

- b. The Departed Minority: The PB should initiate a motion to poll the Central Committee on the following proposals:

(1) To expel immediately and unconditionally Ellens and Stoute on the basis of (a) confirmed evidence that Ellens has been in secret, private contact with VO's top leaders. We will release Crawford's letters proving this allegation, and also have corroborating testimony. (b) the continued, ever-deepening pattern of Ellens' and Stoute's political operations. They have been constructing their own group here with no relation to the SL, going after members and non-members alike. The latest case which has come to our attention is the attempt to recruit Price C. Janacek bragged to us in an indiscreet moment that Paul G., who resigned from the SL a year ago, has been a close contact of Ellens and Stoute for the last six months and has been in a secret study circle class in Marxism. (c) the withholding of their skills from the production of documents for the internal discussion which they initiated. They repeatedly refused direct orders, sometimes openly defiant of the right of the organization to allocate their political time, sometimes with outright lies and fictitious excuses. Although the principle of discipline and the allocation of comrades' priorities by the collective is exceedingly important, it was not just principle which caused us to insist on Ellens' and Stoute's assignment to the N.O. twice a week. They represented about 40% of our effective skilled stencilists.

(2) To suspend the balance of the departed Minority from all party rights until a National Conference, with the option that if they return to the organization before this time they will be restored to full rights and party posts and no action will be taken against them. However, since being sucked in by Ellens all departed Minorityites have tried in every way they could to do damage to the organization, recruit members from the SL, urge members to be disloyal and indisciplined by engaging in private, secret discussions with splitters. At this point, therefore, barring only the one exception that the Minorityite ranks can come back to the organization without prejudice, all members of the departed Minority stand outside the organization and must be treated in every respect and by every member as such. Ideally, we hope these comrades will come back, but in any case we want, through this proposal, to drive a wedge into the Ellens organization and help dishearten any of her supporters who have doubts about the course they have taken.

If the CC is polled and these motions passed, they should be communicated to the departed Minority supporters, along with some additional material: (a) a statement exploiting the contradictions in their positions. Every document of the Minority has stated with indignation our many weaknesses, especially the infrequency of the paper. Presumably, therefore, one of the planks of the Minority is that we should, or they will, do better along those lines. Clearly, this is hypocrisy, as they themselves intend to have no press, no public face, only classes and low-level individual contacting. Fur-

ther, despite their orientation away from the ostensible vanguard organizations and to the working class, they continue to have as a primary task pulling more people out of the SL, which according to them is a hopelessly corrupt anti-working-class petty-bourgeois organization no better than any of the other ORO's which they have scornfully refused to orient to. (b) the letter from Socialist Current in England. The SC comrades find that although they know the SL has serious weaknesses, in the dispute the Majority is correct on the essential issues. Their contribution is especially valuable because they are rather more familiar than we are with VO, of which they have some serious criticisms. According to SC, VO's cadres are largely students, but they orient entirely to the workers. Ultra-workerism is an attractive program and appeals especially to petty-bourgeois radicals, as does their romantic practice of clandestinity. We should point out that SC, although a small organization, is composed entirely of workers; they are not likely to be bemused by a petty-bourgeois adulation of workers, because they are workers. Their letter also catches an extremely important point--that while VO seems to see the class question as paramount in France, the national question is decisive for them elsewhere.

- c. Internal Reorganization: As a result of the resignation of of Stoute, a PB member, we have an imbalance in the PB--an even number of voting members. Therefore we should co-opt Dave C. to full member of the CC and PB even though we are but a step away from a National Conference which will re-elect a new CC. Once embarked on the co-option procedure, it would also be a good idea to co-opt Mark T. as CC alternate, as he has shown himself a genuine opinion-maker in the organization and, as he is resigning as NYC organizer, he will shortly lose his ex-officio privilege of attending and speaking at PB meetings. We would also like to elect Comrade Nelson as National Organizational Secretary, a role which he has continued to fulfill despite his heavy involvement in the SSEU fraction. All these are proposals to the CC.

A number of reorganization points also come up before the PB. Small should be elected to staff as National Treasurer, replacing Janacek. The PB should also act on the resignations of the two West Coast Minorityites whose resignations were accepted by the Bay Area local. The PB should set the Bay Area's acceptances aside in order that the entire national Minority can be dealt with uniformly under the above proposal for suspension. The PB also has jurisdiction over the following staff assignments--to elect Gordon as Managing Editor of the SPAR-TACIST, replacing Janacek, and to elect Rogers as Business Manager, as she is the first one in years to do a really efficient job with the files.

- d. VO and Fraternal Relations: The problem is both technical and political. Technically, VO no longer exists, so we can't even write them a letter about the present situation. We could perhaps get material to them through intermediaries. More serious, their behavior is impermissible in a fraternal rela-

tionship. We have a strong suspicion that they got into this by accident; despite their goody-goody "Trotskyist family" conception, they found themselves with a relentless agent in Ellens. Ellens was a whole-hog VO'er; she not only agreed with every VO position, right and wrong, of political theory and functioning in the French situation, but transposed every method of functioning wholesale into U.S. conditions. She was even more than an American VO'er--she was a French VO'er even in the U.S. If there had not been fraternal relations between the SL and VO they could really do what they like with agents, etc. But we were supposed to have had an organization-to-organization relationship which transcends factions. In the best case they simply didn't know how to behave--i.e. contact between Leninist organizations is carried on between central committees. It would seem reasonable for us now to try and develop confidential channels of communication and just ask them a series of pointed questions about their involvement. VO had guilty knowledge of Ellens' operations the whole time. We see no reason to assume in advance malice on their part; they perhaps acted naively, but their behavior was dead wrong nonetheless.

We should certainly try and establish a dialogue with VO, but should recognize that for practical purposes now fraternal relations do not exist. We will not carry a knife for VO but our future operations in France will no longer carry the circumscription that everything must be cleared through them.
Disc: Dave C., Gordon, Robertson

- e. Internal Discussion: We are left with a largely aborted discussion. We must complete it nonetheless, but the steam is going out of it so we must move fast. If we must have factional struggle we might as well get the full educational value from it. Disc: Nelson, Turner, Nelson, Dave C., Turner, Robertson
- f. Votes: [Results of poll of Central Committee on the proposals to expel Ellens and Stoute, suspend all other members of the departed Minority, co-opt a full and an alternate member to the CC and elect a National Organizational Secretary are attached to the minutes.]

Motion: To elect Small as National Treasurer, Gordon as Managing Editor, Rogers as Business Manager. Passed unanimously

Motion: To query VO sharply regarding their role with Ellens. Passed unanimously

Motion: In the interim, to consider that fraternal relations between the SL and VO are in a state of suspension.

For: Robertson, Nelson; Small; Rogers, Gordon, Dave C.

Opposed: Turner

Passed 2-1

Motion: To set aside the Bay Area local committee's acceptance of the resignations of Larry S. and Jim D.

For: Robertson, Nelson; Small; Rogers, Gordon, Dave C.

Opposed: Turner

Passed 2-1

4. Trade Union:

a. Chicago: Steve S. has put out a leaflet in his own name raising the call for the seizure of the bus barns by striking transit workers. The PB has three strong criticisms to raise over his action: (1) It was a bad idea, and there were strong objections raised by comrades and sympathizers in Chicago. The wildcat strike was failing, as the company has been hiring scabs and service was almost back to normal. In such an isolated situation the call to seize the bus barns is adventurism. Such seizures only work well under a rising line of struggle. Steve reports that the workers were very glad to see his leaflet, but this is not surprising. The strike was losing, and the militants must have been feeling very desperate--in precisely such situations workers begin sometimes to talk of dynamite, etc. While we can understand their feelings, and Steve's, we must oppose tactics of desperation because they don't help and only facilitate even the physical destruction of the strike militants. (2) Putting out the leaflet was an act of indiscipline. CC member Rader objected and told Steve not to do it, and another comrade who is strongly personally sympathetic to Steve admitted he would have opposed the leaflet in advance. A close sympathizer also disagreed with the tactic. Steve said it was his baby and he would go ahead. Robertson spoke to Rader and told him to tell Steve to phone Detroit to discuss his tactic with an experienced trade unionist. Steve refused to do this, nor did he consult with the national center. (3) Steve is a white, known communist, outsider, not a transit worker, seeking to intervene in a union situation. In such a situation above all, no matter how correct the tactic we raise, we cannot seek to substitute ourselves, as outsiders, for the workers actually in the industry and on strike. In any case, therefore, any tactic should have been raised in private discussions with the striking workers, urging them to raise the call for the tactic. Steve may have gotten away with it this time, but his leaflet is a weapon against us in the hands of all kinds of enemies of ours and of the strike--the cops, Black Nationalists, red-baiters, white workers looking for an excuse to fault the black strikers, opponent radical groups. The workers, if they had adopted Steve's tactic, would have been physically smashed, framed up in their isolated situation of a failing strike.

The strike itself was a fine strike. The black transit workers, who were extremely militant, knew they were isolated from the white workers and realized they needed a bridge to them, turned to the white radicals around Chicago for help. The strike seems to be losing nonetheless, as sometimes happens, and kamikaze tactics will not save it.

The situation is part of a continuing problem for us. The mutual hostility in the Chicago group is very heavy. At the Plenum last year we knew we didn't have a functioning group in Chicago and instructed the comrades there to move to another center. However, their personal situations do not seem

to permit this. Gallatin's proposal that all Chicago leaflets be cleared in advance with the New York is not a sufficient solution, as this is supposed to be standard procedure for any organizing committee which has not previously demonstrated its ability to independently operate in carrying out the line of the organization. At first we considered that Steve's action might be just an elegant way of resigning from the organization, but he seems to want to stay in. But in the last incident he clearly considered his judgement superior to that of the collective and insisted on his right to carry out his own line publicly. He is apparently willing to have Chicago leaflets checked by the N.O. but questions the ability of the N.O. to make decisions from a distance. Yet he is willing to move from Chicago, although his suggestion of Detroit is not feasible. Disc: Small, Dave C., Gordon, Nelson

Motion by Dave C.: To suspend Steve.

Withdrawn

Motion by Nelson: To strongly censure Steve, non-publicly, for the three reasons enumerated above. We offer him a trial if he wishes. All leaflets of the Chicago O.C. must get prior approval from the N.O. We ask that Steve and his wife and Dave Rader visit New York to meet with the PB, both because it is cheaper than sending the whole PB to Chicago and in order to have the discussion with them away from the Chicago milieu. Disc: Dave C., Turner, Robertson
VOTE: Passed unanimously

- b. Foxites: Are having a trade union organizing conference over Thanksgiving in Cleveland, sponsored by "The New Rank and Filer". We would like to send a delegation consisting of 1-2 comrades from the West Coast representing the Committee for a Labor Party, 2 from NYC, 3 from the Midwest. We should also send in two documents in advance, dealing with the Foxites' line on going to the bourgeois courts against the union bureaucrats, and also the Negro question. Our comrades should co-ordinate their intervention in a caucus there, but should function as trade unionists rather than SLers.

Disc: Nelson, Robertson

Motion: To have a heavy participation at the Foxite conference.

Passed

5. Press: We have some money on hand, about \$400, and lots of copy. The copy is complete except for an action article, which should preferably deal with the Chicago trade union situation. We have on hand the following unedited copy: Bill G. on Marcuse, Henry on Czechoslovakia, Small on the 1968 elections, Mark T.'s review of Mage's doctoral thesis. We have also been promised an article on the Chicago transit strike. We should have a 16-page Nov.-Dec. issue, to be released in late October.

Disc: Dave C., Robertson, Gordon, Nelson, Robertson, Dave C.

Meeting adjourned 10:20 p.m.

Attachment, PB Minutes of 16 September 1968

Results of Central Committee Poll

Motion 1: To expel Ellens and Stoute.

Motion 2: To suspend all other members of the departed Minority, calling upon them to return to the organization.

Motion 3: To co-opt Dave Cunningham to CC and PB full member.

Motion 4: To co-opt Mark T. to CC alternate member.

Motion 5: To elect Al Nelson as National Organizational Secretary.

VOTE--Full CC Members

<u>Full Member</u>	<u>Motion 1</u>	<u>Motion 2</u>	<u>Motion 3</u>	<u>Motion 4</u>	<u>Motion 5</u>
Robertson, NYC	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Nelson, NYC	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Turner, NYC	no	no	abstain	abstain	yes
Henry, NYC	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rader*, Chicago	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

VOTE--Alternate CC Members

<u>Alternate Member</u>	<u>Motion 1</u>	<u>Motion 2</u>	<u>Motion 3</u>	<u>Motion 4</u>	<u>Motion 5</u>
Kinder, Bay Area	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Vetter, New Orleans	yes	yes	not voting	yes	yes
Sebesta*, Austin	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Motion 1 passed 4-1-0 (consultative 3-0-0).

Motion 2 passed 4-1-0 (consultative 3-0-0).

Motion 3 passed 4-0-1 (consultative 2-0-0-1).

Motion 4 passed 4-0-1 (consultative 3-0-0).

Motion 5 passed 5-0-1 (consultative 3-0-0).

*written responses appended

Attachment, PB Minutes of 16 September 1968

Chicago, Ill.
14 September 1968

Political Bureau
New York City

Dear Comrades,

I will send you a separate letter concerning the Chicago Question very soon. This letter is my reply to the poll on the motions on the departed minority and on personnel of the Central Committee.

1. To expel Stoute and Ellens: Yes. One question I have in regard to the secret contact of Ellens with VO: might this in some way affect our fraternal relations with their organization? Of course dual agents cannot be allowed; I also feel we should submit the relevant portions of the Gordon article on VO for international circulation in Lutte de Classe, etc. I believe we should at the same time re-affirm our fraternal relationship with VO (including comradely criticism) if that be possible (i.e., if the leaders of VO did not send Ellens back to wreck us). The double-recruiting and clandestine organization charges are self-evident, as are the flouting of work assignments connected with the internal discussion.

2. To suspend the rest of the departed minority, with no recriminations if they agree to return and carry discipline: Yes. This should be carried out in connection with an extensive polemic as planned.

3. To co-opt Comrade Cunningham as a full member of the CC and of the PB: YES. I am very pleased by this proposal, as I was on record more than a year ago as favoring the addition of this valuable comrade to our leading body. I also believe that comrades Harper, Kinder, and Vetter are very active workers in the field who certainly deserve consideration for promotions to full members in the future.

4. To add Comrade Mark T. as an alternate on the CC and PB: Yes. His role in the recent discussion showed that he has many valuable ideas, although I am not so sure he is right in some of them. I would like to have a clarification of the position attributed by Ellens to him that a civil-rights program would not be applicable in an all-black union.

5. To elect Comrade Nelson to the post of national organizational secretary: a qualified Yes. I would like to have a definition of this post, and a statement of the duties thereof (in general terms). Comrade Nelson is a very competent comrade, but he does not seem to have an independent political mind. If the post is largely administrative, then I support him warmly. He is our number one trouble shooter.

With communist greetings,

David Rader

cc: personal files

Attachment, PB Minutes of 16 September 1968

Austin, Texas
28 September 1968

Spartacist--PB
New York

Dear Comrades,

I am writing this letter to cast my vote and express my feelings on the five points that the N.O. relayed to me.

1. On the expulsion of Stoute and Ellens--Yes. From what I have seen of their actions, it is apparent that they indeed tried to destroy us and will continue to do so. As to specific evidence of their contact with VO, I know nothing but I do see enough evidence to prove that they were operating with a split perspective (particularly in the manner of and the ostensible reasoning behind their departure). Their refusal to take on party responsibilities is only a further confirmation of my view.

2. As to the suspension of the other members involved--Yes. This is exactly what I had hoped to see. I think that some of these comrades, especially the younger ones, have been misled by the Ellens-Stoute grouping. The actions of these comrades--younger members--show a serious weakness in our organization, however, and that being in the area of consistent and total education of our recruits and our membership as a whole. This is especially true in outlying areas. Comrade Vetter's suggestion on the Education Commission to co-ordinate and guide this work would go a long way toward solving this problem.

Another point to consider is the way in which the org. has been functioning. With the exception of one set, there have been no PB minutes since November 1967--THIS IS UNREAL, COMRADES! We have enough trouble contending with our opponents without the added burden of lack of information about our own org. nationally and internationally and of other news.

3. In relation to the above point, the setting up of the position of national secretary can solve some of these crying problems. For the election of Comrade Nelson to this position--Yes. Comrade Nelson is one of the most competent and hard-working members we have and when his politics are considered his work in this position will be only an asset to our org.

4. Comrade Dave C. has shown himself to be a very good editor and it seems that our problems with the paper are finally on the road to being licked. I do not know as much about his political positions as I would like but he seems serious, dedicated, and can get things done! For co-opting him as a full member of the PB--Yes.

5. Co-option of Mark T.--Yes. I had some doubts about him because of his statements on press policy at the CC Plenum but his paper on the NYC factional fight was very good and on this basis, I support him.

cc: SRB, Houston, file

Communist Greetings,
John S.