted, with Economic Appendix, by the SL Central Committee, 5 September 1971	
Youth-Party Relations.....	59
Resolution jointly adopted by the SL Central Committee and RCY National Committee, 6 September 1971	
Trade-Union Memorandum	
Adopted by the Third National Conference, 25 November 1972	
I—The Struggle Against Labor Reformism and Workerism.....	60
II—To Build a Communist Opposition in the Labor Movement.....	61

# **PART I**

# Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International

*DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE WORLD MOVEMENT submitted to the 1963 SWP Convention by the Revolutionary Tendency.*

## INTRODUCTION

1. For the past fifteen years the movement founded by Leon Trotsky has been rent by a profound theoretical, political, and organizational crisis. The surface manifestation of this crisis has been the disappearance of the Fourth International as a meaningful structure. The movement has consequently been reduced to a large number of grouplets, nominally arrayed into three tendencies: the "International Committee," "International Secretariat (Pablo)," and "International Secretariat (Posadas)." Superficial politicians hope to conjure the crisis away through an organizational formula—"unity" of all those grouplets willing to unite around a common-denominator program. This proposal obscures, and indeed aggravates, the fundamental political and theoretical causes of the crisis.

2. The emergence of Pabloite revisionism pointed to the underlying root of the crisis of our movement: abandonment of a working-class revolutionary perspective. Under the influence of the relative stabilization of capitalism in the industrial states of the West and of the partial success of petit-bourgeois movements in overthrowing imperialist rule in some of the backward countries, the revisionist tendency within the Trotskyist movement developed an orientation away from the proletariat and toward the petit-bourgeois leaderships. The conversion of Trotskyism into a left satellite of the existing labor and colonial-revolutionary leaderships, combined with a classically centrist verbal orthodoxy, was typified by Pablo—but by no means was confined to him or his organizational faction. On the contrary, the Cuban and Algerian revolutions have constituted acid tests proving that the centrist tendency is also prevalent among certain groups which originally opposed the Pablo faction.

3. There is an obvious and forceful logic in the proposals for early reunification of the centrist groups within the Trotskyist movement. But "reunification" on the basis of centrist politics cannot signify reestablishment of the Fourth International. The struggle for the Fourth International is the struggle for a program embodying the working-class revolutionary perspective of Marxism. It is true that the basic doctrines of the movement, as *abstractly* formulated, have not been formally denied. But by their abandonment of a revolutionary perspective the revisionists concretely challenge the programmatic bases of our movement.

4. The essence of the debate within the Trotskyist movement is the question of the perspective of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard elements toward the existing petit-bourgeois leaderships of the

labor movement, the deformed workers states, and the colonial revolution. The heart of the revolutionary perspective of Marxism is *in the struggle for the independence of the workers as a class* from all non-proletarian forces; the guiding political issue and theoretical criterion is *workers' democracy*, of which the supreme expression is workers' power. This applies to all countries where the proletariat has become capable of carrying on independent politics—only the forms in which the issue is posed vary from country to country. These forms, of course, determine the practical intervention of the Marxists.

## EUROPE

5. The recovery and prolonged prosperity of European capitalism has not, as revisionists of all stripes contend, produced a conservatized workers' movement. In reality, the strength, cohesion, cultural level, and potential combativity of the European proletariat are higher today than ever before. The defeat of DeGaulle by the French miners and the persistent, currently accelerating, electoral swing to the Left in the bourgeois-democratic countries of Europe (most notably Italy, Great Britain, Germany) illustrate this fact.

6. The European workers' attempts to go beyond partial economic struggles to the socialist transformation of society have been frustrated by the resistance and treason of the labor bureaucracy. The four years of reaction in France following the seizure of power by DeGaulle show the terrible price still exacted for tolerance of these misleaders. The Belgian general strike showed once again that "leftist" bureaucrats like Renard would also do all in their power to block or divert a movement capable of threatening capitalist rule. But the experiences of both France and Belgium prove a spontaneous desire of the workers to engage in struggle against the capitalist class—rising on occasion to an open confrontation with the system.

7. The task of the Trotskyists in the European workers' movement is the construction within the existing mass organizations (unions and, in certain instances, parties) of an alternative leadership. Marxists must at all times retain and exercise political and programmatic independence within the context of the organizational form involved. Support to tendencies within the labor bureaucracy, to the extent that they defend essential interests of the working class or reflect class-struggle desires within the labor movement, is correct and even obligatory; but this support is always only conditional and critical. When, as is inevitable, the class struggle reaches the stage at which the "leftist" bureaucrats play a reactionary role, the Marxists must oppose them immediately and openly. The behavior of the centrist tendency around the Belgian journal *La Gauche* in withdrawing during the general strike the correct slogan of a march on Brussels, in order to avoid a

break with Renard, is the opposite of a Marxist attitude toward the labor bureaucracy.

8. The *objective* prospects for development of the Trotskyist movement in Europe are extremely bright. Large numbers of the best young militants in all countries, rejecting the cynical and careerist routinism of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic bureaucrats, are earnestly searching for a *socialist* perspective. They can be won to a movement capable of convincing them, practically and theoretically, that it offers such a perspective. The structural changes stemming from European integration pose the issues of workers' democracy and of the independence of the political and economic organs of the working class as the alternative to state control of the labor movement—and impel the working class into increasingly significant class battles. If, under these objective conditions, the West European Trotskyists fail to grow at a rapid rate it will be because they themselves have adopted the revisionist stance of a satellite of the labor leadership as opposed to a perspective of struggle around the program of workers' democracy.

## SOVIET BLOC

9. Since the Second World War, the countries of Eastern Europe have been developing into modern industrial states. As the proletariat of the deformed workers' states increases in numbers and raises its living standards and cultural level, so grows the irrepressible conflict between the working class and the totalitarian Stalinist bureaucracy. Despite the defeat of the Hungarian workers' revolution, the Soviet-bloc proletariat has won significant reforms, substantially widening its latitude of thought and action. These reforms, however, do not signify a "*process* of reform" or "destalinization process": they were yielded only grudgingly by the unreformable bureaucracy, are under perpetual attack by the faction of "Stalin's heirs," and remain in jeopardy as long as Stalinist bureaucratic rule prevails. These concessions are historically significant only to the extent that they help the proletariat to prepare for the overthrow of the bureaucracy. Real destalinization can be accomplished only by the political revolution.

10. A new revolutionary leadership is emerging among the proletarian youth of the Soviet bloc. Inspired by twin sources—the inextinguishable Leninist tradition and the direct and tangible needs of their class—the new generation is formulating and implementing in struggle the program of workers' democracy. Notable in this regard is the point made recently by a long-time participant in Soviet student life. Regarding the fundamental character to much of the widespread opposition among Russian youth, it was stated, "Because he is a Marxist-Leninist, the Soviet student is much more radically dissatisfied than if he were an Anglo-Saxon pragmatist." (David Burg to *The New York Times*.) The Trotskyists, lineal continuers of the earlier stage, have an indispensable contribution to make to this struggle: the concept of the international party and of a transitional program required to carry through the political revolution. Assistance to the development of a revolutionary leadership in the Soviet bloc through personal and ideological contact is a

primary practical activity for any international leadership worthy of the name.

## COLONIAL REVOLUTION

11. The programmatic significance of workers' democracy is greatest in the backward, formerly colonial, areas of the world: it is precisely in this sector that the program of workers' democracy provides the clearest possible line of demarcation between revolutionary and revisionist tendencies. In all of these countries the struggle for bourgeois democratic rights (freedom of speech, right to organize and strike, free elections) is of great importance to the working class because it lays the basis for the advanced struggle for proletarian democracy and workers' power (workers' control of production, state power based on workers' and peasants' *councils*).

12. The theory of the Permanent Revolution, which is basic to our movement, declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be completed *except* through the victory and extension of the proletarian revolution—the consummation of workers' democracy. The experience of all the colonial countries has vindicated this theory and laid bare the manifest inner contradictions which continually unsettle the present state of the colonial revolution against imperialism. Precisely in those states where the *bourgeois* aims of national independence and land reform have been most fully achieved, the *democratic* political rights of the workers and peasants have not been realized, whatever the social gains. This is particularly true of those countries where the colonial revolution led to the establishment of deformed workers' states: China, North Vietnam... and Cuba. The balance, to date, has been a thwarted success, either essentially empty, as in the neo-colonies of the African model, or profoundly deformed and limited, as in the Chinese example. This present outcome is a consequence of the predominance of specific class forces within the colonial upheavals, and of the class-related forms employed in the struggles. These forms imposed upon the struggle have been, for all their variety, exclusively "from above," *i.e.*, parliamentary ranging through the bureaucratic-military. And the class forces involved have been, of course, bourgeois or petit-bourgeois. A class counterposition is developed out of the complex of antagonisms resulting from failure to fulfill the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The petit-bourgeois leaderships with their bureaucratic forms and empiricist methods are ranged against participation by the workers as a class in the struggle. The involvement of the working class is necessarily centered on winning workers' democracy and requires the leadership of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard with its programmatic consciousness of historic mission. As the working class gains ascendancy in the struggle and takes in tow the more oppressed strata of the petit-bourgeoisie, the Permanent Revolution will be driven forward.

13. The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement. On the pretext of defense of the Cuban Revolution, in itself an obligation for our movement, full unconditional and uncritical support has been given to the Castro government and leadership, despite its petit-bourgeois

nature and bureaucratic behavior. Yet the record of the regime's opposition to the democratic rights of the Cuban workers and peasants is clear: bureaucratic ouster of the democratically-elected leaders of the labor movement and their replacement by Stalinist hacks; suppression of the Trotskyist press; proclamation of the single-party system; and much else. This record stands side by side with enormous initial social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a *hardened* bureaucratic caste.

14. What is true of the revisionists' approach toward the Castro regime is even more apparent in regard to the Ben Bella regime now governing Algeria on the program of a "socialist" revolution in cooperation with French imperialism. The anti-working-class nature of this petit-bourgeois group has been made clear to all but the willfully blind by its forcible seizure of control over the labor movement and its suppression of all opposition parties. Even widespread nationalization and development of management committees seen in the context of the political expropriation of the working class and the economic orientation towards collaboration with France cannot give Algeria the character of a workers' state, but leaves it, on the contrary, a backward capitalist society with a high degree of stratification. As revolutionaries our intervention in both revolutions, as in every existing state, must be in accordance with the position of Trotsky: "We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition" (*In Defense of Marxism*). This can cease to apply only in relation to a government genuinely based on workers' democracy.

15. Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the *proletarian* leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for "building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerrilla road to socialism—historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers.

16. In all backward countries where the proletariat exists as a class, the fundamental principle of Trotskyism is the independence of the working class, its unions,

and its parties, in intransigent opposition to imperialism, to any national liberal bourgeoisie, and to petit-bourgeois governments and parties of all sorts, including those professing "socialism" and even "Marxism-Leninism." Only in this way can the ground be laid for working-class hegemony in the revolutionary alliance with the oppressed petit-bourgeois strata, particularly the peasantry. Similarly, for a working-class party in an advanced country to violate class solidarity with the workers of a backward country by politically endorsing a petit-bourgeois colonial-revolutionary government is a sure sign of centrist opportunism, just as refusal to defend a colonial revolution because of the non-proletarian character of its leadership is a sign of sectarianism or worse.

17. The inter-relationship between bourgeois-democratic and proletarian-democratic struggles in the colonial revolution remains as formulated in the founding program of the Fourth International, a formulation which today retains complete validity:

"It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the "national" bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.

"The relative weight of the individual democratic and transitional demands in the proletariat's struggle, their mutual ties and their order of presentation, is determined by the peculiarities and specific conditions of each backward country and to a considerable extent by the *degree* of its backwardness. Nevertheless, the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution* in the sense definitely imparted to it by the three revolutions in Russia (1905, February 1917, October 1917)." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.)

## CONCLUSIONS:

18. The task of the international revolutionary-Marxist movement today is to re-establish its own real existence. To speak of the "conquest of the masses" as a general guideline internationally is a qualitative overstatement. The tasks before most Trotskyist sections and groups today flow from the need for political clarification in the struggle against revisionism, in the context of a level of work of a generally propagandistic and preparatory nature. An indispensable part of our preparation is the development and strengthening of roots within the broader working-class movement without which the Trotskyists would be condemned to sterile isolation or to political degeneration in the

periods of rising class struggle and in either case unable to go forward in our historic task of leading the working class to power. Above all what can and must be done is the building of a world party firmly based on strong national sections, the assembling of a cadre of working-class militants won and tested in the process of the class struggle and on the firm basis of the revolutionary perspective of the Fourth International, the program to realize workers' democracy—culminating in workers' power. A fundamental statement expanding on this perspective, its opposition to Pabloism, and its relevance in the United States is contained in the Minority's "*In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective*" (in SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 23, No. 4, July 1962).

19. "Reunification" of the Trotskyist movement on the centrist basis of Pabloism in any of its variants

would be a step away from, not toward, the genuine rebirth of the Fourth International. If, however, the majority of the presently existing Trotskyist groups insists on going through with such "reunification," the revolutionary tendency of the world movement should not turn its back on these cadres. On the contrary: it would be vitally necessary to go through this experience with them. The revolutionary tendency would enter a "reunified" movement as a minority faction, with a perspective of winning a majority to the program of workers' democracy. The Fourth International will not be reborn through adaptation to Pabloite revisionism: only by political and theoretical struggle against all forms of centrism can the world party of socialist revolution finally be established.

June 14, 1963

# Spartacist Statement to International Conference

*Remarks made during the discussion of Cliff Slaughter's Political Report at the International Committee Conference by Comrade Robertson on 6 April 1966 on behalf of the Spartacist delegation (with minor editorial corrections).*

In behalf of the Spartacist group, I greet this Conference called by the International Committee. This is the first international participation by our tendency; we are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to hear and exchange views with comrades of the world movement.

Therefore, we feel we have the responsibility to present to you our specific views where they are both relevant and distinctive, without adapting or modifying them for the sake of a false unanimity which would do us all a disservice, since we have, in our opinion, some valuable insights to offer.

We are present at this Conference on the basis of our fundamental agreement with the International Resolution of the I.C.; moreover, the report of Comrade Slaughter was for us solidly communist, unified throughout by revolutionary determination.

## 1. WHAT PABLOISM IS

The central point of the Conference is "The Reconstruction of the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism." Therefore the issue, "What is Pabloism?" has properly been heavily discussed. We disagree that Pabloism is but the expression of organic currents of reformism and Stalinism, having no roots within our movement. We also disagree with *Voix Ouvrière's* view that Pabloism can be explained simply by reference to the petty-bourgeois social composition of the F.I., any more than one could explain the specific nature of a disease by reference solely to the weakened body in which particular microbes had settled.

Pabloism is a revisionist answer to *new* problems posed by the post-1943 Stalinist expansions. And Pabloism has been opposed within the movement by a bad "orthodoxy" represented until the last few years by the example of Cannon. We must answer new challenges in a *truly orthodox* fashion: as Gramsci put it, we must develop Marxist doctrine through its own extension, not by seeking eclectic absorption of new *alien* elements, as Pabloism has done.

The pressure which produced Pabloism began in 1943, following the failure of Leon Trotsky's perspective of the break-up of the Soviet bureaucracy and of new October revolutions in the aftermath of the war: this failure resulted from the inability to forge revolutionary parties. After 1950, Pabloism dominated the F.I.; only when the fruits of Pabloism were clear did a section of the F.I. pull back. In our opinion, the "orthodox" movement has still to face up to the *new* theoretical problems which rendered it susceptible to Pabloism

in 1943-50 and gave rise to a ragged, partial split in 1952-54.

## Inevitable Struggle

The fight against Pabloism is the specific historic form of a necessarily continual struggle against revisionism, which cannot be "finally" resolved within the framework of capitalism. Bernstein, Bukharin, and Pablo, for example, have been our antagonists in particular phases of this struggle, which is both necessary and inevitable, and cannot be "solved."

These are some of our views about Pabloism; they are not exhaustive, for they are shaped by the particular aspects of Pabloism which have loomed large in our own struggle against it.

We take issue with the notion that the present crisis of capitalism is so sharp and deep that Trotskyist revisionism is needed to tame the workers, in a way comparable to the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals. Such an erroneous estimation would have as its point of departure an enormous overestimation of our present significance, and would accordingly be disorienting.

We had better concentrate upon what Lenin said concerning the various, ubiquitous crises which beset imperialism (a system essentially in crisis since before 1914); Lenin pointed out that *there is no impossible situation for the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to throw them out*. Otherwise, "crises" are all in a day's work for the mechanisms and agencies of imperialism in muddling through from one year to the next. Just now, in fact, their task is easier, after the terrible shattering of the Indonesian workers' movement; add to this the other reversals which expose the revisionists' dependence on petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic strata, like the softening of the USSR, the isolation of China, India brought to heel, Africa neatly stabilized, and Castro a captive of Russia and the U.S. The central lesson of these episodes is the necessity to build revolutionary working-class parties, i.e., our ability to intervene in struggle.

## 2. ANTI-PABLOIST TACTICS

A French comrade put it well: "there is no family of Trotskyism." There is only the correct program of revolutionary Marxism, which is not an umbrella. Nevertheless, there are now *four* organized international currents all claiming to be Trotskyist, and spoken of as "Trotskyist" in some conventional sense. This state of affairs must be resolved through splits and fusions. The reason for the present appearance of a "family" is that each of the four tendencies—"United Secretariat," Pablo's personal "Revolutionary Marxist Tendency," Posadas' "Fourth International," and the International Committee—is in some countries the *sole* organized group claiming the banner of Trotskyism. Hence, they draw in all would-be Trotskyists in their areas and

suppress polarization; there is no struggle and differentiation, winning over some and driving others to vacate their pretense as revolutionists and Trotskyists. Thus, when several Spartacist comrades visited Cuba, we found that the Trotskyist group there, part of the Posadas international, were in the main excellent comrades struggling with valor under difficult conditions. The speeches here of the Danish and Ceylonese comrades, representing left-wing sections of the United Secretariat, reflect such problems.

The partial break-up and gross exposure of the United Secretariat forces—the expulsion of Pablo, the Ceylonese betrayal, the SWP's class-collaborationist line on the Vietnamese war, Mandel's crawling before the Belgian Social-Democratic heritage—prove that the time has passed when the struggle against Pabloism could be waged on an international plane *within* a common organizational framework. And the particular experience of our groups in the United States, which were expelled merely for the views they held, with no right of appeal, demonstrates that the United Secretariat lies when it claims Trotskyist all-inclusiveness.

### We Must Do Better

Up to now, we have not done very well, in our opinion, in smashing the Pabloites; the impact of events alone, no matter how favorable objectively or devastating to revisionist doctrines, will not do the job. In the U.S., the break-up of the SWP left wing over its five-year history has been a great gift to the revisionist leadership of the SWP.

At present, our struggle with the Pabloites must be preponderantly from outside their organizations; nevertheless, in many countries a period of united fronts and organizational penetration into revisionist groupings remains necessary in order to consummate the struggle for the actual reconstruction of the F.I., culminating in a world congress to re-found it.

### 3. THEORETICAL CLARIFICATION

The experiences of the Algerian and Cuban struggles, each from its own side, are very important for the light they shed on the decisive distinction between the winning of national independence on a bourgeois basis, and revolutions of the Chinese sort, which lead to a real break from capitalism, yet confined within the limits of a bureaucratic ruling stratum.

Two decisive elements have been common to the whole series of upheavals under Stalinist-type leaderships, as in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, Vietnam: 1) *a civil war of the peasant-guerrilla variety*, which first wrenches the peasant movement from the immediate control of imperialism and substitutes a petty-bourgeois leadership; and then, if victorious, seizes the urban centers and on its own momentum smashes capitalist property relations, nationalizing industry under the newly consolidating Bonapartist leadership; 2) *the absence of the working class* as a contender for social power, in particular, the absence of its revolutionary vanguard: this permits an exceptionally independent role for the petty-bourgeois sections of society which are thus denied the polarization which occurred in the October Revolution, in which the most militant petty-

bourgeois sections were drawn into the wake of the revolutionary working class.

### Political Revolution

However it is apparent that supplemental political revolution is necessary to open the road to *socialist* development, or, in the earlier stages, as in Vietnam today, the *active* intervention of the working class to take hegemony of the national-social struggle. Only those such as the Pabloists who believe that (at least some) Stalinist bureaucracies (e.g., Yugoslavia or China or Cuba) can be a revolutionary socialist leadership need see in this understanding a denial of the proletarian basis for social revolution.

On the contrary, precisely, the petty-bourgeois peasantry under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable could achieve no third road, neither capitalist, nor working class. Instead all that has come out of China and Cuba was a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counter-revolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, the degeneration of the October. That is why we are led to define states such as these as *deformed workers states*. And the experience since the Second World War, properly understood, offers not a basis for revisionist turning away from the perspective and necessity of revolutionary working-class power, but rather it is a great vindication of Marxian theory and conclusions under new and not previously expected circumstances.

### Weakness and Confusion

Many statements and positions of the I.C. show theoretical weakness or confusion on this question. Thus, the I.C. Statement on the fall of Ben Bella declared:

"Where the state takes a bonapartist form on behalf of a weak bourgeoisie, as in Algeria or Cuba, then the type of 'revolt' occurring on June 19-20 in Algiers is on the agenda."

—Newsletter, 26 June 1965.

While the nationalization in Algeria now amounts to some 15 per cent of the economy, the Cuban economy is, in essence, entirely nationalized; China probably has more vestiges of its bourgeoisie. If the Cuban bourgeoisie is indeed "weak," as the I.C. affirms, one can only observe that it must be tired from its long swim to Miami, Florida.

The current I.C. resolution, "Rebuilding the Fourth International," however, puts the matter very well:

"In the same way, the International and its parties are the key to the problem of the class struggle in the colonial countries. The petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders and their Stalinist collaborators restrict the struggle to the level of national liberation, or, at best, to a version of 'socialism in one country,' sustained by subordination to the co-existence policies of the Soviet bureaucracy. In this way, all the gains of the struggle of the workers and peasants, not only in the Arab world, India, South East Asia, etc., but also in *China and Cuba* [our emphasis: Spartacist], are confined within the limits of imperialist domination, or exposed to counter-revolution (the line-up against China, the Cuban missiles crisis, the Vietnam war, etc.)."

Here Cuba is plainly equated with China, not with Algeria.

The document offered by the French section of the I.C. several years ago on the Cuban revolution suffers,

in our view, from one central weakness. It sees the Cuban revolution as analogous to the Spanish experience of the 1930's. This analogy is not merely defective: it emphasizes precisely what is *not* common to the struggles in Spain and in Cuba, that is, the bona fide workers' revolution in Spain which was smashed by the Stalinists.

### Overcoming Bad Method

The Pabloites have been strengthened against us, in our opinion, by this simplistic reflex of the I.C., which must deny the possibility of a social transformation led by the petty-bourgeoisie, in order to defend the validity and necessity of the revolutionary Marxist movement. This is a bad method: at bottom, it equates the deformed workers' state with the road to socialism; it is the Pabloite error turned inside out, and a profound denial of the Trotskyist understanding that the bureaucratic ruling caste is an *obstacle* which must be overthrown by the workers if they are to move forward.

The theoretical analysis of Spartacist concerning the backward portions of the world strengthens, in our estimation, the programmatic positions which we hold in common with the comrades of the I.C. internationally.

## 4. BUILDING U.S. SECTION

The principal aspect of our task which may be obscure to foreign comrades is the unique and critically and immediately important *Negro* question. Without a correct approach to the Negro young militants and workers we will be unable to translate into American conditions the rooting of our section among the masses.

We have fought hard to acquire a theoretical insight in the course of our struggle in the SWP against Black Nationalist schemes which disintegrate a revolutionary perspective—defending the position that the *Negroes in the U.S. are an oppressed color-caste concentrated in the main in the working class as a super-exploited layer*. And we have acquired a considerable experience for our small numbers and despite a composition which is still only about 10 per cent black. We have a nucleus in Harlem, New York City. We intervened in several ways in the Black Ghetto outbursts over the summers of 1964 and 65, acquiring valuable experience.

[The balance of the remarks was not written out before delivery; it is given as reconstructed from the rough notes. The issue of propaganda and agitation was not significantly gone into in the report, but is in the Spartacist draft document on tasks assembled the night before the oral report was given, hence the relevant section of that draft is also quoted below.]

Our draft resolution before you states regarding our Southern work that, "Perhaps our most impressive achievement to date has been the building of several SL organizing committees in the deep South, including New Orleans. This is a modest enough step in absolute terms and gives us no more than a springboard for systematic work. What is impressive is that *no other*

organization claiming to be revolutionary has any base at all in the deep South today."

### Black and White

The race question in the U.S. is different from that in England. In fact it is part way between the situation in England and that in South Africa. Thus some 2 per cent of the British population is coloured; in South Africa over 2/3rds of the people are black. In the U.S. if some 20 per cent of the population is Negro and Spanish-speaking, then within the working class, given the overwhelming concentration of whites in the upper classes, the others comprise something like 25 or 30 per cent. What this means is that in England the intensity of exploitation is spread unevenly, but rather smoothly throughout an essentially homogeneous working class. At the other extreme in South Africa, the white workers with ten times the income of the black, live in good part themselves off the blacks, thus imposing an almost insuperable barrier to common class actions (witness the European and Moslem workers' relations in Algeria). In the U.S. the qualitatively heavier burden within the class is borne by the black workers. In quiescent times they tend to be divided from the white workers as in the lower levels of class struggle such as are now prevalent. Therefore the *black youth* in America are the only counterparts today to the sort of militant white working class youth found in the British Young Socialists.

### Uniting the Class

However, we are well aware that at a certain point in the class struggle the main detachments of the workers, as such, i.e., black and white in common class organizations such as trade unions, become heavily involved. Every strike shows this. In preparation for the massive class struggles ahead we have begun to build fractions in certain accessible key sections of the working class. But today the winning over of young black militants is the short cut to acquiring proletarian cadres as well; virtually all such militants are part of the working class.

Finally, we know that under the specific conditions in the U.S. to build a genuinely revolutionary party will require the involvement in its ranks and leadership of a large proportion, perhaps a majority, of the most exploited and oppressed, the black workers.

### A Fighting Propaganda Group

The Spartacist draft theses state: "The tactical aim of the SL in the next period is to build a sufficiently large propaganda group capable of agitational intervention in every social struggle in the U.S. as a necessary step in the building of the revolutionary party. For this intervention we seek an increase in our forces to at least tenfold. From our small force of around 100 we move toward our goal in three parallel lines of activity: splits and fusions with other groups, direct involvement in mass struggle, and the strengthening and education of our organization."



Photos by Ron Burkholder

"Founding the Spartacist League," subject of the public meeting at the Conference. Speakers from left to right were national chairman James Robertson, West Coast editor Geoffrey White, and Central Committee member Paul Gaillard. A comrade from the deep South also spoke. New York organizer Albert Nelson chaired.

# Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League

## 1. THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE

The Spartacist League of the U.S. is a revolutionary organization which, as part of the international revolutionary movement, is committed to the task of building the party which will lead the working class to the victory of the socialist revolution in the United States.

Only the proletariat, through the seizure of political power and the destruction of capitalism in all countries, can lay the basis for the elimination of exploitation and the resolution of the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of the world economy and national-state barriers. Capitalism has long since outlived its progressive historical role of creating a modern industrial economy. Now in order to maintain their rule, the national capitalist classes must intensify national and racial divisions, through imperialism oppress the colonial peoples and impoverish the masses of the entire world, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and redivision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out. In its final frenzied effort to maintain its class rule, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to plunge humanity into a nuclear holocaust or totalitarian oppression of unprecedented ferocity. The United States of America is today the keystone of the entire international capitalist order.

On the other hand, the victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of social classes, and eliminate forever the drive for war inherent in the world economic system of capitalism. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society,

resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, the limitless expansion of freedom in every area, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all.

## 2. THE CRISIS OF PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

History has shown that the self-emancipation of the working class, and therewith the oppressed of all the earth, balances on the question of leadership. The economic preconditions for socialism have long since been reached. But the contradictions of capitalism in its epoch of imperialist decay produce not only wars, but also revolutionary opportunities. The success or failure of the working class to achieve victory in these historic opportunities depends upon the organization and scientific consciousness of the struggling masses, i.e., on *revolutionary leadership*. Only a revolutionary leadership—the indispensable weapon of the working people—has proved to have the strategy and determination to lead the working masses to victory. The responsibility for the defeats suffered by the working class and the abortion of previous revolutionary opportunities lies at the door of treacherous Social-Democratic and Stalinist misleaders. But the revolutionary will of the proletariat *will* triumph! The crisis of leadership *will* be solved! It is to the solution of the crisis of proletarian leadership that the Spartacist League directs its work.

## 3. THE THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE

The Spartacist League continues the revolutionary traditions of the international working-class movement

exemplified in the work of revolutionists such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Liebknecht. Above all we look to the experience of the Bolshevik Party which culminated in the Russian Revolution of 1917, the only revolution as yet made by the working class.

We seek in particular to carry forward the international working-class perspectives of Marxism as developed in theory and practice by V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and by the Transitional Program and other documents adopted by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International. These materials are the indispensable documentary codification of the communist movement internationally, and are fundamental to the revolutionary tasks of our organization.

We also look for inspiration to the example of such revolutionists in the United States as F.A. Sorge, Vincent St. John, Daniel De Leon, Louis Fraina, and James P. Cannon. The Spartacist League is the continuator of the revolutionary heritage of the early Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. The immediate origins of the Spartacist League are in the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP which based itself primarily upon the statement *In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective* and the document *World Prospect for Socialism*.

#### **4. THE VANGUARD ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS AND THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM**

Central to the Marxist perspective of world socialism is the vanguard role of the working class, and particularly the decisive weight of the proletariat of the industrialized countries. Only the working class has the social power and compulsion of clear objective interest to liberate mankind from oppression. Having no stake in maintaining the bourgeois order, its enormous power rests in its productive role, its numbers and organization.

The continued rule of a small handful of capitalists is maintained only through keeping the working class divided and confused as to its true situation. In the United States, the ruling class has succeeded in creating deep divisions along racial lines. The Black workers as a doubly-oppressed race-color caste require special modes of struggle as long as racist attitudes continue to permeate the outlook of the working class as a whole. Socialism in this country will be achieved only by the common struggle of Black and white workers under the leadership of a unified revolutionary vanguard.

Historic experience has shown that the road to socialism can be opened only by the intervention of the masses in the course of history and the creation of dual power culminating in the destruction of the capitalist state and the victory of the workers state and development of a new social order. The police, military, bureaucratic, juridical, and political apparatus of the old order will be replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat based on councils of working people and supported by the workers' armed strength. Such a state

would defend itself against the counterrevolutionary efforts of the deposed ruling class to return to power and would reorganize the economy along rational lines. As the economic basis of social classes dwindled, the workers state would more and more assume a purely administrative function, eventually withering away with the advent of classless communism.

#### **5. THE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION**

Capitalism is a world economic system which has created an international working class with identical class interests the world over. The international character of the working class gives it a potentially enormous superiority over the bourgeoisie as capitalism operates by anarchistic methods which set one national capitalist class against another and constantly create new unevennesses and crises. In order to realize this superiority, the proletariat needs an international party to unify the class across the national and sectional boundaries which divide it and to coordinate the interdependent struggles of the workers of every country. While the revolution may begin in a single country, any partial victory will be only finally secured with the spread of revolution to other countries and the eventual world dominance of socialist economic organization. The Fourth International is the world party of the socialist revolution, whose program and purposes remain as valid today as at its founding in 1938, despite its present organizational disarray. We stand with all those groups seeking the rebirth of the Fourth International and, as a first step, the creation of a *bona fide* International Committee of revolutionary Trotskyists based upon a real and living democratic centralism.

#### **6. THE NECESSITY FOR REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS**

The ruling class has at its command a monopoly of the means of violence, its dominant political and bureaucratic apparatus, its enormous wealth and connections, and its control of education, the mass media and all other institutions of capitalist society. Against such a force a workers state can be brought into existence only by a proletariat fully conscious of its tasks, organized to carry them out, and determined to defend its conquests against the counterrevolutionary violence of the ruling class. The decisive struggle—the conquest of state power—requires *political* consciousness. Through its acquisition of political consciousness the working class ceases to be merely a class in itself and becomes a class *for* itself. Such consciousness is not spontaneously generated in the course of the day-to-day class struggles of the workers; it must be brought to the workers by the revolutionary party. Thus it is the task of the revolutionary party to forge the proletariat into a sufficient political force by infusing it with a consciousness of its real situation, educating it in the historical lessons of the class struggle, tempering it in ever deepening struggles, destroying its illusions, steeling its revolutionary will and self-confidence, and organizing the overthrow of all forces standing in the way of the

conquest of power. A conscious working class is the decisive force in history.

## 7. THE BOURGEOIS BASIS OF REVISIONISM

Insofar as revolutionary consciousness is not prevalent among the workers, their consciousness is determined by the ideology of the ruling class. Objectively capitalism rules through finance capital, its monopoly of the means of violence, and its control of all existing social institutions. But it prefers, when possible, to rule through the dominance of its ideas among the oppressed, fostering illusions and concealing its bloody essence. The ideas of the bourgeoisie penetrate into the very movements and organizations of the workers through the agency of the petty-bourgeois labor lieutenants—particularly the parasitic trade union, Social-Democratic, and Stalinist bureaucracies which are based on the “aristocratic” upper strata of the working class. Enjoying privileges not accorded to the vast majority of workers, these misleaders betray the masses of working people through class collaboration, social-patriotism, and chauvinist-racist policies which sabotage proletarian understanding and solidarity. If not replaced by revolutionary leaderships, they will allow the organizations of the workers to become impotent in the fight for the economic needs of the workers under conditions of bourgeois democracy or will allow these organizations to be destroyed by victorious fascism.

The degeneration and capitulation of tendencies within the Marxist movement has been of especially critical value to the preservation of imperialist rule. Submission to the pressure of bourgeois society has repeatedly thrust nominally Marxist currents towards *revisionism*, the process of ruling out Marxism's essential conclusions. Bernsteinian revisionism, Menshevism, Stalinism, and its Maoist variant are all illustrations of this process which constitutes a bridge to overtly reformist practices.

Within the Trotskyist movement the problems posed by the post-1943 Stalinist expansions have given rise to the revisionist current of Pabloism. Pabloism is characterized chiefly by a renunciation of the necessity for revolutionary leadership and an adaption to existing petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leaderships. This deterioration of theory has led to the degeneration of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky, and to its organizational breakup.

The Spartacist League, by contributing to the theoretical clarification of the Marxist movement and to the reforging of the workers' necessary organizational weapons, upholds the revolutionary proletarian principles of Marxism and will carry them forward to the vanguard of the working class.

## 8. THE DEFORMED WORKERS STATES AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

Historic gains have been made in expelling imperialism from and destroying capitalist property relations in certain backward countries, i.e., the degenerated workers state of Russia, and the deformed workers states in East Europe, and of China, North Korea, North Viet Nam, and Cuba. The nationalization of the

means of production, establishment of economic planning, and the state monopoly of foreign trade have brought tangible increases in the living standards of the masses together with advances in industrial growth in spite of the hostility of imperialism. On the other hand, the failure as yet of the proletariat to successfully carry through a social revolution in any of the advanced countries, the relatively low labor productivity and cultural levels of the workers states compared to the leading capitalist countries, and the numerical preponderance of the peasant class have allowed the formation of bureaucratic ruling castes which exclude the working class from political power and which are susceptible to the development of capitalist restorationist tendencies. These privileged bureaucracies, themselves a reflection of the continued domination of capitalism on a world scale, stand as a barrier to the elimination of class differences within their own national boundaries and the achievement of socialism on a world scale; through their increasingly nationalist deviations, they weaken these conquests of the working class in the face of imperialism and open the way for the repenetration of capitalist economic forms.

The Spartacist League stands for the unconditional defense of these countries against all attempts of imperialism to reestablish its control. At the same time we assert the necessity for the working class to take *direct* control and defense of these states into their own hands through *political revolution* and thus sweep away the internal barriers to the advance towards socialism. Only the spread of revolution internally and internationally can successfully maintain these partial conquests of the workers. It is an immediate and pressing necessity to build sections of the Fourth International in the deformed workers states to guide the struggle of the workers for political power and to coordinate their struggles with those of the proletariat in the advanced and colonial countries.

## 9. THE COLONIAL REVOLUTION AND THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The partial character of the anti-capitalist revolutions in the colonial world over the past two decades (China, Cuba, North Viet Nam and North Korea) leads us to reaffirm the Marxist-Leninist concept of the proletariat as the key to the socialist revolution. Although existing petty-bourgeois nationalist-led movements against imperialism must be defended, the task of communists is to lead the active intervention of the working class to take hegemony over the national-social struggle. The struggle by the proletarian leadership for *self-determination* of the oppressed nations is a powerful tool to break the grip of petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders on the masses. The Spartacist League fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism. Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create

bureaucratic anti-working-class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions towards socialism. Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the Permanent Revolution which declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can the colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation.

## 10. THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY: ITS PROGRAM, ORGANIZATION, AND DISCIPLINE

*“Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.”* The revolutionary party is not only the instrument for bringing political consciousness to the proletariat, it is also the main offensive and guiding force through which the working class makes and consolidates the socialist revolution. The revolutionary party is the general staff of the revolution. Its leading cadre have been trained and tested in the class struggle; it has gained the leadership of the class on the basis of its program and revolutionary determination; it has understood the whole of the past in order to assess the present situation with crystal clarity; it recognizes and boldly responds to the revolutionary moment when it comes, that moment when the forces of the proletariat are most confident and prepared and the forces of the old order most demoralized and disorganized. In the revolutionary party is crystallized the aspiration of the masses to obtain their freedom; it symbolizes their revolutionary will and is the instrument of their victory.

The program of the Spartacist League, as part of the Fourth International, is *transitional* in nature. It forms a bridge in the course of daily struggle between the present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. From the consciousness of the working class today it formulates its demands and tasks in a way that leads inalterably to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. The *united front* of differing and otherwise hostile organizations of the working class is a primary tactic in unsettled periods to both mobilize a broad mass in struggle and to strengthen the authority

of the vanguard party within the class. The transitional program directs the struggle ever more openly and decisively against the very bases of the bourgeois regime and mobilizes the masses for the proletarian revolution.

The organizational principle of the Spartacist League is *democratic centralism*, a balance between internal democracy and functional discipline. As a combat organization, the revolutionary vanguard must be capable of unified and decisive action at all times in the class struggle. All members must be mobilized to carry out the decisions of the majority; authority must be centralized in its selected leadership which interprets tactically the organization's program. Internal democracy permits the collective determination of the party's line in accord with the needs felt by the party's ranks who are closest to the class as a whole. The right to factional democracy is absolutely vital to a living movement. The very existence of this right helps to channel differences into less absorbing means of resolution.

The *discipline* of the Spartacist League flows from its program and purpose, the victory of the socialist revolution and the liberation of all mankind.

## 11. We Will Intervene to Change History!

*“Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action.”* The Spartacist League, as a national section of the international Trotskyist movement, is in the forefront of the struggle for a socialist future. Our day-to-day preparation of the working class and our intervention and leadership in the decisive moments of the class struggle will propel the struggle forward to the final victory. *“To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International.”* These are the rules of the Spartacist League as we go forward in the historical task of leading the working class to the victory of socialism in the United States!

—General line unanimously adopted by Founding Conference, 3 September 1966.

—Final draft approved by Political Bureau, 8 November 1966.

# BLACK AND RED—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom

## I. INTRODUCTION

The struggle of the Negro people for freedom and equality has been the most dynamic struggle going on in the United States in the past ten years. It has taken place in the context of, and has been conditioned by, the general passivity of the organized labor movement. The militancy of the Negro people and the tempo of their struggle increased enormously in the fifties and early sixties, but the achievements have been minimal—limited entirely to token advancement of democratic rights. In fact, the fundamental conditions of life for the vast majority of Black people, particularly in the key areas of employment, wages, housing and education, have *worsened*. The Civil Rights movement, geared to the aspirations of the small Negro middle class, though professing to speak for all Negroes, has been stopped dead in its tracks in dealing with these fundamental needs, and in fact has functioned partly as a brake on the unorganized and leaderless pressures from below. In the absence of an alternative, revolutionary, leadership these pressures and frustrations explode from time to time in undirected, non-political outbursts that change nothing. Thus in the midst of dissipating militancy, disillusionment in struggle and seemingly vain aspirations among the black masses, the movement is at an impasse. A crisis of leadership is the essence of this impasse.

### Economic Prospects

At present U.S. capitalism is attempting to maintain and increase its profits by placing the cost of the Viet Nam war on the working class.

The prolonged and extensive expansion of the productive capacity of the U.S. following upon the Second World War was conditioned by the massive destruction engendered by the imperialist slaughter, and by the world-wide demand for goods which resulted. The period of rapid capitalist development since the war has been marked by periodic mild recessions and interspersed by long periods of boom. Recently the curve of world capitalist development has begun to point downward. The rise in inventories, the drop in investments in capital goods production, and in industrial production, indicate that a world-wide economic downturn is at hand.

While economic indicators pointed to a downturn in 1966, the boom was prolonged another year by the political decision to escalate the aggressive war against

Viet Nam. A decision by the U.S. ruling class for another massive escalation could again serve to postpone the downturn.

The upsurge of militant strike action testifies to the growing refusal of workers to submit to further erosion of their living standards by the inflationary pressures generated by the war on a booming economy, and to their readiness to fight for real gains. Black workers, bearing an even greater disproportionate share of the burden of the war, would be the most militant and ready for greater struggle.

On the other hand, if the war is ended or even continued at the present level of war spending, the economic downturn would prevail. While the black workers would be hit hardest by the ensuing unemployment, lay-offs would also rapidly accelerate among white workers. Again, this poses the perspective of a unity in struggle of black and white workers, and a leap in the level of consciousness of basic sectors of the working class.

### Black Workers and Imperialism

Thus the struggle for Negro freedom takes place not only within the national arena, but within an international context. U.S. capitalism, which doubly exploits black workers, is the cornerstone of world imperialism. The abandonment of a perspective which looks to the *working class* to lead the struggle for the liberation of mankind from oppression is the hallmark of all revisionism. The Pabloist concept that the epicenter of world revolution has shifted to the colonial countries, the Maoist concept that backward countries will encircle and conquer the industrial countries, and the black nationalist concept that the Negro people are essentially part of the movement of African nationalism and will be liberated by the industrially backward countries are all revisionist concepts.

The bankruptcy of revisionism has become apparent with the smashing of the so-called "Third World," "Socialist" regimes and the tragic massacres of the masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The definitive victory of the world revolution will only be secured by a victory of the workers in the advanced capitalist countries. The U.S. working class now has "the most revolutionary of all revolutionary tasks," the destruction of the bastion of world imperialism, the U.S. capitalist system. To the extent that the black workers, the most militant in the U.S. working class, become infused with a revolutionary socialist perspective, and

thereby become able to provide leadership to the class as a whole, they play a vital role in the success of the world revolution.

## II. INTEGRATION OR SEPARATION?

From their arrival in this country, the Negro people have been *an integral part* of American class society while at the same time *forcibly segregated* at the bottom of this society. As chattel slaves they were the labor force on which the Southern planter aristocracy maintained its economic and political dominance until the Civil War. Various factors—the variety of African origins, the deliberate dispersal of slaves with common tribal backgrounds, the fact that most slaves brought from Africa were male—facilitated the total destruction of African languages, social institutions and cultural memories among the slaves and allowed the imposition of a new language and new habits to fit the needs of the economic system into which they were being integrated. In particular, an eclectic Christianity was early instilled to teach the slave to meekly accept his position.

Escape from slavery, not return to Africa, was the goal of Negro efforts toward freedom during the pre-Civil War period. In the Civil War itself, when the political needs of the vigorous and growing capitalist class in the North came into fundamental conflict with the continued political dominance of the Southern planters, freed slaves played an important part in the victory of the progressive forces and destruction of the slave system.

Capitalist and slave alike stood to gain from the suppression of the planter aristocracy but beyond that had no further common interests. In fact, it was the Negroes themselves who, within the protective framework provided by the Reconstruction Acts and the military dictatorship of the occupying Union army, carried through the social revolution and destruction of the old planter class. However, the Compromise of 1877 and the formation of a powerful new bloc of Northern industrial capital and subordinate Southern Bourbons allowed the majority of ex-slaves to be forced back onto the land as tenant farmers or share-croppers.

### Southern Populism

Nevertheless, nearly a quarter of the ex-slaves were able to acquire their own small farms. The white small farmers, who had also been “freed” by the destruction of the slave system, were driven in some cases to join hands with their black counterparts in the defense of their common interests against the new plantation masters. Yet this tentative union—the Southern Populist Movement—was doomed to failure. The small-farmer class itself could not be a real contender for political power in a capitalist society, while the dynamics of private farming inevitably brought about sharp competition among the farmers. This competition was exploited by the new political alliance of big planters, Southern capitalists and certain Northern financial interests, in particular, investors in Southern railroads, land, mining and timber. This bloc initiated a campaign of violent race hatred among their political opponents which succeeded in destroying the developing black-white unity. In the context of the new racism the Black

people were disenfranchised, stripped of all legal rights, and permanently denied access to adequate education. Those setbacks were codified into a series of laws institutionalizing the rigid segregation which has been the dominant feature of the South ever since. It was the racism launched during this period which has since kept wages in the South at approximately half those of the rest of the country (and the wages of Negroes at half those of whites in the country as a whole), prevented effective union organization and perpetuated a crushing poverty on the land for black and white alike, though



**Cops harass 1963 Birmingham demonstrators.**

today the Southern economy has come entirely under the control of Northern capital.

By the First World War 90 per cent of all Negroes still lived in the South, though by this time nearly one million had made their way from the land into hundreds of Southern towns. Then, with the great expansion of demand for unskilled labor unleashed by the War, a vast migration of black workers into the North took place, and for the first time a sizeable portion of Black people became integrated into the mainstream of American capitalist society. This integration did not last. With the 1921 recession the new workers found themselves forced out of their jobs. This, along with the extremely harsh conditions of Northern ghetto life—instead of the “Promised Land” which many had expected—caused thousands in despair and frustration to turn to the “Garvey Movement” built on the thesis that the Negro would never receive justice in the white man’s land and calling for a separatist solution. This first important mass movement with nationalist aims folded later in the ’20’s due to internal contradictions, the imprisonment of its leader and the recovery in Negro employment in the boom years following the post-war depression. Far more significant during this decade in terms of American social reality was the successful organization of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

During the ’30’s once again black workers were forced out of the economy in large numbers—but this time not alone. Radical ideologies and the gains of mass struggle made a deep impact among workers of both races. The organization of the CIO—the culmination of the upsurge in labor struggle—was a joint venture and bound large numbers of the less skilled and unprotected black workers to the most advanced section of the proletariat. Yet the betrayals of the Communist Party during the war years helped wipe out Negro gains and

served to discredit *all* radical movements, even though a significant number of Negro workers came into the Socialist Workers Party at this time. The subordination of the CIO to the bourgeois Democratic Party and Cold War ideology, its affiliation with the conservative AFL and its failure in the context of unexampled prosperity and labor passivity to come to the defense of the Negro freedom struggle have caused black militants to lose confidence in the organized labor movement or in the perspective of common struggle in the future. The SWP's failure to take a clear position on integration vs. separation contributed to its loss of hundreds of black workers and of the opportunity to forge a significant black Trotskyist cadre.

But the objective basis for future common struggle of black and white *workers* not only exists but, unlike the Populist Movement of black and white farmers, holds the promise of success, while struggle along nationalist lines is a delusion and an impossibility. The vast majority of Black people—both North and South—are today workers who, along with the rest of the American working class, must sell their labor power in order to secure the necessities of life to those who buy labor power in order to make profit. The buyers of labor power, the capitalists, are a small minority whose rule is maintained only by keeping the majority who labor for them divided and misled. The fundamental division created deliberately along racial lines has kept the Negro workers, who entered American capitalism at the bottom, still at the bottom. Ultimately their road to freedom lies only through struggle with the rest of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish in its place an egalitarian, socialist society.

Yet the struggle of the Black people of this country for freedom, while part of the struggle of the working class as a whole, is more than that struggle. The Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class. Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs and problems necessitating additional and special forms of struggle. It is this part of the struggle which has begun today, and from which the most active and militant sections of Black people will gain a deep education and experience in the lessons of struggle. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution.

### “Pseudo-Nationalism”

Black nationalism accepts present American class society and working-class divisions as unchanging and unchangeable, and from this static vantage point separation is seen as the only solution. Yet this solution is unrealizable in terms of the realities of American class society. True nationalism is, in essence, the struggle to establish an independent area for the development of a *separate political economy*. Historically it has come at those times and in those places, usually within a common geographical area among those with a common language and cultural heritage, when an emerging capitalist class must free itself from the shackles of a

decayed feudal economy or from external imperialism in order to develop freely, i.e., in order to exploit its “own” working class. But there is practically no black capitalist class in America. Instead, the so-called “Black Bourgeoisie” consists in reality of a small, weak, petty-bourgeoisie catering to service needs arising out of segregation, and of white collar workers—which latter are rapidly achieving a remarkable degree of integration into the white middle class, and thus have an identity of interests and outlook far removed from those of the majority of working-class Negroes.

The present mood among black ghetto youth, “nationalism,” could more correctly be termed “pseudo-nationalism” since the conditions fostering genuine nationalist sentiment do not exist. This mood arises from growing racial self-confidence and pride—a positive development as it is a precondition for real combativeness—coupled with bitterness at the failure of the struggle to gain significant results without support from the rest of the working class. It develops in the context of a generally correct criticism of the middle-class-oriented Civil Rights leadership while an alternate, proletarian leadership has not yet been created. The dominant feature of this pseudo-nationalism, like all variants of black nationalism, is its inability to generate a program of struggle—a further proof of its spurious nature. Such “nationalism” is divisive and interferes with the development of class consciousness and a program to sharpen class struggle.

Thus the Negro struggle in America is more directly related to the class struggle than any essentially national question could be. The falling rate of profit makes it impossible for the ruling class, even during a spurt of unequalled prosperity, to meet the demands of this super-exploited layer for improvements in the basic conditions of their lives. Hence *any* steps forward in this struggle immediately pose the class question and the need for class struggle in its sharpest form.

## III. BROAD TASKS

### Transitional Organization

The necessity for mass organizations of strata of working people with special needs and problems was recognized by the Leninist Comintern, which worked out the tactics of the relationship of such transitional organizations to the revolutionary party and to the class struggle as a whole. These organizations are a *part* of the revolutionary movement, and their struggles advance the overall class struggle. They are neither *substitutes* for nor *opponents* of the vanguard party of the entire class, but are *linked to* the vanguard party through their most conscious cadres. Examples of transitional organizations are militant women's organizations, revolutionary youth leagues, and radical trade-union caucuses. Such a transitional organization is necessary for Negro workers at a time when large sections of the working class are saturated with race hatred.

With its program of transitional struggle around the felt needs of a section of the class, the organization mobilizes serious struggle by the largest possible number. Such an organization, while not itself “socialist,” leads those participating in its struggles to the

realization that a fundamental overturn of the existing society is necessary.

In the Northern ghettos a great organizational vacuum exists. The objective basis of the traditional middle-class organizations such as CORE and the NAACP is growing ever narrower as more and more of the Negro middle class is able to flee the ghetto. (For example, over the past decade, 40,000 employed Negroes moved from Harlem into other, more "desirable" parts of the city or suburbs, where their incomes were sufficient to break some of the barriers of segregation. The Harlem CORE chapter recently has had only a few active members who actually reside in Harlem!) As the objective basis of these groups narrows, they grow subjectively ever less related to the needs and interests of the black masses. This is reflected in the move towards an increasingly consistent position by the middle-class groups that since the basic problems are economic, government intervention—secured by pressures on or within the Democratic Party—must be the primary aim of the Civil Rights movement. In 1964-65 this took the guise of "Liberal Coalition" politics as expounded most articulately by Bayard Rustin, and the delivery of the black vote to Johnson. This year's guise are the more militant-sounding slogans of "Black Power" and "independent political action" as interpreted by certain Northern Civil Rights leaders to mean black judges, black cops and black Democrats or, as regards "independent" political action, to mean a black voting bloc which will supposedly "swing" its vote to whichever capitalist party promises the most to Negroes. The ultimate meaning of the latter is to build support for Bobby Kennedy's projected presidential candidacy. As the old Civil Rights movement becomes more and more subordinated to the political arm of the very forces responsible for the oppression of the Negro people, it will serve increasingly to function *solely* as a brake on real struggle and a diversion from revolutionary alternatives.

### Oppose Federal Infiltration

Furthermore, these reformist organizations have already become so exposed in their ineffectiveness, even in gaining token reforms, that the government has found it necessary to create its own reformist organizations in order that *some* alternative to proletarian organization and program will exist. The millions of dollars poured into HARYOU-ACT have succeeded in confusing or buying off a large number of potential youth leaders in Harlem through a combination of money and pseudo-radical nationalistic rhetoric. The so-called "anti-poverty" projects have also served to foster a certain amount of illusions among the ghetto masses. The witchhunt in Mobilization for Youth when some idealistic young people tried to use it as a vehicle for support to rent strikes, school boycotts and community actions against police brutality shows clearly the outcome of attempting to use government fronts as instruments of real struggle.

The vast black ghettos of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and numerous other cities are wide open for the formation of a proletarian mass organization of struggle. Only the smallness of the black revolutionary cadre, together with the temporary

aftermath of police terror during the "riots," and in some cases sectarianism, has kept such organizations small. The Spartacist League will do all in its power to encourage and aid such organizations, and favors the unity in action of all working-class-oriented organizations in the ghetto.

### Ghetto Defense

For the last three summers ghettos across the country have been rocked by elemental, spontaneous,



Racists in Chicago attack civil rights march.

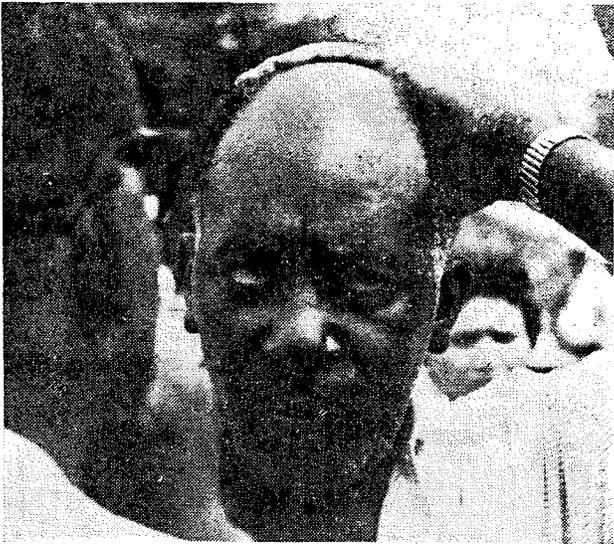
non-political upheavals against the prevailing property relations and against the forces of the state which protect these relations. In no case have they been genuine race riots. The risings have usually been provoked by the police, in the course of "normal" brutalities (Watts 1965) or in an effort to crush a movement which is exceeding the bounds set for it by bourgeois society (Harlem 1964). As the struggle against the police expands, the black street-fighters turn on the merchants and shopkeepers, the visible representatives of the oppressive class society, and smash whatever cannot be carried off. Yet despite the vast energies expanded and the casualties suffered, these outbreaks have changed nothing. This is a reflection of the urgent need for organizations of real struggle, which can organize and direct these energies toward conscious political objectives. It is the duty of a revolutionary organization to intervene where possible to give these outbursts political direction.

The Northern ghettos will be organized only by revolutionary ghetto organizations. The beginning of such organization is possible now, while the form remains open. One form is the building of block and neighborhood councils based on tenants councils. Experience has shown that tenants councils must be introduced to the *whole* transitional program and tied to as broad an organizational base as possible if they are to achieve stability. Block and neighborhood councils of this sort would be able to speak for a whole area, put forward their demands, and call out the people in militant actions to back up those demands.

One of the most important functions of such representative popular organs would be the organiza-

tion and direction of effective self-defense against police and racist violence. The potential for rapid growth by the American fascist movement adds to the seriousness of this task, given the sharp contradictions confronting U.S. capitalism in the next period. Ghetto action might take the form of block patrols of neighborhood men, preferably union members with past military training. The need for the immediate formation of such patrols is shown by the indiscriminate beatings and killings by police during the suppression of ghetto "riots."

Such terror will be unleashed whenever the black people approach a breakthrough in changing the fundamental condition of their lives. Block patrols



**Charles Sims of the Deacons for Defense**

would also help prevent the day-to-day acts of terror against individual ghetto residents by racist cops and would serve to control the crime victimizing ghetto residents which the capitalist cops ignore or participate in. Such neighborhood patrols will become a part of that workers militia which will defend the future American proletarian revolution.

### **Independent Political Action**

The struggle for black freedom demands the total break of the Negro people from the Democratic Party, the preferred political weapon of the forces which profit from the suppression and super-exploitation of the Negro people. The only alternative is a new party based on the needs of the poor and working people. The formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the South, initially with a mass base, indicated the potential and feeling which exist for independent political action. However, the MFDP, as its name indicated, was not independent but was simply a means whereby certain Southern and Northern civil rights leaders hoped to pursue their ambitions within the national Democratic Party at the expense of the interests of the Negro people. This situation has since been recognized by the most militant sections of the Southern movement, and the party has now lost its mass support.

The formation of the Black Panther Party in Lowndes County, Alabama, was a step forward inasmuch as it

was consciously organized *in opposition to* the Democratic Party. Based on the sharecroppers and farmers of a single rural blackbelt county, its program is by these very factors limited to reforms realizable within the system such as improved schools and roads, development of farmer cooperatives, and purchase of land for dispossessed sharecroppers. In order to go beyond these albeit needed reforms and pose a real challenge to the Southern system and the basic structure of society, the idea of independent political action must be extended to the cities and developed among workers. The perspective of the Black Panther Party for a federation of county-wide parties must be replaced by a perspective for a South-wide Freedom Labor Party.

Only by the development of a working-class program and by explicitly opening the door to support by white workers can real political independence be maintained, real gains won and the basis laid for eventual working-class political unity. This unity will come about when the exploited section of the white South is driven into opposition and is compelled to forego color prejudice in order to struggle along class lines against its real enemies—the owners of land and industry.

The creation of a South-wide Freedom Labor Party would serve as a tremendous impetus for similar action by Northern workers. The struggle for such a party would necessitate a rank-and-file revolt within the organized labor movement to overthrow the present labor bureaucracy. In the absence of a labor party, the Spartacist League supports all independent candidates whose programs are based on the needs of the ghettos.

### **Negroes as Workers**

In this period when primary attention has been focused on the ghetto, the importance of Negro militants within the organized labor movement must not be overlooked; black unionists form an immediate, existing, organizational link with the white section of the working class. Militant Negro and other super-exploited minority workers together with their labor partisans must organize within and without the existing unions in order to fight for their urgent needs. Union bureaucrats, with their public lip service to the Civil Rights movement, will be hard put to suppress "Civil Rights" caucuses within their unions or condemn Labor Civil Rights Committees as "dual unions." Yet under conditions in which struggle reaches revolutionary heights, such committees would be precursors to factory committees. Should dual power be posed, these in turn would be vital elements in workers councils and, in victory, of workers power.

In addition to anti-discrimination demands, the "CR" caucuses should raise the following demands:

(1) *Organization of the Unorganized.* At the same time this demand is raised, the black worker militants should themselves begin this organization.

(2) *Organization by the Unions of the Unemployed.* Again, this demand should be accompanied by the actual organization of unemployed workers by the black worker militants. The aim is to create links between the ghetto and the labor movement and to counteract the lumpenization process proceeding apace in the ghettos among the unemployed. Welfare recipients should be organized around a program calling for full employ-

ment and their organizations should be associated with welfare worker unions.

(3) *For a Sliding Scale of Wages Controlled by Labor.* All workers are being hit hard by inflation caused by the war in Viet Nam. The bourgeoisie's attempts to freeze wages to save profits must be countered by the demand that wages be scaled according to the purchasing power of the dollar, with the power of the sliding scale in the hands of workers' committees, not bourgeois agencies.

(4) *Fight for the Shorter Work Week.* The rate of Negro unemployment is twice that of white workers, and the gap is increasing. Yet white workers also face the threat of unemployment due to automation. The struggle for *more* jobs for *all*, rather than competition between black and white workers for a few jobs here or there, can unite workers. At the same time, the demand for a shorter work week poses racial equality in union hiring without making the white worker fear for his job.

(5) *Oppose Government Intervention.* At all times we oppose using the Government to "integrate" unions, and rely solely on the working class for this task. Such ruling class tactics as decertification of discriminatory unions are intended to destroy union independence, foster division among union members and worsen the position of all workers.

For Negroes the fight for full employment at decent wages is not just the key to better housing, schools, etc., but a fundamental and necessary defense. If Black people are forced out of any economic role and become lumpenized as a group they will be in a position to be used as a scapegoat and could be totally wiped out during a future social crisis—just as the Jews in Germany were—without affecting the economy. The fight must be fought *now* to maintain Negroes as part of the working class.

The struggle for this program within the labor unions will entail a simultaneous fight for full union democracy and ultimately a struggle for leadership against the present labor lieutenants of capital. The most essential feature of this struggle will be the break of the labor movement from all its present ties to the capitalist state.

#### IV. THE SOUTH

The Southern economy is today controlled entirely by Northern capital and is an *integral* and *essential* part of American capitalism. The contradictions of capitalism culminating in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall necessitate the maintenance of this vast area of low wage, non-unionized labor as a source of superprofits, and prohibit either any fundamental improvement in living standards for Southern workers whatever their color or any real change in the Southern political system of terror against Negroes. The problem of the South is more than merely one problem among many in the capitalist system. U.S. capitalism can oftentimes remove some problems through reforms in the system, always of course at the expense of exacerbating problems elsewhere. *But the Southern system lies at the very heart of American capitalism; its essentials cannot be removed without destroying capitalism itself.* Yet capitalism in the course of its own development has now created in the South a Negro proletariat larger than the rural Negro population and brought together black and

white workers in the social process of production. Thereby the objective basis is laid by capitalism itself for a future revolutionary struggle against the inhuman Southern system.

Because only a direct anti-capitalist struggle can eradicate the Southern system, any struggle short of that must soon either turn against capitalism or else fall into a swamp of hopeless reformism and soul searching. Perhaps the most critical problem of the Southern Negro struggle has been its lack of revolutionary theory. Much energy and much blood have been sacrificed, but the gains have been few. The struggle has gone slowly as the movement has painstakingly groped its way along, hammering out by trial-and-error a program and method of struggle which is still in flux.

Without any theoretical weapons, the movement first struck out blindly but boldly at the most immediate signs of oppression—segregation in public transportation, eating places, educational institutions, etc. The basic demand was equality *within the system*, while the method of struggle was dominated by non-violence. This struggle reached its height in the early 1960's with the sit-ins, Freedom rides, Old Miss confrontation, etc. A good deal of publicity was achieved, but the system was basically untouched. As if to indicate the reformist nature of the demands, the bourgeoisie adopted the entire Civil Rights program and called it the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

But the civil rights movement was beginning to learn several important lessons. It was learning that one cannot merely make demands—one must have *political* power. *What kind* of political power was still to be learned. The emphasis was on registration of Negroes for the vote. Once again, though, the bourgeoisie adopted this basically reformist demand, this time calling it the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

But the bourgeoisie in the era of imperialism is so decadent, so dependent upon reactionaries, that it can no longer extend even simple bourgeois democratic rights. At this point, then, the Southern civil rights movement was pushed outside the traditional two party system by the bourgeoisie itself. At the 1964 Democratic Party Convention where the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party tried to enter the regular Democratic Party, the bourgeoisie rejected this chance to absorb the Southern leadership and so pushed the leadership into its more militant phase.

#### Rise of the Black Power Movement

The Negro movement in the South has been confronted with two roads: reform vs. revolution, liberalism vs. communism. In recent years, through trial-and-error, the movement has seen the bankruptcy of traditional liberalism. The well-hated "white liberal" who dominated the earlier movement insisted on confining the movement within the system, for a real social overturn would threaten his class position. This attitude was held not only by the white liberals, but also by the petty-bourgeois Negro leaders like Roy Wilkins and Martin Luther King.

The most militant section of the civil rights movement has sensed the inadequacy of traditional reformism, and its suspicions were empirically confirmed by the experience of the MFDP. This healthy though empirical

reaction has its center in SNCC and the "black power" movement.

The adherents of "black power" are usually the most militant elements who have adopted the term partly because of its militant sound and partly because of its repugnance to white liberals. Thus the "black power" movement contains a number of radical points and methods which have caused the bourgeois press to shower vicious abuse on it. Some "black power" advocates profess to reject middle-class values and desire to serve "human" values; they generally favor independent political action such as the Black Panther Party in Lowndes County; they see the connection between the Negro struggle at home and anti-imperialist struggles abroad, as in SNCC's recent statement on Viet Nam; and they discuss the use of armed self-defense against racist terror. In short, the "black power" movement is raising questions whose answers lie *outside* the framework set up by the capitalist class.

However, as yet the movement has not become consciously anti-capitalist. It has rejected what it knows as liberalism but is unsure of how to go further. Lacking a conscious orientation towards the working class, and constantly surrounded by bourgeois propaganda, the movement may yet fall prey to bourgeois politicians with radical phrases or else become hopelessly isolated and demoralized.

Another facet of the "black power" movement is the proposition that black militants should organize Black people and forget about whites for now, since most whites are racist, and that it's a white man's job to organize whites. But the achievement of Negro liberation *depends* on the radicalization of white workers, and every class-conscious white worker means a new ally for the Negro struggle. The lessons that black militants have gained through bitter struggle can best be transmitted to white workers by these militants making clear that their aim is to build an integrated anti-capitalist movement, North and South. This means that the slogan "black power" must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the "black power" movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South. The possibility of this is indicated by Stokely Carmichael's endorsement of the so-called "National Conference for New Politics," a Social-Democratic front group which is leaning towards Robert Kennedy for "peace" candidate for President in 1968.

At this stage of the Southern struggle where the most militant elements are groping for new solutions to the problems reformism is demonstrably not able to overcome, the Spartacist League, as the only professed revolutionary organization with any sort of base in the South, is in a unique position to intervene in the movement to advance the development of consciously anti-capitalist struggle.

### Advancing the Southern Struggle

In addition to the programmatic points discussed earlier under "Broad Tasks," additional demands are pertinent to the Southern struggle.

(1) *For a Southern Organizing Drive Backed by Organized Labor.* Organized labor is being hurt as many companies move South to tap the vast source of cheap, unorganized Southern labor. Black workers meanwhile

suffer from low wages and little job security due to lack of unions. A labor-backed Southern organizing drive would thus help both black and white workers. The demand for a Southern drive is complementary to the demand for a Freedom Labor Party, and, if achieved, would lay the material basis for such a party by creating an organized Southern base.

(2) *Armed Self-Defense.* While this slogan is also applicable in the North, the demand has a more immediate urgency in the South and is already being acted upon. The Deacons for Defense and Justice is a tremendous step forward for the Negro struggle, not



Muhammed Speaks

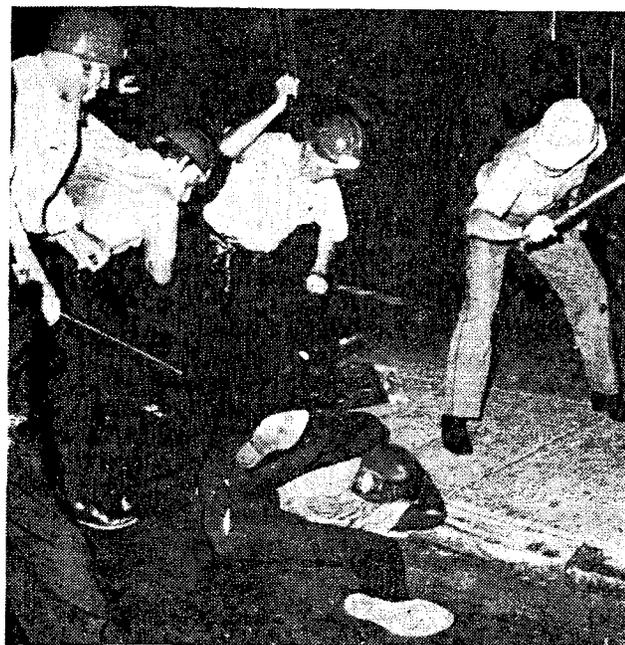
only because it saves lives, but because it raises the level of consciousness of the civil rights movement by discouraging reliance upon the institutions of the bourgeois state. However, the Deacons exhibit a curious duality: highly militant, paramilitary tactics are used to protect the struggle; however, their political perspectives are characterized by comparatively mild, anti-discrimination politics. This contradictory character will eventually result in a crisis which will reveal the urgent need for revolutionary theory and program along with self-defense if the social liberation of the Black people is to be achieved. The demand for organized self-defense must be counterposed to Federal intervention which preserves Southern "law and order" and the racial status quo.

(3) *For a Workers United Front Against Federal Intervention.* As the bourgeoisie loses *political* control of the working class, it must rely more and more on direct Government controls, sometimes thinly disguised as "arbitration panels," "wage guideposts," etc. In the recent Machinists' strike a naked anti-strike bill was almost passed. In 1963 Federal troops were deployed to prevent a threatened uprising by black workers in Birmingham during a campaign of racist bombings. All workers have a vital interest in opposing Federal intervention.

### V. BLACK WORKERS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

There is one state power in this country, and its destruction will be accomplished only by a united

working class under the leadership of a single revolutionary vanguard party. The SWP's concept of the continued division of the working class along color lines with two separate vanguards which would coordinate their activities in a revolutionary period would be like having two command centers during a war, issuing separate orders and disorganization and confusion in the face of the wealthiest and most powerful ruling class in history. The struggle against this concept of a federated vanguard is similar to the struggle carried on by Lenin at the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party against the Jewish Bund's demand for



**Cops riot in Philadelphia ghetto, August 1964.**

autonomy within the party and for their sole right to work among Jewish workers. Trotsky argued that to grant such autonomy to one group would in effect be granting autonomy to any particular section of the working class, i.e., would be the institution of a federated party and the destruction of a centralized organization, in addition to an explicit challenge to an internationalist outlook. As it is the goal of socialism to sweep away national and racial barriers, a socialist organization struggles to overcome such barriers. Furthermore, the perpetuation of a "dual vanguard" concept within the United States would actually prevent the struggle from reaching a revolutionary level. Only *common* struggle for *common* aims can unite the working class and overcome the lifelong racial prejudices of American workers.

Our immediate goal is to develop a black Trotskyist cadre. We aim not only to recruit Negro members—a short-cut to the working class in this period—but to develop these black workers into Trotskyist cadres who will carry a leadership role in organizing the black masses, within the League itself, and elsewhere. As Trotsky said:

"We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class.... If it

happens that we ... are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie."

In recruiting and holding a Negro cadre there are several problems:

(1) *Color hostility.* Only the demonstrated determination of the Spartacist League to carry through its revolutionary tasks will convince black militants to join and remain in our ranks. To avoid disappointment and demoralization, we must make clear to our black recruits that only the patient construction and theoretical preparation of a revolutionary vanguard party will produce significant results.

(2) *Class and educational differences.* At present a predominant number of recruits to any radical organization are from the middle class. In addition whites in the U.S. as a whole have access to more and better formal education than Negroes. These factors, to the extent that they are reflected in our organization, may create a certain social gulf between black and white members. This gulf will only be overcome through conscious, common struggle, and the education of all our members in Marxist theory and practice.

(3) *Daily oppression and the problems of life.* The struggle for livelihood and the immediate problems of daily life create additional pressures on our black members which draw them away from full participation in the revolutionary movement. Our black comrades should be aided in gaining job skills that will make the immediate day-to-day problems of living less pressing and free them for revolutionary activity and concentration.

(4) *Over-Activism.* Because the Negro struggle has been the most active struggle in the country, our Negro members have been intensely active party members. The demands of the mass organizations in which they participate tend to occupy so much time that little is left for the study of Marxist theory and the lessons of past class struggle. Unless there is a balance between these two forms of activity our goal of creating a black Trotskyist cadre to intervene in the mass struggle and lift it to a higher consciousness of its anti-capitalist goals will not be realized. The Spartacist League is confident that it will be able to overcome these problems and create an integrated revolutionary vanguard capable of reaching and eventually uniting in struggle the entire class.

## Final Victory

The victory of the socialist revolution in this country will be achieved through the united struggle of black and white workers under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard party. In the course of this struggle unbreakable bonds will be forged between the two sections of the working class. The success of the struggle will place the Negro people in a position to insure at last the end of slavery, racism and super-exploitation.

—General line unanimously adopted and Editorial Commission appointed by Founding Conference, 4 September 1966  
—Report of Negro Commission on revisions accepted by Political Bureau, 27 March 1967.

# **PART II**

# Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League

## I. GENERAL TASKS

- 1) "The Spartacist League of the U.S. is a revolutionary organization which, as part of the international revolutionary movement, is committed to the task of building the party which will lead the working class to the victory of the socialist revolution in the United States.

"Only the proletariat, through the seizure of political power and the destruction of capitalism in all countries, can lay the basis for the elimination of exploitation and the resolution of the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of the world economy and national-state barriers. Capitalism has long since outlived its progressive historical role of creating a modern industrial economy. Now in order to maintain their rule, the national capitalist classes must intensify national and racial divisions, through imperialism oppress the colonial peoples and impoverish the masses of the entire world, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and redivision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out. In its final frenzied effort to maintain its class rule, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to plunge humanity into a nuclear holocaust or totalitarian oppression of unprecedented ferocity. The United States is today the keystone of the entire international capitalist order."

—*Declaration of Principles*, section 1—  
adopted at SL Founding Conference, 3-5  
September 1966

These words take on even more concreteness today as the United States continues its vicious colonial war in Vietnam and the increasing instability of the capitalist world economy has sharpened reactionary nationalist conflicts like that in the Middle East. "Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind" (from the "Transitional Program" of the Fourth International, 1938).

- 2) "The Spartacist League fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerilla warfare as the road to socialism. Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create bureaucratic anti-working class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions toward socialism. Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the Permanent Revolution which declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation."

—*Declaration of Principles*, section 9

The mass destruction of the Maoist-led Indonesian

Communist Party, Mao's "Cultural Revolution" purge and the further isolation of the Chinese revolution, the decimation of the Latin American guerilla movements—all these and other major events of recent history further emphasize the fundamental flaw in all the so-called "Marxist" tendencies which in fact deny the central role of the working class for socialist revolution.

- 3) The success of the working-class revolution depends on the existence of a revolutionary vanguard party, rooted in the masses and familiar with the accumulated experiences of the world communist movement. Innumerable revolutionary opportunities in modern history have been lost for lack of a qualified leadership. In this period, "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership" ("Transitional Program," 1938). The strategic task of the SL remains to assemble and organize this revolutionary cadre.

The SL decisively rejects that centrism which defers a vanguard orientation, claiming that a mass upsurge will create the vanguard spontaneously. Such opportunist "postponement" overlooks the historical example of the genesis of the Russian communist movement as much around *ideas* as great events and, further, ignores the vital recognition that the success of great mass upheavals is closely linked to the intervention of a conscious vanguard. The sudden onset of an upsurge (such as the French May-June crisis) will find the erstwhile revolutionary elements confused and disorganized unless the most advanced strata undertake serious, long-term preparation—in all periods—for the ebb and flow of class struggle.

The SL reaffirms the Leninist concept of the professional revolutionary leadership, challenged by the late Ellens faction. Characteristic of the pre-Bolshevik socialist movement was the figure of the left-wing intellectual who dabbled in politics, the prominent leader who was considered too important for the "Jimmy Higgins" work. In contrast to this, the SL seeks to expand its staff of full-time political functionaries whose *only* "profession" is the revolutionary organization. The SL in no sense scorns the invaluable contributions of talented Marxist intellectuals, but must seek to construct its leadership of those who combine a creative grasp of our political line with the determination to make revolutionary politics the central focus of their lives.

- 4) No political movement is without a history, and indeed the most conscious political movement—the Marxist vanguard—must establish itself on sound historical bases, or else move like a blind man through history.

"The Spartacist League continues the revolutionary traditions of the international working-class movement exemplified in the work of revolutionists such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Liebknecht.

Above all we look to the experience of the Bolshevik Party which culminated in the Russian Revolution of 1917, the only revolution as yet made by the working class.

"We seek in particular to carry forward the international working-class perspectives of Marxism as developed in theory and practice by V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and by the Transitional Program and other documents adopted by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International. These materials are the indispensable documentary codification of the communist movement internationally, and are fundamental to the revolutionary tasks of our organization."

—*Declaration of Principles*, section 3

The struggle to maintain and develop the continuity of valid ideas does not necessarily mean the continuous existence of any one particular organization. Indeed the birth of the SL from the decaying Socialist Workers Party (SWP) demonstrates that the development of Marxism is not a matter of "preservation" but rather of incessant *struggle* against the influence of bourgeois ideology—sometimes necessitating a break from the old organizations to defend Marxism.

"On the basis of a long historical experience, it can be written down as a law that revolutionary cadres, who revolt against their social environment and organize parties to lead a revolution, can—if the revolution is too long delayed—themselves degenerate under the continuing influences and pressures of this same environment....

"But this same historical experience also shows that there are exceptions to this law too. The exceptions are the Marxists who remain Marxists, the revolutionaries who remain faithful to the banner. The basic ideas of Marxism, upon which alone a revolutionary party can be constructed, are continuous in their application and have been for a hundred years. The ideas of Marxism, which create revolutionary parties, are stronger than the parties they create, and never fail to survive their downfall. They never fail to find representatives in the old organizations to lead the work of reconstruction.

"These are the continuators of the tradition, the defenders of the orthodox doctrine. The task of the uncorrupted revolutionists, obliged by circumstances to restart the work of organizational reconstruction, has never been to proclaim a new revelation—there has been no lack of such Messiahs, and they have all been lost in the shuffle—but to reinstate the old program and bring it up to date.

"They have never sought to destroy and cast out the positive values and achievements of the old organization but to conserve them and build upon them. They have never addressed their first appeals to the void and sought to recruit a non-descript army out of people unidentified and unknown. On the contrary, they have always sought—and found—the initiating cadres of the new organization in the old."

—J.P. Cannon, 1954

##### 5) The difficulties of our situation were recognized at our Founding Convention:

"The SL is weighed down by decades of international setbacks and the disorientation of the proletarian vanguard, together with the particularly hostile American milieu.... In addition, our political and theoretical competence has not simply grown with time. The ability of the Marxist movement to know the reality in which it moves—which is closely related to its ability to have an impact on this reality—is less today than it was at the time of Lenin's Communist International. The early Communist Movement had more understanding because mass revolutionary forces

were included in its ranks, and was more of a subject of the historical process than we are now."

—*Theses on Building the Revolutionary Movement in the U.S.*—presented to London IC Conference, 6 April 1966; adopted with amendments at Founding Conference, 3-5 September 1966

Given our size and the objective conditions, we set our tactical perspectives at the time that the Spartacist tendency began independent existence. We recognized that, with our limited size and resources, we would have to direct our efforts strongly toward the most promising areas for growth—in particular, people who already had some measure of radical consciousness.

In addition, moreover, to the recruitment of *individuals* from the general radical milieu, we orient toward polarizing and splitting away from centrist organizations groupings which have been forced, by the pressure of events and our own polemical intervention, to move toward revolutionary politics. As we stated in our first issue of *Spartacist*:

"We want to *influence* such radical and leftward-moving groups or sections as aspire to Marxist clarity and direction. We frankly state in advance that the purpose of our action is to further a revolutionary regroupment of forces within this country such that a Leninist vanguard party of the working class will emerge. Secondly, we want to *win* individual supporters for our viewpoint from among radical youth, militants in the civil rights struggle, and seek to create modest nuclei within key sections of the working class. Critical to our success will be the ability of our comrades to both be involved as revolutionists in the social struggles of our times and to undertake effective inquiry into the pressing theoretical and political issues posed for Marxists today."

—Editorial notes, *Spartacist* No. 1, February-March 1964; adopted at Founding Conference

An organization of our size can rarely intervene directly and systematically in the mass movements. We cannot, therefore, expect to recruit mainly in this period on the basis of our demonstrated leadership in class struggle, but rather mainly through the power of our ideas. In other words, our tasks and tactics are not those of an agitational party but of a *propaganda* group.

The SL rejects the sterile concept of propaganda which is characteristic of several self-declared "activist" or "agitational" groups such as the Wohlforthite Workers League (WL) and Marcyite Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF), whose activities are in fact limited to frequent publication of a garbage public organ and sporadic participation in street demonstrations. The SL refuses to give dishonest lip service to "conquering the masses now," recognizing that public hypocrisy becomes internalized in such phony "agitational" organizations and creates a deeply cynical cadre. Instead, we frankly term our perspective a *fighting propaganda* orientation, recognizing that for us work in the mass movements has little value unless it has *exemplary* character; otherwise our involvement will be little more than a net drain of resources from the revolutionary Marxist movement to the mass organizations.

The SL cannot be even a propaganda group without involvement in the mass movements, which provide our organization and its cadres with experience in class struggle and, most important, serve to focus and

concretize our propaganda line. If paper will take anything that is written on it (as Stalin is reported to have said), including for example an unworkable union line, a flesh-and-blood trade union is more demanding. Exemplary mass work is a necessary, although subordinate, part of our propaganda and a demonstration of our seriousness.

6) Our goal of a regroupment along a revolutionary program remains unaccomplished. The drying up of important arenas of work in the past two years (especially the black struggle), along with the general rightward shift in the general political climate, has led to considerable membership turnover, including one faction fight and split. We still suffer acutely the problems of a small organization whose membership is overwhelmingly quite young and inexperienced—having lost a whole generation to the political witchhunt of the 1950's, and having prematurely (and involuntarily) broken from the SWP in 1963. The shortage of experienced cadre has been a chronic problem, and must be recognized before it can be overcome:

“Situations like this [constant manpower shortages] are the concrete embodiment of the phrase ‘we are not yet even a stable propaganda group’. At any moment some vital need is uncovered—until such time as it becomes a desperate issue, then another equally vital (but sometimes less glaring or obvious) function is starved for a time.”

—J. Robertson, Letter to G. White,  
16 October 1967

The problem was again raised by the leadership in a series of discussions in the Political Bureau in early 1968. We must recognize that we are a sub-propaganda group whose primary goal over the next period remains the establishment of a stable propaganda group perhaps ten times our present size. Failure to grasp the realities of our situation must lead to innumerable varieties of political quackery in search of quick-and-easy solutions.

No Marxist group can survive forever, without political erosion, in our present condition of “double isolation”—isolation from the working class and within the petty-bourgeois community. Our cadre has not entirely withstood these pressures. Demoralization and extreme impatience have several times flared up and driven a few dissidents to flee our political orientation in search of activism. Every oppositional grouping has proposed its orientation (Baltimore's super-localism, Ross' street confrontations, Ellens' semi-clandestine workerism) as a super-panacea for all our ills in order to make oppositional capital of defects—e.g., the infrequency of the *Spartacist*—which they were actually uninterested in remedying.

7) Central to all our oppositionists has been the belief that the SL will now grow and develop in a way qualitatively different than we have in the past. While recognizing that we have generally recruited mainly to our full program and analysis, they have insisted that we should turn to some gimmick and abandon our orientation of propaganda directed to the most politically conscious elements.

The SL, as a propaganda group whose mass work is necessarily *exemplary*, carefully *selected* and *limited*, must recognize that its main strength remains its ideas rather than its capacity for successful intervention in mass struggle. Thus, in the present period we can expect

to recruit predominantly those people who respond to and agree with our full program and analysis, rather than those who are attracted by the possibility of assistance in their particular struggles. Our strength is in ideas rather than our numbers; thus, we will recruit in general exceptional individuals who feel the need for a comprehensive theory and world-view and who therefore respond more to our powerful ideas than to our limited ability to put them into practice. More specifically, we can expect to grow largely although not exclusively among students, who are interested in ideas and have a generalized intellectual curiosity about the world, with relatively less success among workers who are deeply involved in particular struggles and therefore more interested in an organization which can help them win their fight against their boss or union bureaucrat. Thus, it is not an accident that the SL has had its most spectacular spurts of growth in college towns—Ithaca, Iowa City, Austin.

However, while recognizing that this fact must play a large part in our tactics for the period ahead, we do not seek to build necessity into a self-justifying theory. Where we have had the opportunity to make a sustained effort, we have had important successes in winning to the SL individual advanced worker militants. It is our recognition of our limitations and the dangers of our composition and isolation and our refusal to wish these things away by declaring “we are the party,” “we will conquer the masses now” that has enabled us to do *more* and *better* mass work, offering real leadership in a few union situations, than any other group our size.

8) The weaknesses of our organization have limited our ability to capitalize on our political line. In particular, we have lacked *not* mass involvement but a regular public organ and sufficient implementation of our orientation toward the campus radical movement. In order to be most effective, we need a *short, tight* list of perspectives and priorities to sharply focus our work.

## II. OBJECTIVE SITUATION—THE ECONOMY

9) The fundamental irrationalities of the capitalist economic system in the period of its decay make it liable to severe periodic economic crises, which Keynesian “remedies” are qualitatively insufficient to prevent. The ruling class cannot maneuver the contradictions of capitalism, rooted in the falling rate of profit, out of existence; they can often intervene consciously to suppress developing antagonisms, but only at the expense of exacerbating others. In the period since World War II, the bourgeoisie has shown considerable flexibility in refurbishing Western Europe's destroyed economic and political structure and keeping the newly-independent colonial countries within the capitalist economic orbit. The continuing relative prosperity of the advanced capitalist nations during this period has depended overwhelmingly upon what might be termed “super-Keynesianism”—i.e., the continuation of war production and wars. However, the bourgeoisie is paying for its economic policies with the political instabilities and discontent which high taxes and unpopular wars create.

Numerous organizations on the left—but most

notably the British Socialist Labour League (SLL) and its followers (and also the Marcusite SDS Labor Committee)—have attempted to substitute for viable political perspectives a sense of pseudo-Marxian “faith.” These groups attempt to solidarize their members by promising them that an economic collapse is just now breaking which will lift them out of their isolation and replace their constant petty failures with great success. The SLL, in particular, has been screeching about the “imminent crisis” for years now, denouncing those who were skeptical of this “analysis” as empiricists. When the next big crash comes—as it inevitably will—the SLL and Marcusites will find to their dismay that even an economic crisis will not do the job for them automatically. As Lenin said, there is *no* objective situation that is impossible for the bourgeoisie—they must be *thrown out!*

The ability of the Spartacist League to forecast particular economic trends is closely linked to our ability to intervene and *act on* reality. As expounded by Antonio Gramsci:

“But it is absurd to think of a purely ‘objective’ foresight. The person who has foresight in reality has a ‘programme’ that he wants to see triumph, and foresight is precisely an element of this triumph.... In reality one can foresee only the struggle and not its concrete episodes; these must be the result of opposing forces in continuous movement, never reducible to fixed quantities, because in them quantity is always becoming quality. Really one ‘foresees’ to the extent to which one acts, to which one makes a voluntary effort and so contributes concretely to creating the ‘foreseen’ result. Foresight reveals itself therefore not as a scientific act of knowledge, but as the abstract expression of the effort one makes, the practical method of creating a collective will.”

While particular trends in the economy in fact have only limited effects on our perspectives, they may have considerable impact on the general climate of opinion in which we function. As such, their effects are not always what one might assume; thus, the economic effects of the Vietnam war have produced among the working class very strongly contradictory pressures—restlessness, trade union militancy, rejection of liberalism, increased racism as workers divide along ethnic lines to protect their “slice of the pie” against inflation’s attacks on their standard of living.

10) In 1966 we pointed out the increasing instability of capitalism and the growing importance of the Vietnam war:

“Recently the curve of world capitalist development has begun to point downward. The rise in inventories, the drop in investment in capital production, and in industrial production, indicate that a world-wide economic downturn is at hand.

“While economic indicators pointed to a downturn in 1966, the boom was prolonged another year by the political decision to escalate the aggressive war against Vietnam.”

—*Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom*, adopted at Founding Conference, September 1966

We concluded in the *Theses* (April 1966):

“There are indications of serious struggle ahead: in labor, in the Negro movement, and on the campuses. These struggles reflect long-term contradictions of imperialism, e.g., automation, the economic gains of the Soviet section and the decline in specific weight of

U.S. capitalism relative to European economies in the world market.”

—section 7

This analysis has been very much borne out by events. The U.S. economy today is in fact a war economy. Out-of-control war expenditure has been the chief inflationary pressure since 1965. Since 1966 investment in new plant and equipment has increased by only 10%, while the military budget has increased by 30% and now stands at 81 billion dollars. In fact, during 1967 the economy went through a quasi-recession with civilian production and investment actually falling.

With such a large percentage of the wage payroll generated in the production of goods which do not enter the market, there is an imbalance between the demand for consumer goods and the supply, resulting in general inflationary conditions. In the last three years, the cost of living has increased more than in the previous seven. We are in a classic full-employment, inflationary war economy, a situation which—especially when the war is as unpopular as Vietnam—acts as a spur to labor militancy. In 1968, time lost due to strikes had increased 80% over the 1965 figures. Equally apparent is increased rank-and-file hostility to the conservative union bureaucracy.

The Nixon administration’s plans to bring about a deflation are not likely to succeed within the immediate period—perhaps a year. Of decisive importance is the war. As long as it continues, war expenditure will continue to create inflationary conditions. Moreover, Nixon has inherited a number of expensive programs from the Johnson administration. Nixon’s all-out support of the ABM system, despite the opposition of the financial community, indicates that his commitment to the military business sector overrides any anti-inflationary intentions. Also, after three years of stagnation and anticipating continued inflation, capital investment has picked up sharply, despite record high interest rates and credit restrictions. The Nixon administration is not willing to undertake such unpopular anti-working-class measures as wage/price controls. Its chief deflationary weapons are likely to be taxation (maintenance of the surtax), strict monetary controls (which have triggered the current out-of-control interest rates) and direct attempts to curb union militancy (specifically, repeal of the law requiring membership ratification of contracts negotiated by the union leadership). The ability of the Nixon administration to cut the budget, the unusual high interest rates, the exhaustion of workers’ savings and, most of all, the end of the capital investment boom raise the likelihood of an economic downturn in early 1970. Such a downturn may slow down, but not end, the current inflation.

11) A significant aspect of the recent boom has been the rapid increase in non-military government spending and employment, particularly on the state and local levels. As a result, over the past two years state and local governments have been running large deficits, and sharp cutbacks in this area are going to occur regardless of what happens in the rest of the economy. Such cutbacks will particularly affect three special sections of the labor force: liberal arts college graduates; unskilled women workers, for whom government clerical jobs provide an

important source of employment; and black workers in many large cities. In New York City, the recent cutbacks are having a disastrous effect on the welfare, hospital and educational systems, which may result in struggles by both recipients of these services and government workers whose jobs are threatened.

It is becoming increasingly evident that a major tactic of the government is to channel rising labor anger over worsening conditions into a racist attack on the black ghetto population. The welfare rolls, rather than the Vietnam war, are put forward as a scapegoat for high taxes; "crime in the streets" becomes the rallying cry of the disgruntled white working class. This must be effectively fought—with demands which link employed and unemployed workers in struggle against the ruling class—or it may develop into a profound and disastrous split in the American working class.

12) Internationally, capitalism in this period has been characterized by a re-emergence of serious conflict between the major capitalist powers. The most dramatic manifestation of this conflict, although not necessarily the most important in the long run, is the international monetary crisis. The rapid expansion of American investment in Europe after 1958 enabled American business, given the U.S.'s technological advantages, to dominate key sectors of European industry. A section of the European bourgeoisie, led by DeGaulle, sought to counter this by limiting the ability of the U.S. to finance the balance-of-payments deficits caused by U.S. investments abroad. This aspect of the monetary crisis has been temporarily relaxed by the May-June events, which destroyed France's competitive position, and the failure of key German capitalists to support a Gaullist position.

A second element of the monetary crisis has been the increase in competitive advantage on the part of Germany as against France and particularly Britain, and the unwillingness (despite considerable international pressure) of the German ruling class to voluntarily give up its competitive advantage by re-valuing the mark (i.e., raising the price of its exports). The monetary conflict highlights the two major countries facing acute economic crises at this time—Britain and France.

Of the two, Britain's is the more profound, reflecting plant obsolescence and a distribution of production and employment which no longer corresponds to Britain's international competitive advantage. Britain has been in a major crisis since 1965, with industrial production effectively stagnating. The Wilson government has attempted to solve the problem, unsuccessfully, through various deflationary measures. Recently, Wilson has broached a direct attack on the power of the trade unions, raising the possibility of the destruction of the Labour Party. This exposure of the bankruptcy of reformism in this period of capitalist decline poses the creation of a mass revolutionary movement in Britain.

The French economic crisis is more acute, but stems from a temporary development—the wage jump following the May-June events, which made France uncompetitive on the world market. DeGaulle's attempt to solve the problem by an austerity program and direct attacks on the working class was deemed too dangerous by the majority of the French bourgeoisie. Pompidou

will unquestionably devalue the franc. Such a devaluation will create some inflationary pressure in France, but its major effect will be to further weaken Britain's position.

With an astonishingly high and sustained growth rate, Japan has become the third major industrial power in the world. This rapid growth has finally soaked up Japan's excess peasant labor, and Japan is now running into the problems of full employment—inflation and a breakdown of traditionally strong labor discipline. One effect has been a major increase in investments in East and Southeast Asia. The basis is being laid for the re-emergence of U.S.-Japanese rivalry, in both trade and foreign investment.

### III. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

13) The Spartacist League recognizes the profoundly international character of world capitalism and hence the necessity of an international perspective. Thus, a correct and comprehensive analysis of events outside the U.S. is integral to a correct assessment of our tasks here. Central to our approach is the reaffirmation, in the face of revisionism, of the role of the working class as the central force for revolutionary change and the insistence on the necessity of a Trotskyist vanguard party. While the correctness of revolutionary Marxism will be finally demonstrated only by the successful conquest of power by the international working class, our line has been vindicated negatively over and over in recent years.

The SL rejects the Pabloist dictum that the "colonial world" is the "epicenter" of world revolution. While the extreme economic difficulties and absence of bourgeois-democratic political facade may provoke sometimes violent manifestations of resistance to oppression, the super-exploited peoples cannot achieve liberation except at tremendous cost and with severe deformations so long as the military and industrial power of the advanced countries remains in the hands of the capitalist class. Conversely, both the repressive, brutal dictatorships of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the bureaucratic regimes of the Sino-Soviet bloc states rest on an extremely narrow and weak social base and both depend—the former directly and the latter by reflection—upon the power of American and West European capitalism for their very existence.

14) The Spartacist tendency crystallized in 1960-61 essentially over the question of the class nature of the Cuban Revolution and the reaction of the SWP Pabloists. While recognizing that a social transformation had in fact taken place in Cuba, we insisted on the decisive limitations and dangers of a revolution based on the peasantry and middle classes and made with the deliberate exclusion of the working class. The SWP Majority abandoned Trotskyism and argued that Cuba was a healthy workers state which lacked only the "forms," but not the content, of workers democracy, thus denying the need for a proletarian vanguard and implying that Stalinists or other petty-bourgeois strata can successfully carry out the transition to socialism. Those anti-Pabloist tendencies, such as the Healyites (and *Voix Ouvriere*), who did not capitulate theoretically to Castro have been unable to coherently explain how China and Eastern Europe became non-capitalist states,

and continue to hold that Cuba at least is still capitalist. While we defend the anti-capitalist gains of the limited Cuban Revolution against imperialist attack, we see in Cuba today the continuing verification of our analysis and predictions of 1961—the consolidation of a self-conscious bureaucracy of the Stalinist type, with a system of political repression, opportunist foreign policy, etc.

The SL recognizes that the Cuban, Chinese, North Korean, North Vietnamese and East European states are qualitatively of the same sort as the product of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state. The bureaucratic castes which exercise a monopoly of political power in these states prevent the completion of the transformation from capitalism to socialism and must be overthrown by workers' *political revolution* under the leadership of a Trotskyist proletarian vanguard party.

15) The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 underlined the central contradiction of the Stalinist countries first analyzed by Trotsky: the social ownership of the means of production co-existing with a repressive bureaucracy which has usurped the political control of the proletariat and deforms the vast potentials of the economy. The impetus to the invasion was not fear of military threat from Germany but the relaxation of political censorship and controls which the Dubcek wing of the bureaucracy was forced to tolerate in order to "liberalize" the economy by increasing the exploitation of the Czech workers. The SL condemns the Russian invasion, at the same time noting the absence of organized mass trade union opposition which characterized the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. We warn against a provocative line such as that of the U.S. Draperites, who called for civilian armed resistance to the Russian troops. Our tactic is that of critical fraternization with the Russian soldiers (e.g., "you should be in Vietnam fighting the imperialists").

The Maoist "Cultural Revolution" was a litmus test for Trotskyists. Only our tendency pointed out *at the time* the essential character of the "Cultural Revolution"—an intra-bureaucracy fight and purge of the Chinese CP. With the further development of open armed border clashes between the Soviet Union and China, the need of the workers to overthrow the narrow, nationalist bureaucracies has become even more imperative and obvious as the only way to create communist unity against imperialism.

At the present time, the Vietnam war and the extreme diplomatic and internal difficulties of the Chinese state have forced the Maoists to maintain greater hostility to imperialism and verbally disclaim the U.S.S.R.'s avowed policy of "peaceful coexistence" while themselves peacefully coexisting with Japan. However, we must warn against the growing objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal *with China*. Should the imperialists adjust their policies in terms of their long-run interests (which would take time, as such factors as U.S. public opinion would have to be readjusted), the Chinese would be as willing as the Russians are at present to build "Socialism in One Country" through deals with imperialism at the expense of internationalism.

16) The SL supports the right of nations to self-determination, following Lenin's method on the national question. Like Lenin, our reason for supporting self-determination for oppressed national groupings is in order to get ethnic antagonisms off the agenda and replaced by class issues. Therefore, we at no time abdicate our responsibility to our *class* by tail-ending petty-bourgeois nationalist movements, but instead fight for proletarian hegemony. Thus, for example, the SL supports the right of the Ibo nation to self-determination, but we separate ourselves absolutely from the Biafran political regime, pointing out that national independence without the appropriation of the ruling class is very far from socialism, as the Algerian example has shown.

The SL has led the way in warning of the dangers of subordinating the class interests and organizations of the proletariat to the nationalist "colonial revolution" led by the comprador bourgeoisie. Our statement, "Imperialists and Stalinists in Vietnam" (1965), warned against the now-very-real possibility of a repetition of two prior Stalinist betrayals of the Vietnamese revolution in 1946 and 1954 through a deal with the imperialists. Our analysis of the Indonesian debacle in 1965 exposed the treacherous role of the Chinese Maoists who repeated in Indonesia the tragic consequences of Stalin's China policy—the bloc of the CP with the so-called "nationalistic bourgeoisie."

The SL has pioneered in analyzing the seriously defective guerrilla warfare ideology expounded by Debray and others and personified by Che Guevara. Especially we take note of our "Theses on Guerrilla Warfare" (first published in *Espartaco* No. 2, April 1967). Our analysis has been profoundly vindicated, regrettably in negative fashion, by the virtual decimation of much of the Latin American movement, culminated by the murder of Guevara himself.

The SL takes special note of our unique position on the Arab-Israeli war, adopted by the PB on 12 June 1967 and ratified by the Central Committee Plenum. With the Middle East situation still smoldering, the SL reaffirms that the only solution to the conflict lies in the defeat by the working people of Israel and the Arab countries of their native ruling classes and their foreign imperialist allies (who want to preserve the existing balance of power while bettering relations with the oil-rich Arab governments). The territorial appetites of the Israeli government can serve only to unleash an eventual massacre of the Jewish workers and farmers, while the Arab rulers continue to use the existence of Israel as a scapegoat for the oppression of their own people. We note, however, that since it is the Israelis who were victorious in the most recent set of hostilities, they have had the ability to perpetrate most of the outrages in the last two years and therefore the sharpest edge of our revolutionary defeatist line and propaganda is aimed at their injustices. We particularly note the vicious treatment of the Arabs inside Israel, and would militarily defend any Arab resistance group which was not simply a tool of the reactionary Arab governments, while continuing to point out that the only permanent solution is a bi-national socialist state of the Middle East.

17) The French general strike of May-June 1968 re-emphasized the reformist, counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism and demonstrated once again the great revolutionary potential of the working class in the advanced industrial countries. The revolutionary will of the French workers did not reach the stage of *dual power*, however, reflecting the absence of revolutionary leadership to challenge the hegemony of the CP-CGT. The shattering of Gaullist political control and experiences of class solidarity among the left-of-CP organizations provided a tremendous anti-sectarian thrust and opened the way for a regroupment along a revolutionary line.

Following the crisis, the French government illegalized all previously-existing Maoist and Trotskyist organizations. The tendency which is now *Lutte Ouvriere*, having lost all organizational continuity with its past, and as a result of long-standing theoretical weaknesses, was disoriented by the failure of the left, in the face of such tremendous opportunity, to decisively shatter the CP's hegemony over the workers. They increasingly abandoned their previous theoretical outlook and urged unification, political differences notwithstanding, with the Pabloists in order to form "not a Bolshevik party, but a revolutionary party." The Pabloists refused *LO's* overtures and successfully effected a regroupment with other tendencies on a verbally principled basis of political agreement. In addition, the Lambert (International Committee) group has reportedly had substantial growth, mainly on the basis of their involvement in early manifestations of the general strike and an oversimplified line against student struggle, which has brought them considerable recruitment among radical students dissatisfied with the now-floundering student groups.

18) The Spartacist League reaffirms its dedication to the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the indispensable world party of working-class revolution. We recognize that the FI, founded in 1938 by Trotsky, no longer exists except in its revolutionary *program*. There are now at least five distinct ideological tendencies in the world movement claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. Four tendencies appropriate to themselves the title of "Fourth International" (the Pabloist United Secretariat, associated with Germain, Frank and Hansen as leading spokesmen; the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency associated with Pablo himself; Gerry Healy's International Committee; the Latin American Bureau of J. Posadas) despite the adherence of other formally Trotskyist groups to competing international bodies and the existence of many formally Trotskyist national groups affiliated to none of them. Clearly, we must recognize that the claims of all of these to *organizational* continuity with the FI remain unestablished.

The SL rejects the assertion that no international discussion and co-operation is possible now and the building of an International must wait for "objective developments" such as a great mass upsurge, or for an established leader of the stature of Trotsky. This idea is similar to the convenient "postponement" of the need for a vanguard party. But we do not, however, simply *declare* ourselves to be the FI, thereby adding to the

existing crowd of self-styled Internationals. Instead, we continue to insist on the need for polemic and clarification leading to an international political polarization and regroupment, on the basis of our revolutionary political line, to establish in fact the now-fictional claims to be a reconstructed FI.

The SL rejects that interpretation of "internationalism" which relies on some great foreign power or the prestige of some leader for sustenance. We insist strongly on the principle of international democratic centralism, not federalism, as the basis of a revolutionary International. This implies as a converse that the mechanism for arriving at decisions must be truly international, not dictated by the chauvinism of a dominant section. The International must have the ability to make and enforce political decisions, but at the same time cannot attempt to rigidly dictate the application of tactical formulas to national sections. The Wohlforthite interpretation of "internationalism" as sycophantism to the British is a grotesque parody of real internationalism, along the lines of the American CP's "internationalism" in subordinating itself to Russian Stalinism.

In addition to the formally organized international bodies, there has lately been a trend toward informal crystallization of loose conglomerations. One such is a coming together among the state capitalist and semi-state capitalist groups: *Lutte Ouvriere* in France, *International Socialism* (Cliff) in Britain, Independent Socialist Clubs (Draper-Landy) in the U.S. Such affiliations are tacit marriages of convenience—essentially non-aggression pacts between groups which have some overlap but not enough tight political agreement to want to take responsibility for one another.

19) Toward the process of international revolutionary regroupment, we defined our perspectives following the break with Healy:

"What we should aim for is the crystallization of a tendency and consolidation of an international center.... We need to develop a programmatic argument and theoretical clarification before there can be actual unity between the groups with which we are now developing fraternal relations. Our perspective should be to extend international contacts, develop more bilateral contacts, attempt to develop programmatic and theoretical discussions, make use of the publications available to us in several languages, and, when it looks propitious enough, submit a draft resolution and International Conference call. From this an international center would be formed. Following through on this perspective would be our contribution to the reconstruction of the Fourth International."

—PB of 27 February 1967, adopted at  
Central Committee Plenum in December  
1967

In the past few years, the SL has developed and maintained a fraternal working relationship with *Socialist Current*, a small Trotskyist group in England. In addition, we maintain contact with a small group of co-thinkers organized around the *New Zealand Spartacist*, and with scattered individuals and independent Trotskyist groups internationally.

20) Central to the task of international political regroupment is the ideological destruction of Pabloist revisionism within the Trotskyist movement. As we

stated to the April 1966 Conference of the International Committee in London:

"Pabloism is a revisionist answer to *new* problems posed by the post-1943 Stalinist expansions.... The fight against Pabloism is the specific historic form of a necessarily continual struggle against revisionism...."  
—Reprinted in *Spartacist* No. 6

Pabloism, essentially a retreat into passivity and the acceptance of what *is*, was the result of the inability of the Trotskyist movement, due to insufficient theoretical development, to explain post-World War II developments—in particular, the ability of the Stalinist parties to preserve European capitalism despite acute pre-revolutionary crises and the expansion of the Soviet bloc under the leadership of Stalinists or other petty-bourgeois strata through military conquest or limited social revolutions. The dominant section of the Trotskyist movement—at first resisted by the SWP under Cannon, until the "reunification" with the United Secretariat in 1963—reacted impressionistically to the restabilization of capitalism and the Stalinist expansion to theorize a limited role of Trotskyists as a left pressure group on the Stalinist parties. In a fundamental sense, Pabloism is a reaction of despair to the previously unexpected strength and resilience of both capitalism and Stalinism—no longer believing that they could struggle against and actually defeat such powerful enemies, the Pabloists fled from revolutionary intransigence into the arms of opportunism.

21) The revisionist current within the Trotskyist movement has been strengthened by the simplistic reflex of those who have opposed Pabloism on the basis of revolutionary instinct rather than Marxist methodology. The chief defender of orthodoxy against Pablo was Cannon who, with his acceptance of the oversimplified formulation that "Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through and to the core" reduced Stalinism, incorrectly, to one of its two contradictory aspects, thereby confusing the issue and actually allowing the Pabloists to use orthodoxy against Cannon. This same impulse to fight revisionism with the wrong weapons also led Cannon to deny the principle of international democratic centralism, in an attempt to simply maintain the SWP on a revolutionary line and avoid fighting against Pablo internationally altogether. Ironically, the hysterical anti-Cannon Healyites have followed in the same path; fearing that the Cuban example, if accepted as *any* kind of social transformation, would mean that the revolutionary party were no longer needed, the SLL-IC simply refused to admit the reality. Their insistence that Cuba is still a capitalist state continues to be used by the Pabloists to ridicule and discredit all anti-revisionist tendencies.

The Spartacist tendency sought to force a principled reunification of anti-Pabloist forces following the original split, manufactured by Healy-Wohlforth, of the Revolutionary Tendency in 1962. Despite their anti-Pabloist impulse, the IC made serious errors flowing from fundamental theoretical weakness. Even while seeking to heal the rupture, the Spartacist tendency in the period from 1962 to 1966 continued to raise its criticisms of the Healy tendency over the several issues in dispute—for example, the 1962 split, the SLL's Cuba position and lack of methodology on post-war Stalin-

ism, their uncritical attitude to the Vietnamese Stalinists, their repeated proclamations of imminent economic collapse which never materialized and their frequent gross insensitivity to racial and national oppression.

Following Healy's sabotage of a possible unified anti-revisionist tendency in 1966, the SLL-IC's unstable adherence to orthodoxy without theory broke down. As Mao mobilized the student youth and the Army to consolidate his absolute control over the political life of China, the SLL (which had always displayed a fanatic obsession with youth, exemplified by their non-political youth organization, the YS) abandoned even orthodoxy to choose sides in an intra-bureaucracy power fight. Shortly thereafter they leaped on the bandwagon of the so-called "Arab Revolution"—a revolution which has the peculiar characteristic of being directed externally rather than within the class structure of the Arab societies. The SLL's ideological capitulation has been matched by their increasing abandonment of elementary revolutionary morality; after using physical violence against opponents inside the movement and threatening to take opponent radical groups before the capitalist courts, the Healyites were then forced to generalize new theories of conduct for revolutionaries in the attempt to justify their outrageous conduct.

The IC is, politically speaking, not a stable configuration. Despite pretensions to international scope, the IC has in fact three sections—the British SLL, the French Lambert group and the U.S. Workers League. The absolute hegemony of the British remains unchallenged, although the French have a reputable history—including being the first group to fight Pablo—and several serious political differences with Healy; most notably, they *privately* held *our* positions, not Healy's, on the "Arab Revolution" and the Maoist "Cultural Revolution." The U.S. Wohlforthites actually have very little in common with Healy politically, but being a group not actually based on politics they are delighted to serve as a passive transmission belt for the IC in the U.S.

22) The SL takes note of the recent repressions against Trotskyists in Greece and Uruguay. The Greek comrades, after being brutally mistreated and tortured, have been given long prison sentences. Uruguay, one of the only two Latin American countries with any semblance of bourgeois democracy, has raided an international conference of the Posadas tendency, which had up until then been a legal party there.

## IV. NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

### A. Black Struggle

23) The division of the U.S. working class along race lines has long been used by the bourgeoisie to aid in the maintenance of capitalist rule. Therefore, the race question is central to the determination of perspectives for the U.S. revolution, and is a decisive test of the political worth of any organization. The SL's position—of determined opposition to black separatism combined with a recognition of the *special oppression* of black working people—is characteristic of our theoretical method and has been one of the defining positions of our

tendency since its inception. The theoretical basis of our position was noted as follows:

"From their arrival, the Negro people have been an *integral part* of American class society while at the same time *forcibly segregated* at the bottom of this society....

"The vast majority of Black people—North and South—are today workers who, along with the rest of the American working class, must sell their labor power in order to secure the necessities of life from those who buy labor power in order to make profit.... Ultimately their road to freedom lies only through struggle with the rest of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish an egalitarian, socialist society.

"Yet the struggle of the Black people of this country for freedom, while part of the working class as a whole, is more than that struggle. The Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class. Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs and problems necessitating additional and special forms of struggle. It is this part of the struggle which has begun today, and from which the most active and militant sections of Black people will gain a deep education and experience in the lessons of struggle. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."

—*Black and Red*, September 1966

Our tendency has therefore always placed great emphasis on recruiting black Trotskyist cadre. We recognized in the developing mood of black militancy an opportunity for a small Trotskyist organization in a country with a traditionally politically backward and anti-communist working class to surmount its seemingly inevitable isolation from the class it theoretically represents; for black people, overwhelmingly working-class as noted above, could be organized in struggle through a *transitional* organization which would be linked through its most conscious elements with the Trotskyist vanguard. Our minority tendency inside the SWP in fact coalesced in part around the struggle for an active intervention in the civil rights movement in the period 1962-64, when the SWP had a singular opportunity to intervene in shaping the developing ideology of the black struggle. We counterposed to the SWP Majority's passivity and abstentionism this orientation:

"At bottom what the Marxists should advocate and aim to bring about is a *transitional* organization of the Negro struggle standing as a connecting link between the party and the broader masses. What is involved in working from a revolutionary standpoint is to seek neither a *substitute to* nor an *opponent of* the vanguard party, but rather a unified formation of the largely or exclusively Negro members of the party together with the largest number of other militants willing to fight for that section of the revolutionary Marxist program dealing with the Negro question. Such a movement expresses simultaneously the special needs of the Negro struggle and its relationship to broader struggles, ultimately for workers' power.

"This approach to the special oppression of the Negroes stems from the tactics of Lenin's and Trotsky's Comintern. It was there that the whole concept was worked out for relating the party to mass organizations of special strata under conditions where the need has become evident and it became important that such movements contribute to the proletarian class struggle and that their best elements be won over to the party itself. The militant women's organizations, revolution-

ary youth leagues, and radical Trade Unionists associations are other examples of this form."

—"For Black Trotskyism," by James Robertson and Shirley Stoute, *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 24, 3 July 1963

24) The SL rejects the position, rampant on the left, that the black struggle is essentially a *national* struggle for self-determination. U.S. black people do not constitute a nation in the Marxist sense; there is no material basis for a separate political economy. Only the victory of fascism in this country, which could completely purge black people from the process of production and economic life, could create such a basis. U.S. black people do not have a separate economic life and class structure, a separate language and territory, or a separate culture. What special black culture exists is mainly that of the most oppressed stratum of the working class and the chronically unemployed. In this country there is one ruling class with one state power, and there must be one united vanguard party to lead the struggle against it.

Equally important, the SL condemns as a capitulation the refusal of the SWP and most other radical organizations to criticize black groups on the grounds that this would violate "self-determination." Even when a struggle is legitimately a struggle against national oppression, Marxists do not abdicate their responsibility to their class, the proletariat, nor would they infer from the existence of two national groupings within one state the possibility of two separate vanguard parties. The SWP's choice of a Black Nationalist theory was not simply a theoretical *mistake*; it was a deliberate attempt to justify theoretically their abdication of the responsibility to criticize and struggle as Marxists instead of enthusing and tail-ending as opportunists.

25) In the earlier phase, the black struggle—in the form of the "civil rights movement"—was essentially a struggle for bourgeois-democratic rights under petty-bourgeois leadership (King, Farmer, etc.) and was imbued with all the aspects of *reformism*, especially pacifism. After the civil rights movement passed its peak with the 1963 March on Washington and the adoption by the bourgeoisie of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a section of the movement under SNCC's leadership pushed towards radicalism, creating the "black power" movement. The black struggle was moving toward a radical *political* approach, stimulated by the bourgeoisie's crude rejection of the MFDP at the 1964 Democratic Party convention. The black power movement contained a number of radical points, including especially armed self-defense and independent political action, as well as serious defects:

"In short, the 'black power' movement is raising questions whose answers lie *outside* the framework set up by the capitalist class.

"However, as yet the movement has not become consciously anti-capitalist. It has rejected what it knows as liberalism but is unsure of how to go further. Lacking a conscious orientation towards the working class, and constantly surrounded by bourgeois propaganda, the movement may yet fall prey to bourgeois politicians with radical phrases or else become hopelessly isolated and demoralized."

—*Black and Red*, September 1966

Following the demise of its openly reformist integrationist phase, the black movement faced a choice

of orientation—essentially between black separatism and communism. Several factors, however, tended more and more to bring out its nationalist side: objectively, the actual worsening of conditions in the black ghetto, especially increasing lumpenization, coupled with the slow and insulated revival of the union movement; on the subjective side, the betrayal of the movement by its older leaders who fled to find greener pastures, and their replacement by new nationalist spokesmen usually motivated by self-aggrandizement. The enthusiastic capitulation of the ostensibly “Marxist” organizations to the nationalist mood was also an important factor, negatively speaking, as winning over the black movement’s most ideological elements to a line of revolutionary integration would have considerably altered the entire black political milieu.

That the bourgeoisie could make brilliant use of black nationalism became blatant with the corporation-sponsored Black Power Conference in Newark (July 1967), and since then the nationalist mood has become pervasive among black youth. Particularly ominous has been the use of petty-bourgeois black demagogues to exacerbate racial divisions within the working population, as happened in the 1968 New York City teachers’ strike.

In addition, the establishment of black caucuses in several important trade unions is a related, although contradictory phenomenon. Impelled both by the legitimate grievances and oppression of blacks as workers and by the mood of petty-bourgeois black separatism, such caucuses—potentially vehicles for militant rank-and-file struggle against the bosses and conservative labor “leaders”—can also be turned into organizers of black scabbing, dual unionism or simple union-busting. In several industries, most notably auto, black workers have shown themselves to be more willing than whites to engage in militant struggle and thus potential leaders in the fight for class demands, but nationalist moods have channeled this militancy instead into increasingly separate struggles.

26) As noted above, our tendency developed a perspective of recruiting a layer of black militants out of the civil rights movement, and through these cadres establishing ties with the ghetto masses. We expected to recruit these cadres by struggle within the civil rights movement in opposition to the prevailing pacifist-reformist leadership. Our transitional program for this field of work contained two main elements: one, tactical militancy, particularly armed self-defense, and two, objectively anti-capitalist economic demands such as upgrading of poorly-paid black workers, organization of the unemployed by the unions, “thirty for forty” etc. Our strategic perspective for an anti-capitalist civil rights movement was the bringing together of black oppression and class issues in a Freedom-Labor Party.

On the basis of this approach, we were able to do valuable work in the black movement, particularly in New York CORE and the Harlem Organizing Committee and with the Deacons. Most notable was our recruitment of a small black cadre and the building of a modest SL base in the deep South. However, in our estimation of the potential for intervention, we may have failed to appreciate sufficiently the attractiveness of black nationalism as an ostensibly revolutionary

counter-ideology to Marxism. Black nationalism was capable of reaping much of the bitterness at the weaknesses, failures and betrayals of the old civil rights movement; thus, young militants disillusioned with integrationist reformism became recruits to separatism rather than to Marxism.

As black nationalism became the dominant mood, our carefully worked-out transitional line for the black movement became essentially abstract. White radicals were no longer accepted in the ghetto; organizations in which we had worked soon dried up or became exclusively black; even those ostensibly revolutionary groups which had adopted a pro-black nationalist line (such as the SWP) were unable to recruit blacks to an integrated organization. The adherence to “all-black unity” hindered political polarization and kept black liberals, black radicals and black fakers tied to the same rhetoric and to each other. Coupled with these factors, we were unable to hold many of our black recruits, who could not stand up to the active hostility and social pressure they met in defending our politics—and their membership in a multi-racial organization—in the black radical milieu. Thus, the all-encompassing dominance of black nationalist moods essentially closed off the possibility of the SL becoming a predominantly black organization in this period. We can, however, wrench individuals out of the black movement on the basis of our full program and a commitment to the fundamental principles of socialist internationalism. Further, we insist strongly that black nationalism—although it now dominates every aspect and manifestation of black political life—is a transitory mood, lacking a program and based on fiction rather than material fact.

27) Recognizing that the SL had become cut off from a major element in our perspective, several comrades urged a change of orientation aimed at more successfully differentiating our program from the verbal militancy of the black nationalists. The Garment Center Vietnam Committee was an example of the attempt to raise general political issues and to interest black and Puerto Rican workers on a basis other than as ghetto residents, tenants, etc.; electoral work, which would enable us to raise more aspects of our general program, was also suggested at one point.

At our Central Committee Plenum, 30-31 December 1967, we adopted the *Memorandum on the Negro Struggle*, drafted by H. Turner, which set forward a new tactic of shifting our attention to black militants *at the point of production*, thereby cutting across false concepts of a classless racial “community”:

“3. A sharp upturn in militant struggles has taken place by the labor movement together with heightened rank and file activity. These struggles have paralleled the rise in militancy in the black ghettos, but have not resulted in increased identification of white and black workers with each other. On the contrary, the growth of black nationalist ideas, and the increase in despairing ghetto outbursts reflect the increased separation felt by black workers.

“4. Prospects for achieving the unity of black and white workers against their exploiters are related to the objective necessity of the working class to pass from an economic level of struggle alone to an all-encompassing struggle which includes the political plane....

“5. A transitional organization is needed at the point of production and in the process of labor, where black and white workers come into contact in their class role, to

prove in action that unity against the class enemy is possible and necessary, and to make available to the working-class struggle the immense revolutionary potential of the black workers.

"12. In order to implement the above perspective, it is proposed that a trade-union commission be formed. The commission should be national in scope, and should act to determine the most fruitful areas where suitable comrades could be encouraged to concentrate. It would serve to transmit the experiences gained and exchange ideas as to tactics, and the solutions of problems arising in this work."

This shift of involvement from the ghetto to the factory was intended to be applied within the context of the SL's "fighting propaganda" orientation of exemplary mass work and as a continuation of the attempt to establish some modest roots in a section of the working class. Following the Plenum, however, confusion over the magnitude and scope developed and was exploited by a then-secret faction. Under the leadership of K. Ellens, the faction invoked the *Memorandum* and the Militant Labor Civil Rights Committee project as their banner, as the first steps to a new, non-propagandist orientation. In view of the impatience and general confusion which developed, supposedly over the implementation of the *Memorandum*, it is important to emphasize that Turner's own view of the tactical turn, presented in his original motivation of the *Memorandum* to the Political Bureau meeting of 2 October 1967, lent itself less than the vague formulations of the document itself to over-ambitious interpretation:

"This proposed turn to greater activity in the labor movement does not represent an attempt to 'jump over' the present perspective and pretend to act like a party, but is viewed as a basically exemplary form of activity, although we can still provide real leadership in some areas."

—PB Minutes, 2 October 1967

The eventual development of a full-fledged faction fight touched on other aspects of the general issue of black struggle. Turner himself continued to focus his attention mostly on the *Memorandum*, the MLCRC and demands for the "upgrading" of black workers—an approach which seemed strongly flavored by moralistic do-goodism, as well as the mistaken notion that the SL should assume a total trade union orientation to replace what he mistook as a previous total civil rights orientation. Ellens, however, was concerned with far more comprehensive departures from the SL's political outlook. In addition to an all-pervasive, if abstract, "workerism" and explicit policy of proletarianization, the outlook of the Ellens faction was heavily overlaid with tendencies toward black nationalism, manifested in the accusation that the Majority was racist in expecting to recruit only *exceptional* black people (e.g., a militant black woman repelled by black nationalism's virulent male chauvinism) so long as the nationalist mood was all-pervasive.

28) The bitterness of the black populace at their worsening conditions has exploded again and again in violent outbursts, usually triggered by police provocations. As we have consistently pointed out, however, these so-called "riots," while they are subjectively expressions of great militancy and anger, can lead to nothing except the victimization of militants and are a reflection of the lack of any real *political* leadership in the ghetto. The SL, one of the first groups to raise the

call for black self-defense, recognizes the absolute necessity of supporting the black ghetto against the brutality of the cops.

In the past few years, manifestations of unrest in the ghettos have been paralleled by developments on campus. A section of the U.S. bourgeoisie has adopted a conscious policy of seeking to create a black middle class (*not* "black capitalism") as a means of controlling the ghetto upheavals, as this privileged strata would have an interest in maintaining bourgeois "law and order." Accordingly, both the large state universities and the elite private colleges are admitting underprivileged black youth under special quotas and programs. Such demands as "open admissions" for black students, separate black housing and dining facilities and "black studies" programs have been at the base of most of last year's student strikes and sit-ins. The impetus to the increasingly separatist mood among black college students seems to be largely sociological, rather than political, for the majority: a desire to retreat from competition with white students who are academically much better prepared than students from ghetto high schools, an increasing wave of cultural nationalism which stands somewhere between an emblem of militancy and a fashion fad, a disgust with patronizing treatment from liberals, a somewhat paranoid overestimation of the strength of overt racism among white college students, a defensive coming together of a minority. For some small number of the black students, however, the revolts represent something more: a feeling that they do not want to be bought off by the bourgeoisie which offers them the chance to become token black faces for white corporations, government welfare and "anti-poverty" workers, black small businessmen to exploit the ghetto.

The Spartacist League gives critical support to policies which extend, even in a limited or deformed way, the rights of the oppressed. Thus, for example, we critically supported the 50/50 quota system proposed and finally vetoed for City College in New York. However, we seek at all times to transcend the limitations of the variants offered by others, instead proposing our own transitional demands, such as the demand for open admissions to free higher education for all, which cut through the polarization of the working people along race lines and instead tend to unite all the exploited at the expense of the bourgeoisie.

29) The current frame-up of 21 members of the Black Panther Party in New York and the several-stage repressions in California should be recognized as part of nation-wide pattern. The Panthers, a heterogeneous grouping, are the only major black organization which has not been simply bought off by the government—i.e., they are black nationalist because they believe in black nationalism, not because they have learned that fake-militant rhetoric pays off. Further, of the organizations which presume to speak for the ghetto, the Panthers are the only one which actually have any semblance of a mass base. We must defend the Panthers unconditionally against the campaign of frame-up and assassination directed against them. Included in our defense, however, must be our strongly critical assessment of how they are defending themselves: the call for a Popular Front to include class collaboration with Democrats and

Republicans, and the confusion of brittle, racist bourgeois democracy with actual fascism.

## B. The Labor Movement

30) Except in acutely pre-revolutionary situations, the working class tends to maintain its allegiance to, and organization in, its traditional organizational forms—e.g., and principally, the organized labor movement. Therefore the Marxists—although they will vary the tactics and scope of their efforts according to their ability to intervene and the external circumstances—always understand the necessity to fight for their program within the labor unions and against the incumbent union bureaucrats. The SL explicitly rejects the old theory, raised once again by the New Left, that work by communists in the existing labor organizations is unprincipled or “reformist”; we act on the communist principle of struggling in the unions against the “labor lieutenants of capital” for the allegiance of the workers. The existing labor unions have a dual and self-contradictory nature somewhat analogous to a deformed workers state; on the one hand they are the organizations of the working class, whose destruction by the capitalists would represent a decisive step backward, but at the same time their leaderships—conservative, narrow, self-interested—impede their ability to defend the workers’ interests against the class enemy. Historically, the organs of dual power have been soviets, political forms that transcend the more limited role of trade unions, as in the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

Our orientation toward the labor unions was summarized by Trotsky:

“Only on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Sectarian attempts to build or preserve small ‘revolutionary’ unions as a second edition of the party signify in actuality the renouncing of the struggle for leadership of the working class.... [However] if it be criminal to turn one’s back on the mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative (“progressive”) bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.”

—*The Transitional Program*, 1938

31) The continuing effects of the Vietnam war on the U.S. economy have produced several important trends in the labor movement. In 1967, there was a general 67% increase in work stoppages due to collective bargaining disputes, centering mainly on wage increases and union recognition and security. The sharpest increase was in the heavy industrial areas of the Northeast and Midwest: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. While productivity per man-hour continues to climb, wage increases during the last three years have actually been outstripped by increased taxes and rises in consumer prices. In the last few years 40% of new jobs have been in government, mainly state and city workers. Since 1956, 800,000 government employees have been added to union membership rolls. Rank and file pressure to bring public employee wages up to industrial levels resulted in a 175% increase in strikes and work stoppages by this segment of the labor force over 1967.

The character of this strike activity by organized workers is indicated by the equally sharp increase in rejections of contract packages negotiated by union bureaucrats, resulting in longer strikes and about a 40% increase in wildcat actions of various kinds.

This pattern of militancy has put union bureaucrats under increased pressure to find ways of containing or heading off rank and file opposition. The head of a major municipal union recently called on union leaders to “take a tougher stand” with members who rejected negotiated accords. Joint committees of labor fakers and management are recommending, along with the Nixon administration, changes in the National Labor Relations Act to prohibit open membership votes on contracts by making secret votes mandatory. Labor leaders in New York City have called for a local Taft-Hartley law providing for a “cooling-off” period for strikes. Many states are passing more stringent anti-strike laws, like the vicious Taylor Law in New York State. In short, the biggest upsurge in labor activity in two decades has resulted in a dual attack by conservative union leaderships and state intervention on various levels against rank and file militancy, indicating once again the role of the conservative union leaderships in subordinating the unions to the bourgeois state.

32) In accordance with the limitations of our personnel and resources, the SL must employ a policy of *concentration* aimed at maximizing our ability to intervene. While recognizing that in practice our choice of targets for union work is often circumscribed by e.g., job skills, limited mobility, etc., the SL seeks to concentrate its unionist cadres in the few carefully selected unions which offer us the most advantageous field for our work in terms of exemplary character, union experience and, where possible, recruitment. At our present level of size and influence, in general we are not able to widely shape and direct aspects of the class struggle. Therefore the nature of our union work must be of a necessarily *exemplary* character, demonstrating in practice, although in a limited way, those policies which we will fight for when we can provide direct leadership on a wider scale, and at the same time giving our comrades the experience and skills necessary to assume that role.

Despite these limitations, the SL is involved in four of the approximately six principal industry groups: communications, maritime transportation, light manufacturing and municipal white collar. Other basic areas in which we do not yet have a base are Midwest heavy industry (auto, steel, rubber, etc.) and Southern industry (textiles, tobacco, lumber products, etc.). Each of these areas has particular characteristics and problems that affect organizing activity, flowing from the nature of the job and the history of its unions.

The union situation in the communications industry has been characterized by very tight, if distant, central control by the International leadership, one heavily steeped in cold-war anti-communism, and long a funnel for CIA funds into the AFL-CIO. There is close collaboration between the union leadership and the company in handling dissident locals or individuals—firing or relocation, withdrawal of dues check-off of a wildcat local followed by threats of expulsion for non-payment of dues, recognition by the company of rump

locals set up by the International to get rid of militant local leadership, etc.—necessitating a very rigid separation of SL organizational activities and union work. Union organization is along industrial lines (as opposed to craft) and locals of 2000 to 5000 are not unusual, which is conducive to organizing oppositional caucuses.

The Maritime transportation unions (as well as the Teamsters) have a long history of physical violence to suppress rank and file dissidents. This is facilitated by the use in the industry of union-operated hiring halls, where union bureaucrats, pie cards, camp followers and goon squads are all concentrated and through which all members must go to get work assignments, with the result that militants can be—and often are—dealt with directly and physically. Under these circumstances, considerable physical security measures are necessary to avoid individual terrorization. The union leadership is extremely corrupt, with a long history of manipulation of welfare and pension funds, union treasury, etc. The bureaucracy is an ardent supporter of the Vietnam war, largely because it means more ships, and has a history of purges of “reds” during the fifties. Wages are relatively low, compared to industrial levels, and working conditions poor. While the nature of the industry lends itself to international union organization, jobs are being threatened by the increased use by American shippers of lower-wage foreign ships. The growing use of automated merchant ships poses an even greater threat to job security, without a sliding scale of hours system. Union democracy is virtually nonexistent, with all decisions on contracts, allocation of funds, officers’ salaries, political support, etc. made by leadership decree. Even membership referendums have been done away with. Under these circumstances the fight for internal democracy is an absolute precondition for the struggle for influence over the membership. The close relationship between the union bureaucracy and the government over support of the war and the handling of war materials is a clear example of the need for our slogan for a political party of the workers to fight for their interests.

Our problems in the New York area are of a different sort. In the union that covers a miscellany of light industry—small print shops, direct mail services, warehousemen, drivers, etc.—caucus organizing is rendered more difficult because the membership is broken up in widely scattered shops. Most of the jobs covered are low-wage and semi-skilled. A high percentage of the membership is black or Spanish-speaking, and young. On the other hand, the leadership is almost entirely white and middle-aged, with a radical past that it puts to use through militant rhetoric to deflect membership discontent. In the past few years the union’s membership has become stagnant and started to decline. Following its intervention to try to end the New York teachers’ strike in 1968, the union initiated a flourish of “community relations” and organization drives to increase membership. The leadership recently carried out an ostensibly radical break with the AFL-CIO, reportedly under pressure from an organized black caucus, in the direction of the newly formed Alliance for Labor Action. While the leadership is presently enjoying some popular support, it has projected a rather ambitious organizing program which is inconsistent with its past performance, a contradiction that should provide opportunities for intervention by our comrades.

The fraction has been experiencing some difficulties due to its social composition because of the male chauvinism of many of the young union members.

Our longest and most systematic work has been in a large and relatively radical municipal white collar union in the New York area. Four years of experience there have provided us with a great deal of concentrated understanding and expertness in union functioning. While a membership base of primarily recent college graduates enabled the union to carry out several militant strikes and a series of local work actions, resulting in a sharp increase in wage levels and significant improvement of working conditions over a period of five years, this same social composition results also in a very poor class consciousness that is even reflected in the leadership itself. The college degree requirement breeds anti-union attitudes through a vulgar middle-class notion of “professionalism.” This is particularly true of black workers, whose participation in union actions has generally been minimal. Recruitment has proven difficult. The high turnover of workers—30 to 40% a year average—has itself accounted for the loss of over two dozen caucus supporters over a period of years. Organizing is difficult with our limited division of labor, since the membership is spread out in over forty work locations in five boroughs. Nonetheless, we have become a recognized political current within the union and polled 22% of the vote in city-wide union elections in 1968.

Recently the union remerged with the conservative AFL-CIO union from which it had earlier broken, thereby reinforcing an increasing tendency to make deals with the city. One result has been the passive acceptance of a massive job cut that will literally wipe out 75% of the membership basis of the merged union. Our comrades have acquired considerable experience as shop stewards during the past several years, accumulating skills in the production of leaflets and newsletters, organizing, internal union functioning, floor speaking, election campaigns—in short a basic education in functioning as trade union militants.

While we have no organizational base yet in the heavy industrial areas of the middle West or the South, recruitment and colonization over the next several years can change that situation. Heavy industry has been marked by a sharp increase in strike activity and militancy, particularly among the large number of black workers, especially in auto. But this has been accompanied by an increased racial polarization as well. The most characteristic feature of Southern industry has been the hard and long-standing opposition to union organization that permeates all levels of government and industry. Nonetheless, the past year has seen increased union activity, typically in textile, where militant black women workers have been playing key roles, as well as among predominantly black municipal employees, notably in Memphis and Charleston.

33) There are four basic tactical approaches to union work: (1) the organization as a whole, acting in its own name, approaching a union from the outside; (2) individual scattered comrades in an area working with contacts through a pan-union organization; (3) an intra-union caucus of SL members and other militants in a given union; (4) an individual comrade known as a

militant, but as yet without strong supporters. A mass vanguard party could and probably would combine these approaches, but for a small organization such as ours some of these tactics tend to interfere with others. Of the four possibilities, (1) and (3) are compatible, i.e., the SL local organization backing up a particular fraction-caucus with more generalized propaganda in a given situation, and (2) and (4) are compatible, e.g., an individual campaign for union office being used to develop contacts in other unions through a pan-union newsletter. During particular hot strike situations, for instance the subway and teachers' strikes in New York, we intervened directly with SL propaganda, even though we had no members in the union involved, not to jump on the bandwagon but because we had some especially relevant analysis to contribute. We reject the wishful-thinking approach of L. Marcus (Labor Committee) and H. Turner who, attempting to leap over a necessary stage of building internally, elevate this approach to a *strategy*, because we recognize that propaganda directed at workers from the outside is not sufficient to break them from their established leaders and their policies.

Our own experience has covered the whole range of these four methods, but where possible we work in unions through intra-union caucuses of SL members and other militants organized on the basis of agreement with a specific program of transitional demands. A caucus provides the best organizational form for counterposing to the incumbent leadership a militant program, making clear that it is not simply personal positions, but the political and action program of an organized grouping which competes for leadership with the union bureaucracy. Such caucuses form the basis for factory committees in times of greater upheaval, the expressions of dual power on the factory level. Through caucuses, union militants attracted by one aspect of the SL's program can function in an organized way with our comrades in struggle without having to accept the full program of the SL.

In addition to organized struggle through caucuses, the SL must also utilize individual comrades in unions who are not in a position to draw militants around them into a caucus. In our Bay Area local, for example, we found ourselves with several long-time unionists scattered through different unions. In addition, independent militants were drawn in from the local's activities in a labor party caucus at the Peace and Freedom Party founding conference. We utilized these members and independents in a pan-union organization, which in addition to attracting politically interested workers can also be used to involve non-union radicals seeking a working-class orientation. We recognize that such pan-union organizations cannot as such lead struggles inside particular unions, and seek the development of fractions in each particular area; our comrades are presently involved in building caucuses in two such areas. The pan-union organization has proved valuable in exchanging caucus-building experiences and in encouraging contacts to undertake caucus work. But in general the SL cannot effectively combine a pan-union approach with caucus-building since a pan-union group tends to absorb local personnel and resources which should be channeled into the higher-priority caucuses, which require a much more concentrated and

systematic activity. In addition, a caucus associated with a pan-union group is vulnerable to a charge of "dual unionism." To the extent that a pan-union formation is actually successful it will wither away in favor of established caucuses.

Security procedures of SLers in unions will necessarily vary widely depending on the union and the particular situation. In general, our comrades will avoid direct organizational identification with the SL, although this will vary depending on the situation from perfunctory use of a party name in the *Spartacist* to non-participation in virtually all SL public activities. "Hiding" one's politics, however, vitiates the purpose of our union work and, in addition, sets up the possibility of being red-baited. Where we have a caucus actively working in a union, we take extreme care to safeguard our comrades' security by maintaining a rigid separation of fraction and caucus functions, restricting all internal union activities such as union meetings, leaflet distributions of the caucus, etc., to union members.

34) The union caucus struggles for union democracy and militant rank and file control of the union. The caucus must expose the union bureaucrats as unwilling and unable to fight for the felt needs of the workers, and must transcend simple bread-and-butter unionism through a program of transitional demands linking proletarian class consciousness with a unified perspective of general social struggle against capitalism. As Comrade Trotsky pointed out, in this era of imperialist decline the unions have become closely linked politically with the capitalist state power through their conservative bureaucracies. Militant unionists must fight not only their individual boss but also the repressive apparatus of the state with its anti-labor laws and the political stranglehold of the capitalist parties.

The particular program of a union caucus will vary depending on the particular union, but will also include more general economic and political demands, e.g., full employment through a shorter work week ("30 for 40"), a sliding scale of wages based on price levels to keep pace with inflation, labor action to oppose the Vietnam war (e.g., a one-day political strike calling for withdrawal of U.S. troops), the fight against "professionalism" through abolition of unnecessary requirements and extension of necessary skills to the unskilled, opposition to racial discrimination by either company or union, organization of the unemployed by the unions, etc.

The SL's policy is one of uncompromising opposition to government interference in labor struggles. We are the only tendency which has resolutely opposed the efforts of reformists and misguided radicals to deepen the involvement of the state in the internal affairs of unions by appealing to bourgeois courts or Taft-Hartley-type laws to act "impartially" against corrupt and undemocratic union bureaucrats, thus replacing the control of the unions by the "lieutenants" of the bosses with control by the bosses' state itself and avoiding the obligation to involve and organize the workers themselves to clean their own house.

35) The U.S. is the only major industrial country in the world which has no major party separate from the capitalist parties, claiming to represent the working class. The historical reasons for this situation include the role of the Communist Party in wedding an important

section of the labor movement to the Roosevelt administration, especially in the period of the rise of the CIO, and its subsequent role as the "left wing" of the Democratic Party. In addition, the post-war witchhunt physically purged the U.S. labor movement of thousands of its most conscious and militant elements. The slogan for a labor party has been an important component of the Trotskyist transitional program for the U.S., but in most periods has had a generally abstract character because it did not correspond to any strong felt need among workers. The current political situation, and particularly the increasingly unpopular Vietnam war, took the labor party demand "off the shelf." The SL's slogan "For a Labor-Socialist Ticket" was an attempt to focus on the absolute strategic necessity for the labor movement to break from the ruling-class parties, and a concretization of our sharp criticisms of the middle-class-oriented SWP Halstead-Boutelle campaign and the left-liberal Peace and Freedom Party formations, counterposing their deliberate avoidance of a class line to the enormous objective possibilities.

The significant support for the racist right-wing Wallace campaign among Northern ethnic white workers was both an example and a result of the utter disorientation of the U.S. left. While many of Wallace's adherents, especially in the South, were undoubtedly hard-core reactionaries and bigots, many were traditionally Democrats, often former supporters of Robert Kennedy, and union members who were fed up with liberalism and responsive to Wallace's "little man" populism. Trucks in the Midwest carried bumper stickers combining Wallace and McGovern, one a racist and the other a "pro-labor" liberal Democrat. These discontented workers, willing to desert the two major parties, responded to high taxes and inflation by demanding an end to the Vietnam war through military victory and, especially, an end to welfare "handouts" to the black ghettos, reflecting in a racist way their own deeply felt economic insecurity. Had a class-conscious labor party movement had the forces of the "independent" anti-war campaigns, a significant section of Wallace's supporters might instead have rallied behind demands which cut through the objective basis for racism by demanding that the capitalists provide decent jobs for all and withdraw U.S. troops immediately from Vietnam.

36) The SL opposes the formation of the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA), the ostensibly "progressive" breakaway from the conservative AFL-CIO. The ALA, initiated by Walter Reuther and based mainly on the United Automobile Workers and the Teamsters, is being sold to rank and file unionists as an organizational step toward militancy and, especially, to increasingly active black workers, as a break from "lily white" mainstream unionism. In actuality, this move is an attempt by a section of the union bureaucracy, especially Reuther, to mollify tremendous rank and file discontent, while establishing an outside base to challenge and simply replace the Meany bureaucracy for international leadership of the AFL-CIO. The split avoids the necessity for any internal struggle against the manifestly unsupportable positions and practices of the Meany leadership, leaving everything basically as it is,

pending an eventual return. The "liberal" Reuther could do a much more effective job for the ruling class than the rigidly anti-communist and conservative Meany in dealing with, for instance, the French general strike. A union leadership which was seriously interested in defeating Meany & Co. politically, especially considering the considerable resources of the UAW, would have taken their fight to the membership inside the AFL-CIO and would not have left until physically thrown out. But such a process would have unleashed a force that would also unseat Reuther himself, exposing him as only the more flexible of the ruling factions of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Reuther's vicious suppression of black militants in the UAW, who are in revolt against the do-nothing policies of his leadership, as well as his crushing of wildcat opposition to the last contract, reveals Reuther's current militant rhetoric as utter fakery. We must oppose any attempts by other labor fakers, like the Livingston leadership of District 65, to lead their members into this fake-militant dead-end, and insist instead on a program of irreconcilable struggle to oust the entire Meany-Reuther-Hoffa leadership.

### C. The Anti-War Movement

37) The SL has recognized that the unprecedented wave of opposition to the colonial war in Vietnam is a transitory, and therefore urgent, opportunity. The Chinese state has suffered severe set-backs which make the imperialists' policy of showdown and escalation in Vietnam no longer worth either the economic and political cost domestically or the weakening of the U.S. vis-à-vis the other imperialist powers. In this situation, the ruling class itself is openly split, which facilitates the development of radical anti-war sentiment in the country while the bourgeoisie seeks extrication as rapidly as possible from its intolerable situation:

"There has opened up an area in which there is a certain gap between the overall interests of American imperialism and the Johnson government, which is pursuing the worst of all possible policies. U.S. imperialism has effected the isolation of China, particularly through its successes in India and Indonesia, facilitated by the betrayals of the Mao government...."

"The problem now facing the bourgeoisie is how to extricate itself without being patently defeated. Therefore there are strong tendencies within sections of the American ruling class to collaborate with the right-wing Stalinists in arranging a covert sell-out by the NLF. Meanwhile, the U.S. government presses on along its original course of escalation...."

—*Theses*, 6 April 1966, section 10

The approach outlined at our Founding Conference in September 1966 retains its validity:

"Our major approach must be to link up the war with social struggles in the U.S. and to direct anti-war militants toward the working class. While fighting for the minimum demand of immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces, the SL endeavors to win support for a victory of the anti-imperialist forces emphasizing that a negotiated settlement would be a betrayal of the Vietnamese social revolution. Closely connected with our intervention is the task of fighting for political non-exclusion in all movements and demonstrations. Our supporters must also fight for the protection of the anti-war movement against chauvinistic and fascist attacks through organized self-defense."

—*Theses*, section 10

"Without a recognition of the existence of a conscious ruling class which has a vital stake in the winning of the war, on the one hand, and of a working class which—

while presently deficient in consciousness—has an objective stake in opposing the ruling class and its wars on the other, the anti-war movement will continue to vacillate between reformist attempts to win over 'respectable society' (through such things as prayer vigils and Democratic Party primary campaigns), and flamboyant individual sacrifices which hurt no one but the participants themselves (submarine climbing, draft refusal, etc.)....

"The SL will emphasize the role of the working class not only as that class which will ultimately carry out the socialist revolution and thereby end the causes of war, but will also point out the great power that even a section of the class would have right now to combat ruling class plans for war."

—Amendment to *Theses*, National Conference, September 1966

As concretizations of this approach, the SL developed its "Anti-War Friday" and "Labor-Socialist Ticket" slogans in 1967.

In conjunction with this general orientation, the SL made a principled fight in 1965 against the popular front practices of the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade coalition, essentially a political bloc between the CP and the SWP, with the latter providing the key core of "peace movement" patriots who fought to keep the movement united and "independent" through the deliberate exclusion of politics under the umbrella slogan, "Stop the War Now." The SWP-YSA's line of "single issue"-ism provided the justification for all those who sought to keep the anti-war movement from recognizing the identity of imperialist war and the capitalist system and from seeking allies from other social struggles. This SWP-YSA betrayal and the nominal "independence" (independence from a working-class line) which they zealously safeguarded for the movement left it prey to all forms of reformist fakery, in particular the Eugene McCarthy "peace" campaign which sucked in many anti-war youth. Most of the anti-war militants who moved through the anti-war movement and continued in a leftward direction went into SDS, although the SWP-YSA successfully captured a newer (and less politicized) layer.

38) In conjunction with our anti-war work, the SL notes that we took the lead in developing a correct position on the Army and the draft:

"While denouncing the draft as part of the imperialist War Machine, the SL opposes all forms of pacifism or individual abstentionism such as typified by the slogan 'We won't go' or the act of draft card burning. Likewise we are against special exemptions for student youth at the expense of young workers; student radicals must 'burn' their privileged deferments, not their draft cards."

—*Theses*, section 10

"While a few individuals here and there may find ways of staying out of the armed forces, there is no general way to prevent the drafting of most youth. Thus as a policy illegal draft resistance in North America today will only result in individual martyrs. Given a choice between the army and prison, anti-war militants should choose the army, remembering that their democratic rights of participation in the political process are curtailed but not eliminated upon membership in the armed forces."

—Amendment to *Theses*, September 1966

The initial presentation of this line to the SDS Convention in the summer of 1967 was met with extreme hostility, as SDS adopted a "We Won't Go" position. More recently, however, the very heavy jail

sentences against draft resisters, coupled with significant manifestations of unrest within the Army itself, forced the radical movement to recognize the Army as a fruitful field for radicalization and to orient to, e.g., G.I. coffeehouses, underground soldiers' newspapers, etc. In addition, G.I. protest has captured the remnants of the civilian anti-war movement rather like Black Nationalism captured the white New Left. Radical soldiers are the new bandwagon of the SWP-YSA, which gave G.I. protest top priority at a recent SWP Plenum. The SL opposes the illusion, reminiscent of the "draft resistance" mentality, that G.I. anti-war sentiment is important mainly because soldiers can by themselves end the war by refusing to fight, and opposes a G.I.-chauvinist anti-war rhetoric which puts the G.I. *per se* at the center of the struggle. However, we recognize that soldiers' work is of immense importance for the Marxist movement as one of the rare areas in which a small vanguard group can establish ties with a section of the masses, working-class youth.

Our position toward the Army itself must center on political demands, linking them to G.I. gripes, recognizing that it is the Vietnam war which has been responsible for politicizing most radical soldiers. In particular, of central importance are: (a) the unconditional right of G.I.s to hold and express political views, and the defense of this right against infringement by the brass; (b) the nature of the Vietnam war, and the class divisions in society; (c) the black question and the bourgeoisie's use of racial divisions, an issue which may take on vital importance in the determination of the future of the G.I. movement; (d) the demand for the establishment of a servicemen's union as an organized form for the protection of soldiers' rights against the brass.

Given the simple civil libertarian anti-war propagandism of the YSA and the apolitical confrontationism of *The Bond*, the demand for a real servicemen's union will be important in the Marxists' building of an oppositional caucus in the G.I. anti-war movement.

#### D. The Student Movement

39) The SL anticipated in the New Left movement a major opportunity for the recruitment of cadres. In particular, we have intended a serious intervention in SDS since our Founding Conference and before. A special National Office circular to our members nationally explained our policy:

"The Spartacist League is encouraging its younger members to carry out work in SDS on a sustained national basis. It has been our policy since SDS dropped its communist exclusion clause for our members to work in this group. With the rise in anti-war activity, SDS involvement has been important for all serious socialists. As a result of discussions at our Founding National Conference, we have recognized that a qualitatively more serious participation on our part is overdue and urgent...."

—Lyndon Henry for the N.O.,  
21 September 1966

In particular, our comrades were to orient toward SDS nationally even where opportunities for intervention in a local chapter were not promising, as we sought to become an ideological pole of attraction within the radical student movement.

Despite our acceptance of this policy of serious attention to SDS, our work in the radical student

movement has been sporadic, generally limited (except for participation in major national and regional gatherings) to intervention on the local chapter level and, especially, limited to and dependent upon the initiative of a few comrades with a particular interest in such work—for example those who were active in SDS previously before joining the SL. The National Office has taken the lead in facilitating our physical and literary presence at important SDS Conventions and the like but we have been generally unable to make it a matter of routine that our members of reasonable age should consider SDS work one of their responsibilities.

40) We have recognized that a qualitative heightening of our involvement in SDS work has been indicated as SDS itself became more and more in danger of destruction. The SL sees the desirability for the existence of a broad-based, non-exclusionist radical youth organization—along the lines of the Japanese Zengakuren—such as SDS had been since it broke from the League for Industrial Democracy and repudiated anti-communism. Within the last year or two, SDS became a battleground for violent factional hostilities, essentially at the instigation of the evolving “hard-line” New Lefters who sought to turn SDS from an inclusive organization into a more homogeneous and possibly even democratic centralist organization of New Leftism by purging it of “outside cadre organizations,” in particular Progressive Labor. The reason advanced for purging PL was that these “outside” groups could determine SDS’s positions undemocratically because they voted in a bloc, but the impetus was actually to change the nature of SDS from a broad organization which included all the radical groups as well as “independents” to a competing tendency. The SL opposed the attempt to purge PL, arguing that those who favored mainstream New Leftism ideologically should not seek to turn SDS into their exclusive little bailiwick, but should set up their own “outside cadre organization” while maintaining SDS as a broad-based group in which each tendency can fight for political dominance for its line.

However, we recognized that PL was growing enormously in influence in SDS as the most left-wing and pro-working-class tendency visible there. PL made itself into the main pole of opposition to the SDS “National Collective” and politics à la Mark Rudd, and, largely on the basis of a crude, Stalinist representation of a line for proletarian revolution, recruited the most serious elements in SDS to their “Worker-Student Alliance.” Many of these might well have been won to the SL, had we been more obtrusive, but are now in or around PL instead on the basis of opposition to the ideological elitism and theoretical bankruptcy of the “National Collective” and the attraction of PL’s burlesque of a proletarian vanguard line. Finally, at the June 1969 SDS Convention in Chicago, PL, by virtue of months of work and planning as well as through ideological conquest, showed up with what was probably an actual majority of the delegate votes.

The June 1969 SDS Convention in effect marked the end of the New Left. After some days of violent factionalism—including chanting of Mao slogans and obscenities, counter-chanting of Mao slogans and obscenities and fistfights on the convention floor—the

“National Collective” supporters walked out before the voting and SDS was split in two: the PL-WSA group representing the left wing and the Klonsky-Avakian-Rudd conglomeration representing the right wing. Thus the New Left, which scorned theory and the necessity of a comprehensive outlook and professed to have transcended the errors and betrayals of the “old leftists,” has been captured entirely by the Stalinist movement—the most “New Leftish” of them into the orbit of the CP and undifferentiated Third Worldism, the dissidents into the sphere of PL.

At the SDS Convention, the Black Panther Party acted as allies and hatchet men for the right-wing Stalinists (Klonskyites) against the left-wing Stalinists (PL). In so doing, the Panthers lent themselves to the internal wrecking operation and destructive splitting of SDS. Underlying such maneuvering by the Panthers lies both a political softness toward Third Worldism such as Klonsky exemplifies and the assumption, made explicit as a reason for earlier supporting the Peace and Freedom Party, that something other than the correct politics is all that can be expected of whites. An undercurrent of a tendency toward alliance with the CP runs through the central Panther leadership, for some representing political agreement but for others simple opportunism. In the U.S. radical movement, which has been disarmed by capitulation to all aspects of the black nationalist movement, the Panthers have a tremendous moral authority which they have treated without the seriousness generally characteristic of their attitude toward the ghetto.

41) The SL, while it must separate itself from the particular actions and policies of PL in SDS, recognizes that the Worker-Student Alliance wing of SDS is qualitatively politically to the left of the Klonsky faction who forced the split. The WSA-SDS has affirmed that it upholds non-exclusionism in its organization (after voting down the SL’s proposed amendment to that effect!). The radical students who have been pulled into the WSA are seeking the answers and analysis which only the SL can provide—on world Stalinist betrayals, the implementation of a proletarian perspective, a *transitional* line in the mass movement, the black question, a way to surmount “doing one’s own thing.” Thus, we belong in the WSA wing of SDS politically and should be able to gain from vigorous intervention a significant number of recruits to Trotskyism.

It is urgent that this tactic be implemented without sluggishness, because the opportunity is an extremely transitory one. All the groups are seeking immediately to digest their latest acquisitions and harden them up against other tendencies. Their present protestations of non-exclusionism to the contrary, PL has a history of organizational abuses including the exclusion of our comrades from the Harlem Defense Council and the defense committees for Bill Epton, the sudden and unilateral dissolution of their May 2nd Movement and the expulsion of SLers from the New Orleans MDS. The “National Collective” has already adopted a politically exclusionist re-definition of membership. Neither PL nor the “National Collective” has the understanding or the principles necessary to avoid turning their SDS organizations into front groups for their leaderships’

politics by driving out dissident individuals and, sooner or later, getting rid of oppositional tendencies.

The SL must be flexible and practical in its application of this orientation to SDS. We strongly prefer to work with the WSA-PL wing, both because we stand politically closer to its main thrust and because its supporters are the most serious elements in SDS, who will be most open to our revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist theory and practice. However, in areas where we have forces suitable for SDS work but no possibility of WSA membership—e.g., we are excluded from the WSA group, or no WSA group exists, etc.—we will work in whatever SDS group exists arguing for SL politics, a broad political youth movement, reunification with the WSA-SDS, repudiation of the Klonskyites and their split, etc. All SLers in the proper age group should formally and immediately take out membership in the national WSA-SDS.

42) The SL takes note of the recent emergence of the movement for women's liberation, which has been and remains mostly an offshoot of the existing multi-issue radical movement. The SL recognizes not only the actual economic superexploitation of women workers, but in addition the myriad of political and social factors which have contributed to women's oppression. In keeping with the traditional Bolshevik position, we call for transitional women's organizations to struggle against sexual oppression in the context of the general class divisions in society, noting that the existing radical women's organizations have generally not progressed past a concern—often intelligently and articulately expressed—with the particular social problems of middle-class radical women. Our attitude toward any women's organization would be determined by its *program*. We note that many spokesmen for the new women's liberation groups have accepted an extension of the black separatist position, especially the concept of a separate women's vanguard, thus continuing the New Left's mentality of "doing one's own thing." While the demand for a separate women's revolution and even a separate women's state may be no more frivolous than the expectation of a separate black revolution, it is also no *less* frivolous, or erroneous, and has in addition exposed the radical women's groups to hostility and ridicule.

The SL notes that the main social unit for the maintenance and propagation of women's oppression is the *family*:

"... which *throughout* a woman's life gives definition to her oppressed state: as daughter, as wife, as mother. The family is a central target in the Marxist criticism of society. The program of communism includes its abolition (when society has reached such a point that the family could be replaced by social relations of a *superior* physical and emotional content—our aim is not to put everyone in a contemporary state orphanage). It is the family—with all the connotations of the transfer of property through the generations, the necessity to control sexual access to women to ensure that a father passes on property to his son, etc., etc.—which generates all of the morality superstructure. In short, the family is the key social unit for the maintenance of capitalism: the worker's family by which the labor force is reproduced, the capitalist's by which his property (i.e., the congealed life blood of the workers) is transmitted to his sons."

—J. Robertson, letter to Chris,  
18 February 1969

This basic position must have a central place in our propaganda toward the radical women's movement. We note that the Woman Question devoid of real analysis is rapidly becoming a bandwagon of sorts for the general radical movement, with lip service to women's liberation becoming a catch phrase and a weapon against political opponents much like the often all-powerful nominal invocation of the black movement among white-guilt liberals and radicals. This cynical and patronizing opportunism is no substitute for analysis and program.

## V. OSTENSIBLE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS

43) Essential to our perspective of polarization and regroupment is a serious orientation toward the several Ostensible Revolutionary Organizations (ORO's):

"The existing ORO's are both a challenge and obstacle to the building of the movement. If left alone by the SL in sectarian fashion, they will drain off and disorient erstwhile revolutionary elements. Approached in the proper way, in the proper circumstances, sections of them will supply critically important contributions toward our main tactical goal of fusing together a large propaganda group."

—*Theses*, section 14

The SL has two aims in its orientation to the ORO's: to win individual members and supporters, as well as larger sections through splits, of an opponent organization to the SL and to politically expose and discredit a competitor. These aims, which are in many if not most cases closely related, determine our tactics. We reject the opportunistic ingratiation approach which sacrifices politics in the attempt to get organizationally "close." While seeking to take advantage of whatever opportunities present themselves, we recognize that to pick up a member here or there from an organization while leaving its central cadre intact is insufficient. A successful intervention would mean exploiting existing internal differentiation within the cadre by injecting the Trotskyist program, leading to the crystallization and emergence of a revolutionary wing.

44) The SL seeks to make use of the united front as a tactic for setting the base against the top. Thus, we argue for and participate in common work with other ORO's on specific issues wherever a sufficient area of agreement exists. The involvement of our members in demonstrations, defense committees, union elections, etc. along with members of other organizations provides a testing ground for the competing programs and actions, and exposes the centrist leaderships in the eyes of the subjectively revolutionary militants.

Within these common committees, the SL fights for the utmost clarity of ideas and, therefore, works both to convince others of its positions and to maintain non-exclusionism. The SL fights for the right of participating organizations and individuals to carry their own slogans, raise their own propaganda and freely and publicly raise their own criticisms of and disagreements with other tendencies. We are often the only group to raise such an orientation, as other organizations jockey for organizational advantage or seek to bury radical politics under a popular-front "umbrella."

In practice, we find that a principled united front is generally difficult to achieve except under the pressure of events, as sectarian fear of confrontation from the top

and indifferent organizational loyalty from the bottom combine in turning deaf ears to proposals of common action. Nevertheless, the SL will continue to raise such proposals as part of our effort to aid political clarification on the left. Similarly, we must oppose all manifestations of gangsterism in the radical and working-class movement as absolutely antithetical to *consciousness*, the communists' only weapon. Even where we are not strong enough to prevent sectarianism and gangsterism, our propaganda can aid in exposing organizational atrocities and attracting serious militants to the SL.

45) A main focus of our opponent work has necessarily been the SWP, the historical repository of Trotskyism in the U.S., and its youth group, the YSA. The SWP has moved very far from its revolutionary past, degenerating into opportunistic and impressionistic worshippers of the accomplished fact, a cheering section for the Cuban bureaucracy, black nationalist demagoguery, the liberal "peace" movement of the disaffected middle class. Ideologically, the SWP has suffered a number of defeats: the tragic decimation of the Guevarist guerrillas coupled with the redemonstration of the revolutionary potential of the French working class has shown that the "epicenter" of the world revolution has indeed not shifted to the Third World; the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy has continued to harden up, in contradiction to the SWP's contention that Cuba was a healthy workers' state lacking only the *forms* of workers' democracy. (They are currently reported to be characterizing Cuba as a deformed workers' state in their internal educationals.) They have been widely discredited in the eyes of many anti-war radicals as a result of their openly reformist popular-front "single-issue" line which prepared the way for the capture of the nominally independent anti-war movement by McCarthy. Their ultra-black nationalism forced them to become unashamed advocates of union-busting and scabbing in the UFT strike and back-handed apologists for black anti-Semitism, positions which may become a severe embarrassment to them in the future.

It should be noted that while the SWP is generally considered, in much of the student radical milieu, to be discredited as a result of their conservative "peace" line, they have managed to amass a sizable youth organization as a result of precisely this work. The SWP-YSA has grown considerably over the past few years, a fact which has probably been an important factor in inhibiting internal resistance despite the rapidity of its flight from Trotskyism. Critical to the future stability of the SWP-YSA will be its ability to continue to give its members the feeling of participating in "something big" like its "peace" movement role since about 1964—front groups, organizational maneuvering, recognition as part of the respectable radical movement, influence far out of proportion to its size. The SWP has now recognized the burgeoning G.I. protest movement as a promising bandwagon about which to enthuse, and is utilizing the revamped, revitalized machinery of the civilian "peace" movement to try to secure behind-the-scenes organizational control.

46) The Young Socialist Alliance, the youth group of the SWP, is a front group rather than a revolutionary

youth organization. The basis of this was established in the SWP itself, when the Party, in order to purge the Revolutionary Tendency supporters who were the actual youth leadership, adopted the policy that SWP members were bound by SWP discipline in the youth group as they would be in a neutral or hostile organization, although the youth group is affiliated with the SWP and thus the SWP is by definition singled out among all tendencies for privileged treatment. The Leninist position on relations between the revolutionary party and the revolutionary youth is the *political* subordination of the youth to the party and, in return, the guarantee of free debate inside the youth organization including the free expression of minority viewpoints by party members, i.e., *organizational* independence.

The manipulation of the YSA became more unashamed with the so-called "National Convention" held in November 1968 in Chicago. Attendance was not restricted to members and the main "resolutions" were complete with photographs and subscription blank, in an attempt to lower the political level of the YSA even more than previously by dressing up what was nothing more than a recruitment rally as a decision-making convention. At present perhaps half of the YSA locals around the country are engaged in massive internal education projects aimed at hardening up and assimilating the latest wave of recruits from this and other activities, perhaps in connection with *The Militant's* recent turn toward verbal Trotskyist orthodoxy on some issues.

47) Since our expulsion from the SWP, we have sought to use their electoral campaigns (as well as any other minimally supportable socialist campaigns) as a vehicle for polemics directed toward them through the mechanism of sharply critical support to their candidates. While working with them to get their candidates on the ballot, and calling for others to vote for them as well, we have explained the serious deficiencies of their campaigns: their exclusively middle-class orientation, their excessive concentration on electoral work, their political betrayals, their abandonment of Trotskyism. In the 1969 mayoral campaign in New York City, however, we cannot give any support, no matter how critical, to SWP candidate Paul Boutelle. At the very time that *The Militant* is running perhaps its most "orthodox Trotskyist" articles in recent years—about the French general strike, the New Left's lack of program, the need for a vanguard party (!)—the Boutelle campaign centers overwhelmingly around the reformist and even reactionary demand for "community control." Whereas the SWP's two previous Presidential campaigns have been classless in the standard opportunist sense, the present Boutelle campaign is fundamentally, *anti-class*, in essential thrust a proposal for a race war.

The SWP-YSA remains a main target for us. The farther right they move, of course, the more their recruits will be, in the main, non-revolutionary even subjectively and, therefore, less vulnerable to us. However, the SWP-YSA must remain in contradiction with the formal ideology of Trotskyism and the organizational heritage to which it pays lip service, unless it chooses to explicitly repudiate both. When the

SWP-YSA begins to fall short of its recent standards of growth and influence, dissatisfaction within the organization will be mostly in a rightward direction, but a certain proportion may move left depending on objective events and our intervention. Even while the organization remains successful in its own terms, individuals at least can be won to us on the basis of the extreme contradiction between our common Trotskyist heritage and their current politics.

48) The emergence of Progressive Labor as a left split from the CP was seen very early by us as an opportunity to recruit Trotskyist cadre. We warned:

“... PL is quite without, indeed seems to deny the need for, a historical, theoretical, or concretely internationalist outlook. Without both recognizing the need for and achieving a Trotskyist clarity about the nature of the Soviet Union and of Stalinism, no formation (above all one formed as a breakaway from Stalinism) can acquire an authentic and durable revolutionary quality.”

—Harper, Nelson and Robertson, *Memo on PL Group*, 6 January 1963

Over the past several years we have witnessed the hardening of PL from a rather stylish, Maoist-Guevarist-Fidelist group with a large periphery among New Left campus radicals into a square, anti-libertarian, tightly controlled “super-proletarian” hard-line Maoist organization. Despite this, the leading cadre has remained essentially the same. The essential contradiction for PL is that it has not come down decisively either as an apologist for Third World Stalinism—as its absolute adherence to Maoism would dictate—or for proletarian revolution in the U.S. This contradiction has been emphasized most recently by the dramatic line change from black nationalist apologetics to oversimplified colorblind workerism. Although PL is often easy to discount for its simpleminded analysis, Mao cultism, bureaucratic structure, etc., it nonetheless remains our most effective competitor in many areas, such as SDS, where PL has picked up SDSers who aspire to a working-class orientation. Yet although PL generally recruits people who are subjectively much more radical than the average YSAer, they have been harder for us to approach, as their hard-line Stalinist hostility to Trotskyists has occasionally reached the point of physical gangsterism against our comrades and others, while this and other aspects of PL’s general Stalinist practice has tended to drive dissidents out of PL and, in their disillusionment, rapidly away from identification with Marxism and Leninism thereafter.

In impulse, PL might be characterized as “Trotskyism with a prefrontal lobotomy.” PL’s strength has been its desire to see a proletarian revolution in the U.S.—which is in a nutshell the essence of the Trotskyist rejection of “Socialism in One Country.” Whereas formal, faithful Maoism necessitates a subordination of the class struggle to the “national liberation” movements, PL actually broke with the Canadian Maoist Progressive Workers Movement to adopt a critical attitude toward Ho Chi Minh, at the present time the world’s most prominent and popular “national liberation” leader. PL’s subjectively revolutionary impulse has caused them to come up with positions which are essentially an unconscious bad paraphrase of our analysis, often several years later and after having denounced as “counter-revolutionary Trotskyism” those very posi-

tions. The most amusing—and instructive—example was in 1965 when PL’s William McAdoo accused the Spartacist tendency, in writing, of being in league with the U.S. State Department because we called for anti-bureaucratic revolutions in the deformed workers’ states. In the years since then, of course, PL has denounced Cuba and North Vietnam, dubbed the Soviet Union “capitalist” and proclaimed the necessity for the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” to purge the Chinese CP of “capitalist roaders.”

Unable to stand any study of history or theory, which would reveal the betrayals of Stalin and Mao as well as PL’s inconsistencies and past mistakes, PL has had to rely on instinct for determination of its positions. Typically, therefore, in reaction against a past position they have jumped right over the correct analysis into symmetrical mistakes from the other direction. Recognizing several years after the fact the wrongness of black nationalist ideology and rhetoric, they have recently overcorrected to a position ignoring special oppression of black people; seeing that the U.S.S.R.’s proclaimed “peaceful co-existence” is a betrayal of the international working class, they conclude the Russians have returned to capitalism. In other cases their impressionistic disdain of theoretical analysis has led to simple betrayals; with their complete ignorance of a transitional line, they have formally accepted as their trade union policy the tactic of “left-center coalition” which can result in nothing other than a bloc with a section of the union bureaucracy.

Most recently, in their impulse toward a revolutionary, proletarian line PL has stretched its left centrism dangerously far. PL has now explicitly denounced the NLF’s “theory of stages,” the Popular Front and Dimitrov’s classic pamphlet and the subordination of the class struggle to “national liberation.” PL’s Maoism is paper thin and liable to break from any direction. Should they be repudiated by Peking, the organizational cement holding together this conglomeration of positions and impulses will dissolve.

49) The dominant characteristic of the Wohlforthite Workers League is its cynicism. Thus this minuscule grouping, with an exclusively propagandist orientation consisting of producing an unreadable paper twice a month, proclaims an “agitational” perspective and manufactures faked-up articles purporting to show involvement in struggle, for the benefit of their British mentor, Gerry Healy. Wohlforth’s relations with Healy’s SLL-IC are a gross example of gutless opportunism: the WL accepts without demur either externally or within the IC Healy’s positions on Cuba, the “Cultural Revolution,” etc., although the WL leadership previously held a different line and Wohlforth in fact drafted the original document of *our* Cuba position. The WL’s politics are defined by opportunism so shameless that it has been hilariously inconsistent from month to month, responding with 180° shifts to each new brainstorm in the search for petty organizational advantage. A typical example was their short-lived Trade Unionists for a Labor Party, whose program explicitly and deliberately excluded the Vietnam war and black struggle in an attempt to reach anti-Communist and racist white workers. Although originally the WL was *soft* on black nationalism and

could not be bothered to fight the SWP's capitulation at the 1963 Convention, they have since completely reversed their line to replace it with one dictated by Gerry Healy. Their recent extreme hardening up on the race issue ("All Black Caucuses are Reactionary") displays an insensitivity to racial oppression of such magnitude that they are becoming an ideological left cover for white racist unionism.

During the last year the WL suffered a loss of membership due to their frenetic "Build a Labor Party Now" campaign, and have been reduced outside NYC to their original members. Internally, they are fractured by at least three semi-oppositional groupings, all of whom are hostile to Wohlforth but are held together by their loyalty to their supreme authority, Gerry Healy. Their reliance on the (questionable) prestige of Healy and his SLL has probably been a main organizational factor in sustaining their membership, along with utter cynicism toward their own membership in promising them that the final crisis of capitalism is just around the corner. Their most recent outrage has been to denounce the SL as "the fangman for the world capitalist class," in the worst tradition of Stalinist slander. In general, the WL is not a serious organizational opponent but have made it their main goal to upset opportunities for us.

50) The Independent Socialist Clubs, based mainly in New York City and Berkeley, embody the opposite values from a group like PL. The ISC is sometimes capable of excellent analysis—e.g., the Arab-Israel conflict—in the abstract but is utterly unserious. With their disdain for "sectarians" and their aping of New Left anti-centralism, they cannot help but be unprincipled and, in addition, undemocratic, as the lack of tightly structured organizational forms masks the freedom of the leading spokesmen from control by the membership through a majority line. The ISC built the Peace and Freedom Party, deliberately avoiding choosing a class line, opting instead to seek to become the tactically independent left wing of the middle-class McCarthy movement. At the June 1969 SDS Convention, the ISC provided a real demonstration of "third camp"-ism by cuddling up to both factions after the decisive split, running candidates for leadership in the Klonskyite group while in the WSA wing proposing motions condemning the Klonskyite splitters.

Steeped in the tradition of Stalinophobia, the ISC prides itself on its hatred for CP totalitarianism, but nonetheless has often found itself in bloc with the CP, as in Trade Union SANE on the West Coast, where both groups fought for the "negotiations" line as against immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. This is not surprising, as the ISC is, politically speaking, quite close to the actual thrust of CP politics and only quantitatively to their left. Recently, sections of the CP have paralleled the ISC's appetite for total adaptation to the Panthers as previously manifested in the ISC's PFP-Panther bloc.

At present, the ISC has a rather successful mechanism for holding all dissidents inside the organization by the expedient of having no formal line binding on members. This, combined with the total difference in style and manner between ISC and Trotskyist politics, militates against any great opportunities from their direction right now, but we may be able to win individuals who are

repelled by unseriousness masquerading as democracy.

51) We note that we have been particularly successful in recruiting from the more transient and peripheral centrist formations like ASOC, the YPSL Revolutionary Tendency and campus Marxist discussion clubs, and we must pay special attention to seeking out such leftward-moving pockets. Our attention to the NYC Marcus group (SDS Labor Committee)—which at first moved left but became demoralized, culminating in a red-baiting attack on PL and SDS in the pages of the Socialist Party organ—did not result in any recruitment for us but successfully exposed a breach of revolutionary morality and continues to be useful nationally.

## VI. SL FUNCTIONING

52) The Spartacist tendency emerged as a distinct political tendency inside the Socialist Workers Party in 1960-61, although some of its leading individuals were associated with one another as a less clearly defined political entity as early as 1956 (and some oppositional history goes back to 1951). But it was at the January 1961 SWP Plenum that an anti-revisionist Trotskyist tendency first crystallized in the already faction-ridden SWP, in opposition to the Party's uncritical adaptation to the petty-bourgeois Castro leadership in Cuba. In the early 1960's the SWP continued its theoretical degeneration, and over the issues of Cuba and black nationalism adopted a line which was objectively liquidationist, as it saw no need for the intervention of the Trotskyist vanguard party in the Cuban Revolution or the black struggle. The SWP had entered on the transition from Trotskyism to centrism to reformism.

The Revolutionary Tendency inside the Party included, as well as our comrades, the tendency which was to become the current Workers League. In 1962, however, this latter grouping deliberately split the RT over a manufactured difference. The split, engineered by Art Philips and Gerry Healy, was forced over the question of the nature of the SWP Majority. The Healy-Wohlforth bloc insisted the SWP was still a revolutionary party and drew practical conclusions about the nature of the RT's role. Our tendency affirmed it would carry out this line, in adherence to international democratic centralism, while protesting to the Healyites their disregard for the rights of the majority of the U.S. comrades, as we made up the majority of the RT. Healy, however, insisted all comrades must sign a document stating they no longer *held* their position—a clearly unacceptable demand, designed to show total capitulation to Healy no matter what and to destroy the integrity of our comrades hereafter. The overwhelming majority of the RT went along with the refusal, and Healy-Wohlforth were left with only a few sycophants in their "Reorganized Minority Tendency." Shortly thereafter, the Wohlforthites deliberately set us up for expulsion from the SWP by making public their intra-tendency slanders against us, and later acted as the attorney for the SWP Majority in the YSA and offering them rationalizations for how we could be expelled from the youth.

At that point in 1963-4, our tendency was thrust into independent public existence. The first issue of *Spartacist* appeared in early 1964. We continued to appeal our expulsions from the SWP—the Party

refused to hear our appeals, in direct defiance of the SWP Constitution—until, with their anti-war policy, we rejected continued seeking of readmission to the Party as we would not carry out its new public line of betrayal of elementary class politics.

We also continued to affirm the unprincipled nature of the split from us by the Wohlforth grouping (which despite its verbal insistence on the still-revolutionary nature of the SWP had provoked its own expulsion from the Party) as we had, aside from widely divergent conceptions of internal democracy and functioning, substantial political agreement with the Wohlforthites at that time. We set up a series of Unity Negotiations between Spartacist and their organization—then called the “American Committee for the Fourth International”—and reached agreement to attend the April 1966 Conference of the International Committee in London, expecting a re-unification of its American supporters to follow. At that Conference, however, the Spartacist delegation was expelled, ostensibly for unwittingly breaking an (unannounced) Conference procedural rule, after our contribution to the proceedings had shown clearly that we intended, unlike the Wohlforth group, to continue to struggle for our particular political positions inside the IC. (Not long thereafter, the SLL-IC’s political line finally caught up with their anti-Leninist concepts of organization.)

Following this decisive break, we held our Founding Conference in September 1966 in Chicago and became the Spartacist League.

From the time of our expulsion from the SWP-YSA to the Founding Conference, we had experienced rapid growth and had *tripled* our size. By our enlarged Central Committee Plenum (New Year’s 1967-68) our growth had leveled off, with considerable membership turnover which had been, generally, a net improvement. The greatly expanded Plenum was characterized by a high degree of political cohesiveness and apparent unanimity of perspective.

However, the SL’s failure to match its earlier rapid growth and a certain mood of impatience with our weaknesses—most notably a woefully irregular press—were tending to produce a spirit of demoralization, accentuated by the loss of individuals to non-political milieus which occurs in all periods but especially those of rightward motion in the general climate of opinion. In this context, the New York SL was the scene of two underground factions—one, the Ross group, a tiny clique which wanted us to engage in street violence with the cops in preference to building a union fraction, split almost immediately; the other, the Ellens faction, did not surface openly for several months. The Ellens faction, which later split within itself, became the SL’s first serious internal opposition; unlike the Ross group and the earlier Baltimore clique of disgruntled marginal members, the Ellens group, while small, was not limited to one local and contained several active or previously leading members. Its main positions were a super-proletarian orientation condemning as “petty-bourgeois” attention to the existing radical movements, emulation of the Voix Ouvrière group in France, security-clandestinity fetishism and the repudiation of the concept of a full-time revolutionary leadership—all discussed elsewhere in this document. Anxious to get away from supposedly destructive factional struggle in

order to apply their schemas, they split after 8 or 9 months of (at first secret) oppositional existence, leaving behind two “frictional losses” who departed two months later. Borrowing from VO the belief that a base of working-class militants immunizes the party from opportunism, the Ellens group has now settled down to an ivory tower study of *Capital* to “re-educate” them to think alike, while sending their most dedicated members to Detroit to conquer the masses by underground penetration.

53) The Spartacist League takes its organizational forms and practices from the evolved institutions and experiences of the Leninist movement, and seeks to function according to the best traditions of Leninism. We seek to make use of the widest amount of internal democracy and discussion which is compatible with functioning in an effective and disciplined way. Unlike many organizations, which give only lip-service to the idea of factional democracy, the SL recognizes that the right to factions (including proportional representation on all leading bodies) is basic and that factional struggle is not only educational but is, in cases of sharp difference, the only way in which the party can arrive at the correct political line. The SL insists, however, that the exercise of the right to factions is costly and that therefore it is the responsibility of the leadership to ensure that only those who also fulfill their obligations as members of the SL will be able to avail themselves of factional prerogatives.

The SL must be primarily an action organization, not a discussion group. Once a position is arrived at, it may always be overturned by a higher body or later reversal, but until then it must be carried out. A basic consideration for organizational structure is that there is a chain of command which is never “off duty” in case of emergency—thus bodies which have authority when in session have delegated representatives who assume their authority between meetings: the Central Committee has a resident Political Bureau and National Officers; a local committee has an Executive Committee and local officers. If and when necessary, any member can assume the full authority of the organization himself—when some particular action is necessary, there *must* be someone with the authority to take that action.

The SL has members, but it does not have “a membership” as a body of the League. Thus, we do not arrive at decisions by referendum, which as any trade unionist knows is a way of having issues decided by those with the lowest level of consciousness. Positions can be adopted only by actual bodies which come together and meet, and in which individuals therefore have the ability to *exchange* views and influence one another. The highest body of the SL is a delegated National Conference.

The SL seeks to regulate personal aspects of comrades’ lives *only* where those aspects themselves intrude decisively in the political or organizational life of the members, particularly in security matters.

The SL recognizes that functioning is based on *consciousness*. We therefore have higher standards for the performance of Central Committee members, and allow for the possibility of stronger infringements on their personal preferences—for example, job or geographic situation—by the organization when necessary. Similarly, the SL must be more tolerant toward isolated

members-at-large than we should be toward SLers functioning with organized SL groups. In general, we seek to be as tolerant of individual preferences and problems as is compatible with the maintenance of general minimum standards of activity and discipline. Where we can allow no latitude whatsoever is in cases where lagging individuals seek to justify their weaknesses into a political program, denying the *right* of the organization to demand adherence to its norms of conduct and its democratic centralist discipline.

54) In order for us to hold our recruits over the long haul, they must be constantly involved in deepening their understanding of Marxism and extending their competence and skills for intervening in the class struggle. Our comrades will become cadres by a combination of education and experience—education in Marxist theory and related aspects of understanding the world, and concrete experience in the class struggle and the political movement. We recognize that while the development of the comrades rests in part with the initiative and seriousness of the individuals themselves, the organization must supply encouragement and practical assistance by seeking to make available the individuals' experiences to the collective.

The SL recognizes the importance of internal education through the mechanisms of classes and the like. It is not only the newest comrades who can profit from this formal encouragement to read and re-read some of the basic articles and documents of our movement. The study of the past theoretical positions and disputes of the Marxist movement is essential to the training of comrades in our methodology through critical examination, especially as many of the problems we face and the supposedly "new" solutions often offered have been fought out before. To paraphrase Santayana, he who is unaware of history is condemned to repeat it.

Currently, we have undertaken a project of internal educational bulletins, to consist of reprints of scarce or little-known "Marxist classics," valuable articles from academic publications, creative theoretical work by our own comrades, etc. Technical difficulties have temporarily interfered with the production of these "Marxist Studies" bulletins; however, we look toward this series to be the first step in an educational project which will for the first time be national in scope rather than limited to the initiative of each local group.

Central to the education of our comrades must be a knowledge of our tendency—what we are, where we have been, where we are going. Without an understanding of our political history and our unique contributions to present-day Marxism, the comrades cannot even understand the basis of our existence as a distinct tendency and independent organization. With the passage of time and the turnover of people, this extremely valuable part of ourselves—our history—stands in danger of being dissipated, and the indispensable recognition of our continuity lost. Therefore, in addition to making generally available more primary documentation and source material (e.g., our *Marxist Bulletin* series) and systematic effort to include discussion of our history in individual contacting, we must organize classes for members to bring to the newer comrades a re-creation in their own consciousness of

these political, factional and intellectual elements of the highest level of the class struggle.

In addition to factional struggle and theoretical education, the SL also provides its members with opportunities to increase their own competence in the practical and technical side of our activities. For this reason—as well as other reasons—the SL has always encouraged local SL committees to bring out local publications (e.g., *Spartacist-West*, *-East* and *-South*) in order to increase the pool of comrades experienced in writing and editing, the various aspects of technical production and responsibility. Likewise, activities such as internal classes and the functioning of locals—in addition to being important in their own right—should be utilized as opportunities to develop experience in speaking, running meetings, etc. Comrades with special skills or training should share their knowledge and all members should be pressured to take seriously the practical aspects of our functioning. From the most modest operations of getting out a mailing to the most high-level leadership functioning externally, we disapprove of amateurism.

55) The issue of security has been a stumbling block at several points in the history of our movement, notably in the CP of the 1920's where "undergroundism like in Russia" became a fetish divorced from the needs of the American party. Our basic consideration regarding security, which should be self-evident, is that security precautions should be employed only when necessary; generally, we want to make ourselves known as widely as possible to facilitate recruitment. Security fetishism is a destructive practice which substitutes romanticism and self-satisfaction for the objective needs of our movement. In addition, it often masks a desire to avoid open political confrontation.

The members of the late Ellens faction who advocated "semi-clandestinity" had already given up the keystone of our policy: *the fight for legality*. The SL is a legal organization and we intend to exercise every prerogative and privilege of bourgeois democracy. Our legality is precious to us; this is one reason why the SL is virtually the only radical organization with an untarnished record for defending other radicals who are victims of persecution and frame-up. Further, operating in a conspiratorial or "semi-clandestine" manner without reasonable cause is doubly dangerous, as it invites both police provocateurs and government repression, since exaggerated conspiratorial procedures create a strong presumption in the minds of a jury that there *must* be some illegality involved to be worth concealing.

In a period of bourgeois democracy—which has both democratic rhetoric on the one hand and flagrant injustice on the other—the SL has a policy, instead, of *security*. We recognize that we cannot prevent any government agency which is willing to take the time and effort from keeping track of us; however, we resolve to make it difficult for them by vigilance and prudence. Those security precautions which we adopt are mainly designed to avoid compromising individuals. Our security measures must be sufficient to prevent our victimization so long as the capitalist system continues to function within a bourgeois-democratic framework; we have and can have no real protection against fascism freed from all bourgeois-democratic restraint except our political struggle to prevent fascism from triumphing.

In addition, we can to some extent protect our organization and its members against victimization by forces which have, in general, more limited resources than the governmental repressive apparatus. Depending on the individuals' situations, the region of the country, etc., certain elementary precautions (for example, party names and the use of Post Office boxes in our public press) can in most cases prevent loss of employment or union situation, harassment or terrorism by right-wingers, etc. However, our members must recognize that a certain amount of personal safety, like personal comfort, is inevitably sacrificed for the satisfaction of participating in communist politics, and must avoid the desperate desire to find a gimmick to *guarantee* safety, a desire which is an outgrowth of paranoia and obsession with the security question.

56) In addition to chartered SL locals, the SL also has Organizing Committees, established by three or more members who have not yet demonstrated sufficient political competence and experience to govern their own affairs. OCs remain under the immediate jurisdiction of the national center. The SL also has members-at-large—individuals who are not functioning with any organized body; they are also directly under the jurisdiction of the National Office. In general, our experience has forced us to recognize that most groupings of SL members which do not have sufficient size, experience and diversity of abilities to function as a unit cell of the SL (complete in all essentials) are not stable units. More than once we have seen promising young comrades, without any lack of good will toward the organization, dry up and begin to drift away if they remain in isolation from larger, functioning centers of Spartacism. This is even truer of members-at-large. The exceptions to this rule—and we have had a few sterling exceptions—serve to reinforce the conviction among isolated members that they too will certainly withstand the tremendous pressures toward discouragement and depoliticalization.

In response to this recognized problem the SL has long had a policy of concentration by region into Regional Centers, which can take upon themselves the recruitment and integration into the organization of others from surrounding areas. The Bay Area and New Orleans have been our only recent functioning Regional Centers, while our several efforts to establish a functioning center for the Midwest have thus far been unstable. The national center in New York also functions as a *de facto* Regional Center for the East.

One of our major priorities for the next few years must be to stabilize and reinforce our Regional Centers. We must undertake further serious efforts at colonization into the South, where we have significant new recruitment and other major opportunities for growth. We must continue to urge our m-a-l's and small inexperienced groups to move to areas of SL concentration.

57) "Questions concerning the SL press are above all political questions, directly related to the general perspective of the SL. The SL recognizes the importance to its work of a press of the maximum possible frequency and comprehensiveness.... The press must be viewed as an instrument of intervention in the class struggle rather than a commentary upon it. As such it must be on a high enough level as to fill the need of the

various sectors central to our aims—the activist and radical youth, militants in the Southern civil rights struggle, ghetto Negroes, key sections of the working class, the international movement—which can be reached by our ideas at this stage."

—*Theses*, section 15

Our press is directed toward actual people on whom we can have an influence; we do not seek to build a "showpiece" press whose only function is to make our members feel good. A prime example of the latter press philosophy is Wohlforth's *Bulletin*, which seeks to deceive its members and others into believing that it is reaching masses of "ordinary workers" by the sole virtue of being dull, dishonest and oversimplified; thus it is read, not by workers, but by nobody, not even Wohlforth's own members. Further, unlike many European left-wing publications, our press is a hard line press, making clear where we stand, and a polemical press, written for people who are, to a first approximation, rather like our own members—political, intelligent, generally informed—i.e., potential recruits.

Without propaganda, we cannot be much of a propaganda group. Our press is our main vehicle for explaining and publicizing our ideas, and our ideas are our main strength. In contradistinction to those who insist we must have a press in order to show our opponents that we exist, we insist that we must have a press *in order to exist*. Our press must be *regular* and *frequent* if we are to make our ideas known.

Our perspective of developing a 16-page bi-monthly half tabloid, adopted at our 1966 Founding Conference, has not been fulfilled and remains a major goal. Our best record to date has been five issues in twelve months, and in other years we have fallen far short of that. The severe factional struggle of 1968, we note, virtually paralyzed much of our public press in the production of factional material as well as by monopolizing much of the creative thought of leading comrades which would otherwise have gone into public work and propaganda. The first step toward the solution of our perennial press problem was the relocation into New York City of a full-time editor with considerable writing experience. Shortly thereafter, the expected move of an experienced printer comrade from the West Coast to New York City posed the possibility of an SL party printshop. However, the aftermath of the Ellens factional conspiracy took this opportunity from us, as the splitters took out the printer as well as several members of *Spartacist* staff, reducing our press capacity to less than it had been before.

We have also published a number of local papers such as *Spartacist-West*, which serve to supplement the lack of a national paper, assist the work of the locals and provide valuable experience. The SL encourages such publications, so long as they do not interfere with the perspective of building a national press—for example by competing seriously with a functioning *Spartacist* for articles, staff or sales personnel. In addition, we recognize that no local or national press will substitute for leaflets, in situations where we have a fraction constantly intervening in a quickly changing situation or where we want to give our views the widest possible distribution. But neither can there be any substitute for a regular, frequent national public organ; this remains our major press goal.

[adopted 31 August 1969 by the National Conference]

# Provisional Organizational Rules and Guidelines

## Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Spartacist League of the United States, hereinafter referred to as the SL.

## Article II. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Spartacist League is to achieve Communism over the whole earth by class-struggle centered means that are at once *proletarian, revolutionary* and *internationalist* as defined by the SL's "Founding Declaration of Principles" (September 1966). The SL is therefore Marxist, Leninist and Trotskyist in political character and democratic-centralist in organizational form.

## Article III. Membership

1. Membership in the SL is open to persons who agree with its Statement of Purpose and who accept its program, decisions and rules. Applications for membership shall be in writing and shall be endorsed by two full members of the SL.

2. Applicants for membership shall be voted on by the Local Committee (LC) in their locale. In those areas where an Organizing Committee (OC) exists applicants shall be passed on by the Political Bureau (PB) with the recommendation of the OC. Where no SL local body exists the PB alone shall pass on membership and the applicant if accepted will be given the status of member-at-large (m-a-l).

3. Action on membership applications shall take place in the absence of the applicant.

4. Applicants for membership shall serve a period of candidacy, normally of three months, during which the applicant may be dropped at any time by the admitting body. At the end of the set period the candidate will either be accepted into membership, continued for another period as a candidate or dropped. For admission to full membership candidates should be able to demonstrate a comprehensive basic understanding of the political positions of the SL. During the period of candidacy members shall not have a decisive vote in the national decisions of the SL.

5. When applicants have had immediately prior, verifiable membership in another radical cadre organization the period of candidacy may be waived or reduced.

6. Persons who have been expelled or dropped from the SL or have resigned from it may not be readmitted without the approval of the PB. Normally such persons, if readmitted, will serve longer periods of candidacy than others.

7. Every member shall belong to a local body if such exists in the area. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by a national body. M-a-ls shall be directly

responsible to the PB for the conduct of their political work.

8. A member desiring to leave one locality for another must apply to the LC to which the member belongs for permission. A letter of transfer, including a statement of financial standing, must be sent to the LC of the locality to which the member moves. If no LC exists in the old locality the PB shall pass on the transfer, with the advice of the OC where such exists. If no local body exists in the new locality the member will become a m-a-l.

9. Leaves of absence may be granted to members temporarily unable to carry out regular political activity due to ill health or other reasons. The maximum leave time permitted a member in any one continuous interval is six months. Any political work undertaken while on leave must be under the jurisdiction of the appropriate party body. The amount of sustaining pledge while on leave may not be less than five dollars a month without permission of the National Office (N.O.).

10. Substantial material support to cults, religions or comparable fads or proselytizing for them is incompatible with SL membership.

11. Members will not in their personal appearance, habits, conduct or life styles be either a serious or chronic detriment to the SL.

12. Each new member shall pay an initiation fee of five dollars which shall be forwarded to the N.O.

13. Every member shall pay a monthly sustaining pledge. The minimum amount which must be paid will be computed as a progressive income tax, in the range of 5 to 15% of the usual member's net income (i.e., making allowance for dependents and excluding from net income taxes, legal obligations and certain other unusual expenses). The exact system of computation is established by the Central Committee (CC). Any sustaining pledge of less than five dollars a month must be approved by the N.O. Members should be encouraged to pay sustaining pledges larger than the computed minimums, and sympathizers should be encouraged to make regular sustaining pledges to the SL.

14. Any member more than one month in arrears in sustaining pledge ceases to be in good standing. Only members in good standing may vote or hold office in the SL. Any member more than three months in arrears in sustaining pledge shall be dropped from the SL after a warning.

15. The CC is empowered to accept groups or organizations of individuals, eligible under Section 1. of this Article, as members en bloc, and to assign them to the proper local bodies.

## Article IV. National Conference

1. The SL shall normally meet every two years in a delegated National Conference. Special Conferences

may be called by the CC or on the demand of LCs representing one-third of the membership. The National Conference is the highest body of the SL.

2. The Call for the Conference, together with an agenda and the proposals of the CC, shall be issued at least ninety (90) days before the date of the Conference for discussion in the local bodies and internal bulletin. Local bodies have the responsibility of providing adequate time in meetings for discussion on all material submitted for Conference decision. In the event a special Conference must be called, the length of the pre-Conference discussion period may be reduced. The PB may set a deadline for acceptance of pre-Conference discussion articles for the bulletin.

3. The election of Conference delegates shall take place in LCs and OCs. The ratio of delegates to members shall be set by the CC in the Conference Call. M-a-ls, although unable to vote for delegates, may in all other respects participate in the Conference process including stand for election as proxy delegates by local bodies. Only those who are full SL members at the time of the Conference Call and who are in good standing at the time of delegates' elections will be counted to determine the delegate representation each local body is entitled to. Only such members may vote for or run as delegates. Local bodies may elect alternate delegates in numbers not exceeding the number of regular delegates.

4. The CC shall levy a compulsory assessment to help finance the National Conference.

5. In case of political differences defined by conflicting resolutions, the election of delegates in the local bodies shall be on the basis of straight proportional representation. The proportionate division of the delegates depends on the number who vote for their respective conflicting resolutions.

6. If a local body is unable to send to the Conference the full number of delegates it is entitled to, it may appoint proxy delegates from other areas. No delegate shall cast more than one full vote.

7. Full and alternate members of the CC, if not regular delegates, shall be fraternal delegates to the Conference; hence shall be entitled to speak and cast a consultative vote.

#### **Article V. Central Committee**

1. The Central Committee shall be the highest continuing body of the SL. The National Conference which stands higher is a specific, discontinuous event. The CC shall have final authority between Conferences over all SL members, fractions and committees, local and national, and over all SL publications, public or internal, local or national.

2. The CC shall consist in size of such full and alternate members as is set by the National Conference. In electing the CC, if conflicting political divisions are present, the Conference will use proportional representation with the limitation that a Conference majority is entitled to a minimum of three-fifths of the CC seats.

3. The personal qualifications of nominees for CC membership are qualitatively higher than for simple SL membership. Full CC members should be persons of

proven political capacity who are at the disposal of the SL for geographic or other assignments if called upon. Alternate CC members should be persons who show evidence and willingness to meet such qualifications.

4. In no sense is the CC a federated group of representatives from different semi-autonomous localities. The CC is the centralized national collective which leads the entire SL between National Conferences. Hence the CC must include elements creating a strong yet sensitive and balanced leadership that is authoritative, possesses a division of labor among the central leaders, yet has sufficient spread into the principal localities and areas of work to be in intimate contact with the SL ranks.

5. The CC shall select from the alternate list to fill vacancies among full members. The CC may coopt members to itself in the event its list of alternates is exhausted; or to maintain the proportional political representation established at the preceding Conference or to give political representation to newly joined groups or tendencies; or to maintain the size of the PB or add new National Officers.

6. The CC directs all the work of the SL, decides all questions of policy in accord with Conference decisions and appoints National Officers and subcommittees, including the PB.

7. The CC shall regulate internal written and oral discussion of conflicting positions in accordance with the principle that a living, continuous internal life is vital to the SL. Hence any limitations on discussion must be justified in each particular circumstance.

8. A major limitation found necessary is that questions decided by the National Conference may be subjects of new discussions only when such discussion is either formally authorized by the CC, generally after a period of time and in the light of new developments, or in the established preconference discussion period.

9. CC regulation of discussion also requires the technical centralization of written internal discussion, which shall take place exclusively in bulletins and mailings the CC has given prior authorization.

10. During its regular term of office the CC shall normally meet at least three times, including immediately after and before successive National Conferences.

#### **Article VI. Political, Regional and Special Bureaus**

1. The CC shall elect from among its members a Political Bureau to serve as its resident executive subcommittee.

2. The PB shall act on behalf of the CC between its meetings and shall be responsible for such work as is delegated to it by the CC. Among the normal functions of the PB are the supervision of the N.O. and National Officers, direction of national publications, and appointment of the national staff.

3. There shall be the same proportional representation on the PB as on the CC if conflicting political divisions were present at the last Conference.

4. The PB shall normally meet at least monthly and shall send minutes of its meetings to all full and alternate members of the CC.

5. Regional or other special bureaus or commissions of the CC may be created as needed and are subject to the authority of and regulation by the PB between CC meetings.

### **Article VII. National Officers**

1. The National Officers of the SL shall be directly responsible for their work to the PB and shall be elected by the CC from among its full members on the PB. Normally the CC shall elect a National Chairman, National Secretary and such other National Officers as it deems necessary.

2. The National Chairman shall be the political spokesman of the SL and shall be the convener of the PB.

3. The National Secretary shall be responsible for the administration of the National Office.

### **Article VIII. Local, District and Regional Organization**

1. The Local Committee formed on a territorial or occupational basis shall be the basic unit of the SL. Five or more members in a locality or occupational unit may upon application to the PB be chartered as an LC. The criteria guiding the PB in granting charters should center upon the demonstration of the applicants' sustained organizational and political stability as an OC. An LC shall not be larger than 30 members.

2. An LC has the prerogatives consistent with its expected ability within its jurisdictional scope to do the political and organizational work of the SL. Hence an LC may issue leaflets and newsletters in the name of the SL, pass on membership applications, hold public meetings. Its charter from the national organization may only be revoked for cause.

3. An LC shall be administered in a regular fashion. Each LC shall elect an organizer and such other officers and working committees as are required to carry out the LC's responsibilities including financial, secretarial and educational functions and the circulation of the SL press. LCs must hold regular meetings of which minutes shall be sent the N.O. Normally an LC will elect an executive committee to act on the LC's behalf between the latter's meetings and undertake such other work as assigned by the LC. Local elections should take place no less often than twice a year.

4. Where three or more members exist in a locality they may upon application be recognized as an Organizing Committee. OCs shall meet regularly and send minutes of all their meetings to the N.O. OCs may, with the guidance of the N.O., issue public SL leaflets and may recommend to the PB applicants for membership.

5. Local and Organizing Committees will be responsible in consultation with the N.O. for setting members' minimum sustaining pledges and for collecting and forwarding them to the N.O. Payment of sustaining pledges is a matter of the individual member's responsibility; there will be no collective local pledge. The sustaining pledge will normally be the only regular payment the members make to the SL. Locals will normally finance their activities by retaining a portion

agreed to by the N.O. of the sustaining pledges collected locally.

6. LCs, OCs and m-a-ls will receive free of charge bundles of SL literature and publications for sale in such quantities as are agreed to by the N.O. In return the N.O. will receive the entire proceeds from all sales of the press.

7. Where more than one LC exists in a locale or where a single LC has grown unwieldy, a district organization may be set up, subject to the approval of the PB. A district organization shall include a District Executive Committee (DEC), elected no less often than annually by the entire district membership meeting in District Conference, and such officers as the DEC may select. Between District Conferences, the DEC shall be the highest body within the district organization. District Conferences shall take place no less often than four times a year.

8. In geographically larger areas regional organizations may be set up, subject to the approval of the PB. Between delegated Regional Conferences, the Regional Committee shall be the highest body within the regional organization. Regional Conferences shall take place no less often than annually.

### **Article IX. Discipline**

1. The SL program and policies in all areas, institutions and organizations shall be carried out by the members in such situations acting as an organized body and subject to the decisions of higher bodies of the SL. All decisions of higher bodies of the SL are binding upon the members and subordinate bodies of the SL.

2. Political collaboration with non-members of the SL must be formally authorized by the SL body having jurisdiction.

3. A Control Commission of three members shall be elected as follows: the National Conference shall elect two members and the third member, who shall be a member of the CC, shall be designated by the CC. The Control Commission shall have full authority to investigate any individual or circumstance affecting the SL it may deem necessary and shall be responsible for periodic audits of the financial accounts of the N.O. and other national SL departments and institutions. The Control Commission shall have the power to delegate any of its authority to representatives.

4. The Control Commission, on completion of its investigation in each case, shall present its finding and recommendations to the PB for action.

5. In those cases where the Control Commission finds it necessary to intervene, its authority shall supersede any local investigation or trial.

6. It shall be obligatory on every member of the SL to furnish the Control Commission or its authorized representatives with any information they may require, other than material exchanged entirely privately between SL members, i.e., between individuals or within a tendency or faction.

7. Any member or body of the SL may bring charges against any member for violation of the program, decisions or rules of the SL. The charges must initially be presented in writing to the highest body of which the

accused is a member. That body may constitute itself as the trial committee or may refer the charges to a lower body of which the accused is a member. If a higher body decides to intervene directly, the trial shall be so transferred. Charges may be dismissed at any time by the body having jurisdiction at that time.

8. No body shall meet as a trial committee unless all members have been informed in advance of the business at hand. The accused must be given notice of the trial date and a copy of the charges at least seven (7) days preceding the trial. Failure to appear or to send a letter of defense in the absence of excuse for such failure shall be grounds for conducting the trial in absentia.

9. The disciplinary measures which are normally available in the event the accused is found guilty are, in increasing order of severity: censure—private or public, reduction to candidate for a period, suspension—partial or complete, and expulsion.

10. The accused or accuser may appeal the decision (dismissal of charges, guilt or innocence, or the severity of discipline) of any body to the next higher one, up to and including the National Conference whose decision shall be final. In the meantime, pending appeal, a current decision remains in force. An appeal must be filed within fifteen (15) days after the action being appealed.

11. In some circumstances trials are pointless, irrelevant or dangerous. Such cases may include those where the accused admits the accusation, where the accused is not in good standing, where the accused has quit the SL, where the accusation involves crimes according to bourgeois legality, where attempted penetration by class enemies is involved. In such cases other means than a formal trial should be employed.

## Article X. Miscellaneous

1. Necessary modifications of the SL Organizational Rules may be made by the CC in order to protect the

*[The above provisional organizational rules as such continued to the Fifth National Conference, 23-25 June 1977. At the Fifth Conference the following extensions were added to the rules which remain in force, as provisional.]*

## INTERIM ADDITIONS

1. The Central Committee at its option may establish a Standing Committee of the Political Bureau to be elected by the PB from among the members of the CC able to discharge the required functions.

The Standing Committee of the PB undertakes certain administrative responsibilities. Its decisions are either unanimous and therefore operative or, failing unanimity, the disputed issue is either moot or, if so decided by Standing Committee majority, reverts to the PB or CC.

2. The Central Committee shall have an additional category of candidate member, junior to the alternate

security and functioning of the SL under different or altered circumstances. Otherwise amendments to these Rules may be made only by the National Conference. All members of the SL shall be provided with a copy of the Rules.

2. All decisions in the SL shall be by simple majority vote. No second shall be required for motions in any body of the SL. The chairman of all meetings and committees has a right to voice and vote. The nay vote shall be taken first in calling the question.

3. Those members with many years in the Marxist movement who by reasons of old age or chronic infirmity are unable to regularly do the work of the SL or meet their financial obligations or both may by mutual agreement be transferred to the status of consultative member. Consultative members shall have the right to participate fully in the internal life and public work of the SL without, however, possessing a decisive vote on any body.

4. Full members of a higher body shall have the right to attend and speak at all meetings of lower bodies within the jurisdiction of the higher body.

5. At all meetings of the SL Roberts' Rules of Order (Revised) shall govern the proceedings, except where they are in conflict with the SL Rules.

6. LCs and other bodies may adopt such by-laws supplemental to these Rules as they deem desirable, providing such by-laws are not in conflict with these Rules or the decisions of higher bodies.

—Draft accepted by the Political Bureau on 27 August 1969 and adopted provisionally on 31 August by the Second National Conference to be in force until the next National Conference with the Central Committee authorized to make changes in the interim.

members. The alternate members shall have the same right of access to any party body (excluding certain central party bodies for cause) as CC full members have had.

3. 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 by CC members be inverse to their CC category.

—Adopted unanimously by the Fifth National Conference, 25 June 1977. Additions and editorial changes ratified by the Central Committee, February 1978.

# PART III

## Preface

This is a very important collection of documents. They are central to the perspectives and work of the Spartacist League in the present period. The Transformation Memo sets forth the framework and fundamental aims of our perspectives as well as the then current specific tasks of eighteen months ago. The Trade Union Memo characterizes the now fashionable face(s) of that left-posturing class collaborationism which is the principal obstacle to the struggle for communist ascendancy in the labor movement. In this context, the Trade Union Memo also sketches concretely the working perspectives of the SL in the labor movement.

The report on our 1972 Thanksgiving weekend National Conference reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* brings the actuality of the state of the SL through late 1972. But in several ways that account is already superseded. Since then we have undergone very considerable extension in the labor movement. We are experiencing beginnings which promise the development of a black and Spanish-speaking component to the SL cadre. As witnessed by our analysis and critique of the attempt at a popular front in France and the role of groupings to the left of that popular front, we have extended and systematized our political capacity for the crucial struggle internationally to counterpose the proletariat to the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies.

At our November 1972 National Conference, we projected the struggle to achieve a regular bi-weekly *Workers Vanguard* within a year. We have always despised those radical groupings who see in their press a *substitute* for serious political theoretical propaganda and equally serious real intervention into the mass movement. Precisely because of our genuine commitment to work as revolutionary Marxists, the real and felt pressure upon us for a bi-weekly—and when possible a weekly—has mounted relentlessly. As these lines are being written just five months after the Conference, the second bi-weekly is being readied for publication.

—National Office  
May Day 1973

## Spartacist League Third National Conference

# Toward Construction of the Leninist Vanguard!



WV Photo

The third National Conference of the Spartacist League, highest body of the organization, was held November 25-27, following a National Conference of the SL's youth section, the Revolutionary Communist Youth. The conference was attended by 178 members and disciplined supporters, which marked a twofold increase in attendance over the heavily-attended expanded Central Committee Plenum of September 1971. The conference provided fresh evidence of the continuing transformation of the SL into the nucleus of the vanguard party and demonstrated the organization's increased ability to intervene as the communist pole in major arenas of political struggle: the trade unions, the black and women's movements, the campuses, the ostensibly revolutionary organizations, the international movement.

### Unprecedented Growth

The report from the Credentials Committee noted the unprecedented growth of the SL/RCY over the past year, as evidenced by the fact that 67% of the members of the organization had joined within the past year. However, 61% of those attending the conference identified themselves as former members of an ostensibly revolutionary organization. Most of these were from SDS, the Buffalo Marxist Collective, PL and its periphery, the Communist Working Collective or local New Left and Maoist groupings. Other organizations represented by ex-members were the SWP/YSA, the IS, the Black Panthers, the Socialist Party/YPSL, the Revolutionary Union, the Communist Party, the Black Student Union, the SLP, the Labor Committee and the IWW.

The conference delegates repeatedly noted that this wave of recruitment brings with it a challenge to the organization to transform these comrades—through

political struggles, involvement in the labor movement and critical study of the history of the Marxist movement—into fully-rounded communist cadres rooted in the living continuity of Leninism. Without this undertaking the SL, painfully thin in tested and experienced cadres, can only squander this precious human capital.

Many of these new comrades joined the SL/RCY as part of a series of regroupments from the Maoist/New Left milieu, beginning with the fusion with the former Communist Working Collective of Los Angeles in September 1971. Following the CWC fusion, the politics of the SL won hegemony over the semi-syndicalist Mass Strike group of Boston and pro-working-class women's groups in New Orleans and Oakland. In addition, 10 comrades from the Socialist Workers Party/Proletarian Orientation Tendency/Leninist Faction were won to the SL over a period of several months. At the conference leading members of the Buffalo Marxist Collective—which had just fused with the RCY—applied for SL membership as well. Several members of the Cleveland Marxist Caucus also attended.

These regroupments were in the main the result of the SL's intersection with subjectively pro-working-class groupings of New Left-derived ex-students who were pragmatically attempting to implement a proletarian perspective. Leading comrades of the BMC, for example, had been associated with Progressive Labor, whose hard but deformed proletarian line had forced an empirical break with the Stalinist theory of "two-stage" revolutions. It was in the context of political confrontation with mainstream Maoism, PL and the social-democratic Labor Committee that the BMC comrades began an investigation of Trotskyism, rejecting the cynical and sterile pro-bureaucratic opportunism of the Workers League to embrace the program of the SL as

the expression of authentic Trotskyism. The East Oakland Women intersected the SL primarily in the labor movement itself, while the New Orleans grouping was first attracted to Trotskyism primarily on the basis of the SL's exposure of the bankruptcy of Maoism as a "revolutionary" strategy, as well as by the SL's anti-feminist intervention in the women's liberation movement. The SL's demonstrated ability to win over subjectively revolutionary and serious young comrades from diverse political backgrounds in principled regroupments stands out in sharp contrast to the stark failures of the fake-Trotskyist WL.

## Political Report

The main political report to the conference discussed the evolving world relationship of forces characterized by the intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries and the U.S.'s loss of uncontested hegemony as the economic and political policeman of world imperialism. The reporter noted that the bureaucratic leaderships of the deformed workers states are hampered in their appetites to simply play the power-politics diplomatic game by their social position as bonapartists representing the interests of the world bourgeoisie but resting atop the economic conquests of a workers state.

The continuing transformation of the SL is intimately linked to the transformation of the international working class: the emergence of the new generation of young workers whose outlook has not been shaped by World War II and the monumental betrayals of the mass-based Stalinist leaderships from Greece to Belgium in its aftermath. In the U.S., the anti-communist hysteria which gripped the labor movement during the "Cold War" period appears mainly irrelevant to the young workers. The reporter characterized the present situation as "a profitably uneven period" for the SL of a generalized leftward shift internationally. The "new Nixon" policy has apparently bought some time for the U.S. ruling class by defusing the war issue, thus allowing domestic fears and racial tensions to come to the fore, but within the context of the generalized crisis-ridden instability of the bourgeois order, which had exhausted its possibilities of economic development at least since 1914. The predominant mood as evidenced in the U.S. elections was a shift to the right and the threat of a new anti-red campaign to highlight the end of "permissiveness"; however at the same time the intensification of exploitation as the bourgeoisie drives to compete on the world market, combined with seething social discontent over racial oppression and the war, means that sharp class struggles will continue to increase.

The report noted that many of our regroupment opportunities over the past year have been a result of the "crisis of Maoism"—the Nixon-Mao alliance sorting out the U.S. Maoists into two components: the potential revolutionaries vs. the virtual "U.S.—China friendship associations" which are the analogues of the old Pop Front CP apologists for the Russian bureaucracy.

In the current period, variants of radical workerism are becoming the predominant anti-Bolshevist current, replacing petty-bourgeois multi-vanguardism. The inability of the main core of the SWP/POT/LF grouping to transcend centrist workerism was charac-

terized as a defeat for the SL, undercutting our intention to establish the SL as the Trotskyist alternative in the minds of dissidents breaking from the revisionism of the SWP.

## "Freedom of Criticism"

Just as the SWP dissidents represented the only significant opposition in eight years to emerge within the SWP, so the several ostensibly anti-Pabloist groups internationally which have emerged from the United Secretariat represent the post-war accumulation of subjective Trotskyists in several major industrial countries, but lacking real continuity in the Leninist movement. For instance, several groupings have taken up Lenin's formulation from 1906 (when he was still a revolutionary social-democrat, not yet a communist) of "freedom of criticism, unity of action." This is to negate the experience of the October Revolution and the founding of the Communist International. For a Bolshevik, this formulation is applicable to a united front, not to a democratic-centralist party; the impulse toward its resurrection flows from a workerist impulse which looks to the non-party workers to intervene to correct the party—at bottom a clear denial of the concept of the vanguard.

A key point of centrist disorientation continues to be the question of communist policy toward mass reformist working-class formations. There are those who continue the old Pabloist-type "deep entrism" policy (whose variants include the OCI's position of calling for a "strategic" united front at the expense of program and for a workers' government without Bolsheviks); the "no entrism" posture of denying the working-class component of the mass-based reformist parties is merely opportunism standing in fear of itself, a New Leftist reflexive reaction which wishes away the need to shatter the authority of the established organizations in the eyes of the workers through polarization and split.

Remarking that the Spartacist tendency had been born over an international issue—Pabloism as manifested in the Socialist Workers Party's capitulation to Castroism—the reporter stressed the urgency of the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International. "The SL/U.S. urgently requires disciplined subordination to an international leadership not subject to the deforming pressures of our particular national situation," he stated, noting that although the Bolsheviks had been able to make the October Revolution before the birth of the Communist International, had they not been struggling for that International they would have been just another collection of Mensheviks.

## Trade Union Work

The recruitment of new forces and the stabilization of a monthly press has enabled the SL to undertake further colonization and concentration in industry; the percentage of SL/RCY comrades involved or becoming active in this work has already more than doubled. The trade union report reviewed the current work of SL fractions in the labor movement and noted the increased opportunities for SL exemplary work in the labor movement, aimed at demonstrating the capacity of our political line to focus and lead mass struggles, despite

our present inability to directly vie for leadership of the class as a whole. Referring to the past experiences of communists in the unions and to the legacy of the Cold War witchhunt which decisively cut the ties between the labor movement and the radicals and established in power the bureaucracy which runs the unions today, the reporter noted the emergence of a new generation of young workers, with a heavy component of blacks and other minorities, in basic industry and the brittle character of the heavy-handed union tops, socially isolated from the workers and lacking the reformist sophistication of their European counterparts.

The reporter stressed the need to build caucuses on the basis of the transitional program. Rejecting the workerist conception of work in the class, the SL sees the programmatically-based caucus as a link between the vanguard and the class, carrying out the unique political line of the party in the labor movement and ultimately winning real authority for the vanguard in the class. At the same time, the SL must intervene directly to reinforce the work of its fractions through sustained sales of *WV* at the plants.

The party press is an important component of our trade union work. The press functions as an organizing tool and reinforces the work of the party fractions in all aspects of work. The accretion of human resources and the increase in SL intervention into all areas of social struggle have made both necessary and possible the struggle to achieve a regular bi-weekly *Workers Vanguard* within a year. The SL press will retain its highly polemical and propagandistic character. It is aimed at the advanced workers and militants of the domestic and international left and seeks to further the process of revolutionary regroupment as well as individual recruitment. It does not call itself a "mass press"; as Trotsky wrote in 1935:

"This task cannot be effectively solved except as a function of the growth of the organization and its cadres who must pave the way to the masses for the newspaper—since it is not enough, it is understood, to call a publication a 'mass paper' to have the masses accept it in reality."

—"What Is a 'Mass Paper'?"

Our conception is directly counterposed to that of the Workers League, for example, which uses a paper as a substitute for winning political authority through real struggle. Unless the press reflects the actual intervention of the party, it cannot be concrete and can only win for itself discredit from militants.

The trade union reporter also noted that most of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations are currently on a workerist kick. The intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries and the need of the bourgeoisie to cut costs through increased exploitation of labor has led to a heightening of the class struggle, compelling the left to again take notice of the working class. These opportunist organizations are now tailing after the workers with all the zeal that earlier characterized their attempts to locate the main revolutionary force in students, lumpens, the colonial peasantry, etc. Thus the SL's union work will increasingly intersect the presence of such tendencies.

Because of time limitations at the conference, an

additional national gathering devoted to SL work in the labor movement was scheduled.

### Which International?

A comic sidelight to the work of the conference was provided by the distribution of a leaflet to the participants by the "Vanguard Newsletter" of Harry Turner and the "Class Struggle League" (formerly Leninist Faction of the SWP). The leaflet criticized the SL for its "ultimatistic posture" that principled union work requires the building of caucuses based on the full transitional program. In an attempt to square the SL's past and present work in the labor movement with Turner's chronic characterizations of the SL as "petty-bourgeois" and "student-oriented," the leaflet characterized the SL's emphasis on colonization of the unions as "camouflage" to impress student radicals (perhaps then, Turner, the SL will make the proletarian revolution—think how much *that* would impress them!). The leaflet was titled, "Build the World Party of Trotskyism!"—no doubt its authors considered very clever their evasion of the question, *which* world party of Trotskyism?, since the LF/CSL calls for a "Fifth International" while Turner presumably still stands for the reconstruction of the Fourth!

The international report noted that the SL is in the process of concentrating in the national center several highly qualified comrades constituting the necessary division of labor to achieve for the first time the ability to carry out systematic and sustained international work. SL/U.S. comrades and foreign supporters have produced two issues of a French edition of *Spartacist* and have already translated the SL "Declaration of Principles" into French, German and Spanish. In addition, large quantities of international material have been translated into English for the information of the SL membership.

The conference reviewed the SL's international work over the past period and discussed and adopted tactical proposals for the SL's continuing struggle for the program and perspectives necessary for the rebirth of the Fourth International. As a part in this perspective, the conference ratified the intention to seek to transform the *Spartacist* into the organ of the international Spartacist tendency.

A fraternal representative from the Spartacus Bolshevik-Leninist group of Germany presented the greetings and views of her organization to the conference, and much of the ensuing lively discussion focused upon the question of the class character of the German SPD. The SL has offered the Spartacus B-L group space in the *Spartacist* to further present their views on this question. The German representative also presented her organization's views on democratic centralism and their impressions of the positions and work of the SL.

### Black Commission

An important part of the work of the conference was the holding, between conference sessions, of commission meetings, which included Press, Colonization, Black Work, Trade Union and Financial. In particular, the commission on Black Work noted the breakdown of the stranglehold of black nationalism, as exemplified by

the split and disintegration of the Black Panthers. This development—the displacing of separatist ideology and petty-bourgeois multi-vanguardism in the face of general class motion—opens renewed opportunities for the recruitment of black workers and young militants to Trotskyism. The SL, which had earlier carried out successful exemplary work in this field, was cut off from consolidating and deepening this work by the rise of black nationalism; we must recognize our loss of continuity with the theoretical and practical aspects of this work for most comrades. The key to a breakthrough is the recruitment of an initial black nucleus, a process which has already begun and will continue, especially in the labor movement and through polemical intervention among black radicals. The development of hardened black communist cadres is the key to re-developing exemplary mass work among blacks, a crucial precondition for the struggle for class unity in this profoundly racist country and thus an urgent responsibility for the proletarian vanguard.

### Communist Work Among Women

The reports and lively discussion on the woman question stressed the virtual hiatus in communist work among women and noted that the SL had in the course of its own work been forced to rediscover and apply the experience of the Communist International, especially of its Russian and German sections, as the model for our own intervention. The conference noted that while the struggles of any particular section of the oppressed, other than the proletariat itself, necessarily have an episodic and partial character, it is a principled responsibility for the communists to seek to intervene in these struggles as a principled communist pole, in clear opposition to petty-bourgeois utopianism and bourgeois ideology. The conference reaffirmed Lenin's insistence on the need to seek special organizational forms, linked to the party, for work among oppressed women, noting that the program for such organizations must be the full transitional program of the party which

embodies the crucial needs and historic tasks of the entire proletariat.

The SL's intervention into the petty-bourgeois women's liberation movement on this principled basis has been responsible for the recruitment of many serious activists who—repelled by both the economist abstentionism of tendencies such as the Workers League and by the pandering to anti-class feminism on the part of the SWP and IS—found in the SL program the concrete application of their subjectively working-class impulses. The conference affirmed its determination to continue this field of exemplary activity through the publication of the journal *Women and Revolution* under the supervision of the SL Central Committee, noting that in the current period the SL's work on the woman question will have a dual aspect: as part of our polemical approach to the ostensibly revolutionary left and as an important component of our program for the labor movement.

Following the organizational reports and the election of the incoming Central Committee, the conference was adjourned with the singing of the *Internationale*. ■

—reprinted from *Workers Vanguard*  
No. 15, January 1973

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## CORRECTION

*WV*'s report on the Spartacist League's third National Conference ("Toward Construction of the Leninist Vanguard!" in *WV* No. 15, January 1973) incorrectly quoted the Credentials Committee report as having stated that "67% of the members of the organization had joined within the past year." The correct figures were that 42% had been members of the SL/RCY for less than one year, while a total of 67% had joined within the past two years.

—*Workers Vanguard* No. 16, February 1973

# Memorandum to the CC on the Transformation of the SL

1. The tasks facing the Spartacist League and the capacity of the SL as a revolutionary Marxist organization have both been qualitatively transformed through an interacting process. The crisis and breakdown of the post-World War II configuration of the world capitalist system, dominated by American imperialism, has been marked by the catastrophic consequences of the American involvement in Vietnam, the French general strike of 1968 and the definitive collapse of the "American century" with Nixon's new fiscal and economic policies, which mark the forced abdication by the U.S. of the role of world policeman and the reversion of American imperialism to merely the strongest of several competing units. These developments have of course also been conditioned and paralleled by the political decomposition of the deformed workers state bloc, above all the Russia/China split.

These developments have uniquely been continuously noted, analyzed and conclusions drawn from them for the proletarian struggle in the press of the SL over the past several years, and in a comprehensive fashion in the 1969 resolution, "Development and Tasks of the Spartacist League."

2. The working class internationally has now recovered from the destructive consequences of the second World War, the primitive effort and failures of the proletariat at the end of the war to assert its power through the framework of massive nationalistic Stalinist and social democratic movements, and the ensuing subordination of the class struggle in many lands to the pervasive anti-Communist mobilization organized and led by U.S. imperialism. A whole new generation of young workers has grown up unscarred by earlier defeats but innocent of earlier hard-won lessons. Skeptical of what it knows as "the establishment," it demonstrates in a sharply increasing way great spontaneous energy and combativity. While as always these struggles are fought out within the framework of given national states their international impact is frequently not only immediate but extends decisively through the "Iron Curtain" which despite the intentions of capitalist imperialists and Stalinist bureaucrats alike goes not to bedrock but only cuts across surface phenomena. The demand "Workers of the World Unite!" has never had greater validity.

3. Thus the stage is being set for a new round of intensified class struggle quite capable of challenging and overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie, and the objective conditions for the building of mass revolutionary parties and for the rebuilding of the Fourth International necessary to consummate such seizures of power by the proletariat is not only objectively highly favorable but crucial in the period which we have entered.

4. The decisive defeat of the proletariat would lead in a direct fashion to the third World War fought with nuclear weapons. With the re-emergence of qualitatively

sharpened inter-imperialist rivalries and the corresponding breaking up of the American-imposed system of military alliances, the earlier deterrence imposed by the Russian nuclear shield (the "Workers Bomb" so sneered at by left social democrats) to a nuclear third World War is lost. In the previous period the qualitatively greater contradictions of capitalist imperialism were counterposed to the lack of urgent expansionist drives by even the deformed workers states which together with the powerful Russian military capacity combined to produce a relative global stalemate. This equilibrium is being superseded by a vista in which the earlier class-differentiated blocs are being absorbed into inter-imperialist power rivalries and the earlier tendency of nuclear military capacity by the deformed workers states objectively to buy time for the proletariat to regroup is undercut. The initial impact of new and major revolutionary workers struggles can be expected to cut across these power blocs and refocus general capitalist hostility on the existing workers states as well, as felt sources of the "red menace."

In the new situation, the bureaucracies of the deformed workers states, despite their qualitatively greater vulnerability to social upheaval, cannot and do not deter an inter-imperialist holocaust but acquiesce to the game of great power politics. Thus the political revolution destroying these bureaucracies is central to the struggle against imperialist war. The vague outlines of the new alignments are already taking shape: the U.S., China, West Germany, England vs. Russia, Japan, India, France, Italy. The outcome of this projection represents at a minimum a terrible setback to human culture and possibly fulfilling the negative alternative of Karl Marx's "either socialism or barbarism" with the obliteration of the human species.

5. Not only has the proletariat acquired renewed capacity for struggle, but it has become urgent that this struggle result in new seizures of power shattering the capitalist system. Hence once again the subjective crisis of leadership within the workers movement comes to the fore: put more concretely the whole outcome hinges upon the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International of powerful sections—mass revolutionary parties.

6. The impact of this world crisis upon social relations and class struggle domestically in the U.S. has been initially contradictory. The freshening of struggle has first shown itself in rebelliousness among sections of the essentially petty-bourgeois youth and student milieu, together with violent outbreaks, bitterness and an inward-turning by the Black section of the population in the face of an apparent hopelessness to improve their lot within a nation which, from their vantage point, appears not only implacably racist and hostile but unchanging. The white sections of the proletariat and lower middle class, also increasingly burdened and disgruntled, and themselves reflecting a conclusion drawn from several decades of social stagnation—that

little more can be extracted from the ruling class—react with hostility to the demands of the Black people and with sometime hysteria to the rebellious youth contemptuous of “educational advancement” which has been taken by large sections of the American proletariat as the key to personal emancipation, i.e. class advancement.

7. The most evident of these antagonisms is that of Black vs. white but throughout the productive process the tendency is very strong for one group of workers to seek to advance themselves at the expense of another, and this tendency extends beyond antagonism within the national framework alone: thus Mexican is pitted against Black worker in the Southwest, American auto or steel worker against German and Japanese, long-shoreman against teamster, American against foreign seaman.

8. Thus domestically the central axis for the intervention of Marxists must turn on assisting and transforming appetites in the mass for a larger share of economic and social gain at the expense of other sections of the population into an interlinked and concerted struggle for social gain at the expense of the ruling class, a struggle which tends to go toward the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Powerful objective forces press in this direction, but if the revolutionists are not present to raise those demands which manifestly unify the class by benefitting all its sections, especially the most oppressed, and at the expense of the bourgeoisie, the working people will be deflected by capitalism's lieutenants, the trade union bureaucrats, the revisionists and reformists, the petty-bourgeois nationalists.

9. It should be stressed that in the U.S. too there is now throughout industry a young generation of workers of great demonstrable militancy and indifferent to the anti-Communism which paralyzed their fathers and older brothers and which led to the present desperately conservative and undemocratic labor movement, which is grossly incompetent even in giving a pretense of serving the workers' needs. This union apparatus has now been rendered unstable and can be shattered. Again, whether it is replaced by slicker fakers or by revolutionists depends in good part upon the revolutionists themselves.

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10. The Spartacist tendency had its genesis within the Socialist Workers Party when in early 1961 it crystallized initially around the Cuban question, upholding and insisting upon the validity of the permanent revolution, on the necessarily dominant role of the proletariat in achieving a workers state such as that created by the Bolshevik revolution, and on the necessary role of the revolutionary Marxist party in leading that proletariat to victory.

11. In late 1962 with Healy's connivance Wohlforth split away a minority. At the end of 1963 the tendency underwent expulsion from the SWP. With the first issue of *Spartacist* in early 1964 there were perhaps twenty-five more or less solid supporters. Over the next two years the tendency grew rapidly, nearly tripling in size by the time of the Founding Conference of the Spartacist

League over Labor Day 1966. But there were several weaknesses despite or within this growth and despite the considerable theoretical, programmatic and political development of the tendency.

The main mass work of the Spartacist had been in the civil rights movement North and South. This ended with the defeat and disintegration of this movement and the Black Nationalist freeze. Additionally much of the numerical growth of the Spartacist tendency was of a miscellaneous character, individuals joining on a rather loose catch-all basis because we loomed large as a Trotskyist group to the left of the SWP at a time in which radicals were beginning to recognize its rightward swing. Finally, the definitive rupture with the Socialist Labour League's International Committee, while it resulted within the U.S. in a small immediate accretion of forces from Wohlforth to us, was discouraging because it indicated that we would have to endure national isolation for an undefined but not short period of time.

12. Through 1967 our membership leveled off and dropped a little, and there was little systematic involvement in mass work. Our most notable failure was our inability to intervene in a systematic and large-scale way in the SDS despite our own recognition since 1965 that this was the prime field for youth and student work. The weakness of the National Office created more overt sources of dissatisfaction through lack of regular production of Political Bureau minutes and especially over our poor press regularity and frequency. The attempt to improve the situation adopted at the New Year's 1968 Plenum was however overtaken by a factional explosion which preoccupied the SL leadership and cadre throughout 1968.

13. That year of factional struggle created the SL as it is presently shaped and completed the pre-conditions for our present transformation. Notably, the main factional discussion material and summaries which have been assembled in four membership bulletins constitute for us our own “In Defense of Marxism,” defining again the thinking and tasks of Marxist revolutionaries. A new layer of comrades came to the fore in that struggle and today constitutes a precious enrichment of our leading cadre.

In the aftermath of that struggle we transformed our attitude toward membership from one of coaxing marginal members to keep functioning as a sort of a favor to one of aggressively purging such people with a ruthless attitude of “better less but better.” Ross, Ellens and Turner added all together took out of the SL only some fourteen people, but from a high of a nominal seventy-five at our Founding Conference, with the individual drop-outs, factional losses and our own purging we managed to reduce our membership to around forty by the middle of 1969. Ellens claimed that our membership was a half social democratic and Turner asserted that we lacked a collective leadership. By the time we were through fighting them we had developed a hardened Bolshevik membership and a new collective leadership. In short, for the first time the SL had created a homogeneous, developed cadre.

14. By the time of our second National Conference over Labor Day 1969 we had completed the slow,

painful process of laying down in written form the essential programmatic basis of our tendency. Program is not completed in a month or a year; it grows out of the conscious synthesis by revolutionists of their experience in struggle as analyzed in the light of Marxist principle. Indeed it was only in 1928 in the period of the decline of the Communist International that the CI after nine years of effort adopted a program as such. The programmatic base of the SL encompasses the material printed in *Marxist Bulletin* #9 covering the international question, Black question, American question and organizational rules, codified in the period 1963-69.

15. The pick-up of our involvement in social struggle in the U.S. first involved us in a notable way in the student youth field. Following our intervention in the June 1969 SDS split convention we finally began in a systematic and, for us, massive way to intervene in SDS. By New Year's 1970 the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus was formed. As reflected in its present name, it was simultaneously to be a caucus in SDS and, initially rather loosely, an organization of Trotskyist youth.

16. The piecemeal increase in our trade union work led on the West Coast to the production of the irregular printed paper *Workers' Action*, which was moved to New York and more regularly produced with a more directly political line.

17. Another area of social unrest became evident, women's liberation, and here too our comrades wherever they were around the country found themselves compelled to intervene as a pro-working-class, pro-socialist, anti-feminist contingent. The highest expression of this involvement has been the production from the Bay Area of the newspaper *Women and Revolution*.

18. The variety of SL-led caucuses, factions and committees in sections of the mass movement has given us a considerable organized periphery, approximately defined by the Mensheviks' old definition of party membership, i.e. individuals who agree with and work under the direction of the party. This has not only given us a greater organized force in comparison to SL membership but has tended to elevate the quality of membership in the SL itself.

19. Our electoral line in 1968 anticipated our work of the next year but was largely drowned out by our own factional preoccupation and by our marginal impact on the rest of the radical and especially the labor movement. Our call for a Labor-Socialist presidential ticket in opposition to the SWP candidacy, our attacks upon George Wallace which almost alone among socialist critics recognized the valid grievances he was catering to with racist demagoguery, in the context of our attack upon the petty-bourgeois elitism and ideological tail-ending of left-liberalism by the Peace and Freedom Parties—i.e. the IS, PL and the CP—and the little model Assembly campaign through CIPA which we ran in New York City were the major points in this work.

20. We have never found a suitable organizational embodiment nor made other than individual recruitment directly from our revolutionary working-class oriented opposition to the Vietnam war. Our refusal to

give political support and confidence to the NLF or North Vietnam while resolutely standing for their military victory, our opposition to class-collaborationist Pop Frontism first expressed organizationally in our 1965 break with the 5th Avenue Peace Parade Committee, our opposition to draft refusal, and our constant propaganda for labor political strikes against the war in opposition to endless peace marches and the individualist confrontationism which these gestures breed have however given much content to our mass work in student, labor and women's liberation arenas.

21. Thus almost every aspect of struggle and motion has found us compelled to intervene, and in a way qualitatively at variance with our self-designation as an *unstable sub-propaganda group*. Since our intervention has been as a *vanguard nucleus* while the reality of our forces has been as a sub-propaganda group, in the past three years we have found ourselves functioning under great tension and vastly overextended. The PB has been moving since the beginning of this year to resolve this contradiction by a series of measures to make the leap and resolve the desperate contradictions inherent in our present functioning as a reversible nucleus of the vanguard party.

22. The key is our national center; we have program, cadre and mass involvement. The objective opportunities and demands upon us are great. We are determined to concentrate into the center and so organize our national work as to make this leap possible. When this projection was made it appeared that we would make this shift at the cost of creating a new and ironic contradiction—namely a considerable weakening of our forces in the leadership of local committees and the withdrawal of comrades from important mass work. But we determined on this course nonetheless on the assumption that if our prognosis was correct and our determination steadfast we would win fresh forces.

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23. The erstwhile Trotskyist movement internationally has felt the impact of the crisis and the new challenges. The United Secretariat has both experienced a number of splits to the left and developed a sharp clash between its leading European sections centered on the French Ligue Communiste on the one side and the American SWP on the other. The U.Sec.-SWP antagonism arises essentially out of the divergence between the continuing Pabloist, essentially centrist appetites of the U.Sec. (recently directed at student youth as the springboard of revolution) and the SWP which uses Marxist "orthodoxy" as a cover for their ambition to become the new party of reformist socialism in America.

24. The International Committee, essentially a bloc of the British SLL and the French OCI, together with their respective satellites, teeters on the edge of an open split. The central SLL-OCI difference, which is of some years' standing, has been sharpened intolerably by the new opportunities for building the world movement which the Lambert group is energetically pursuing. The SLL considers that the Fourth International has been rebuilt and that they are it—a posture of sectarian

pretense. The OCI accurately subtitles its identification of the IC as "for the reconstruction of the FI." Despite our agreement on this point, we have several serious differences with the OCI: (1) their use and justification of their own violence (in circumstances other than of self-defense) or that of the state against other radicals; (2) their approach to radical youth programmatically independent from the vanguard party, i.e. treating student-centered youth as a sort of a separate revolutionary class, i.e. conciliating essentially petty-bourgeois youth impulses; and (3) pretending for years that their bloc with the SLL was a bona fide democratic centralist international organization and hiding from the world movement their many substantial differences with the SLL in order to maintain that bloc.

25. In the context of the instability of the self-styled "Internationals," a process of several splits among national sections, particularly from the U.Sec. and its periphery, continues to be evident, producing independent groups which are in rapid motion away from or towards one or another of the loosely-defined tendencies of the existing international Trotskyist movement. It is essential that the Spartacist tendency become a pole of attraction in the sorting-out process taking place. The question being posed by these opportunities is whether the IC, possibly reorganized under OCI leadership, will continue to be the main recognized repository of anti-Pabloism, or whether a process of internal differentiation within the sections and supporters of the IC, combined with the accretion of new forces, will produce the political clarification necessary to pose the fight against revisionism on a theoretically and programmatically correct and principled basis.

This perspective—which is nothing less than the perspective of rebuilding the Fourth International through political struggle leading to a process of splits and fusions—requires not only the intervention of the SL in the international arena, but also reciprocally the continued strengthening and development of our work domestically to provide our tendency with the political authority needed for us to have a significant impact on the international movement.

26. One of the principal failures in our current work has been to effectively implement the decision arrived at last winter between our delegation to Europe, the British RCL and the German IKD to launch an international discussion bulletin, for our part at least directed toward the crystallization of an essentially homogeneous international tendency of revolutionary Trotskyists to fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. A complicating difficulty has been that the IKD and especially the RCL have chosen to take a somewhat exclusive approach to the bulletin, limiting invitations to participate in it only to those national tendencies which they know fairly well and which meet particular but ill-defined criteria, rather than throwing it open to all those tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist and standing for example to the left of the U.Sec. However, our main problem has been the press of domestic work such that the comrade assigned to spend at least half his time on the international movement has been compelled to spend half his time away from the center over the last period. It is therefore proposed that an editorial staff of some five comrades experienced in the international

movement and/or able translators be established at the Plenum with a collective responsibility for the early production of this bulletin.

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27. In recognition of the unlocking of the existing radical tendencies in the U.S. under the impact of objective events we have raised beginning with *Spartacist* #14 and pursued through the last eighteen months an active regroupment policy centered upon Progressive Labor in view of their sharp turn against the Stalinist states and nationalism in favor of a crude proletarian revolutionary orientation. But our regroupment orientation has deliberately had a wider character; among the main U.S. tendencies we have noted a certain polarization in the SWP-YSA (now loosely crystallized in the Proletarian Orientation and Communist factions) and a bulge to the left on the part of the International Socialists (discovery of the working class, for the military victory of the NLF, formal avowal of Leninism on the organizational question). It is not now possible to foresee where this process will end or where it will lead.

28. Account must be taken of the alignment of the ostensible revolutionary organizations at the National Peace Action Coalition in New York in July, organized by the SWP-YSA with some CP support. This conference was the first overt realization of the Popular Front the SWP has been striving for. U.S. Senator Vance Hartke and Victor Reuther, head of the UAW's International Department—i.e. key elements in the liberal Democrat-labor bureaucrat bloc which actively ties the American workers movement to bourgeois politics—accepted invitations to speak. The SWP rammed these celebrities' participation down the throats of the conference, and when their speeches, particularly Hartke's, were vehemently shouted down from the floor, the conference marshals—SWPers, CP trade union goons, led by the SWP's Fred Halstead, assisted by Workers Leaguers—with deliberate brutality smashed and evicted the protestors. Harry Ring's apologia in the 16 July *Militant* did note accurately how the radical groups responded to this festival of class betrayal:

"The only one of these groups ["political sects" attending the conference, i.e. Labor Committee, International Socialists, SL, Workers League] that supported the motion [commending the marshals in evicting PL-SDS] and offered to help with defense of the meeting was the Workers League. Members of the Spartacist [sic] League actually joined with the PLers in the disruption and were evicted with them. The National Caucus of Labor Committees and the International Socialists took evasive positions."

Ring however did not make clear that even some of the CP-influenced elements at the conference were so anxious not to be associated themselves with the marshals' brutality that they sought unsuccessfully to get the conference to disassociate from the guards' violence.

This division of the tendencies, ranging from revolutionary through centrist to reformist, and sealed in blood, crystallizes the main lines of division within the radical movement over the next period and defines possibilities for regroupment in that period.

29. The "crisis of Maoism" (steps toward Peking-Washington rapprochement) has disoriented and

disorganized U.S. pro-Maoist movements and presents the SL with opportunities for influencing and polarizing previously inaccessible Maoist groups and collectives, especially those individuals and groups which had already implicitly challenged "Mathought" by seeking to discover in Maoism a consistent revolutionary proletarian strategy for the advanced countries.

30. Already we note several results from our regroupment orientation, in addition to the recruitment of individuals from in and around the radical movement attracted to us because of our recognition (in distinction to self-styled revolutionaries like PL and the Workers League) that regroupment is at certain junctures a vital part of the building of the revolutionary party. We are in the process of formally consummating an evidently deeply-based fusion with the comrades of the Communist Working Collective, a Los Angeles ex-Maoist formation; at least a portion of the comrades of the Boston "Mass Strike" group have adopted a fusion perspective with the SL; and also in Boston we have won SL supporters from among members and leaders of the PL-led University Action Group. Including the fusions, in the last four months we will have had a more than fifty per cent increase in direct SL membership.

31. The experienced forces won which in good part are a direct accretion to the SL cadre, taken together with the extremely valuable recruitment of younger comrades to the RMC, give us the human resources sufficient to ensure the strengthening of our center, the production of our press, the extension of our trade union work, the development of a Trotskyist youth league and the consolidation and extension of the SL geographically into more regional centers in the country.

32. In viewing the SL as the nucleus of the vanguard party there is however a vital weakness. In the period through 1968 we suffered the attrition and loss of essentially all of our Black comrades. Without a Black component playing a creative and leading role in the SL it is impossible in this racist country in either mass work or effective general propaganda to have much impact on Black workers or militants. And without the mobilization in revolutionary struggle of the Black section of the proletariat, under some conditions in a relatively leading role, a successful social revolution cannot be realistically projected.

We now have an opportunity in one area to win Black comrades. This work must be pursued at the highest national priority and, if it is to have revolutionary significance, without a trace of conciliation to Black Nationalist inclinations nor of personal patronization. Within the party we do not and will not know any social divisions. Our continuing struggle as revolutionists is "to be in, but not of" this society. Side by side with this adamant inter-party attitude we must take account in our propaganda and mass work of all of the special sensitivities, prejudices, particularities and antagonisms of the oppressed and exploited if these are to be overcome in the course of struggles which aim to channelize all discontent against the ruling class.

33. The spectacular split in the Black Panther Party presents the new generation of Black activists with hard evidence that Black Nationalism even in its most leftist,

anti-"porkchop" embodiment, cannot provide a way forward for Black revolutionaries in the U.S. Whatever the organizational fate of the BPP, its former glamorous appeal among wide masses of Black youth, which insulated the overwhelming majority of Black radicals from the impact of multi-racial radical politics, is shattered, and the most thoughtful and dedicated of these youth are again potentially reachable by the SL through its general propaganda and work among this stratum.

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34. As we have recognized from our inception, a regular and frequent press is central to our existence as a propaganda group. Now that the SL also finds imposed upon us the tasks of, and key elements in the capacity to be, the nucleus of the vanguard party, the inability to resolve our press question would reduce us to a mockery. We have recognized that we could either liquidate all our other publications (*Workers' Action*, *RMC Newsletter*, *Women and Revolution*, trade union journals) into the *Spartacist*, thus in imitation of the Workers League retreating from actual mass involvement for the sake of pretense, or we could undertake a tightly regulated expansion centering around *Workers' Action*.

35. The Political Bureau has opted for the latter and in agreement with the CWC has worked out the following proposal: that we go over to an 8-page tabloid, subtitled a "Marxist working-class monthly, published by the Spartacist League." The PB proposes that the new paper be called *Workers' Vanguard* and that the early issues note that it incorporates *Workers' Action* and that special emphasis be given the fusion with the CWC.

The name *Workers' Vanguard* is appropriate to the kind of paper we intend. From the vantage point of the vanguard it is appropriate to treat the struggles of all the oppressed and in a fully Marxist fashion, while centering on the class struggle. The July-August issue of *Workers' Action* was intended to be transitional in its character, and the first monthly issue, September, is meant to be representative in all but the new name of the kind of paper we aim to produce.

36. The *Spartacist* will continue with approximately its recent frequency as "An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism, published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League." It will have a special area of responsibility toward the international movement and for theoretical material. But all of the SL-directed publications should have an overlapping of content with the new *Workers' Vanguard*. It is important that the struggles for example in the fields of youth work and women's liberation find expression in the new main organ. It will be necessary for the CC to tightly regulate the size and frequency of the other publications to ensure above all that *WV* is not undercut.

37. The step of producing and effectively distributing an 8-page monthly has and will require a drastic reorganization of the center and the SL as a whole. In view of the magnitude of the changes involved it is likely that we will find it more difficult to stabilize our monthly than we will in going over to a paper every two weeks,

which is the indicated next step for a formation of our relative size.

38. The actual production of the paper rests on several considerations which must be met. One of course is copy. A considerable proportion must be produced in the localities. The branches will have to encourage and direct qualified comrades to write frequently, freeing them when necessary from other responsibilities. The authorization of particular articles in this context is the responsibility of the editors.

It is the intention of the PB that comrade Benjamin be the Managing Editor of *Workers' Vanguard* with an Editorial Board of Benjamin, Gordon and Treiger, with comrade Rogers as Circulation Manager and comrade Allen as Production Manager; *Spartacist* with comrade Gordon as Editor and an Editorial Board of Cunningham, Gordon and Robertson, with Rogers also as Circulation Manager. We intend to continue producing *Spartacist* in a metal shop on the much cheapened basis that we have arrived at; *WV* is to be offset, composed by us and printed in an inexpensive unionized commercial shop. An early capital expenditure required is a composition machine freeing comrades from the onerous double setting now required.

39. Our own small offset press is intended especially for the production of pamphlets, which are otherwise now financially impossible to produce, as well as miscellaneous printing. Our own shop, managed by comrade Knox, is intended to evolve into a commercial shop in order to partially subsidize SL production. About two-thirds of the essential equipment cost has been met; some \$1500 more is still required.

40. Second only in priority to the drive to establish our press on a new basis is our calculated and systematic extension of our trade union work. We propose to appoint a national trade union director available at least half-time, partly for the purpose of consultation with our developing fractions but most urgently in this period to direct and assist in the actual creation of fractions. We have no lack of dedicated comrades eager to undertake this work, and who in any case must hold jobs, nor do we lack knowledge of the indicated priorities of one field over another. What generally appears impossibly difficult is the actual placing in the indicated spot of the indicated comrades, a task made doubly difficult given the present recession. The failure under present conditions to tactically implement fully our strategic proletarian perspective would be nothing other than a denial of that perspective. Therefore every resource and ingenuity must be brought to bear in a fully conscious and calculated way to achieve this vital aim.

Put quantitatively, about fifteen per cent of SLers in the past period have been *active* unionists. By active unionists we mean those comrades who are in a position to and do produce written agitational material within their plant, industry or union. Through the period of our growth, the *proportion* of active unionists must climb.

41. The two operative words in all SL mass work undertakings in this period remain "concentration" and "exemplary." "Concentration" is to say that we must continue to carefully select our arenas and strongly supervise our allocation of forces so as to maximize our impact. One comrade isolated in e.g. a union is viewed

largely as an individual with personal politics; a fraction of at least two comrades is potentially able to achieve a division of labor and constitute a pole of attraction for militants in struggle.

In addition to work which offers a possibility of direct and more or less immediate recruitment of individuals and groups to the SL, we also undertake, in a carefully selected way, *exemplary* work among sections of the masses, in order to both generate program concretely through interaction with struggle, and as an essential part of our propaganda—i.e. demonstrating the capacity of our political and programmatic line to focus and lead mass struggles despite our inability, through the limitations of our forces and roots in the working class, to directly vie for leadership of the class as a whole. Thus in these situations we will work with militants who accept our full transitional program for that struggle without necessarily being immediately recruitable to the SL directly through this work.

Any definition of "propaganda" which excludes this element of seeking to offer real revolutionary leadership in a few key situations is mere pretense in favor of an alien appetite; any assertion that an organization such as the SL can be primarily "agitational" ("conquest of the masses") rather than propagandistic in the sense here defined is crackpotism, utopianism or, worse, completely cynical. It is not an accident that the SL—virtually alone among radical organizations in refusing to style itself an "agitational party"—is already involved in more and better mass work than any other group of comparable size.

42. Our determination to implant ourselves in the working class should not be taken as a syndical deviation. Given our marginal propagandistic situation student-centered youth work is not only no less necessary for our existence but interacts closely with our proletarianization campaign. To separate either one from the other would be a major political deviation. Less emphasis is being placed here on the development of the RMC because it is easier and further advanced.

The principal internal obstacle in the consolidation of the RMC is just the opposite of the difficulty experienced in 1958-59 in the founding of the YSA. Then, the founding youth cadre, though few, were very experienced as socialist youth: local organizers, editors and national leaders. But the parent SWP politically undercut the development of a revolutionary youth group by its increasing departure from a Leninist regroupment policy as it pursued, and sought to get the YSA nucleus to pursue, elements moving to the right in the Stalinist milieu. Moreover, significant sections of the party were suspicious and obstructive to the creation of an organizationally separate national youth formation at all. The RMC development was undertaken with the initiative and encouragement of the SL central leadership, and throughout the period of the RMC's dual role as a caucus in SDS and a Trotskyist youth formation, the SL materially supported the RMC and assisted in the development of clear Bolshevik politics. However, through the present, but decreasingly, the absence of an experienced youth cadre has been at every turn a serious handicap. Already one can see in talented and dedicated young comrades of 18-22 the future RMC leadership.

43. The main tasks for the RMC are the development of an experienced center with a regular administration, and the creation of more RMC local chapters. Of special priority is the development of a functioning RMC chapter in New York City.

44. It is the intention of the SL to replace the present interim national organizational relationship with the RMC (the RMC Bureau being simultaneously the Young Bureau of the SL appointed by the PB). In place of this temporary expedient we want to develop at the upcoming RMC Conference and party Plenum a jointly agreed resolution regulating youth-party relations in the fully Leninist mode worked out in the period of the first four Congresses of the Communist International codifying the relationship of the youth league to the party as "organizationally independent but politically subordinate"—i.e. autonomous. This necessarily requires, for the creation of a living communist youth group, rather than a front group of young epigones, that the Youth comrades, party and non-party alike, play a real and full if subordinate role in all discussion and decision-making in our movement as a whole. Correspondingly the youth organization as a whole must be a disciplined part of the movement as a whole in carrying out the decisions it helps arrive at.

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45. Over the next period following the new general allocation of forces already agreed upon with the CWC, we expect that both the Bay Area and Boston locals will become sources for personnel assignment elsewhere, that New York will experience colonization in only for specific functional reasons and will otherwise be kept pruned. The stabilization of a viable Los Angeles branch is our main additional regional priority, followed by the intention to put sufficient additional forces into Chicago to give us a local there. A local in Chicago not only means filling in the largest single gap in our national extension as well as incidentally backing up our student work there, but it also gives us the basis to undertake union work in the industrial core of the country. Our Southern perspectives have been indecisive partly because of the objective lack of one dominating regional center among Atlanta, New Orleans, Houston.

46. At this point in our development money has become our most serious bottleneck. We have suddenly jumped from spending roughly \$10,000 per year to approximately double that, with no significant immediate change in our income! We have gotten through the summer by virtue of \$500 in special donations, a \$500 loan and a \$5-15 surcharge on Sustaining Pledges, which is to be extended through the balance of this year. Following the Plenum it is vital that comrades being newly integrated into branches be brought fully up to SL norms of financial performance.

47. A new major source of income will be from sales of the new monthly. If we are to have effective circulation of the paper, the branches must sell it far more intensively in the much briefer period available per issue. Each comrade will find that he will have to go on sales several times a week or more. In the aggregate this

will result in several hundred dollars additionally per month to the National Office.

48. The RMC has been completely financed out of the SL treasury. We intend proposing the following financial arrangement to the RMC National Committee: that all RMC members pay whatever uniform dues are set by the RMC; that dual RMC-SL members pay the whole of their normal SP to the SL; and that a regular amount be given the RMC by the SL in accordance with the budgeted RMC needs.

49. In this period of many-sided expansion and growth, we must not lose sight of the necessity to maintain the SL as a centralized, highly responsive national collective. Locals must run intensive and systematic educational programs, perhaps modelled on the set of three educational series and reading list developed in New York and the Bay Area several years ago (I-Basic Marxism; II-Leninism and Trotskyism; III-Theoretical and Political Positions of the SL). Any tendencies toward personal or organizational polarization within locals or failure of locals as a whole to follow the national lead must be examined closely and rectified; or, if on examination they reveal the kernel of political differences, they must be fought out on a political rather than an organizationally disintegrative basis. Incidental loss of national cohesiveness or incipient political departures will tend to be arrested both by a more frequent press and by the continuation of frequent national gatherings and tours.

50. The comrades must understand that in the broadest sense we are and will remain a propaganda group. Lenin noted in 1920 that the British Communists, with several thousand members and in London and especially on the Clyde a certain industrial base, were but a propaganda group, even as they passed through a time of great social strife; that until the British Communists had cracked open the British Labour Party and stood at the head of a section of the class they would not yet be a revolutionary party. Our task is above all the propagation of our full program made concrete by and addressed to our fellow militants in every sort of struggle.

If we are able to achieve over the next period the historically modest aims set forth in this memorandum we will however have *consolidated* ourselves as the nucleus of the indispensable vanguard party, and that National Conference of the SL which acknowledges that achievement might well consider adopting the name of a Party in the same spirit that we now take the name for our press of Vanguard: as a deliberate assertion of our intentions and our determination.

—22 August 1971; general line adopted by the PB 23 August; extensions incorporated 24 August.

—adopted, together with the Economic Appendix, jointly by the Executive Committee of the Communist Working Collective and the SL Central Committee, 5 September 1971.

## ECONOMIC APPENDIX

Nixon's wage control policy marks the first major qualitative change in the relationship between the U.S. state and the labor movement since World War II. In the absence of effective policing machinery, the 90 day freeze is more a test of will of the labor movement than a serious wage control policy. With this policy, the U.S. joins all major capitalist countries in attempting to impose direct state control of the labor market. Such a policy has not been ultimately successful in any state maintaining bourgeois democracy. The most successful experience of capitalist wage control occurred in the early years of De Gaulle's semi-authoritarian rule. There is no reason to believe that the U.S. government will be able to impose effective long-term wage control, although in the immediate period it will undoubtedly hold down real wages.

To the extent that money wages are, in fact, held down, this will moderate the inflation with some time

lag. Despite the restraints on real wages, the changes in fiscal policy (which are contractionary, on balance) and steps taken against foreign competition, there is no reason to expect a significant expansion of production due to the over-capitalization of American industry resulting from the investment boom of the mid 60's. The next few years should witness the continued stagnation of production, accompanied by high, if not rising unemployment.

The U.S.'s competitive devaluation and turn to protectionism will spread the American crisis internationally in the classic manner. Despite retaliation and imperialist expansion into non-U.S. markets, there is no way that Western Europe and particularly Japan can avoid powerful contractionary pressure on their economies. The long Japanese boom is over, presaging the breakdown of Japan's paternalistic labor system, which is based on guaranteed employment geared to a rapidly expanding export market.

—30 August 1971

## Youth-Party Relations

[adopted by SL CC Plenum and RCY NC,  
6 September 1971]

1. The Revolutionary Communist Youth is the youth section of the Spartacist League. It functions as an autonomous Spartacist League affiliate: it is politically subordinate and organizationally independent.

2. The RCY and SL are, taken together, a common movement, each discussing all disputed questions and, being bound by the discipline of the common movement, each carrying out all decisions arrived at. Therefore given these conditions within the RCY the dual SL members will not function as a fraction separate from the other RCY members.

3. The highest body of the common movement is the Spartacist League National Conference at which the RCY National Committee will have [three] delegates with full rights who proportionately represent any factional divisions within the RCY. The SL Central Committee is the highest body of the movement between National Conferences. There will be [three] RCY representatives to the SL Central Committee, one of which shall sit on the SL Political Bureau. In the event of a factional division in the RCY National Committee, the minority shall be entitled to that proportional representation which most closely approximates its strength in the RCY National Committee. There shall be one full representative from the Spartacist League Central Committee and Political Bureau to the corresponding RCY bodies.

4. In all corresponding bodies of the RCY and SL there shall be an exchange of representatives, each enjoying full rights (voice and vote). Except at the

national level there shall be one representative from each corresponding body to the other. The representatives at all levels are bound to carry out their instructions except for the RCY delegations to the SL National Conference and Central Committee who are not under binding instruction. SL members, other than the SL representatives, should not attend RCY meetings except by specific invitation. As a privilege, all full RCY members should be encouraged to attend SL local meetings.

5. Unresolved disputes between RCY chapters and SL local committees shall be reviewed by the RCY National Bureau and if the dispute remains unresolved to the satisfaction of all concerned, final decision shall rest with the SL Central Committee.

6. SL members in the RCY shall pay dues at the same rate as other RCY members and pay their SL Sustaining Pledges at the same rate as other SL members. The SL shall grant back to the RCY a regular monthly amount as agreed to by the SL in accord with the national RCY budgetary need.

7. All SL-related youth work shall be directed through the RCY. Any exceptions to this policy must be agreed to by the RCY National Bureau which in any case shall retain general supervision.

8. The SL notes the RCY upper age limitation of 29. In the event the SL wishes to transfer to other work SL members who are RCY cadre, it must do so in consultation with the appropriate RCY bodies.

9. Older and more politically developed RCY members should orient toward early becoming SL members.

# Trade-Union Memorandum

## I: The Struggle Against Labor Reformism and Workerism

The end of petty-bourgeois radical dominance within the left was presaged by the 1968 French general strike which clearly established the revolutionary potential of the working class for the present generation of young radicals. Around 1969, the absolute dominance of the black and war questions in the political life of the U.S. began to dissipate as the war-financed inflation generated a strike wave of major proportions. The traditional conflicts between the organized working class and capital were further revived by the economic downturn of 1970 which again made unemployment a major political issue and highlighted the irrationality of capitalism as a productive system. Caught between a strike wave generating large money wage increases and a weakened international competitive position, the Nixon administration imposed wage controls in mid-1971, thereby demonstrating that the labor movement, even under right-wing leadership, is the major enemy of the smooth functioning of the capitalist (i.e. profit motivated) system.

The inadequacy of New Left politics in the face of the general social crisis in the 1969-71 period, particularly the revival of working-class struggle, caused splits in the two key radical organizations—SDS and the Black Panthers. These splits destroyed the authority of these organizations and the general hegemony of New Left politics within the left. Arising out of the destruction of the New Left was the strengthening of those organizations adhering to proletarian socialism, in both its revolutionary and reformist forms, as well as the reconciliation of petty-bourgeois radicalism with bourgeois liberalism. The latter is most obvious in McGovern's victory in the Democratic Party. The 1972 Democratic convention with its "tax the rich—give to the poor" rhetoric, its long-haired youth politicians, its black and women's caucuses, conformed to the New Left populist image. A parallel development occurred in the black movement with the Spring 1972 Cleveland Black Power conference. Appropriately the dominant personality at that conference was Imamu Baraka (ex-Leroi Jones), grey eminence of Newark, who personifies the unity of 1960's mainstream black nationalism with Democratic Party machine politics.

A significant section of the ostensible revolutionary movement is turning to the unions as their principal area of mass work. The CP has greatly revived its union activity through its youth group, YWLL, and Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy. The proletarianization policy of IS is particularly significant, since IS has become something of a barometer indicating the climate of radical public opinion. In three years, IS has gone from being the leading force behind that epitome of middle-class left-liberalism, the California Peace and Freedom Party, to moving their headquarters to Detroit and throwing their forces into various oppositional union caucuses. A parallel development is the replacement of the Panthers with their street-lumpen orientation by the Black Workers' Congress with its point-of-

production approach as the "most revolutionary" manifestation of black nationalism. It is clear that the unions are becoming a major arena of struggle between ourselves as a vanguard nucleus and the reformists, revisionists and petty-bourgeois nationalists in the ostensibly revolutionary movement.

The increasing union activism by ostensibly revolutionary organizations occurs against a background of rising class struggle and generalized rank-and-file discontent against an ancient, patently undemocratic and right-wing bureaucracy. This bureaucracy has now been rendered unstable and can be shattered. In this there is a certain analogy between the present situation and the early 1930's. Having exhausted its historic usefulness, the central core of the bureaucracy has responded to new labor rebelliousness by moving to the right of the liberal bourgeoisie. The bureaucracy as a whole is increasingly isolated from its base and fragmented—the result of tailing after different political currents in bourgeois politics. This provides a renewed opportunity for revolutionary leadership to come to the head of mass labor struggles, displacing sections of the bureaucracy and threatening its continued existence.

While the possibility exists, however, for a qualitative altering of the relationship of forces in the labor movement in favor of revolutionary leadership, the fundamental question is whether the bureaucracy will be defeated by communism or renewed labor reformism, i.e. by revolutionists or slicker fakers. The danger of a dynamized labor reformism through the infusion of young erstwhile revolutionaries is indicated by the activities of the IS in pushing blocs with "leftist" bureaucratic aspirants, such as Art Fox, whose United National Caucus in the UAW is a classic opportunist formation replete with national chauvinism. The formation of a mass reformist labor party to head off and contain an inchoate revolutionary upsurge bypassing the existing bureaucracy is one way in which such a bureaucratic left could replace the old leadership, making the programmatic content of the demand for a workers party based on the trade unions a decisive question.

It is very likely that the new labor reformism will be associated with a workerist ideology having its roots in New Leftism. Both the IS and Black Workers' Congress project varieties of New Left workerism. Even the CP, despite its formal adherence to Soviet Stalinist tradition and support of bourgeois liberalism, presents its politics as a cry from the soul of the American worker. The new labor reformism will be based on a program governed by the existing political consciousness of rank-and-file activists (i.e. participatory democracy); exclusionist and federalist organizational principles based on shop-floor or union demarcations; and a denial of the vanguard party principle, that of leadership embodied in professional revolutionaries whose world-view derives outside of and in some ways counterposed to all sections of existing, nationally-limited bourgeois society.

Workerism, the identification of revolutionary socialism with the existing workers movement, is one of the major false radical ideologies against which

Marxism developed. As Marx polemicized against German workerist opponents in 1850:

“While we say to the workers: you have fifteen or twenty or fifty years of war and civil war to go through, not just to alter the existing circumstances, but to change yourselves and make yourselves fit for power, you on the contrary say: we must obtain power at once.... While we draw the workers’ attention to the undeveloped state of the German proletariat, you outrageously flatter the national sentiments and social prejudices of the German artisan.... Just as the democrats make a sacred entity of the word ‘people,’ so do you with the word ‘proletariat.’”

—Mehring, *Karl Marx*

The Spartacist tendency has also developed through major struggles against workerism at critical points in its history. The RT had to fight the Art Philips-Tim Wohlforth faction which was presenting the policy “everyone into the unions” as a cure-all for the SWP’s revisionism. This policy also meant abstention from a struggle against reformism in the black movement, which had attained a mass character and occupied a strategic place in American political life. The most important factional struggle in the SL’s history was against Turner- Ellens’ black workerism, which simultaneously represented a syndicalist liquidation of Trotskyism and a capitulation to petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Workerism is based on two inter-related concepts: (1) the identification of the struggle for socialist revolution with the struggle for the sectional interests of the working class within capitalism, and (2) the belief that the communist consciousness of the vanguard derives from its participation in working-class life and struggles. The first proposition leads directly to economism or labor reformism. As Lenin noted, organically the proletariat can only develop trade union consciousness. Socialist consciousness is based on knowledge of the history of the class struggle and, therefore, requires the infusion into the class-struggle process of socialist conceptions carried by declassed intellectuals organized as part of a vanguard party. Socialist revolution does not occur through the intensification of traditional class struggle, but requires a leap from a vantage point outside bourgeois society altogether.

In its second proposition, workerism sees communist consciousness as a function of the social composition of the party. Workers are viewed as the proletarian conscience of the party. In reality the communist vanguard creates itself by breaking its recruits from the dominant social and political attitudes of whatever section of society they are part of, including the proletariat. In this sense, the communist vanguard is in, but not of, bourgeois society. The communist vanguard maintains itself through constant struggle against the enormous social and ideological pressures that bourgeois society bears down on it in all areas of party work, particularly against the backward prejudices in the working class and particularly in periods of rising class militancy when the party is seeking to expand its influence in the unions.

In a country as rampant with national chauvinism as the U.S., workerist politics will take on an anti-communist character despite the subjective desires of its adherents. A prominent and essential policy for Trotskyists is the defense of the Sino-Soviet states against American imperialism, a policy which goes

directly against one of the strongest prejudices of American workers. For that reason, all tendencies breaking from Trotskyism in a workerist direction (e.g. Johnson-Forrest, Ellens) rapidly adopted an anti-defensist position, as does anarcho-syndicalism in its pure form. Moreover, our priorities, relations with other tendencies and the like are as much determined by international as domestic developments. Workerist groups tend to echo the chauvinist union bureaucracy in claiming that an organization as concerned with the class nature of the Chinese revolution or the Chilean popular front as with what is happening in the shops is an alien element in the American working class.

## II: To Build a Communist Opposition in the Labor Movement

Our transformation memo projected the penetration of a section of the cadre and a good part of our membership into the unions as a priority second only to the maintenance of a monthly press. The proletarianization policy is a necessary means to create communist opposition in the labor movement and should not be viewed as a virtue in itself. For an organization of our size and tasks, we should seek to have 30-40% of our membership active in trade union work. Historically, the percentage of SL trade union activists has been well below that figure. It decreased in the past year and a half due to rapid growth and difficulty in implanting comrades in selected unions, and then rapidly increased after a series of hiring successes to the current level of 32% (in current fractions of SL members). This has caused some considerable dislocation of SL public work in the harder-hit areas, such as New York, and required the RCY to carry an exorbitant share of the public work of the common movement, with limited forces. The problem is exacerbated by a continuing pattern of too many members in marginal or dead-end jobs instead of on campuses, in fractions or in full-time party work.

The key organizational form for intervention in the unions is the caucus, the nucleus of an alternative, revolutionary union leadership, uniting members of the vanguard with those union activists who agree with that section of the party program for the labor movement. We strive to build the caucus in as political a way as possible. The growth of our caucus will not be primarily through the recruitment of politically backward militants drawn to us because of our leadership in local struggles. Rather, the caucus will grow through political struggle with other left and militant union formations leading to a process of splits and fusions. Thus, we project our caucuses growing in a manner similar to, although not identical with, the party. However, the establishment of our cadre as recognized militants with real constituencies is the essential building block and core of our caucus. Without such a base of reputable militants, our caucus actions would either be empty rhetoric or tail-ending forces much stronger than ourselves. The caucus program is a program for leading mass struggles. In general, caucus recruits should be of a significantly higher political level than that defined simply by the caucus program.

Recruitment to the caucus is not solely the task of the caucus, but that of the party as a whole. Relevant *Workers Vanguard* articles and their distribution at strategic plants and union meetings is an important part

of caucus-building. Equally important is the direct party contacting and recruitment of known union oppositionists, particularly those associated with external radical organizations.

The character of any labor struggles we lead is exemplary. That means its principal value is not in the direct expansion of our social base, but as a verification of our political line in the eyes of advanced workers and the radical movement. Therefore, we seek to concentrate on building national caucuses in key national unions. Local organizers may have to resist the impulse to implant comrades in easily accessible or "hot" local situations, which, however, are ultimately isolated or transitory. In general, we seek to avoid scattering, and concentrate our forces in a few of the indicated local situations, so as to maximize our ability to intervene with a stable organizational structure.

Our perspective for work in the unions is necessarily long-range; therefore the acquisition of industrial skills is vital in order to maintain an industrialized core which has mobility, minimum job security and protection, if not from all grueling, dead-end jobs, at least from their unlimited duration. The responsibility lies with the local committees not just to continue to organize industrialization of our members, but to systematically plan their skills acquisition and up-grading to be roughly in keeping with the general pattern of advancement in the various industries.

In this period, our intention is to concentrate in four national unions: Intermediate Industry (II), transport, communications and public employee.

Intermediate Industry (II)—It is probably the most important single union in the country industrially and politically. It is here that the debates between the tendencies of the working-class left, long held in sterile isolation from the class, promise to most rapidly develop into a serious competition for leadership of an important section of the class, thereby restoring a direct basis for judgment of mutually exclusive programs in and by the course of the class struggle, and posing the possibility of the re-establishment of a mass base for revolutionary leadership in the working class. This union is thus a key part of the perspective of transforming the SL from a propaganda group into the nucleus of a vanguard party. Having ridden in on a seasonal wave of hiring augmented by artificial election-year stimulation of the economy, however, our fraction still has but a fragile toe-hold, and could be wiped out easily. After having survived one year of the seasonal lay-off pattern, our fraction will have become qualitatively more secure.

A union with an important radical past, virtually all its early leaders were affiliated with various left-wing organizations. Most of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations concentrated forces in this union so that it became the principal industrial battleground for the left. Out of this battleground emerged a slick social-democratic regime that transformed the union into one of the pillars of the country's liberal establishment. A strong radical current remained in the union into the McCarthy period. And, unlike most other unions, small groups associated with the left maintained a certain continuous existence through the present.

Currently, the industry is facing serious import competition, which it is attempting to counter through

qualitatively speeding-up the normally harsh pace of production and enlisting the union bureaucracy in its efforts to improve production. This has produced intolerable working conditions leading to wildcats in key plants, and to the virtually total isolation of the bureaucracy in the impatient ranks, as exemplified by virtual non-attendance of union meetings. Nevertheless, the union bureaucracy has managed to isolate and defuse these strikes, but the situation remains explosive in a number of key plants. Due to the grueling physical nature of the work (which produces an enormous turnover), the labor force is overwhelmingly young, volatile, and experiencing the intensified generational conflict of this period. In the main Midwestern centers, the industry employs large numbers of young Southerners who provide a certain base for Wallaceite racist-populist demagogy. A very significant portion of the labor force is black. In the late 1960's, the union was the most important base for industrial black nationalist formations, which reflected the genuine grievances of this most oppressed section of the work force, but also intensified racial polarization in the shops.

Virtually every ORO is present in the union, with many groups having recently colonized in, so that there exist a number of small left caucuses, and a more fertile ground for eventual opponents work than on many campuses. In addition, there are significant remnants of the black nationalist formations. However, the only major national oppositional caucus is a classic opportunist swamp, led by an ex-radical, with a catch-all program and social-patriotic posture. However, the caucus does formally stand for such standard left positions as "30 for 40," immediate withdrawal of the U.S. from Indochina, and a labor party. Recently, this caucus has received support from one of the more significant ostensibly revolutionary organizations, which has been colonizing its young members into the industry.

Women are being systematically hired into the industry for the first time since the general exclusion of women from the work force after World War II, and this has aided our ability to get hired. Part of a general "public relations" tactic being undertaken by major corporations in several fields and the federal government, the women in II—still relatively few in number—are being used as a way of conservatizing and introducing divisions into the work force (through such methods as giving women easier jobs ahead of higher-seniority males). Not eliminating the need for communists to raise inclusion of women in the work force as an immediate programmatic demand, this tendency instead provides an opportunity for us to concentrate on such issues as child care, sex discrimination and equal pay for equal work in a union which has traditionally stood for these demands and which, because of the unusually high solidarity naturally engendered in the work situation, provides an opportunity to turn the companies' attempts at divisiveness into their opposite.

In initiating activity in this union, there were some reservations that the extremely arduous nature of the work would burn out our comrades. However, we have decided to push ahead as a major priority, while being sensitive to the problems and dangers involved. After intensive discussion, we arrived at a caucus-building

perspective which is highly indicative of our general conceptions of union work. We projected a year's time to consolidate our forces, develop a core of recognized militants and establish a public fraction presence. During this period, we would not engage in entry tactics, united fronts or other maneuvers with oppositional formations, since, given our very weak state, this would be de facto liquidationist and would tend to strengthen the more established formations. However, we will seek opportunities to criticize other oppositional caucuses and differentiate our fraction from them.

The danger we face at the hands of unscrupulous opponents, and the general need for security, was underlined when one of our members was fired for being a communist, disguised as a lay-off, just before completing the company probation period, probably because he was recognized by a member of a Stalinist ORO, which then passed the information on to its contacts in the union bureaucracy. Despite the complete violation of seniority of the "lay-off," and the long-time presence of radicals and left-wing activity in the plant, hard evidence of outside communist association was sufficient to accomplish this victimization.

The central character of the industry's Midwest base area makes colonization of this area essential for the establishment of a viable fraction. This in turn requires the building of a complete branch, including provision for student work on nearby campuses, general public propaganda work, etc. Despite the heavy investment of resources and manpower required for this, and the as-yet fragile character of our fraction, the importance of this union to our exemplary trade union work and transformation into the nucleus of a vanguard party eliminates any doubt that we should undertake this move as soon as possible, consistent with our other central priorities (press expansion and augmenting the staff of qualified cadre in the center), hopefully by the Summer of 1973.

Transport—A union with a Stalinist-radical history, the central leadership made the usual decisive right turn with the onset of the Cold War period. Spurred on by a worsening economic position, the leadership became increasingly corrupt, violent and dictatorial so that today it is one of the most bureaucratic unions in the country. Thus, the struggle for internal union democracy has played a large part in all oppositional formations, including ours.

The overriding problem facing the union has been the shrinkage of U.S. merchant transport due to foreign competition and "runaway" U.S. carriers. The deterioration of its economic base has eroded the union's position, a trend qualitatively accelerated in the past 3-5 years. As a result the membership is relatively old and there are severe restrictions against new members. The membership is simultaneously open to radical solutions to the problem of maritime unemployment and desperately conservative. Thus, it is one of the unions in the country in which pension rights and benefits are major issues.

The main blows of our fraction have been directed at bureaucratic chauvinism. In addition to demands for a shorter work week, the call for the immediate nationalization of the industry and the creation of an international transport union have been extremely relevant to internal union politics. Equally important has been the

struggle to eliminate the rigidly institutionalized "second-class citizenship" imposed on newer, younger members. Given the character of the membership, recruiting to our caucus has not been easy. Moreover, the union may very well be destroyed by the capitalist strangulation of the industry.

As this threat became clear with events of the past year, it was necessary to both step up the intensity of our caucus' warning of the imminent demise of the industry under the treacherous, social-patriotic policies of the bureaucracy, and to re-affirm that, apart from the fate of the union caucus, we will seek to maintain a core of communist workers. The transport industry is a strategic international industry containing among the most militant and class-conscious groups of workers in every country. Historically, such communist workers have played a uniquely valuable role as internationalizing agencies in their national working classes.

As our oldest and best-established fraction, our leading comrades in this union have played an indispensable role in the establishment and growth of our trade union work generally, both before and during our effort at transformation, and have in addition been called upon to perform other party functions. This alone has held our caucus back from playing fully the role which it has acquired as the only viable alternative leadership group. Thus for no other reason were we prevented from having a well-known delegate at the recent (rarely-held) convention, which instituted an important new tactical turn of the bureaucracy to save its own neck by incorporating unrelated workers (heretofore used as separately-organized voting cattle to keep the central bureaucrats in power) into the union. Recent modest growth of our fraction through hiring efforts, recruitment and incorporation of more members into full membership in the union provides the basis for reversing this tendency in the next period and allowing the caucus to play a full political role.

Communications—The union was consolidated in the post-war period, the bureaucracy being formerly based on a company union and in the far right wing of the labor movement. It worked closely with the company and the government anti-communist apparatus, being a major funnel of CIA funds into the labor movement. Since the mid-1960's, the industry has experienced considerable expansion requiring an increased labor force and a resultant inflow of young workers. The combination of youthful radicalism with the general rise of rank-and-file militancy in the late 1960's produced numerous and large wildcat strikes, notably an exceptionally long and bitter one in New York City. The bureaucracy's policy of starving wildcat strikes out has left a certain residue of demoralization. However, this large and growing union with its youthful and dynamic membership will undoubtedly be in the vanguard of a new upsurge of labor radicalism.

The main base of our caucus is the West Coast. It has established itself as a real oppositional pole and recruited potential communist cadre. In particular, it has won over a group of women militants originally organized around radical feminist politics. This is significant because a main element in our caucus program is the elimination of the rigid sexual division within the industry, with large numbers of women

workers being in company unions. Attempts to extend the West Coast base through implantation in other areas has, as yet, not been successful. However, the creation of a nationwide caucus in this union remains a basic priority in our industrialization policy.

The importance of our caucus to the life of the union, and the extent of its threat to the uniquely debased and cynical local officialdom, has prompted both a high degree of ORO-backed left social-democratic demagogery and the most vicious, depraved and physically violent attacks ever suffered by our members in the trade unions. Burdened both by inexperience and the ravages of the recent spate of clique departures, our local leadership is nevertheless performing valiantly and courageously under intense pressure.

In addition to the SL, a closely competing left-wing organization has made the union one of its major caucus-building targets. We have already engaged in sharp struggles with this tendency on the West Coast. It is likely that the communications union will be a major battleground between the SL and this "revolutionary" left social-democratic tendency.

Public employee—This large section of the labor force has been generally unorganized and is facing uncommon economic pressures due to the fiscal crisis of state and local government. Therefore, the public employee union is the most rapidly growing in the country and is quite likely to become the largest. Due to the presence of many young college graduates the union is relatively politically open and has mirrored the campus radicalism of the 1960's. It was the first major union to take an anti-war position and its bureaucracy has played a key role in the liberal anti-war movement. With its growth and organic ties to the state apparatus, it has become one of the most important unions in Democratic Party politics.

As part of its general expansion, the union has absorbed a number of police and prison armed forces, thereby breaking the long-standing Gompersite (!) tradition against allowing the main strike-breakers into the organized labor movement. With the union's liberal image and significant black and minority membership, this will be an explosive issue and one which our caucus has and will continue to focus on.

Located in the most radical section of the union, in which organizing drives against a reactionary state bureaucracy are the key question, our caucus has stood forth both as exemplary organizers and oppositionists, combatting the central bureaucracy's efforts to quell the organizing and acquire large dues-paying membership blocks through mergers with company-union "associations," and has made a noticeable impact at state and national conventions. In an arena heavily penetrated by OROs, our comrades have had an opportunity to conduct work and recruitment on a high level. While we will have to gut the leadership of this caucus in order to implement our more central perspective for work in II, we will retain the caucus for its excellent short-term recruitment perspective.

Due to its social composition and relatively open character, direct recruitment to the party will be easier than in other unions. For the same reasons, it will be a union in which there will be the most open competition between organizations claiming to be revolutionary. Since the union is easily accessible to our membership, it will be used as a back-up for members who can't get into more selected fractions rather than as a primary target for implantation.

—24 November 1972

—[Adopted by Third National Conference, 25 November 1972]

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