

Spartacist League
Box 188 MIT Station
Boston, Massachusetts 02139
23 March 1976

Boston International Socialists
Brothers and sisters,

In response to the request made by your comrade, Mike H., at last Sunday night's "Benefit for the Portuguese Revolution," we are sending you this proposal for a debate. We would suggest that the topic be either "Which Road to the Portuguese Revolution" or "What is Communist Work in the Trade Unions." Our two organizations have had considerable intersection on these two issues all across the country and will no doubt continue to do so. (Of course we are willing to debate any mutually agreeable topic.)

Your comrade suggested that a debate would be a suitable format for a political discussion between our two organizations. We, of course, quite agree that a debate is one important way of struggling for political clarity. We believe that such a debate will be of educational value and of interest not only to our respective supporters but also to the entire left.

Lastly, we would suggest this debate take place on Friday evening, 9 April, at Harvard (which is easily accessible and at which we can obtain use of a room for free.) These arrangements are, of course, subject to negotiations to establish a convenient and suitable date and location.

We look forward to your early response.

Fraternally,



Peter Atkins
for the Spartacist League

492-3928 or 354-7285

Boston International Socialists
Box 8488 JFK Station
Boston, Mass. 02114
March 28, 1976

Spartacist League
Box 188 MIT Station
Boston, Mass. 02139

Dear comrades,

We have considered your proposal for a debate between our two organizations. We regret that we will be unable to comply with your request. (It is our understanding that it was your comrade who requested a debate of us, at which point we agreed to consider a written proposal.)

At this time it is true that the I.S. still maintains something of a public face on the left. (Indeed, working in Boston we find this nearly unavoidable.) We had agreed to the Socialist Workers Party's proposal for a debate a while back on Portugal (Portugal: The Unfolding Revolution). At the time it seemed to us that the Portuguese revolution was attracting a good deal of interest in this country, as evidenced by the large crowds that came to hear Antonio Silva in every major city in this country and Canada. At the time of the S.W.P. proposal, we felt that we could not miss an important opportunity to build solidarity with the leading tendency in Portugal at this time, the Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat. Having a revolution on their hands, our comrades there can use all the help they can get, even leftist help.

Since we have become a workers' organization our main work has been, of course, in the class and not "on the left". We will, in the coming years, debate any organization on the left that is or becomes an important tendency in the class. However, it is our perception that at this time most of the left is engaged in work that is oriented to the student and intellectual communities. This work at best is characterized by irrelevance, at worst by esoteria, trivia, and sectarianism. This is not the arena we are forced to work in any longer. The changed period permits our work in the class to move forward, to recruit workers and build the cadre of what will become the revolutionary party.

In short then, we feel that the types of individuals drawn by a debate between our two organizations are not, to put it kindly, our main priority. Needless to say, it could hardly be of interest to workers who seem, at this time, more interested in fighting the depression than in debating. Most importantly however, the Spartacist League continues to finger shop floor militants in or working with the I.S. in your newspaper, Workers' Vanguard. This hopefully unwitting aid to the employers and against us in our work, quite naturally makes us reluctant to deal with your organization for security reasons. We must be able to defend our work and so must take whatever precautions necessary. Your national leadership has already been contacted on this question by our organization, but to date we have seen no change in this disastrous and to us, personally dangerous, policy.

We can, of course, work together on those projects with which we have mutual agreement. The Spinola demonstration you initiated here in town was along almost model non-sectarian lines. We apologize for not at least informing you informally of our inability to participate in the anti-racist demonstration you co-sponsored at Boston University. Since we work, the 12:30PM time presented difficulties for us. We were also unclear as to why an anti-racist demonstration was being held at a university. Again, we apologize for only letting you know of this after the fact, but, as you know, the Master Freight Agreement is up at the end of this month, and, as you can understand we are up to our ears in work.

Fraternally,

Karl Werner
Karl Werner
for the Boston I.S.
Executive Committee

SPARTACIST LEAGUE
Box 188 MIT Station
Cambridge, MA 02139

labor donated

SL DEBATE CHALLENGE TO IS

The following letter was sent to the International Socialists (IS) on 23 March 1976, at the suggestion of a member of the IS. As yet, there has been no IS reply, either written or verbal. Our challenge still stands.

In the interim, however, the IS once again demonstrated that it prefers bureaucratic suppression of political discussion to open political struggle. Last Friday night at Harvard, IS supporter Mike [H.] slapped an SL comrade in the face. Obviously frustrated with his inability to defend the IS' reformist opportunism, [H.] resorts to attempts at intimidation. The Spartacist League has consistently fought to uphold workers democracy. We are opposed to physical attacks on any tendency within the workers movement and will defend ourselves or any other group within the workers movement that becomes the target of such attacks. Exclusionism (which the IS has not hesitated to use in other cities,) slander and gangsterism are well known Stalinist and Social Democratic tactics. The real beneficiaries of these tactics, of course, are the capitalists and the cops who can use the suspicions and hostilities within the left to their own advantage. We call on all tendencies and individuals within the workers movement to condemn the IS' attempt at physical intimidation to suppress political struggle--DEFEND WORKERS DEMOCRACY!

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