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SPARTACIST LEAGUE

INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

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MATERIAL FROM THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE CONVENED BY THE OCI, 1-4 JULY 1972

The French OCI (the Lambertists) convened an international conference for the first time in their own right this summer, following their split with the British SLL. I.e. the OCI's "Second Session of the International Pre-Conference" in Paris was preceded by the SLL-dominated "First Session" held in London in June 1970.

The following material from the later conference was translated from La Correspondance Internationale, no. 6, October 1972 (subtitled "Bulletin de Discussion du Comité d'Organisation pour la Reconstruction de la IV^e Internationale).

These documents should be read in conjunction with the following articles which have appeared in Workers Vanguard: on Bolivia and the IC split (WV no. 3, December 1971); on France and the OCI (WV no. 11, September 1972); letters exchange and reprint of statement on Munich events (WV no. 13, November 1972).

--the N.O., 17 November 1972

SECOND SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE, JULY 1-4, 1972

The Second Session of the Pre-Conference (the First Session took place in London in June 1970) called by the International Committee, met in Paris from 1-4 July 1972.

The following elements participated in the working meetings of the Second Session in July, 1972:

-Sections of the International Committee:

- * Internationalist Communist Organization (France) [OCI]
- * League of Hungarian Revolutionary Socialists [LRSH]
- * Marxist Workers League (Mexico) [LOM]

-Organizations which took part in the First Session of the Pre-Conference in June, 1970:

- * International Workers Correspondance (Germany) [IAK]
- * "Vanguard" Group of Israel
- * African Marxist Group
- * Organizing Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of Eastern Europe:
Walka Klass (Poland), Proletarska Vangarda (Yugoslavia),
Proletar (Czechoslovakia)
- * "Octubre" Group (Brazil)

-Organizations associated with the activity of the International Committee:

- * "Politica Obrera" (Argentina), Trotskyist militants from Peru and Venezuela who took part in the Latin American meeting called by the International Committee in June, 1971, the Chilean Revolutionary Marxist Organization [OMR] which, like the other organizations, took part in the Latin American Conference which was held in April, 1972, the Spanish Trotskyist Organization

-The following organizations and groups also took part in the working meetings of the Second Session in July, 1972:

- * Trotskyist Cell (Italy)
- * Group of Portuguese Trotskyist Militants
- * League for a Workers Republic (Ireland)
- * Labor Action Committee of Canada
- * Comrade Betty Hamilton, member of the International Committee and comrade Stéphane Just, co-secretary of the International Committee took part in the working meetings of the Second Session of the Pre-Conference.
- * The P.O.R. (Bolivia) was excused.

RESOLUTION ON THE TASKS IN RECONSTRUCTING THE F.I.

(Resolution presented by the OCI and adopted)

The Second Session of the Pre-Conference, considering:

1. That the proclamation of the F.I. in 1938 meant the construction of the International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution, the indispensable condition for the construction of the Revolutionary Party as a section of the F.I. in each country;
2. That for Bolshevism, the World Party of Socialist Revolution must be built on the principles of democratic-centralism which of course cannot be applied formally and mechanically, but by taking concrete political conditions into account;
3. That the content of democratic-centralism, which is the essential content of the World Party of Socialist Revolution proclaimed in 1938, means the construction of the leading center* of the International;
4. That despite its many weaknesses, the International Secretariat and the International Executive Committee constituted, from 1945 to 1950-52, the leading center of the F.I. The majority of the International fought more or less clearly against the currents, tendencies and individuals who, abandoning the program, were preparing to pass over to the positions of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie (Shachtmanites, the right wing in France, etc.);
5. The Pabloist revisionism organizationally destroyed the International proclaimed at the First Founding Conference in 1938, that it destroyed the F.I. as the leading center, but that revisionism could not destroy the F.I. as a program;

[Therefore however] the Second Session of the Pre-Conference has not decided to hide, nor does it have the intention of hiding, from the vanguard of the world proletariat and from the workers the fact that the pressure of bourgeois and Stalinist forces had destructive results for the organization of the F.I.

Within the F.I. and its leadership, against which the Trotskyists struggled, tendencies which wanted to liquidate the F.I. betrayed its program. The program of the F.I. has not failed. This program, adopted in 1938, has been completely verified by the subsequent course of History and provides the only answers to the problems of the class struggle in our epoch.

6. The foundation of the International Committee (IC) in 1953 was based on an ambiguity. On the one hand, after Cannon's letter which, in the name of the SWP, denounced Pabloism as a liquidationist

* "Centre dirigeant"--leading center. By "leading center" the OCI means a body with the political authority to carry out its decisions internationally; in effect, the executive committee or central committee of a real International, the World Party [translator's note].

current, the SWP, and the English, Swiss, French, Chinese and other sections constituted the IC in 1963 [sic: 1953] to counterpose a leading center of the F.I. to the Pabloist center, the International Secretariat (IS).

On the other hand, the SWP refused to carry out its international tasks and prevented the IC from carrying out the task of reconstructing the International. This led the SWP to evolve toward a policy of reunification with the Pabloist IS, in which so-called "orthodox" Trotskyism united with self-proclaimed non-orthodox Trotskyism, Pabloism, the liquidators of the F.I.

7. The OCI and the SLL, as well as the other organizations of the IC, refused to follow the path of the SWP in 1963. But quite soon, starting in 1966, the SLL started down the same path which the SWP had previously taken. For the SLL, the IC was to function as the leading center of the F.I., but, in addition to the fact that the SLL refused most of the tasks relating to international work, the IC functioned according to the principles of federalism--imposed mainly by the SLL--which have nothing to do with the principles of democratic-centralism. Increasingly, the SLL blocked every initiative and every attempt at constructive international work, and refused to enter into or to participate in political clarification through international discussions. Finally, it was led to propose an unprincipled reunification with the United Secretariat.

Thus the facts have provided the most stinging rebuff to the ambiguity which presided over the formation of the 1953 IC, which claimed to be a leading center of the F.I., but which finally lined up with a policy of reunification with Pabloist liquidationism.

8. The IC did indeed represent the continuity of the F.I. in the sense that it defended the program--unity of theory and practice in building the organization--and thus had the job of reconstructing the leading center of the F.I. But, by refusing thoroughly to draw all the conclusions from the Pabloist crisis, and, in addition, by refusing to struggle for the reconstruction of the F.I., the IC did not assure its continuity.

9. The roots of the crisis in the IC, which led to its explosion, lie essentially (we repeat) in the refusal to appreciate fully the meaning of liquidationist Pabloism, which succeeded in destroying the leading center erected by Leon Trotsky at the founding conference in 1938. The reunification of the SWP with the USec, and then the proposals by Gerry Healy, translate this refusal to draw all the logical conclusions from the analysis of Pabloism: they are at the root of deviations in principle on a number of fundamental questions.

Behind the radical assertion of the founding declaration of the IC:

"We consider the IS of the Pabloist usurpers as bankrupt, since it devotes its activity to the revision of Trotskyism, to the liquidation of the International and to the destruction of its cadres....

Representing the overwhelming majority of the Trotskyist forces in the International, we decide to constitute an IC of the F.I."

there lies the desire not to take into account the depth of the crisis in the F.I. More or less clearly, this denial of the crisis and of the quality of the crisis of the F.I. meant a refusal to define--and of course to resolve--this crisis by analysing its roots, by undertaking the task of reconstructing the F.I. In practice, it wound up with the IC being stymied, with the desertion of the IC by the SWP, with the SLL's policy of systematic paralysis, that is, with the refusal to make the IC the driving force for the reconstruction of the F.I.

Beginning in 1966, the OCI stated: "If the IC does not assume its task of being the driving force for the reconstruction of the F.I., it will wind up by exploding."

This is where the split perpetrated by the SLL has its roots.

In order to pursue the struggle for the Reconstruction of the F.I., it is indispensable to consider the origin of the explosion of the IC. The Second Session of the International Pre-Conference condemns the criminal split performed by the SLL. It also rejects any position which would tend to consider the explosion of the IC as a "crisis in the process of growing which allows the terrain to be cleared." The explosion of the IC caused by the SLL, which is an attempt to break the continuity of the combat for the Reconstruction of the F.I., aggravates the dispersion brought about by Pablo-Mandel-Frank in 1952. But at the same time, holding the Second Session of the Pre-Conference demonstrates the will to, and possibility of, advancing toward the regroupment of forces, organizations and groups which are struggling for the reconstruction of the F.I.

10. No leading center exists, we must reconstruct the leading center on the principles of democratic-centralism: that is the content of the struggle for the Reconstruction of the F.I.

The Second Session of the Pre-Conference proposes, therefore, to form the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, which takes as its task the reconstruction of the leading center of the F.I.

Belonging to this Organizing Committee are those organizations and groups which state their will to fight on the program of the F.I. to reconstruct the leading center, which they agree does not as yet exist.

Thus the Organizing Committee will first of all constitute the broadest framework for international discussion. It will convoke a new Conference based on the agenda set forth in the general resolution.*

*See statement at end of Summary of Contents of the general resolution [translator's note].

11. But the Organizing Committee does not limit its task to creating an international framework for discussion. It will pursue the work toward the construction of national sections of the F.I. which has already begun. This task should take its place within the revolutionary perspectives of the class struggle both internationally and in every country and within the application of these perspectives to the crisis of the international working-class movement, which will create from Stalinism, from Social Democracy, and from the petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations of the backward countries, currents, factions and groups which seek the path toward the construction of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. The groups and organizations which are engaged in the class struggle and which, whatever their political origins may be, feel the pressing need for the construction of the revolutionary party in every country and of the International, the indispensable instrument for the victory of the proletariat in every country and in the world arena of the class struggle, for the victory of Socialism, are invited to the Conference and its preparation, with the agreement of the Organizing Committee.

This is the only way that the continuity of the F.I. will be assured and its reconstruction begun.

12. The Second Session of the Pre-Conference states what is. We must reconstruct the F.I. as the World Party of Socialist Revolution, that is, reconstruct the leading center of the struggle for World Revolution. The crisis of the F.I., we repeat, has continuously deepened since 1950-53, both in the organizations belonging to the USec. as well as in those which have formed the IC.

The Second Session clearly states: at the present time the Organizing Committee does not constitute a centralized international leadership. By saying this, the Second Session of the Pre-Conference remains faithful to the resolution adopted by the Third Conference of the IC in 1966. The Trotskyist organizations, groups and militants who are participating, declare that they are determined to take up the struggle for the reconstruction of this centralized leadership.

The Trotskyist organizations, groups and militants see the proof of the possibility of realizing this task in the seriousness of the working sessions which took place at the Second Session of the Pre-Conference.

The Trotskyist organizations, groups and militants decide to constitute themselves into an Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the F.I. on the basis of this resolution.

The Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the F.I. proposes to convoke those organizations, groups and militants which could meet during the summer of 1973 to an International Conference on the projected agenda proposed by the general political resolution.

To this end, it will edit an international discussion bulletin in three languages: French, Spanish and English.

It invites all organizations, groups and militants who accept

the framework for discussion defined in this resolution to participate in its preparation which is henceforth open.

The Organizing Committee, in accord with point 11 of this resolution, will launch and coordinate all initiatives which aim at the constitution of national sections of the F.I.

It will organize and launch international political campaigns to be decided on, in particular, that already taken up for the defense of Yakir and those in jail who have been fighting against the Moscow bureaucracy and for the liberation of imprisoned Trotskyist militants in Bolivia and Brazil.

The Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the F.I. designates an International Bureau, composed of:

The Internationalist Communist Organization for the Reconstruction of the F.I. (France), the League of Hungarian Socialist Revolutionaries, the Spanish Trotskyist Organization, the IAK (Germany), the "Vanguard" group (Israel), the Bolivian POR (Revolutionary Workers Party), the Mexican LOM (Marxist Workers League), Politica Obrera (Argentina), the League for a Workers Republic (Ireland), and Comrade B.H.

VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION; submitted by the OCI, on the Tasks in Reconstructing of the F.I.

Vote on the general line:

FOR: OCI (France), LOM (Mexico), IAK (Germany), "Vanguard" of Israel, African Marxist Group, Politica Obrera (Argentina), a militant from the OMR (Chile), Trotskyist Militants from Peru, Venezuelan Trotskyist militants, Italian Trotskyist Cell, Group of Portuguese Trotskyist Militants, League for a Workers Republic (LWR) of Ireland, Labor Action Committee (LAC) of Canada, comrade Betty Hamilton.

ABSTENTIONS: League of Hungarian Revolutionary Socialists (LRSH) (Hungary), Organizing Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of the Countries of Eastern Europe, "Octubre" (Brazil), Spanish Trotskyist Organization.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENTS:

Amendment of the LRSH: in point 8, write "the IC FULLY represented the continuity, etc."

FOR: 2 (LRSH, Organizing Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of the Countries of Eastern Europe).

ABSTENTIONS: 4 ("Octubre" (Brazil), Venezuelan Trotskyist militants, Italian Trotskyist Cell, Spanish Trotskyist Organization).

AMENDMENT DEFEATED.

The 7th paragraph of point 9 of the Resolution, paragraph beginning with "In order to pursue the struggle for the Reconstruction of the F.I., it is indispensable to consider the origin of the explosion of the IC" and ending with the sentence "But at the same

time, holding the Second Session of the Pre-Conference demonstrates the will to, and possibility of, advancing toward the regroupment of forces, organizations and groups which are struggling for the reconstruction of the F.I." constituted an amendment proposed by the OCI.

A separation was requested for the sentence "It also rejects any position which would tend to consider the explosion of the IC as a 'crisis in the process of growing which allows the terrain to be cleared.' ".

Vote on the separated sentence:

AGAINST: LOM (Mexico), LRSH (Hungary), Organizing Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of the Countries of Eastern Europe.

The sentence is therefore integrated into the amendment.

Vote on the amendment as a whole:

AGAINST: LRSH, Organizing Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of the Countries of Eastern Europe.

ABSTENTIONS: LOM (Mexico), Spanish Trotskyist Organization.

The amendment is adopted.

In addition, the end of point 12, starting with "the Trotskyist organizations, groups and militants see the proof of the possibility..." was unanimously adopted.

Vote on the text as a whole, including all amendments:

FOR: 15; OCI (France), LOM (Mexico), IAK (Germany), "Vanguard" (Israel), African Marxist Group, "Octubre" (Brazil), Politica Obrera (Argentina), Trotskyist militants from Peru, Trotskyist militants from Venezuela, Militant from the OMR (Chile), Italian Trotskyist Cell, Group of Portuguese Trotskyist militants, LWR (Ireland), LAC (Canada), comrade Betty Hamilton.

ABSTENTIONS: 3; LRSH (Hungary), Committee of Trotskyist-Communists of the Countries of Eastern Europe, Spanish Trotskyist Organization.

The resolution is adopted.

GENERAL POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(Resolution presented by the OCI and adopted by the conference)

[Summary by J.S., except for direct quotations]

I. Introductory.

II. Characterization of the epoch. This section is largely drawn from the OCI document submitted to the First session in 1970. In particular, it contains the section on the "imminent revolution."

III. Relation of the social revolution to the political revolution. This section contains, among others, the following passages:

"In the present period, the world-wide unity of the class struggle is expressed in the organic unity which links the social revolution in capitalist countries to the political revolution in countries in which capital has been expropriated and in which a parasitic and counter-revolutionary bureaucracy has usurped political power by destroying the institutions of the dictatorship of the proletariat....

"This struggle [for the political revolution] finds its main force in the international working class. The task of Trotskyists is to strive to have the whole of the international workers' movement take charge of this defense, which managed to save the communist L. Pachman.

"In this way not only can the arrested and threatened militants be saved, but also the struggle for democratic rights in the countries conquered by socialism be developed thus opening the path to political revolution.

"Thus this struggle will also be an important tool in our fight for the realization of the Workers United Front in capitalist countries, one of the important arenas of our fight against the Stalinist apparatus and to get socialist and communist militants to fight by our side for the Revolution."

IV. The relation of the world-wide class struggle to the national question, in relation to:

"1. the revolutionary struggles in Latin America, in particular the struggle of the Bolivian proletariat led by the POR, the Bolivian section of the International Committee;

"2. the questions posed by the unity of Jewish and Palestinian workers in the framework of the national problem in the Near East; questions which are complex, but integrated into the permanent revolution;

"3. the Irish question;

"4. the national question in Quebec."

v. The construction of the party and the united front. This section is largely drawn from the 1966 document of the International Committee and from Trotsky's "What Next?" Its center is the following passage:

" 'Class against class' is the very cement which binds together the transitional slogans as a whole.

"That is why the Workers' United Front is not simply a slogan, but a strategic axis in the policy of Trotskyist organizations. The strategy of the United Front is embodied in various tactical expressions which range from limited agreements for united actions between different organizations to the Soviets, the 'natural form of the united front at the time of combat,' as Leon Trotsky said in Whither France?"

VI. Building the International and the fight against "Stalinism, Reformism, Pabloism, rotten leftism and other political expressions of the petty-bourgeoisie, such as Castroism." Linked to the earlier passage on Eastern Europe, this section contains the following passage:

"The Stalinist bureaucracy does not have a 'double nature' as the Pabloist revisionists have claimed in order to capitulate to it: it is the organism of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement, the "uncontrolled caste foreign to socialism" (The Revolution). The fundamentally counter-revolutionary (bourgeois) character of this bureaucracy is expressed in the policy of "peaceful coexistence," of increasingly open dependence on imperialism in the face of the direct menace which the political upsurge of the working class in the USSR and Eastern Europe represents for the bureaucracy; a policy which its agencies, the Stalinist parties, are supposed to spread to every country."

VII. Finally, the Resolution ends with the following discussion proposals:

"The Second Session of the Pre-Conference considers that the discussion should begin among and within the participating organizations on the following questions:

1. The struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in Latin America in relation to the developments of the class struggle and the national question.
2. The slogan of a Palestinian Constituent Assembly as a transition from the struggle for a Soviet Palestinian Republic in the framework of the Socialist United States of the Near East, unifying the struggle of the Jewish and Arab workers of Palestine.
3. The national question in Ireland
4. The national question in Quebec
5. The new developments in the political revolution in the USSR and in the countries of Eastern Europe.
6. The worldwide unity of the class struggle in the period of the imminence of the Revolution, as seen through the developments of the revolutionary crisis in the advanced capitalist countries, the upsurge of the political revolution in the countries in which Capital has been expropriated and the

development of the proletarian revolution in backward countries.

The organizations participating in the Second Session of the Pre-Conference invite all organizations which affirm that they fight on the program of the FI to take part in the discussion, which is declared open."

COMMENTS BY THE "VANGUARD" GROUP (ISRAEL)

This Second Session of the Pre-Conference was influenced by an obvious paradox which marked the debates: it came at a time of a particularly serious crisis in the reconstruction of the F.I., but also in a framework in which numerous new sections were represented, sections which did not even exist at the time of the First Session.

The decision by the faction led by the SLL to perpetrate a split is serious and criminal. It undeniably stems from a false analysis of the crisis which the F.I. underwent after 1951; this analysis--or rather this absence of analysis--refuses to recognize the situation in which Pabloism, because it was located in the highest bodies of the world Party, broke the organizational framework founded by L. Trotsky in September, 1938, and even further back, the movement which has its origin in the International Left Opposition founded in 1929.

This framework, based on democratic-centralism, was destroyed. Starting in 1951--and we are still at this point--the task consists in reconstituting it. That's what the "reconstruction of the F.I." is. The SLL and the sections associated with it refused to carry through this task; they refuse to recognize the fact of the organizational destruction of the world Party, which leads them to ignore the tasks of reconstruction: the clarification of the nature of Pabloism as a centrist policy which uses the traditional terminology of Trotskyism in relation to treacherous parties, to Stalinism, to the Revolution in colonial countries, etc., and the clarification of the necessary construction of new sections of the F.I.

The Second Session decided to draw the conclusions from this situation. It decided not to call itself the continuation of the IC, but to form another framework including the best experience of the IC and to take up the tasks abandoned by the SLL. But it must be said clearly: every organization or Party which is a member of the Organizing Committee must assimilate in depth the fact that this situation is absolutely provisional, otherwise this framework will also explode.

There can be no question whatsoever of constituting a kind of liaison office which would serve as a substitute for a centralized International. Starting now, we must fix clearly and distinctly the time lapse for the refounding of the F.I. as the World Party based on democratic-centralism. The delay should be 1 or 2 years at the most. The Fourth Conference should be the first conference of the reconstituted F.I.

That means that the OC should carry on its struggle in at least the following areas:

-Demand that the IC-SLL begin a real discussion on the problems which were left hanging. The SLL and the sections which are close to it should be invited to enter into the framework of the discussion opened by the Pre-Conference session. Our proposal to this effect was adopted by the Session.

-Launch the discussion on the international situation and the tasks of the reconstruction of the F.I. so that the greatest number of sections take part.

-We are gratified that the Session adopted the proposal for which we have been fighting for years and which we asked be put to a vote: an international discussion bulletin in three languages.

We reaffirm that the immediate cause of the crisis in the IC lies in the absence of open and frank discussion which leads to joint conclusions. Only such a mode of discussion can serve as a basis for the education of the cadre of the Revolutionary Party and for democratic-centralism. To reject international discussion is in fact to postpone the time for the reconstruction of the F.I., that is, the reconstruction of the democratic-centralist framework on the international scale.

The current situation of the international movement is characterized by a crisis. This crisis stems from the fact that numerous questions are obscured and that political positions are confused. Thus, at the Second Session new discussions sprang up all the time between different sections concerning new problems. The same situation of confusion and of a conscious refusal to clarify [problems] obtains in the IC-SLL, for example on the Vietnamese question between the SLL and the Workers League.

We can also cite the example of the "imminent revolution on the world scale," which has become a dogma without any real analysis of this "theory." How is the world Revolution more imminent than in "the period of wars and revolutions" as a whole? More imminent than 1917-23, 1925-26 (Germany - China), 1931-32 (Germany), 1936-37 (France - Spain), 1943-47, 1953 (general strike in France, East Germany), 1956 (Poland - Hungary), 1960 (Belgian general strike)? The "imminent revolution" curiously recalls the Stalinist analysis of the "third period" starting in 1928, or Pablo's "imminent war-revolution" etc.

The OCI comrades have not demonstrated to us that the transformation of the revolutionary upsurge which began in 1968, [a transformation which is] in fact situated outside history, outside the concrete relations between classes--which are independent of the ebbs and flows of the masses--is not identical to the former phantasies of Pablo or of the Stalinists. And we know (this is just what was demonstrated by the Stalinists and by Pablo) that verbal radicalism serves as yeast for practical opportunism: since the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses can do nothing against the "objective situation," they are obliged to become more radical, to become the instrument of the masses, etc.

-To organize, if possible, regional liaison bureaus which would take charge of the tasks of the OC in their area, including that of the construction of new sections in the F.I. (Latin America, Africa, Near East, Western Europe...).

-To prepare progressively the organizational framework of the reconstructed F.I.

The Second Session of the Pre-Conference demonstrated at least two things by the debates and the sharp arguments which sometimes occurred:

-First, that the discussion really is open, the era of diplomacy inherited by a regime whose style was created by the Pabloist IS is over. Ended is the era of reciprocal concessions, in which I close my eyes to your opportunist policies in your country in return for which you close your eyes on what I do in my country. We know well enough that this situation leads to what is now happening between the SWP wing and the Mandel wing of the USec. The tail of Mandel's organizations is still in its ultra-left phase of flirting with spontaneism (the head, wiser to be sure, is again turning toward the apparatuses), whereas the policy of the SWP is no longer distinguishable from that of the American Stalinist Party.

That is an anti-Leninist conception of the International, traces of which existed in the IC in the form of two "major" sections. This is over, liquidated for good.

But the debates of the Second Session also demonstrated that international discussion is not a luxury, a sort of "theoretical" pastime. On the contrary, clarification, analysis, the lessons to be drawn from the problems posed at this session and from numerous others which weren't even touched on, must be at the heart of the political work of every section. A section which thinks it can always entrust its fate--including its political line--to some kind of mother-section; such an organization will never lead a victorious proletarian revolution in its own country. Bolsheviks are not educated in that school.

At the end of the debate, we abstained on the general Resolution, not that we disagreed with most of the text, but, as we explained, this resolution was incomplete.

It did not recall that the policy of the United Front as conceived by the OCI misunderstands the principles which govern Bolshevik tactics. For the OCI, the United Front replaces revolutionary politics, it replaces transitional slogans instead of being subordinated to them, instead of nourishing them. The OCI makes its entire policy that of the United Front or, more exactly, of appeals (necessarily abstract given the limited size of OCI forces) to the traitorous leaderships of the class for "unity." The OCI has forgotten that we must "march separately" in order to "strike together." For the OCI on the contrary, we should march together. We know that the consequences of such a policy have always been: to be struck separately.

The policy of the FRA [FRA: Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front. This "front" includes left generals, including Torres (translator's note).] followed by the POR after Banzer's counter-revolution does not have a new character, as the POR itself rightly repeats. This policy represents the logical continuation of the policy of prostration inside the Popular Assembly, this Popular Assembly-Soviet, which had a program.... The Popular Assembly became a framework for discussion with left nationalism and Stalinism instead of being an

arena for struggle through which--complementing the revolutionary action which the POR carried out under its own banner, in the mines, in the factories, the streets, villages and, in particular, in local soviets--the POR would have mobilized the masses openly and audaciously against Torres and his allies: Lechin and the Stalinists.

We also learn that the red thread which runs through all these discussions is the central question of the relationship of Party to Class. If the SLL presents clear ultamatist tendencies (recently demonstrated again when the YS march against unemployment replaced the preparation for the general Strike toward which the English proletariat was moving), the OCI intervenes on "tailist" and "spontaneist" positions. That is, it tends to trail along behind the traiterous leaderships.

The OCI also confuses the revolutionary Party and the leading Party, the revolutionary leadership of the class. The task of the Organization of Bolshevik-Leninists is to establish a relation of leadership to the decisive sectors of the proletariat through its organized intervention in the class struggle, to become a Party which leads the class struggle--which by that fact becomes proletarian revolution. But if this intervention is to occur, to become the leadership of the proletariat, one needs the indispensable tool which is none other than the Revolutionary Party, openly opposed to all other parties.

The OCI tends to ignore national oppression in the backward countries and to consider it only as an "epi-phenomenon," a "will-o-the-wisp." No, this national oppression by imperialism in Africa (Chad, Somaliland, Portuguese colonies), in Vietnam, in Palestine is not at all a phantasy. Crucial strategic and tactical tasks follow from this situation. Of course, it is absurd to claim that the countries of Latin America, for example, labor under national oppression: the direct oppressor is not imperialism. But the local governments represent support for imperialist super-exploitation (the extraction of super-profits), just as imperialism, through its economic links with the local bourgeoisies, represents the firmest possible support for these governments.

We wish to protest here against the fact that the OCI tends to present the differences with our organization as located merely in the area of the Israeli national question (Within the OCI, we understand that a position on the "Jewish national fact" is sometimes attributed to us which is absolutely not our position.) whereas for us, this question is minor on the scale of international questions and tasks, including those in the Near East. On this point, we would recall that the documents which we prepared deal with the question of the United Front which--we request--should be published in No. 2 of the International Discussion Bulletin (our text will be complemented by another on the question of the "workers' government").

We have even proposed to the Second Session the election of a Commission on the Near East whose task would be to discuss, on the basis of detailed and documented contributions, the situation in the Near East, including that of the Revolution and the counter-revolution in this area of the world. We have requested that this Commission

determine appropriate slogans.

For us, such a framework would represent a step forward toward the reconstruction of democratic-centralism on the international scale which is itself the necessary condition for the formation of the leading center of the F.I.

* * *

These are the original four motions introduced for discussion by the Spartacist League/U.S. to the meeting of representatives of the SL, RCL and IKD held in London, 23-24 November 1970. The RCL's minutes of this meeting, including these motions, appeared in RCL Internal Bulletin Volume I, Number 4, December 1970. Material omitted from the RCL's transcript appears here in brackets. (In the course of the discussion, the three groups agreed on the proposal for an internal international discussion bulletin; the other motions were not adopted.)

1. Motion: Recognition of our existence as an international Trotskyist bloc on the basis (a) of the Brussels statement and (b) a to be drafted principled statement of aims, [centered on transitional program and incorporating the thrust of the 8 points sloganized in the JR-LG letter to AR, 26 September 1970*] (c) with the aim, as common principled programmatic agreement is verified or achieved, of constituting an international Trotskyist tendency [that presents a public face and is internally democratic centralist].
2. Motion: To publish two bulletin series on an interim basis: (a) an internal "Discussion Bulletin" as a principal means of expressing and arguing differing political positions of the national groups toward the hoped for aim of either overcoming differences or of verifying that they fall within mutually recognized permissible principled limits; (b) later, a public "International Bulletin" following adoption of the projected statement of aims.
3. Motion: Each bloc participant shall send to all the others such internal material as is distributed to its own Central Committee.
4. Motion: As a bloc, all decisions must be by the unanimous agreement of all the groups involved. [Acceptance of new participants in the bloc will be on the basis of their acceptance of the bloc's existing adopted statements. All significant international contact by any one bloc participant will be made fully known to all other bloc participants. Individual members of a bloc participant undertaking local political intervention within another bloc participant's country shall do so only with the knowledge of and in a way consistent with the work of the latter.]

- - -

* the "8 points":

"Rebuild the Fourth International, Destroyed by Revisionism!"

"Entrism: Not Adaptation to Left-Bureaucrats, But the Struggle for Revolutionary Leadership!"

"For Communist Unity Against Imperialism Through Political Revolution Against ALL National Bureaucracies, From Moscow, Havana and E. Berlin to Peking and Hanoi!"

"No Deals--All Indochina Must Go Communist!"

"Down with the Reformist U.S. SWP-YSA: Popular Frontist on War, Capitulator to Petty-Bourgeois Black Nationalism and Women's Separatism, Giver of Condolances to the Widow Kennedy!"

- "Smash Zionism! Against ALL Sellout Arab Regimes! Forward to the Multi-National Proletarian Dictatorship!"
- "'Guerilla War' is Petty-Bourgeois Adventurism, Not Marxian Class War!"
- "For Permanent Revolution!--the Struggle of the Conscious Trotskyist Workers' Vanguard to Take Command of the National Struggle!"

New York
22 June 1971

20.

IKD
Berlin

Dear Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fraternally,

James Robertson

cc: RCL
SL/NZ
Moore

IKD Statement to Essen Youth Conference

[Over July 3-4 an "international assembly of youth" was held at Essen, Germany. The initiating organization was the Alliance de la Jeunesse Pour le Socialisme (AJS, youth group of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, French section of the International Committee) along with the Young Socialists of Britain and the Junge Garde of Germany. Announcements appearing in the IC publications stated that 16 different youth organizations were represented. The statement reprinted below is the translation of a leaflet written by the IKD for distribution to the meeting. All footnotes are those of the translator.]

* * *

Comrades!

This congress is taking place under the slogans of struggle against imperialism and Stalinism and for the Socialist World Revolution. Its concrete significance should lie in the fact that it constitutes a step on the path to the "Revolutionary Youth International" (RYI). But what contribution can an organization like the present RYI make to the solution of current problems of world revolution?

It is clear that today's revolutionary movement cannot start from scratch. The tasks of the present cannot be understood without an encompassing analysis of the prior history of proletarian struggle and of the organizations of the proletariat, and the appropriation [for our use] of the lessons to be drawn from that history.

The first three Internationals, each for different reasons, were not able to accomplish on a world scale the goal they set for themselves of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of socialism, and foundered prematurely. The total assimilation of the lessons from that experience constitutes the basis for the programmatic orientation of the Trotskyist movement, which was the only tendency of the international working class movement which was able to exhibit a correct revolutionary perspective for the struggle both against imperialism and against Stalinism after the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern. We feel that to the present day, this perspective has not lost its validity: much rather, it still requires realization. An organization which, under current conditions, wants to make a contribution to the world revolution, must from the beginning be conceived of as Trotskyist.

But the RYI is precisely supposed not to be a specifically Trotskyist organization, but rather to unite within itself different youth organizations, groups and individual youths, who may have broken from Stalinist organizations, but who have not yet completed the conscious step over to Trotskyism. In a word, it is a question of an organization which in essence would be a centralist collective movement.¹

Now of course, the comrades of the "International Committee" (IC), that is, especially the French OCI, the English SLL and the

¹collective: "Sammelbewegung," i.e. a movement which is a collection of small groups.

Bolivian POR agree with us that today, revolutionary politics can only be conceived of as Trotskyist. They openly say that the revolutionary youth organizations, which would later be the RYI, and even now organizations such as the French AJS, the English "Young Socialists" and the German "Junge Garde," can exist only through the political drive of organizations founded on the finished² program of world revolution, the "Transitional Program," as is said in the organ of the OCI, "La Verite," No. 550. They feel that this RYI can lead to Trotskyism; [a position] which they deduce from the claim that at the present time they already dispose of the "complete program for world revolution," by which they mean the 1938 "Transitional Program."

We consider this claim unjustified, because it is based on a schematic and rigid understanding of program. For even if the lessons of past struggles do form the indispensable basis of the program, the program is by no means exhausted by the summation and theorization of these experiences. Corresponding to changes in the conditions of struggle, the program itself undergoes a continual development, change and concretization, and this process cannot be completed in a purely theoretical fashion, but rather only through the mediation of struggle itself. The conditions under which this can happen are that the revolutionary organization in fact plays an active role in the class struggle, and is capable at least of leading a small part of the class. The program can be determined only in connection with the development of the class struggle and of the revolutionary organization.

But this connection is split apart in the IC's own understanding of itself. For the IC agrees that the Fourth International (FI) doesn't exist at present, yet on the other hand claims that it represents the continuity of the FI, because it does indeed already have available "the program of the FI." As opposed to the IC,³ the tendency represented by the U.Sec. for example, has departed from the "Transitional Program" and thus ceased to be Trotskyist.

Now nothing could be further from our minds than to again confer on the U.Sec. its Trotskyist reputation. From the concrete reality of the U.Sec., from the theories it supports today and from its praxis, we deduce that on decisive points the U.Sec. stands opposed to the bases of revolutionary Marxism. But on the other hand, if one takes the "Transitional Program" qua document as a standard [of Trotskyism], the question of revisionism becomes merely a question of departing from the printed text, merely a problem of literary interpretation. This is a method which distinguishes itself by the subjectivism and arbitrariness of those who do the judging. For such people, nothing whatsoever is left to do, when the argumentation of the traditional texts ends, but to set themselves up as the ultimate standard. Thus the construction of the FI, which can certainly be understood only as a process of shifting and of regroupment of existing forces of the "world Trotskyist movement," as the collection of its best parts around a new axis, is surreptitiously turned into a purely organizational problem. Namely, how the IC can succeed in

²the French is "acheve"--finished, doesn't need any more work. The German gives simply "volle"--complete, i.e. all points are covered.

³i.e., from the point of view of the IC, not necessarily of the writers of this document.

spreading its influence, winning more comrades, groups and organizations to "the program" and thus in developing itself into the FI as the vanguard party of the world proletariat.

If, on the other hand, one considers building up the program as a process, as a task to be achieved in struggle, then the question is: what role can the RYI play in this process?

It is undoubtedly correct that the program can be built up only in struggle, but this characterization is not yet adequate. For here it is a question not of a program "given as such," but of the class program of the proletariat, which--just as with the revolutionary organization itself--itself can be developed only in the political struggle of the proletariat. The most pressing task of revolutionary cadre groups--and nowhere today do we have to deal with anything more than that--therefore consists in developing the political struggles of the proletariat and of evolving a concrete program of struggle, which will allow such groups to lead in struggle at first small, but then ever more meaningful sections of the proletariat. In the course of this process, these groups should integrate into their ranks the most highly developed elements of the proletariat and thus as proletarian vanguard organizations, themselves become a part of the class, even if they originally may have consisted overwhelmingly of intellectuals.

But the RYI is precisely to become not a specifically proletarian organization, but is to include youth in general, above and beyond all class categories. But what is the general interest of all youth supposed to consist in?

In the call for the congress, it is said: "youth wants to live, in hope and in freedom, and in order to live, it must struggle. Youth aspires to life, youth needs exalting perspectives. Bureaucrats and bourgeois offer only a sordid life, unemployment, misery, failure, war and suffering."

It cannot be denied that many young people portray their own situation that way. Yet the concept of youth only includes the growing generation, insofar as it has not yet gotten out of specific institutional forms of social integration (family, school, apprenticeship, university). At the corresponding level of self-understanding, "youth" still maintains a host of illusions about the formation of its further existence which, one after the other, will be shattered by social reality. Thus the lump, undifferentiated rejection of "the System" implies a situation of apparently identical interests in all sections of youth, and this appearance will remain as long as the struggle of the young continues to remain at its lowest level, the level of revolt.

But the appearance will be smashed as soon as the struggle attains a higher level. For youth does not stand outside the organization of society by classes. Any given young person has before him the perspective of later occupying a very specific social position, from which his interests derive. The problems of proletarian youth, central among them the questions of education, of downgrading,⁴ of

⁴"Entqualifizierung," lit. "dequalification."

the unemployment of youth, of being underpaid, are to the same degree also problems of the entire class, since the education of working class youth makes them into component parts of the process of reproduction of the class as a whole, since the proletariat is structured and formed with them, and since at the present time they are already placed in a competitive relation to their older class comrades. The goal of their struggle is not different from that of the class as a whole; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the means of constructing socialism.

But what interest in socialism does the high school student,⁵ the university student, have? To be sure, it cannot be denied that the idea of a classless society is an "exhaling perspective." But for high school and university students, as well as others, actions and consciousness are in the main ultimately determined by their social situation. Indeed this is precisely characterized by educational privilege, through the expectation that they can later occupy a position above the proletariat, that they will not have to perform any physically demanding labor, that they will earn more and enjoy a greater social respect than the majority of the population. When they rebel, it is therefore not against the system because it is capitalist (although their protest can take on this ideological form), but insofar as it will never be able completely to fulfill these expectations. But they have nothing more to expect from socialism, since socialism means precisely the destruction of all social privileges, whereas the maintenance of privilege is bound to the existing system (in particular to the bureaucratic deformation of the workers' states).

A political movement of high school students and university students based on the interests specific to their strata can therefore only have a petty-bourgeois character. It cannot itself become the vanguard⁶ of socialism, however much it might want to. Thus, even if the crisis of the capitalist system is thoroughly reflected in the minds of intellectuals, it is precisely Marxists who should not commit the fundamental error of taking the ideological expression for the driving force of the movement. In any case, under conditions of a sharper class struggle, the question of alliances⁷ is now posed for the proletariat.

The consciousness which is expressed in the general rebellion of youth, thus merely reflects the still dominant position of the petty-bourgeoisie over the proletariat. The task of revolutionaries consists precisely in contributing to overcoming this state of affairs. The development of the revolution can be advanced in no way other than through the many-sided and decisive emphasis on the particular, specific class interests of the proletariat, through forming

⁵"Oberschuler," i.e. college track high school student. As in England, students are split into university and working class track--into separate schools--at an early age. These are students preparing for the university.

⁶Vorkampfer: engaged in preliminary struggles.

⁷Bundnisfrage.

the proletariat as a class, both organizationally and in terms of self-consciousness. But proletarian youth cannot be excluded from that process. For to a far greater degree today than in the past, the largest part of proletarian cadre are recruited from the younger parts of the class; cadre who should lead the class and mediate its particular interests through consciousness. But if proletarian consciousness has to include the insight into the relationships and interests of all classes and layers of society, then present day revolutionaries cannot allow proletarian youth to remain unclear about the difference, and in some ways the contradiction, between their interests and those of the petty-bourgeois parts of the youth movement. On the other hand, the attempt to construct a similarity of interests between the entire youth and the proletariat, in reality winds up by splitting the young generation of the proletariat off from the older sections of the class, and thus by robbing youth of a decisive opportunity of gaining a foothold in the class itself for the perspective of proletarian revolution.

Comrades: From the consideration of all these arguments, it follows that the construction of the RYI is doomed to founder by its very conception. As a non-Trotskyist organization it would be unable to lead a truly anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist struggle; as a non-proletarian organization it can make no positive contribution to the formation of a class program. It will be wrecked by its programmatic and socially disunified orientation as soon as it attempts to leave the area of general declarations and take the first steps into practical politics.

Comrades! The discussion around the perspectives of international revolutionary politics today must begin from the necessity of the FI, from the reasons for which, over 30 years after its proclamation, it does not yet exist at present, from the current situation of the "world Trotskyist movement," from the programmatic basis and the practical perspectives for its construction. But a discussion which already accepts the perspectives of the RYI as its precondition and only examines the "how" of that construction, can lead to no correct answer to the decisive questions of the era.

FOR THE PROLETARIAN CLASS LINE!

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IV. INTERNATIONAL!

[SL/US translation]

to the "Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme" (AJS)
and the "Organisation Communiste Internationaliste" (OCI)

Comrades!

It is now six months since you approached us in order to discuss with us your project for a "Revolutionary Youth International" (RYI). Comrades of yours have visited us three times in all for this purpose, the last time to discuss with us your call for an "International Assembly of Youth" in Essen on the 3rd and 4th of July. We declared that we could not sign this call and have in the meantime acceded to your request to write a reply to this call for publication in your organ "Jeune Revolutionnaire." An answer to our contribution has been promised by the comrades of the OCI.

However the events of the morning of July 4th raise serious doubts concerning the possibility of a continuation of the discussion:

We had come to the congress with the intention of selling our brochures and papers, of distributing a leaflet and of ourselves making a short speech at the congress. We had received in advance and from a responsible comrade of the West-German "Junge Garde" assurances that we could disseminate our materials and deliver this speech. As to distribution of the leaflet, here we were of the opinion that no special permission was required.

Things turned out differently, however. First of all we were forbidden as "Pabloites" to offer our material for sale in the downstairs lobby of the congress hall, though permission had been restated to us but a few minutes before. We were thus forced to display our literature on the stone steps in front of the entry.

It is, however, your reaction to the distributors of our leaflet that constitutes an open affront.

We had composed a leaflet in German, French and Spanish in close agreement with the text of our reply to your call for the congress, where, under the slogans "For the proletarian class line! For the construction of the Fourth International!", we dealt with the goal of the assembly. Our point of departure was the fact that today, following the failure of the first three internationals and the abandonment of Marxism by Stalinism, revolutionary politics can be understood and carried out only as trotskyist. But the RYI was not conceived as a trotskyist organization but rather as a centrist mass movement. From the standpoint of trotskyist politics it was therefore necessary to raise first of all the question of the perspectives of the OCI or the "International Committee" (IC) as the case may be, whose organizations were to constitute the decisive backbone of the RYI. We questioned the claim of the IC to dispose already today over the "full program of world revolution" in the form of the "Transitional Program" and emphasized rather the character of the program as process, a character which can be realized only in the practical dialectics of the development of the class struggle and of the revolutionary organization itself. It was only through the rending asunder of this connection that the IC was able to attain to the assertion that it itself represented the continuity as well as the core of the

Fourth International. --The second major point of the leaflet centered around the class character of the program and of the revolutionary organization as its bearer. We demonstrated that the designation of the RYI as avantgarde-organization of all youth in reality amounted to a neglect of the class differentiations of young people and a separation of proletarian youth from the older parts of this class, and that therefore the RYI could not constitute a contribution to the development of a class program. The leaflet concluded with the demand to make the necessity of the construction of the Fourth International the starting point of the discussion and not to accept the RYI uncritically from the beginning as a component of this perspective.

We began to distribute this leaflet fairly early before the beginning of the major session of July 4th and, n.b., in front of the congress hall, not within it. Shortly before, comrades of the GIM, the German section of the "United Secretariat," had distributed a leaflet in which they praised the USec as the "true" Fourth International. (That we thoroughly criticize this impostor's claim and the revisionist line of the USec as a whole should be well known to you from our publications and also from the leaflet. Therefore we must reject as empty polemics and in the sharpest fashion your attack on us for "Pabloism.")

When we had disposed of perhaps 1500-2000 of our leaflets, your marshals suddenly--clearly as a result of commands from higher up--came into action and hindered us in the further distribution. Not only the fact itself but also the method is reminiscent of the practices of the Stalinists: we were shoved away, leaflets were ripped up, we were threatened with violence. One of our comrades was seized by two marshals, thrown down on the ground and kicked; a second comrade, who was hurrying to help him, was held back and threatened. Two of the marshals, who clearly would have liked nothing better than a brawl, stood out in particular here and could be restrained only at the last moment by one of your comrades (who evidently had more to say) from simply attacking our distributors. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that the marshals' orders allowed them any and all measures, if participants in the congress could not otherwise be prevented from receiving our leaflets. Things went so far that several of the participants in the congress had leaflets which they had received at our literature display taken from them and torn up.

The reasons which were stated to us for these actions are one and all not acceptable to us:

We were told that the call for the congress constituted its overall frame; we had, however, not signed it and so had placed ourselves outside this frame. Therefore we were not entitled to distribute our leaflet to participants in the congress. For then the "Stalinists could just as well come and attempt to distribute a leaflet"; this would not be permitted either. This conception was supported by a definition of "workers' democracy" by one of your comrades that would signify the throttling of any political discussion: in front of factories or in the unions, we were told, any political group could of course distribute any sort of leaflet; there complete workers' democracy ruled. But what was going on here was a "congress of the avantgarde" and as such could itself define the framework of its presentations.

But what kind of an "avantgarde" is it, for which the leadership has to prescribe what it can and cannot read and discuss? Is it perhaps still too immature, not advanced enough for the consideration of positions such as ours?

Another argument could only strengthen this impression: namely, that our position should be discussed not at the level of the AJS but of the OCI, since it was primarily a criticism of the OCI or the IC.

Nonetheless it accords with your official position, that organizations such as the AJS have no justification for their existence without the permanent intervention of the organizations of the IC. And although the OCI, the English SLL, the West-German IAK were not numbered among the official organizers, the initials of the OCI, for example, were displayed in the hall in the same size and beside those of the AJS and comrades delivered speeches in the name of these organizations. Therefore it is not only justified but also necessary to carry on discussion concerning the politics and claims of the IC on the level of the youth organizations, and it was in regard to this point that our leaflet constituted a contribution. Clearly, however, the comrades of the AJS etc. are supposed to accept the guidance or the necessity of collaboration with the IC not as the result of an explicit discussion but rather a priori and as a matter of faith. So it is not surprising that we were not permitted to speak at the congress, if this was planned not as a meeting discussion but rather as a gigantic display (which, however, did not turn out to be quite that impressive).

It is also characteristic that on the preceding day the Maoists were allowed to sell their material and on the Sunday itself (as already mentioned) the USec comrades to distribute a leaflet. Was it only that the corps of marshals was formed so late or did it only occur to you so late that our criticisms, in contrast to the other materials, exceeded the limits of what was permissible for the "avantgarde?"

Comrades! It is now up to you to take a clear and unambiguous position regarding the incidents of July 4th and to make clear your interest in a further discussion, your conceptions on the relationships of our organizations. If your interest is limited to winning us to the perspectives of the RYI, then you must first of all refute our position, which you know: must establish clearly what function the RYI can have in the construction of the Fourth International. This cannot, however, remain a discussion within the top leadership but, both for you and for us, must be extended to the broad mass of members. That we were hindered in doing this requires a public explanation on your part; those who were responsible must be found and called to an accounting. If, however, you should consider it correct to deal with us as do Stalinists with their opponents, then we shall not be remiss in adopting an appropriate stance.

Berlin, July 13, 1971

Leadership of the INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISTS OF GERMANY (Trotskyist)
Central Leadership of the Communist Youth Organization SPARTACUS

["The IKD statement on the events at the Essen conference is quite accurate."--Tweet, in a letter received 26 July. She was a witness personally to the entire incident.]

Internationale Kommunisten
Deutschlands (Trotzkisten)

19 September 1972

To the
Spartacist League
USA

Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of March 14, 1972 by way of several addresses (around the end of March). Unfortunately, our practical work in the general political situation left us little time (Bonn government crisis, May Day, the campaign against the abortion laws, the elections). As a result of the resignation of Cde. J.E. from the IKD, there are even more problems in handling all our work. The reason for his departure by no means lies in political differences, but rather in Cde. J.E.'s notion that at the present time KJO-SPARTACUS is incapable of an appropriate practical realization of our general political line because of its personnel composition, and that as yet he could not see any sign of a change in this situation.

I.

You wrote in your letter that you wouldn't yet judge which organization stands closer to you politically, Spartacus/BL or the KJO-Spartacus together with the IKD. Yet it is your first impression that Spartacus/BL comes closer to your political positions. You have probably reached a more precise assessment since writing your letter, which we, however, do not yet know. It would be good if you would express your opinions soon, especially since there are no principled differences between Spartacus/BL and us on one of the two questions (Character of the SPD) which you go into.

First of all, we would like to answer your criticism once again in order to contribute to the clarification of these questions.

First, the question of the KJO. In your criticisms you refer to the "Leninist norms" of the relations between the Party and youth organization, which you "codified" and also published in German. There is, however, a critical drawback to applying this codification to the present situation; namely that the pre-conditions for it are lacking. The Party, that is, a revolutionary organization which not only possesses a program (necessarily still largely abstract), but also is capable of leading significant sections of the proletariat in struggle around this program, and hence plays a real role in the class struggle. Only then does the revolutionary organization enjoy enough authority to be able to tie a youth organization to its program, in spite of [the youth's] organizational independence.

First of all we think that we are far from being a Party, and secondly, in addition, that we cannot arrive at this Party in West Germany through a "direct march" to the "class as a whole" but only by the "detour" of the KJO.

The reasons for our conception that the KJO must be a strategic moment in the construction of the new CP have been explained suffi-ciently in our basic documents and articles (see our platform with supplements in the "Fourth International," I/1, the Platform of the KJO, the series of articles "Through the unity of working youth toward the workers' United Front," in Spartacus Nos. 10-16, updated in the "Theses for the Reorientation of Spartacus" in Spartacus, No. 25). It would be desirable if you would relate the "validity of the Transitional Program" and the "revolutionary potential of the German working class as a whole" somewhat more to the present conditions of revolutionary work in West Germany and in this way concretely oppose us. Similarly, we would be thankful for a more specific explanation of why seeing the KJO as a strategic moment means "a denial of Marxism and of a proletarian revolutionary perspective." This position was really meant to give a more concrete answer to conditions than the mere statement of the necessity of the class struggle, the Party and the dictatorship of the Proletariat.

But even if we didn't hold this strategic conception, the first reason (namely, that we are by no means a Party) would suffice not to apply "ready made" [in English in the original] the "classical" conception. Unfortunately, we do not know what the relations between the SL and RCY are like in practice. We would be thankful for a description of this relationship so we could judge to what extent it indeed corresponds to the formal conception. However, we are rather skeptical, since after all, even you do not claim that you are already a Party, no matter how small. Given the fact that there exists no C.P. at the moment, if we still build a KJO (whether the KJO be understood as a strategic moment or in any other way), it follows that it needs its own programmatic basis. We never claimed that the KJO program would contradict the IKD's orientation, but there is no doubt that the programmatic orientation of these two organizations is not the same. Both have a different set of tasks and they go different ways to carry out their function in the construction of the Party. The starting point of the IKD is to link up with the heritage of the world Trotskyist movement, that of the KJO the revolutionary organizing of the working youth around the fight for their interests. It is clear that the consequences of both of these paths merge precisely into organizing the Party; but the KJO will only be able to carry out its duties within this perspective when it is a democratic-centralist organization with its own political responsibility.

In our opinion, the concept of "freedom of criticism" by no means signifies a "departure from Leninism;" we took it directly from Lenin ("Freedom of Criticism and Unity of Action," 1906, Works, vol. 10). In addition, appropriate to the level of development of our organization, we share the concretization of this concept as we found it in a corresponding form in Trotsky's "In Defense of Marxism." You should view the explanations there as our position.

Now to the question of the Character of the SPD (on which, up to now, there are, as we said, no differences between Spartacus/BL and ourselves); see Spartacus, organ of BL, No. 28). The SPD originated as a workers' party, in which a reformist practice increasingly

became predominate. This reformism--within the framework of a general orientation toward representing working-class interests--is not to be found in the SPD "in-itself," it is not the result of a historically immutable (ultimately in the metaphysical sense) "essence" of the Party; rather it represented the SPD's reaction to the conditions created by rising monopoly capitalism, approximately in the course of the last quarter of the 19th century. In this epoch of generally peaceful development and of the gradual expansion of Social Democracy, the workers' aristocracy and the workers' bureaucracy grew apace. In practice, they became the agents of adaptation to capitalism in exchange for some temporary concessions to the working class and for economic and political privileges for the workers' bureaucracy.

With the end of this period of growth, and above all because of WWI and its consequences, the space, or margin for reformist struggles such as those the SPD has previously led, dwindled. The development of imperialism forced European Social Democracy either to adapt completely to capitalism or to wage a revolutionary struggle against it. Because of its reformist past and bureaucratization, the SPD could only go the way of complete capitulation. It became an entire bourgeois party.

Does this mean that all differences between the Social Democracy and other bourgeois parties have become irrelevant? Of course not. But tactics toward the SPD have to be determined concretely. Not a single political question can be determined now by referring to the character of the SPD. In character, it is a bourgeois party, which is forced to continue to address itself to "the little man," and to mobilize "those who are on the short end" in society (and even this within very narrow limits; without initiating any real struggles or even merely encouraging them), because it does not enjoy the direct support and broad trust of the capitalist class to the same extent as other parties of the bourgeoisie. To the extent that it still relies on the working class in this sense, it does so only so that it can come to power as a bourgeois party and can carry out the political affairs of the bourgeoisie. It is sheer dogmatism to still apply the concept of the "bourgeois labor party" to this party: it neither pursues the real interests of the workers, nor does it claim to represent the working class, nor do the workers see in it the representative of their specific interests as workers, but rather the representative of their interests (in a totally vague sense) as underprivileged and low-income people.

To label the SPD as a "bourgeois labor party" is dogmatic not only because it is not at all empirically true; but also because--irrespective of how one answers the SPD question--such tactical questions as election support or entrism are not directly conditional on this. Thus at the Second Congress of the C.I., Lenin advocated the entry of the English Communists into the British Labor Party because a) a large part of the working class was organized in it, and b) their membership in the BLP would not restrict the Communists in their political struggle. And he advocated this even though he stressed that the BLP was not the "political expression of the trade union movement," but rather was, because of their leadership and the content of their actions, "a bourgeois party through and through," an "organiza-

tion of the bourgeoisie!"

Trotsky suggested the united front of the CP and the SP in Germany. On what basis? On the basis of the fight against fascism, which, if it came to power, would destroy not only the CP, but also the SP. But: "The Social Democracy, regardless of its working class base, is an entirely bourgeois party" (Trotsky, What Next?). This is a political characterization to which we have nothing to add. For Trotsky, it did not follow that one should "ignore" the SPD--not by a long shot.

In France, Trotsky finally advocated entry into the SFIO, although he had no illusions about its character: "The SFIO is, in a certain sense, a petty-bourgeois organization not only because of its dominant tendency but also because of its social composition." (Writings, 1934-35, p. 104).

As far as the SPD today is concerned, the argument over whether the SPD still has a working-class following, whether it has "organic relations to the trade union bureaucracy," etc., obscures one's view into the actual political problems rather than adding to their solution. Even we don't "ignore" the SPD. On the contrary, we know that its influence on the workers is tremendous even today and that it represents the main ideological barrier to the development of revolutionary working-class politics. This recently was shown on a large scale when strikes and demonstrations (which, by the way, the SPD leadership clearly tried to hold back) took place against the SPD/FDP government. But in what textbook of Marxism is it written that workers go into the streets only for the interests of the workers, and that there can be no mobilization of workers for purely bourgeois politics? No one would seriously hold the opinion that the active support of the Peronist regime in Argentina by the working class should be taken as proof that the Justicialismo constitutes a Labor Party, even a "bourgeois" one. In evaluating support actions for the SPD/FDP government, we must start from the fact that in today's West German working class there is no noticeably wide-spread consciousness of actual working-class interests and no noticeable movement for working-class politics. The small beginnings of such a movement are found to be largely under the influence of the DKP. The decisive task before us is first of all to implant again into the West German working class the political consciousness that they have their own working-class interests. If we followed your suggestion of supporting the SPD in the elections under the slogan "Brandt Out! SPD to Power" we would not come a step nearer to solving this task. First of all, as we said before, the SPD has no working-class demands to which we could hold this party in order to develop the class consciousness of the workers; and secondly, the solution which you propose is on the far side of reality, since the SPD would not only have vastly smaller chances of coming to power without Brandt, but also, even the workers vote for the SPD because of Brandt, not in spite of him.

We do not need to go into the actual policies of the SPD in the recent years here; this is set forth in our position on the German parliamentary elections, which we are enclosing [main slogans: "No Vote for the Bourgeois Parties" (i.e. the CDU/CSU, FDP and especially

directed against the SPD) and "Vote DKP!"]. We merely want to point out that in these policies there is not a single point which offers the possibility of extracting from it even a deformed form of working-class politics. And yet there exists in West Germany a Party which--in reformist clothing--represents workers' demands: the DKP. Only insofar as we support this Party critically will we achieve even a small success in reconstituting class consciousness in the West German working class and be able to strengthen our own organization.

Thus, as you can see from our electoral support for the DKP, our position on the SPD is in no way the result of an "ultra-left origin." Your assertion that our cadre "essentially originated in the German New Left" is purely and simply false. In terms of personnel, the origin of our organization lies in the socialist youth movement in which the German Trotskyists, among them precisely those who later formed the IKD, were already anchored when the Student movement first sprang up. But even if your objection were not so patently false and we really had our roots in the "New Left"--what would that prove about the character of the SPD and our concrete political tasks? You have allowed yourself to use a demagogic maneuver here which does not exactly contribute to increasing the persuasive power of your arguments. Above and beyond that, your evaluation of the SPD is also based on empirical errors. Today the inner-Party life of the SPD is no longer determined by the workers, or even influenced by them to a noticeable extent, but from civil servants and property owners, whereas precisely those workers who are still organized into the Party have largely withdrawn from party life. And how do you arrive at the peculiar conception that in the Young Socialists [SPD youth group] there are "centrists" and even "Maoists"? Even apprentices are organized into the Young Socialists in rural areas where there is no political alternative. In general, the Jusos are completely dominated by intellectuals, even numerically.

We are not asserting an identity between the SPD and the Democratic Party in the US. Their opposite historical origin is surely not meaningless. But on the basis of the de-politicization of the West German working class the SPD has come extraordinarily close to the Democrats in its political orientation. If you consider this evaluation false, you must bring to bear counter-arguments which correspond to actual relationships and not base yourselves on an image of the German Young Socialists which is foreign to reality.

II.

Now we want to take up the question of organizational relationships between the Spartacist League and the IKD.

You write that you have not yet come to a final decision whether or not you want to maintain future relations with the IKD or with Spartacus/BL. Yet for our part, we have the impression that you already reached a more precise evaluation of your future relationships with us before the split in KJO-SPARTACUS, that is, a negative one. We remind you that these relationships have been formally clarified ever since the London discussions of 1970, namely that we were bloc partners. Unfortunately, there is not the slightest trace of this question in your March letter or in earlier letters.

We deduce the fact that you must have reached a more definitive decision earlier from your behavior on the question of the "International Discussion Bulletin" (IDB). This Bulletin was to have been the decisive instrument for the consolidation and further development of the bloc, and also serve, when appropriate, to integrate new bloc partners. The first number was to have appeared in February, 1971. The English comrades' contribution was available on schedule. Our contribution was already written at that time (it dealt with the development of the Fourth International), but we gave it to you somewhat later because it was not clear to us whether it would be possible to translate the entire, fairly long essay (as it later developed, that was indeed not the case). Finally, still in the early summer of 1971, we presented a shortened version of the first part of our essay, so that we, for our part, would not seriously hinder the appearance of the Bulletin. In contrast, your contribution has still not arrived up to the present day, nor have you said anything about this. And not only that: after several attempts to get a contribution from your organization, the RCL and the IKD agreed to publish the first number of the Bulletin in September if necessary, even without your contribution. When we told you this, the representative of your organization who was there promised that your contribution would arrive in a short time, as it was already under discussion in your Political Bureau. After this assurance, we and the RCL renounced publication of the first edition without your article. Yet we never heard anything more about your contribution thereafter.

Without polemical exaggeration, we must state that you have directly obstructed the publication of the Bulletin. Our impression is that, starting in Spring 1971 at the latest, you therefore regarded the agreement as no longer binding. Yet you let us prolong the illusion that the bloc was still a reality. It would be useful if you would clarify your behavior and would state what you currently see as the perspectives for common international work.

In Easter 1971, the National Conference of the IKD discussed extensively the previous development (or lack thereof) of our international activity, since the building of the "bloc" had originally been conceived as the step by which it would be possible for us to intervene in the sense of developing a genuine revolutionary tendency, in the unfolding process of regroupment in the world Trotskyist movement.

The NC came to the conclusion that any development of the IKD's perspectives in the international arena must proceed from the fact that the project of the "bloc" in its original conception had failed, since the core element of the bloc, namely the IDB, had still not seen the light of day more than a year after its projection.

But we see the causes for the failure of the "bloc" conception not so much in the particular combination of groups of which the bloc originally was to have consisted, nor in the good will or lack of a readiness to cooperate on the part of these groups. The real basis for the failure of the project must surely be seen in the fact that the principled agreement which existed at the time between the participating groups, was not yet sufficient for such a project.

The clearest index for this is the fact that a common appearance on the occasion of the Lambertist's Essen congress in July, 1971, failed because of a question which already seemed to be answered in the "Brussels Statement": namely the question of whether the Fourth International must be constructed or reconstructed. Here it became obvious that the agreement that the Fourth International does not exist at the present time which had been reached previously, did not suffice. Without a doubt, this is an extraordinarily narrow basis on which to undertake the obligations of a common bloc. It has become apparent that it is clearly an illusion to hope for a qualitative step forward from a discussion which is shut off from all other tendencies in the Trotskyist movement. A discussion bulletin whose context is limited to a few groups, with the goal of first reaching agreement between these groups, does not sufficiently take into consideration that the basis which these groups already have in common is still extraordinarily thin, and that on the other hand this procedure substantially limits the possibility for each of the participating groups to intervene directly in the process of regroupment and argumentation with groups which stand outside the "bloc."

Given the failure of the "bloc" conception, we consider that the primary task of the IKD is to present immediately for discussion our position on central international questions and on the history of the Trotskyist movement on the International scale--indeed first of all we must formulate it. We are not of the opinion that we must already have an unambiguous position on every question. But to establish a clear line, we are dependent on setting into motion an international discussion on many questions, a discussion which will be more than a shallow polemic--as was the argument between the Lambertists and the Healyites on the question of Bolivia.

We will therefore begin shortly to publish an International Discussion Bulletin which--as opposed to the old conception of the "bloc"--will openly present questions and in which we will seek to publish and to discuss contributions from other groups in addition to presenting our positions. We have suggested to the RCL that it take part in this project with an English language edition. The condition for this project is not that each of the two organizations agrees with the content of the respectively other language edition, nor even with reprinting all the articles which appear there. Similarly there is no obligation to translate every article and to publish it in one's own edition. Each of the two editions would thus be published with the full responsibility of the respective organization.

As yet we have received no final decision from the RCL on this proposition. But we thought it necessary to inform you of our further plans in order to draw up a clear position for ourselves on the original project of the "bloc." If a common undertaking with the RCL does not come about in the framework of our new conception of a bulletin, we will nevertheless begin with the publication of a German edition. You will receive it as soon as it appears. The Resolution of our last National Conference will be printed in this first number, in which we present in a more encompassing form our position on the question of the development of the Trotskyist movement and in which we motivate our project of a public bulletin.

Finally we must simply state that the organizational relationships, as laid down in the framework of the "bloc," between the SL and the IKD, do not exist. We nevertheless hope that in the future we can arrive at a close and friendly contact between our organizations on a more realistic basis, and we would be happy to receive your position on the question of what perspectives you see for international work after the foregoing developments.

In the meantime, we remain,

with communist greetings,

the Leadership of the IKD

Copy to your representative in Germany

[SL/US translation]

14 November 1972

Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands
(Trotzkisten)

Germany

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of 19/09/72 on 18/10 and are in the process of translating it to prepare a fuller answer to the political questions you raise.

First, we want to state clearly that at this time we have no political representative in Germany. The comrade who is in Germany is there exclusively for personal and academic reasons. He is therefore not in any way a representative of the Spartacist League/US.

We have sent you a long position paper on the question of the SPD, which should serve as a response to that portion of your letter. Naturally, we would consider any serious reply you would care to make to that paper. The concrete aspects of our application of the Transitional Program, as well as other questions you raise can best be seen from examples in our press, Workers Vanguard and the RCY Newsletter.

We also wish to clarify some of the organizational points you raise in your letter. First, on the question of "bloc partners." We do not and never have had a bloc with the IKD except on particular issues. The only bloc we formed with the IKD was against the Brussels conference of the United Secretariat. Further, since at the meeting in London in 1970, we raised proposals to codify and to extend the bloc to other questions, and since you comrades, in the person of J.E. at that time declined to establish a bloc, it seems to us disingenuous of you to say that our relations were those of "bloc partners."

At the time of the Brussels conference, we had proposed a formulation for the "reconstruction" of the Fourth International, which comrade J.E. brushed aside and rewrote, presenting us with a fait accompli of which at that time we were not fully aware. From the beginning, the leadership of the IKD was fully aware of our position on the need for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, as well as our position on the full application of the Transitional Program.

During the London meeting, we proposed an International Discussion Bulletin which in some ways is similar to the format you now propose. At that time, the IKD refused an expanded discussion format and insisted on having a veto power over the participating groups and contributions, to which we could not agree. We hope that you have received our Spartacist No. 21, with the articles on Pabloism and Bala Tampoe. We feel that this issue of Spartacist will function as an element in international discussion, and plan to use Spartacist increasingly in this way in the future. Naturally, we

would consider any relevant material which you have prepared.

You are correct in saying that the SPD question remains a significant unresolved question between ourselves and Spartacus-BL. We are continuing a discussion with them on this question. It is difficult for us to form an opinion on the evolution of the IKD or of KJO-SPARTACUS at this time, since we have received no publications from you since the split in December, 1971. We would like to receive anything you have put out during this time. In addition to the lack of published material and positions on which to base an opinion, the split in Spartacus and the disappearance of some of the top leadership of the IKD means that we no longer have a very clear idea of who and what the IKD is. In these circumstances, we feel it would be unfair to both of us to form a premature opinion. Any information you could give us would be helpful.

Finally, as regards the International Discussion Bulletin which you propose, we would welcome the appearance of serious international discussion material which has as its goal the formation of a disciplined international tendency.

With communist greetings,

John Sharpe
for the Spartacist League

2 September 1972

Spartacus-BL
Political Bureau

To the Political Bureau of the
Spartacist League

Dear Comrades,

Since we consider the evaluation of the West German SPD as a central point in the discussion of both organizations, we propose the following procedure to begin an open (public) discussion. We will write a basic article on the SPD question as an answer to your SPD paper. Although it will take up your paper, the article will nonetheless contain a systematic presentation of our position on the SPD. We propose publishing both articles in the framework of the international discussion of our two organizations in the respective theoretical organs. That way the question of financing the German publication of your paper will be solved. It would appear in our theoretical Organ Results and Prospects ("Ergebnisse und Perspektive"), probably in the second issue. We would request you to answer this proposal as soon as possible, so that we can be in a position to begin the appropriate preparations.

We are prepared to take Workers Vanguard and Spartacist in our central literature stock. We can give you a precise figure (of our needs) only when we have received answers from all our locals.

Due to the fact that the discussion between our two organizations has been primarily of a technical nature until now, largely because of the inexcusable neglect of international contacts by our organization, the Comrade can have no official status beyond technical and organizational questions. On the central questions--such as Construction of the Fourth International, the SPD--he can therefore not be regarded as the official representative of the Organization.

RED FRONT!
on behalf of the PB

Gunther

[SL/US translation]

23 September 1972

Political Bureau
Spartacus/BL

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of 2 September. We are in essential agreement with your proposal for publication of the two papers in the organs of our respective organizations, with one restriction. Due to technical limitations and lack of space, we wish to limit the length of the articles to 25 pages each, typewritten, full double spacing (i.e., 6 pages each when they appear in our Spartacist). We will therefore edit our current SPD paper to one-half its original length and in such a way to make it apply to the general theoretical problem of reformist workers' parties with special emphasis on the SPD. When comrade F. of Spartacus/BL was in New York, we discussed technical limitations and various possibilities with him.

We are currently typing the original paper and will send you a copy in about two weeks. In addition, we will also send you a German translation, begun by comrade H. of Spartacus/BL and corrected and completed jointly by comrade Sharpe of the SL and comrade F. of Spartacus/BL. We will send you our final, edited version as soon as it is done; hopefully by the end of October.

We would appreciate receiving as soon as possible a copy of the Grundsatzklärung adopted by your national conference, as we may wish to translate and circulate all or part of it as a part of our pre-conference discussion.

We note that you accepted responsibility for the lack of international contacts before this. While we appreciate this gesture, we also feel that it was not entirely warranted. We, like yourselves, have certain technical and organizational difficulties which occasionally have caused us similar delays--and will undoubtedly continue to do so in the future.

While our comrades were at your national conference, we learned on good authority that you are aware of a factional situation which has existed in the Spartacist League. Although we do not wish to discuss this situation in detail or at any length, especially while these matters are under internal discussion during our pre-conference period, we feel it is important to put to rest any rumors which might be circulating in your organization due to partial knowledge of some comrades of the situation. We are therefore sending you two copies of our internal bulletins dealing with that situation in order to clarify in advance any misunderstandings which might tend to arise.

By the time you comrades receive this letter, comrade Moore of the SL/US will have returned to Germany. We wish to make his present status clear: comrade Moore is returning to Germany exclusively for personal and academic reasons. He will therefore not in any way be a representative of the SL/US. We hope your organization generally will note this fact and be guided accordingly.

Hopefully, the arrangement for the SPD articles which we propose will be acceptable to you, even though it is somewhat limited. We are of course prepared, within the limitations objectively imposed on us, to consider any alternatives you might suggest. We look forward to hearing from you.

With bolshevik greetings,

John Sharpe
for the PB of the SL/US

22 October 1972

Political Bureau
Spartacus-BL

Dear Comrades:

The Political Bureau of the Spartacist League invites the attendance of a delegation from Spartacus-BL with observer status to the Third National Conference of the SL, to take place on November 23-24, 1972, in New York. Agenda points dealing with questions concerning the internal functioning of the SL (open only to elected delegates and Central Committee members) will be closed; all other points will be open to you.

Some of the main political agenda points are contained in our Internal Information Bulletin No. 15 and our International Information Bulletin No. 16, which we have already sent you. In addition, there will be a main general conference document and a major document on the woman question, which we should be producing shortly and will send you.

We realize the difficulties and expenses which are involved in sending a delegation. If a minor proportion of the air fare would make the difference between being able to attend and being unable to attend, we are prepared to assist you. Further, if comrades wished to remain in the US for a brief period, it would be preferable for us if they were to stay after the conference rather than to come before it.

We would of course arrange housing for your delegation.

Communist greetings,

Sharpe
for the PB, SL/US

SPARTACUS * BOLSCHEWIKI-LENINISTEN
 Politisches Buro

Mainz
 2 November 1972

To the
 Political Bureau
 SPARTACIST LEAGUE/US

Dear Comrades:

We are very sorry that you have not heard from us for some time, but we did not think it particularly meaningful to begin the necessary discussion between our organizations without having intensively studied the material we have received from you. In addition the translation of this letter, which in our opinion was necessary because of its politically sensitive character, was somewhat delayed.

Although we have very attentively read your Internal Information (Discussion) Bulletins of June and August 1972 on the events within the SL, we have not in the least succeeded in coming even a bit closer to grips with the entire complex of events. It is impossible for us to discern a political background in ["both the methods and"--this phrase is not in the German text] the arguments of the factional or prefactional discussions within the SL. Most of the accusations in the letters and documents available to us range over the pure organizational or personal-disciplinary questions, and even the few political accusations in these attacks seem both arbitrary and incoherent. We are even more bewildered by the reports of our comrades who have returned from the U.S., comrades who have, in their letters from there already attacked the majority of the SL in the sharpest fashion.

The task of the leadership of our organization is not to seize upon isolated single instances (however serious they might appear to us) and to cry bloody murder over them, rather it is much more to come to grips with the different instances in their whole relationship, in order to arrive at political characterizations and decisions. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that we receive a clear and unambiguous position from you on the whole affair! It is imperative because of political developments that political clarity on the relationship of our two organizations be once and for all created, otherwise our political cooperation stands in danger of degenerating into routinism, no longer bound to a real perspective for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

1) Since we do not judge the "factional" discussion in the SL from previous methods of "factional" struggle alone, we must precisely at this point request from you a clear declaration, not in the last instance because the manner of faction fighting also permits inference to the content of this struggle. The German comrades who return-

ed from the U.S. have informed us of things which one can only characterize as the most serious infringement of democratic-centralism. Individual minority comrades are supposed to have been finished off in hours long discussions with 20-45 (!) majority comrades; without ever going into real political differences minority comrades are supposed to have been called psychologically ill (!); private letters are supposed to have been used by the majority as means of proof; two letters are supposed to have been stolen (!) from Cde. Cunningham's apartment. We could continue this list at your pleasure, and each detail would cry out for clarification.

Comrades, are these accusations legitimate? If they are only close to the truth, how can one justify such practice? And even if you deny the specific accusations, how can one explain that at no time has there ever been a real faction fight in the SL? Why is it that oppositional comrades, to the last man, have either resigned or been expelled? Are all these comrades cowards or idiots, although almost all have played a leading role in the SL? And if they really were incapable of struggling for their positions as an organized faction, how come such phonies were responsible for such important leading posts in the SL?

2) After these points which come to mind after a superficial consideration of the situation, the question of the political background of these events raises itself for us. Here the problem of democratic-centralism, which has been raised through the questions posed above, would be the first to come to mind. The central accusation of the minority comrades is the bureaucratic regime of Cde. Robertson, which blocks and suppresses every meaningful political initiative. We already know from your letter of 14.3.72 that you reject our understanding ["Begriff." This can equally well mean "concept" or "conception of."] of 'freedom of criticism.' Moreover, Cde. Franz, after returning from the USA ["berichtete uns Gen. Franz aus den USA." "Cde. Franz reported to us from the U.S.," that is, while he was still in the U.S.], informed us that the SL has taken a negative attitude to a position paper of the Leninist Faction of the SWP on democratic-centralism, which is supposed to be in agreement with our position. Therefore, the problem of democratic-centralism needs a theoretical clarification as well!

While all questions having to do with the organizational life of a group, must have a political kernel as well, democratic-centralism can only be discussed on the basis of correct Bolshevik politics. But precisely on this most important point of every factional discussion neither the opposition nor the majority seems to have much to say. While the minority limits itself to establishing a "split between theory and practice" and maintains that the program of the SL is "formal, lifeless" (Motion on Moore Oral Report, adopted by PB no. 53, 16 July 1972; Internal Discussion Bulletin no. 15, August 1972) without clarifying where this state comes from, one hears, by and large, only personal accusations from the majority.

"Subjective, arrogant cliquists have destroyed the innocence (!) of this organization." (Liz Gordon, "Cliques, Blocs and the Regime," p.3; Internal Information Bulletin no. 14, June 1972)

Comrades, such a method and way of argumentation is completely foreign to our understanding! If you hold that the opposition is a rotten clique, why not show completely and clearly the political roots of this cliquism? Cde. Gordon writes in the article cited (p.14):

"What are at issue are counterposed conceptions on the party question, which along with other central questions defines the political character of the SL."

Why not carry out this accusation? Where do the political differences in the SL really lie? So many questions wait for an answer, which, in a clear and unequivocal way, would bring light to the darkness in this factional struggle.

3) Another further point worthy of mention is the work of Cde. Moore in Germany and the accusations raised against him (de-facto bloc with Bolfra etc.). After reading your internal documents, we would grant that these attacks on the organizational level are not to be rejected out of hand. But when seen only from the organizational perspective this question is primarily a question of democratic-centralism in the SL, which can only be of secondary interest for us. What is far more important for us is the political background which permits the subjective clarification of Moore's method of operation.

To anyone who had the privilege of experiencing the IKD in its day to day practice, it had to become clear that all the international work of this group is merely a coverup, an alibi. The IKD doesn't have the least idea of how to proceed toward the reconstruction ("construction") of the Fourth International and it had not even the simplest methodological and programmatic prerequisites for developing an international strategy, which in their opinion cannot exist, for the working class. As I myself can testify (being a member of the IKD until a week before the split), information about the international contacts of the IKD was not even discussed in the organization as a whole, not to mention KJO-Spartacus. All of the international work was always a private hobby of Ebmeier and a few other Berlin bigshots, so that, for example, the IKD comrades from Rhine-Main and North Rhine Westphalia actually had to learn from Bolfra (!) that the SL was critical of the KJO theory. In view of such a situation, it is naturally no wonder that the entire international work virtually stagnated; that the SL/RCL/IKD bloc degenerated into a caricature of proletarian internationalism, which no one took seriously anymore.

This entire debacle is, however, in our opinion, in the last analysis to be attributed to the entire conception of the "bloc" itself. The only thing in common between the different members of this "bloc" was the abstract denial of the pretensions of the U.Sec. to be the Fourth International and the understanding of the necessity to construct the Fourth International, concerning which no one was even united to the extent of acknowledging whether or not it had ever existed. In actuality, one cannot find the most minimal strategic consensus in this "bloc," which, of course, made it easy for the IKD to muddle along undisturbed with its "national strategy" and to regard

the whole bloc as something extra, as independent from its actual practice. This is the political experience which has caused us to enunciate the following in our Declaration of Principles:

"Just as we reject, in fundamental programmatic opposition to the leading tendencies in the world Trotskyist movement, every political fraud which claims to be the Fourth International, so too we separate ourselves from its opportunistic counterpart, unprincipled bloc building. When we attack the U.Sec. on the basis of its deformed conception of revolutionary strategy, the same goes all the more for such a group as the IKD who regarded their international contacts as appendages to their real 'national strategy.' The thesis that the Fourth International will develop through a 'process of splits and fusions' remains an empty and useless abstraction so long as one is not able to specify the political content of this process. We reject rotting away within some peculiar 'bloc' which is united only on the single fact of the non-existence of the world proletarian party. We will initiate our international contacts only on the basis of solid strategic principles, which hold for us both as a basis for discussion as well as a measure toward concrete organizational steps forward. Reconstruction of the Fourth International means reconstruction of the Bolshevik program; this will be no abstract phrase for us, but will determine every one of our actions."

In order to force the IKD toward a Bolshevik orientation, or else, to break the politically serious elements out of the IKD, it would have been absolutely necessary for the SL to take the programmatic offensive against the theories of the IKD. Only then would the SL's international work have acquired a meaning. What is the use of such a superficially beautiful bloc which is composed of completely heterogeneous political elements, and which would be blown to bits by the first serious crisis:

"Unity is a magnificent thing, but not on a rotted foundation." (Leon Trotsky: Whither France?, p. 111; Merit Publishers 1968)

The SL did not attempt to bring clarity into its international relationships. The SL satisfied itself with the fiction of an international "bloc" and avoided creating the political-programmatic prerequisites of such a bloc, whereby the appearance of the International Discussion Bulletin would have been only the most paltry step forward in view of our historic tasks.

The causes for this complete debacle are not (as far as the SL is concerned) known to us, we can only state the facts here. These facts indeed cry out for clarification; and that means in terms of the international work of the SL in the past as well as how the SL sees the construction of the Fourth International. It is not our function, nor do we wish to excuse or paper over, therefore, the break in discipline of Cde. Moore, but we are very interested in seeing that it be set in the correct light, and in this light one must admit that Cde. Moore had enough consciousness of his respon-

sibility not to resignedly lay down his weapons when faced with the catastrophic situation in Germany.

4) Since we are not historians, but Marxist politicians, our interest in the international work of the past is not academic, the clarification of such problems is of absolute political necessity for us. The decisive question which we must put to the SL in the present situation is: how will you carry on your further international work? Will you continue to hang out a sign post with the RCL and the IKD behind which no one stands? Should both BL and the IKD continue with one another in "peaceful co-existence" in their undefined relationship to the SL?

Comrades, history will not wait for us! With the sharpening of the structural crisis of imperialism, the problem of the class leadership of the world proletariat will once again be in the most immediate sense a burning question for the working class. If the Trotskyist world movement is not able to overcome the dilemma of Pabloist revisionism and esoteric sectarianism, the world working class will once again suffer an historic, catastrophic defeat. The task of the construction of an international Trotskyist tendency presents itself with utmost urgency--to us! The relations between different organizations must be tested as to their value and binding character through hard polemics over the Bolshevik program, so that the proper organizational steps can be initiated on solid programmatic foundations.

In the present situation, an essential step in the clarification of our future international work together is the settlement of the "German question": that is, a definitive SL position on the problem of IKD-BL. Certainly we can understand that after the split in the KJO the SL would not want to intervene on one side or the other without a thorough investigation of its causes, but when you wrote in your letter of 14.3.72, that "ours is an interim policy based upon either the unclarity in your split or present deficiencies in our understanding or both," then we would request of you that after more than seven months you re-investigate this interpretation, or else fill out its contents.

In any case, we must reject in the sharpest manner the notion that the differences between BL/IKD are only quantitative. Not even directly after the split, could these differences be characterized exclusively as "quantitative," in spite of the relatively weak and underdeveloped character of our programmatic foundations; the impossibility of such an assertion must have already become clear to you from your list of the differences between the two organizations contained in your letter of 14.3.72. How can differences between two organizations who have diametrically opposed positions on such central questions as "the character of the epoch, the validity of the Transitional Program and the revolutionary potential of the German working class as a whole," be conceived of as only qualitative? To be sure, the split was consummated at far too abstract a level; to be sure, we were not immediately able to criticize in a methodologically correct manner the theories of the IKD, that is, their logical inter-relationship. Further, our general programmatic conceptions almost left the level of practical politics to the side.

Nevertheless, the further development of both organizations has shown--which you must see from the publications you have received--who has the perspective for the development of Bolshevik class politics and who doesn't. That the KJO, in view of the most precarious domestic political situation in West Germany and the awakening of the West German working class, has nothing better to do than to base their politics on the problem of §218 (the paragraph outlawing abortion) is the logical consequence of their fully rotten perspective.

The IKD-KJO conception is based not only--as you think--on an incorrect understanding of the relationship between the party and youth organization, but is based even more on an impressionistic as well as idealistic method which never addresses the task of the development of a revolutionary strategy in the first place. Through their mechanical separation of political and economic struggles, the IKD from the very first insures that their politics would not be based on the real movement of the class. Instead of addressing themselves to the question of how proletarian class consciousness can be developed, how to take up the tasks of the construction of the party and the development of strategy, the IKD seeks rather the where, that is, the sector of the proletariat in which the relationship between the vanguard and the masses (in their Lukacsian children's picture book conception) can be produced quasi-automatically. At a closer glance, their entire (formally) 'proletarian' orientation is reduced to a take off on youth radicalization, greatly spiced up with Lukacs. Only on the basis of this perspective can one really understand their "theory" of the "dialectical unity" of the IKD and the KJO: one organization has the task of (literarily) defending the "full program" of the proletarian world revolution without the possibility of carrying it into practice, while the other has the function of working toward an implantation within the working class or else the working youth without a Bolshevik program (with "excerpts from the full program," which, however only exists on paper). Both the KJO as well as the IKD are completely unBolshevik organizations; organizations which consistently put the whole revolutionary character of the imperialist epoch into doubt through their theory of "Kondratiev waves"; which through unprecedented national narrow-mindedness deny the international and scientific character of the communist program, to replace this program through some hair-brained perspective which is derived from "special national conditions"; which ignore Trotsky's struggle for the Fourth International and the Transitional Program (which becomes clear from their position on the "construction" of the Fourth International), and so on. Therefore, we can not understand how you can make such concessions as to characterize the KJO as a tactic (!!!) which is thoroughly possible under "the present conditions" when it is clear that this (IKD) methodology represents nothing more than a peculiar amalgamation of Pabloist and Lukacs revisionism.

Comrades, we believe that the time has come for you to declare which of the two German organizations stands closer to your programmatic principles and to draw the appropriate organizational consequences from this judgement. If you are really not in the position at this time to make such a decision, we request that you inform us quite precisely of the reasons for what remains unclear, what must be discussed further, what in principle stands in the way of such a

decision, etc. Without underestimating the political significance of the SPD question we do not believe that it is an argument for evading this decision. Notwithstanding our differences on the characterization of the SPD, we are of the opinion that one can only discuss the tactical approach to the SPD in a binding fashion with an organization which has the necessary programmatic presuppositions for the deployment of Marxist class politics. And here, Comrades, is where the body is buried!

The essential precondition for the construction of the Fourth International is the struggle against Pabloism, and not only in its undisguised form but in its concealed Lukacsian variant as well!

So much for the political section; in closing an organizational remark. We will translate our SPD article after it is approved by our Central Committee, we hope to send you an authorized version in about one and a half months. We are going to have the article of Cde. Moore translated again, as the existing translation is a stylistic catastrophe. Cde. Moore will check it in order that nothing concerning the content is changed.

With communist greetings,

for the Central Committee
of Spartacus (BL)
T.T.

P.S. After finishing this letter we received your September Bulletin on the KJO split. Unfortunately, it is not possible here for us to dispute the observations included there (in the first place, in the Introduction of the NO), but we think that a few clarifications of the report of Cde. Sharpe are vital. While we do not wish to attack Cde. Sharpe personally, we must say that his report on our National Conference is pretty much beside the point. Precisely because we realize how difficult it is for a comrade to evaluate an organization only on the basis of some impressions from one national conference, we believe it necessary to make a few observations, without, of course, being able to cover the discussions of our National Conference here.

a) What Cde. Sharpe sees as the lack of organization of the National Conference is not to be primarily attributed to the young average age of the members, but rather to the rapid programmatic development of our organization which necessitated changing the arrangements for the NC from one CC meeting to another; we were forced to have the NC despite the lack of preparation--in the absence of this NC the organization would have fallen apart politically and organizationally; a few positions were developed actually only shortly before the NC.

b) Cde. Sharpe has not in the least understood the essential political discussions of the NC. Two essential points which were informative of the state of our organization he did not follow at all. In the organizational report (which the SL comrades attended through a technical oversight) as well as in the discussion over Declaration of Principles, all the essential points on the development and foundations of our organization in the argumentation against NRW as well

as Berlin were said. It would have saved a lot of writing if Cde. Sharpe could have followed the discussion here.

c) It is also to be noted as well that Cde. Sharpe has distorted or falsified all three positions on the question of critical support to the DKP; it would, however, take us too far afield to undertake clarification here.

d) The entire characterization of the different regions of Spartacus/BL is false. The Berlin local will neither draw everything from the fundamental character of the epoch (rather, they attempt to determine communist strategy from the "stages of the capital realization process") nor do they deny in principle critical support to a Stalinist party; there is absolutely no "left-communist trend" in NRW, rather the NRW comrades have accused their political opponents at the NC of showing tendencies toward left-radicalism. Moreover, Cde. Sharpe must have multiplied the different proposals on factory work by a factor of five, or else he would have scarcely come up with the figure of 20 (!).

e) Due to the defective political understanding of the problems of our organization, as can be seen in his report, it is only to be welcomed that Cde. Sharpe did not draw any political conclusions from his evaluations. We would request the SL not to draw on this report as foundation for its evaluation of our organization.

P.P.S. I have just received your letter of 22.10.72. Thank you very much for the invitation to your National Conference; we will send an official representative of our organization there. The only thing which could cause us difficulty is the financial factor; if you could help us financially, it would be very valuable. Further information to follow.

Copies to:

Kommunistische Liga/Bolschewiki-Leninisten (Osterreich)
Bruce R. (IS opposition, England)
Spartacist League of New Zealand

[Copy distribution not in the German text.]

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[Note: Spartacus/BL sent us both a German and an English text of this letter. We take the German text as authoritative. Certain stylistic changes and corrections of minor errors in the English version have been made by us without comment. In a few cases where the differences between the two texts has political significance, the German text is indicated in brackets. The German text is dated 2 November; the English text 9 November. An accompanying note from Germany states: "letter finished--translating and typing--on 14 November." We received the material, c/o Sharpe in Boston, on 17 November. --the N.O., 19 November 1972.]

Spartacist League

17 November 1972

Political Bureau

Spartacus/Bolschewiki-Leninisten

Dear Comrades:

I received your long letter today. We thank you for your interest in our internal affairs. Of course, the total character of any organization with which one has contact is necessarily of interest to a serious organization. At the same time, as you note, care must be taken to avoid the possible impressionism of individuals, particularly in the absence of other documentation.

The participation of a delegation authorized by the Central Committee of Spartacus/BL will greatly facilitate the answers to questions you raise and go a certain distance toward assisting us in solving the question you pose to us, that is, the "German question." We would only note that for us, the evaluation of the SPD is not simply that of a tactical approach to any organization, but is central to the problem of building a revolutionary Party in Germany. Final clarification of our organizational relationships may involve sending to Germany a delegation from the Central Committee of the Spartacist League to discuss with Spartacus/BL and the IKD.

The Spartacist League will do what is necessary to assist you in order to assure the presence of an authorized delegation of the Central Committee of Spartacus/BL at our conference. Due to lack of time, we hope to settle the details in New York upon your arrival. If this is impossible for you, call.

Finally, we note that Moore has offered to "check" the necessary new translation of the Spartacist League document on the SPD. Since Moore is in Germany for personal reasons, any political or technical assistance he may choose to offer Spartacus/BL represents that of an individual acting in his own name and has no connection with the Spartacist League, unless explicitly agreed on beforehand.

With communist greetings,

John Sharpe
for the Spartacist League