

January 24, 1974

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. A letter from Gus Horowitz to an Israeli comrade, discussing the draft resolution on the Arab revolution by Jaber, Sami and Vergeat.
2. An exchange of letters between the IEC Majority tendency in Germany and the Compass Tendency in Germany; plus a letter to the United Secretariat from the Spartacus group in Germany.
3. A letter from the editorial board of Rouge responding to the protest made by the comrades of the Liga Comunista of Spain (see SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 8 in 1973, pp. 29-32).

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

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New York,
December 20, 1973

Haifa, Israel

Dear Mikado,

As I had mentioned to you some time ago, I have drawn together in an Education for Socialists bulletin some of the key material from the 1971 SWP discussion on Israel and the Arab revolution (also including a slightly updated and edited version of the essay I wrote about a year ago for our discussion, a copy of which was sent to you last January). This bulletin has just been published, and it should give you a pretty good idea of our thinking on this issue. I would appreciate your comments if you care to send them.

Since my trip was aborted and I did not have a chance to talk to you directly, I am writing to tell you some of my thoughts on the document submitted by Jaber, Sami, and Vergeat entitled "The Arab Revolution: Its Problems, Present State and Perspectives." (IIDB, vol. X no. 21)

There are many good points to the document, for which a lot of credit should be given to Comrade Jaber, who was the author. His document is certainly richer than some of the earlier drafts we had been discussing. And that is testimony to the importance of having comrades on the scene offering their concrete understanding of the subject.

Some points should be added to the document to round it out. For example, the analysis of the situation in Israel could be made more concrete. I assume that you comrades are planning to make a contribution in this regard. Among other things, it would be particularly useful to have a concrete analysis of the Histadrut and the various political parties, and the nature of the labor movement in Israel.

By the way, during the United Secretariat discussion on the document, we were informed that you comrades had written down some brief comments related to the preliminary draft that was circulating. Are these meant for publication in the IIDB, or are you thinking to submit something else?

I think it would also be useful for the document to include a brief section on the tremendous buildup of the Iranian ruling class by U.S. imperialism for the purpose of helping them preserve imperialist oil interests against the Arab revolution.

I think it would also be useful to draw out some of the significance of the USA-USSR detente, as illustrated by the recent war and its consequences. First of all, of course, we should note the stepped-up collusion between Washington and Moscow who are trying to impose a settlement to the detriment of the Arab revolution. But that is not the only thing to note. The recent war has also shown the incapacity of any agreements reached between Washington and Moscow to contain the class struggle; the danger of a nuclear conflict developing out of the confrontation between Washington and Moscow in the Arab East; and the fact that the detente does not mollify the imperialists, but only emboldens them.

In addition, I think that a section could be added to the document on the immediate tasks of the Trotskyist movement -- not a set of tactical prescriptions, of course, but some general guide-

lines.

Finally, of course, it would be important to indicate how the world Trotskyist movement stood up to the test of the recent war, in contrast to other political tendencies in the left. Here, I would expect that we can draw a positive balance sheet.

There were two major tests facing our movement: the test of the political stand that we took and the test of the activity we engaged in.

As far as the political stand is concerned, the key test was for our movement to put defense of the Arab people at the center of our propaganda. At the outset, I think, it was unfortunate that the press of some of the European sections centered on some slogans that avoided dealing squarely with this issue -- for example, the front-page banner headline in the October 12, 1973, La Gauche, demanding "transform the war into a revolutionary offensive." I think that this slogan of La Gauche was a little too abstract for the general reader, whose first interest would naturally be to find out what side we were on. Rouge also had a slightly unfortunate imbalance at the outset. But these inadequacies were soon corrected -- and I think a lot of credit for this is due to the influence of the forthright statements that were issued by the Trotskyist groups in Israel and Lebanon. The United Secretariat met some time later and adopted a unanimous statement "For the Defeat of Zionism and Imperialism!" (Intercontinental Press, November 5, 1973)

As far as the activity of our sections is concerned, the war was also a test of our capacity to mobilize on a campaign basis against this new Zionist aggression -- to take some "initiatives in action," so to speak. I'm sure you followed the Militant's extensive coverage of the very active campaign of the SWP and YSA here in the U.S.A. Meetings and demonstrations were held from one end of the country to the other. Taking into account the unpopularity of anti-Zionism in the U.S.A., many of these meetings and demonstrations were fairly sizable. A good roundup of this campaign is also contained in the article by Dave Frankel that appears in the December 3, 1973, issue of Intercontinental Press.

I hope that the Trotskyist groups in other countries carried out a similar campaign; but I don't really have a lot of information. Rouge and La Gauche, for example, did not carry reports of such activity on a large scale. I'm sure there were a lot of possibilities though, especially given the very sizable number of Arab workers in France. So I'm waiting very anxiously to hear about all the activities that our comrades there carried out.

Well, these are among the main additions I would suggest including in the document. But on all of these points, there might not be any serious differences. If that was all that was involved, I am sure that the document could be amended easily and presented as a common document supported by a big majority of the International leadership.

However, other differences exist, as you well know. Because of these other differences the minority on the United Secretariat expressed opposition to the line of the document, despite the recognition that there is much else of value in it. I will briefly discuss the main differences below, but first I should like to state that in my opinion the differences that have unfolded up to now on the Arab revolution are not comparable in depth to those on

the main disputed questions facing the International today. Furthermore, the differences on the Arab revolution are not part of the political basis defining any of the tendencies in the International today, and it is possible that the differences on this question could cut across factional lines. At least we should not prejudge the situation or freeze the discussion. In any case, this reinforces the importance of carrying out this discussion in an objective manner, with as little factional heat as possible, and without pressure being brought on anyone to line up quickly on this question on a factional basis.

* * *

Following are the main criticisms that I have of the document:

First of all, the attitude towards the slogan of a "democratic, secular Palestine" is not specified. This cannot be avoided for two reasons: first, because this demand was given prominence in the propaganda of Fateh, the main Palestinian resistance organization; second, because disagreements have existed and still exist over this demand within the Fourth International.

As you know, the SWP supports this slogan -- not as a self-sufficient slogan adequate to sum up what we stand for, but as a democratic slogan expressing the Palestinian demand for self-determination. The key aspect of this demand is its call for a unitary Palestine to replace the Israeli settler colonial state. Democratic demands such as this should be incorporated into the Trotskyist program for the Arab East.

There are three main objections that I have heard to the SWP position in discussions held in the International.

First, some comrades have equated our support for this demand with support for the call for a democratic state, also advocated by Fateh and other Palestinian groups. This is unwarranted. We reject and oppose the idea of forming some abstract, classless, democratic state, a concept which is used by the Stalinists and others to cover up their goal of supporting a bourgeois state. We say that we support the goal of a unitary Palestine, and the call for democratic rights, and that these goals can only be achieved by a socialist revolution which will culminate in the creation of a workers state. This point is taken up in considerable detail in the Education for Socialists bulletin (see in particular, the first article containing the theses on the revolution in the Arab East since 1967 and also the report adopted by the August 1971 SWP convention).

Second, some comrades have contended either that the demand is meaningless because the creation of an independent Palestine cannot be achieved prior to the unification of the Arab East, or that calling for a Palestine is a "regionalist" error, cutting across the goal of unification of the Arab East. I believe that Jaber's document implies a position along the latter lines.

Whether or not an independent Palestinian state ever comes into being is irrelevant in determining the validity of the call to replace Israel with Palestine. A unitary Palestine will be realized, even if it is part of a larger United Socialist Arab East. The importance of the demand for a unitary Palestine lies in the fact that it is directed squarely against the Israeli settler colonial state, and thus helps advance the Arab revolution as a whole, including the goal of Arab national unification.

As far as the latter argument goes, it is schematic and formal, in my opinion, to counterpose the call for Arab national unification to the call for a unitary Palestine -- for the same reasons. The struggle for a unitary Palestine against Israeli settler-colonialism helps advance the Arab revolution as a whole, and thus helps advance the unification of the Arab East. I know that Fateh and other groups in the resistance deliberately fostered a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of the other Arab states, and that they did this in the name of concentrating on Palestine. But why should we accept that framework? Rather than counterposing the two, we should point out that the struggle for a unitary Palestine necessitates the involvement of the masses throughout the Arab world, and that the struggle is inextricably tied to the Arab revolution as a whole.

Consider an analogy: Sadat calls for Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, and he limits his demand to that, accepting UN resolution 242. And even this call is only to prepare the Arab masses to accept even less, as part of a broader deal. Should we be bound by that framework and counterpose the call for a unified Arab East or the call for the liberation of Palestine to the call for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories? It would be schematic and formal to do so. I think that the issue was put very well in the interview printed in Intercontinental Press, October 29, 1973, with a leader of the Trotskyist group in Lebanon. He said, "We are not opposed to the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the 1967 borders. On the contrary, we are for the total and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist army to the pre-1967 borders. That would be a step forward that would be childish to reject. But I say 'a step forward'; that is, the objective of withdrawal is not counterposed to the objective of the liberation of Palestine -- it is in the service of that objective."

Similarly, the call for a unitary Palestine is in the service of the objective of Arab national unification. We could also add that the demand for total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops to the 1967 borders is also valid even if that demand cannot be realized prior to the unification of the entire Arab East.

As I said earlier, the document by Jaber, Sami and Vergeat does not take a position on the demand for a unitary Palestine; but in my opinion it does tend to go overboard in setting up a schematic and formalistic counterposition of "regionalism" to the goal of Arab national unification. We are opposed to the narrow "regionalist" politics of the bourgeois regimes, and to any notion of limiting politics to the borders of any of the present states; but I do not believe that concentrating on the issue of Palestine is a regionalist error (the error would be in limiting oneself to Palestine -- the "noninterference" line -- and of course no one in our movement proposes that).

I have also heard from a few comrades such as Said an objection to the demand for a democratic Palestine on the ground (among others) that the Palestinian right to a unitary Palestine would cut across the right of the Israeli Jews to a separate state (self-determination).

We have discussed this question of self-determination at great length in the SWP and the discussion is documented in the Education for Socialists bulletin. As you know, we are for full democratic rights for the Jews in a unitary Palestine, but reject the call for self-determination for the oppressor nationality. The right of the

oppressed, the Palestinians, to self-determination includes their unilateral right to a unitary Palestine, which does preclude the right of the Jews to a separate state.

While there were fairly wide disagreements on this issue in the International several years ago, the differences on this issue have tended to narrow. That was one of the things reflected in the self-criticism of the Argentine PST, published in Intercontinental Press, Nov. 12, 1973. They stated in correcting an earlier erroneous position that their error was due to repeating the position they had taken during 1967, a position which was fairly widely held by the Fourth International at that time. I have also noticed lately that even those sections that have not rejected the notion of Israeli-Jewish self-determination at least do not give this point prominence, as had been done in the past. The 1973 unanimous statement of the United Secretariat was also much better in this regard than the statements of 1967.

The document by Jaber, Sami and Vergeat comes close to the SWP position on this question. But there is still an ambiguity; this ambiguity cannot be ignored, precisely because of the differences that have existed.

The document is correct in stating that "in the present conditions of the continued existence of the Zionist state, demanding the 'right of self-determination for the Israeli nation' could in the last analysis only be reactionary." (page 23, IIDB vol. X no. 21)

This is clear and unambiguous. The ambiguity arises in the few sentences coming immediately after the above passage, as well as in the passage immediately preceding this, outlining the perspective of the future norms of a workers state. For example, it says that "workers democracy requires recognizing the right to self-administration of the Jewish workers in their regions, within the context of the political and economic centralism demanded by a workers state."

When this came up in the discussion in the United Secretariat I said that this passage was not incorrect, as far as it went, but that it was necessary to specify that self-administration did not include the unilateral right to an armed force, which is the cornerstone of a state. Comrade Ernest and others objected, saying that self-administration, in their view, did include the unilateral right to an armed force. This, in my opinion, indicated that while the differences on this question have narrowed, they have not disappeared.

During the discussion, Ernest tried to present his argument in the best possible light -- spoke of the unilateral right to a workers militia. But this does not change the question. If we are not to fall into an error similar to that of the Workers Opposition in the early days of the Soviet Union, we must recognize the authority of the central government of a workers state as decisive. We certainly expect that in a revolutionary situation bringing about a workers state, the masses of Jewish workers will be aligned with the revolution and will take part in the workers militias that are established. But I think we should expect that there may be some Kronstadt type situations too, where under the rubric of a workers militia, some conservative and even pro-Zionist Jewish workers might try to maintain a "unilateral" right to a "workers militia." So, our documents should not open the door to any ambiguity on this account.

My position on this question is summed up in the following two

paragraphs of the theses I wrote last year (with a new addition to clarify the point that came up in the United Secretariat/Bureau discussion):

"The central task of the socialist revolution, insofar as the national relations between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs are concerned, is to take whatever steps are necessary to insure that the national oppression of the Palestinian Arabs is ended. This means defense of all democratic rights of the Palestinian Arabs, up to and including their right to self-determination. The right of the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination includes their right to a unitary Palestine embracing all of the pre-1948 borders, even if this is a part of a larger unified Arab state.

"The right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination is a unilateral right. That is, it is the right of the presently oppressed Palestinians to determine unilaterally whether or not they and the Hebrew-speaking Jews will live in a unitary state or in separate states. The Israeli Jews, as the present oppressor nationality, do not have that right. But within this framework, the Hebrew-speaking Jews, a small minority within the Arab East, are guaranteed all democratic rights of a national minority, such as language, culture, religion, education, etc. If appropriate, this can include the right to local self-administration in Jewish areas, but not the unilateral right to form a militia or other armed force; any form of local self-administration must be subject to the approval of the central government of the unitary workers state." (Education for Socialists bulletin, Israel and the Arab Revolution, page 10)

For the most part, the differences in the International on this question of self-determination for the Jews are on the theoretical level, dealing with what the norms of a future workers state should be. These theoretical differences remain basically as before, in my opinion. In saying earlier that the differences had narrowed, I meant this in the sense that the differences have narrowed over what we should say and advocate prominently today. Most of the comrades who still support the right of self-determination for the Jews in the future, after the revolution, do not think that this should be given prominence in our propaganda today. Thus, it should be possible to conduct this discussion in a calm and objective manner, with very little heat. The unanimous ten-point recommendations of the United Secretariat indicate the type of discussion that is warranted. Of course, I do not mean to imply that the difference is a minor one. There is always the danger that the difference on the theoretical level could give rise sometime to a sharp difference on the immediate political level over what to say and do.

As far as this goes, the sharpest disagreement with the SWP position that I have heard has been raised by Comrade Said, who feels that it is important to call now, and call loudly for the right of the Israeli Jews to self-determination, as part of the program for the Arab socialist revolution. He may be drafting up a document for the international discussion, which would be useful to help clarify the issues. In any case, he has already published a new essay, entitled "Arab Revolution and National Problems in the Arab East," which deals with this question at some length. It was jointly co-authored by Said and M. Machover, and was published in the summer 1973 issue of International, the theoretical journal of the IMG. I assume you have already seen this, but just in case you haven't I enclose a copy.

By the way, do you still consider Machover to be an anarchist-leaning centrist? I recall your letter to Tariq and the IMG last year calling upon them to unmask Machover's phony pretensions to Trotskyist sympathies, especially because of Machover's role in helping to provoke the split in Matzpen. Does the IMG's publication of the joint article by Machover and Said now indicate that Machover has moved closer to our movement?

There is one other main criticism I have of the document by Jaber, Sami and Vergeat, but it is of lesser importance than the ones above.

I disagree with calling for one Leninist party for the entire Arab region; presumably, this means one section of the Fourth International. I do not think that this is in accord with the traditional Leninist concept. We conceive of the International as a single, world party of socialist revolution, based around a single program, and whose goal is the construction of Leninist parties capable of leading the working class to power in the various countries of the world. These national sections are defined, not by any separate programmatic basis, nor by our goals of what the future organization of the world will look like, but according to the boundary lines of the existing nation states -- boundary lines which are not of our choosing, but in which we have to function, nevertheless. The socialist revolution will not take place uniformly throughout the entire world, nor uniformly throughout the Arab world. It will take place through a process, and over time, shorter or longer as the case may be, of overthrowing the various ruling capitalist classes, who are organized along the national boundary lines that imperialism and they establish. Naturally, as the sections of the Fourth International functioning in the Arab world develop they will need more and more coordination between them. But that is a different question than forming a single section.

The Bolsheviks had to deal with this question, under somewhat different circumstances. Although they called for the right of oppressed nationalities in the Czarist empire to form separate states, they organized the working class into one revolutionary party, in accord with the boundaries of the Russian state. We face a similar situation in the United States. Black and Chicano Trotskyists are organized in the same party as white Trotskyists, despite the fact that we call for the right of the Black and Chicano people to self-determination. Our goal is to centralize the revolutionary struggle against the centralized American capitalist class and its state. Similarly in Canada, there is one Trotskyist party for revolutionists in both Quebec and English Canada. Similarly, our goal is to build one Leninist party in Spain.

A couple of other points may also illustrate the error in conceiving of one party for the entire Arab world. For example, the Kurdish people, presently live mainly in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran as an oppressed nationality. We are for their right to self-determination, including their right to form a common Kurdish state. Should there be one Kurdish section of the Fourth International too? I think not. Forming sections along the boundary lines of our ultimate goal will impede the immediate task of centralizing the struggle against the various ruling classes in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran, who are centralized according to different lines than our goal.

It is finally, just impractical to have just one party for all the Arab world. The very boundary lines set up by our capitalist enemies will prevent sections organized on a different basis from

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functioning seriously as sections. Leadership functioning, communication, speedy decision making would all present insurmountable problems.

Well, these are some of my thoughts on the document. Let me know yours. I'll send a copy of this letter to Jaber too, and to various leading comrades in the International.

By the way, two of the leading Iranian comrades, Ahmad Heydari and Cyrus Paydar, have submitted an article to the IIDB on the national question, including a very interesting discussion on the revolutionary history of Iran. It is now being prepared for publication in IIDB no. 26 and should be available shortly.

Fraternally,
s/Gus

January 24, 1974

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrades,

The material sent you in the mailing of December 15, 1973, contained a copy of a letter from the leadership of the Compass Tendency in Germany calling attention to the fact that Pierre Frank and members of the IEC majority tendency in Germany had organized discussions with a small group outside the Fourth International known as "K-Sp." They did this without going through the normal channels of the elected leadership of the German section.

Attached are copies of a reply to this letter from the steering committee of the IEC majority tendency in the GIM (dated December 4, 1973); and an answer to this from the Compass steering committee (dated December 12, 1973).

Also attached is a copy of an open letter to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from the German group Spartacus (from which the "K-Sp" referred to above split off) asking to be invited to participate in the world congress discussion.

Comradely,

Mary Alice

Mary-Alice Waters

Compass Tendency in the GIM

November 28, 1973

To:

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International

cc: Pierre Frank

Joe Hansen

Political Bureau of the GIM

Dear Comrades,

At its November 24, 1973, meeting, the CC of the GIM dealt at length with the regroupment tendencies in the Trotskyist organizations in West Germany outside the Fourth International, which formed out of the 1969 split in the German organization. It decided to seek organized discussions with these groupings. In particular it decided to immediately seek discussions with the minority of the former KJO Spartacus, which broke from the KJO Spartacus about three weeks ago and is now vigorously seeking discussions with the GIM. On this occasion a few members of the CC of the GIM supported the view that this grouping could quickly be brought close to the GIM.

In fact, even before this CC meeting and before these decisions were made, an organized discussion with this grouping took place, although not with the Fourth International and the GIM as a whole, but rather with a tendency in the Fourth International and a tendency in the GIM. On the occasion of Comrade Pierre Frank's visit to the Berlin GIM group, where he spoke as a representative of the IEC Majority Tendency in the international discussion, a candid discussion took place with the Berlin section of this grouping that split with Spartacus, in which besides Pierre Frank (IMT) a number of comrades in the "Internationalist Tendency" of the GIM (supporters of the IMT within the GIM) took part, among them CC members of the GIM who belong to the IT (and the IMT). The CC, the PB, and the organizational secretary of the GIM were not informed about the discussion that had taken place at its November 24 meeting. The CC accepted this report without taking a position.

Our tendency welcomes the attention that the CC of the GIM is paying to this regroupment process, a process that may have positive results for us. Further we gather from the report on this discussion that was given by IT comrades in the CC that these comrades who have split from KJO Spartacus expressed their understandable desire to become acquainted with the positions of all tendencies in the GIM. There is no majority tendency in the GIM at the present time. Since the Fourth International does not recognize different rights or conditions for different tendencies, our tendency, of course, claims the right that the IMT and the IT have already exercised for themselves. Therefore, we too will conduct our own discussions with this grouping insofar as it desires to have such discussions with us. This does not contradict our readiness to take part in GIM "tendency parity" discussions with this grouping. We welcome such discussions and hope that they will soon come about. What is at issue here is, rather, a normal consequence of our equal rights with the IT as a tendency, as well as our interest in seeing that the former Spartacus comrades do not get a one-sided picture if the discussions with them have already been taken up on the tendency level.

Herbert Obenland
6 Frankfurt, Nordenstrasse 30

The Steering Committee
Albert - Juan - Karl

TRANSLATION

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INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY
in the GIM

Frankfurt, Dec. 4, 1973

To:

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International
The Political Bureau of the GIM
The Control Commission of the GIM
The Steering Committee of the "Compass" Tendency
Copies to: Pierre Frank, Joseph Hansen, IEC Majority Tendency
Comrades,

The steering committee of the "Compass" Tendency, in its letter of Nov. 28, announced its intention to enter into direct discussions as a tendency with a group that stands outside of the German section, a group which recently split from the former KJO Spartacus (this "organizationless faction" also calls itself "Compass" and thus in the following will be referred to as the K-Sp for short). Alleged "organized discussions at the tendency level" between the Internationalist Tendency in the GIM and the IEC Majority Tendency (represented by Comrade Frank), on the one hand, and Berlin representatives of the K-Sp, on the other, are given as justification for this step.

It is untrue that discussions ever took place between our tendency and the group in question, and we have no knowledge of "organized discussions" between the K-Sp and the IEC majority tendency. Acting on the suggestion of the CC of the GIM that local groups of the GIM should utilize any opportunities which presented themselves at a local level to get into conversations with members of the grouplets produced by the decomposition of KJO Spartacus and Spartacus BL, several Berlin comrades intensified private contacts (which had already existed for a considerable time) with individual members of the grouping in question. Incidentally, they also notified the CC of the GIM of these activities. Contacts like this with GIM branches (with participation of Compass comrades) occur in many places. To attempt to stylize these discussions into "official" negotiations between the Internationalist Tendency and the K-Sp is absolutely ridiculous. The fact that the comrades involved in these contacts in West Berlin belong to the IT is purely coincidental (there are neither "Compass" nor LTT members in Berlin). It is neither the case that the steering committee of our Tendency was involved in an organizing capacity in this activity (Comrade Winnie already had contact with the K-Sp comrades in question before there was an IT, that is, before he became a member of the steering committee), nor that the K-Sp comrades involved represented their grouping as a whole (which, indeed, is organized beyond West Berlin).

The interpretation imposed by Compass on these contacts is all the more surprising to us inasmuch as reservations of no kind were formulated by its representatives at the CC meeting of Nov. 24 at which the Berlin comrades reported their impressions. Moreover, it is difficult to see where the difference lies between the Berlin contacts and, for example, the discussions that have been going on for much longer between Comrade Karl (organizational secretary, member of the Compass steering committee) and at least one leading K-Sp comrade. The CC and PB of the GIM were not "informed nor asked beforehand" about these either, and were informed only fragmentarily, incidentally, and after the fact. So far as

the presence of Comrade Frank at one of these discussions is concerned, we can only repeat what the Berlin comrades have already stated to the CC: Pierre Frank was [in West Berlin] for a discussion on the international differences (Comrade Vergeat, who was originally scheduled to attend -- about which the PB was notified -- was ill), which the Compass steering committee itself in its letter admits, and [he] took part in a discussion with several K-Sp comrades at the invitation of several Berlin comrades -- not as a representative of the IEC Majority Tendency, but rather in a personal capacity. The Berlin comrades motivated their invitation to Comrade Frank by saying that they wanted to give him as a member of the United Secretariat the opportunity to inform himself on the present political position of the comrades involved; they broke with the Fourth International several years ago.

In our opinion, the direct "official" discussions announced by the Compass tendency with the K-Sp would explode the democratic centralism of the German section. The CC of the GIM has expressly specified that, although all three of the tendencies represented in the PB at the present time are to be included in the planned discussions between the GIM and the K-Sp, this procedure may not be permitted to nullify the external organizational unity of the GIM. The fact that Compass now desires to enter into such discussions at the tendency level without authorization can only be interpreted as the first step on the way to constituting a Compass faction (even if there were some truth to the invented "organized discussions" between the IT and the K-Sp, it would have been the responsibility of Compass to call in the CC or the Control Commission in order to put a stop to our procedure, but it was not proper, without any further consultation -- i.e., without giving us the opportunity to clarify the facts -- to constitute itself as a de facto faction). The fact that the justification given will appear to every unbiased comrade as a pretext casts doubt upon the real motives of Compass.

The logical step on our part would now be to initiate "official", centralized negotiations between our tendency and possibly the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in the GIM and the leadership of the K-Sp (we don't even know who that is). For our part, we reject that step in order not to fuel the centrifugal tendencies which threaten to explode the political and organizational cohesiveness of the GIM. We appeal to the comrades of the Compass Tendency not to go further in the indicated, false direction and to rescind their announcement. Contingent upon such retraction, we call upon the control commission to take up the announcement by the steering committee of Compass. We request that the United Secretariat take a position on the Compass letter and influence Compass in an appropriate manner with a view to preventing the announced breach of the discipline of the organization.

The steering committee of the IT
Winnie, Urs, Mintoff

Note: We request that this letter as well as the Nov. 28 letter of Compass steering committee to the United Secretariat be published in the next internal Information-Organization letter of the GIM.

COMPASS

Tendency in the GIM
December 12, 1973

To the IS, PB, CC, CT, IMT, Frank, and Hansen.

Re the December 4, 1973, letter from the Steering Committee of the Internationalist Tendency in the GIM

It should be mentioned in advance that since we had to arrange our priorities differently we have not yet had the opportunity to set up a discussion with the "K-Sp" in accordance with the desire expressed in our letter of November 28.

However, since the letter of the IT Steering Committee is astounding in a number of respects, we wish to take up the following points:

The first thing that is astounding is that a letter directed to the PB [Political Bureau] and the US [United Secretariat] is answered by a tendency, and at that even before the PB had an opportunity to take it up and answer it. We are very disturbed at the way the IT is playing the role of a shadow leadership even before the national convention. How can it be arranged so that in the future letters addressed to the PB will be answered by the PB and not first by the IT?

The second astounding point is that the IT raises the cry that we want to make "official" contact with the "K-Sp" while they did not do so. In our letter of November 28, 1973, we expressly pointed out that we wanted discussions with the "K-Sp" on the basis of equal rights with the IT not "greater rights." If the IT is disturbed about the term "organized discussion" -- well, there is a certain amount of organization involved in bringing together one US member, two GIM-CC members and a larger number of "K-Sp" comrades. If they equate "organized" with "official" we will withdraw the term. As to whether the Steering Committee of the IT was informed or not (one member of the IT Steering Committee who took part was informed in any case) is purely an internal problem of the IT and does not interest us in the least. A Steering Committee is a tendency body and not a leadership body of the GIM.

The third astounding point is how a conversation with two CC members and one US member is made out to be a local matter. The CC is not a federative committee and Comrade Pierre is not a Berliner. If this was such a local affair, why, for instance, weren't other members of the local Berlin leadership involved (who, in fact, are not all members of the IT) rather than just two of the CC members organized in the IT and the IMT?

The fourth astounding point is that it is now claimed that the discussion with the "K-Sp" concerned "information about the present political position of the 'K-Sp' comrades." Petra's report in the CC was very clear as to what was discussed: the European document, the new mass vanguard, the differences on Latin America. These are the very questions that are the subject of controversy between the Compass tendency and the IT (IMT).

The fifth astounding point is that the IT asks (and indirectly throws it up to us) why we did not call in the control commission or protest to the CC. But we expressly said in the CC meeting (those of us present) and in our letter of November

28 that we welcomed these discussions. We are glad that Comrade Pierre took advantage of the opportunity to explain the position of his tendency to comrades who, according to the estimation of several CC members, are moving toward the GIM and want to enter into the closest relationship with it.

Point six, and this is the most astounding and significant point of all -- the IT letter mentions conversations between us and "K-Sp" which are alleged to have already taken place, although Petra in the CC expressly said that the comrades of the "K-Sp" knew nothing about this. How could they since such discussion did not take place? Why Petra even raised such a question is another matter.

The kind of evidence produced in the IT letter is foreign to our movement, but common among the Stalinists: Conversations "between Comrade Karl (the organizational secretary, member of the Compass Steering Committee) and at least one leading 'K-Sp' comrade." The author of the IT letter (Mintoff) knows very well that this "at least one leading 'K-Sp' comrade" (and what leads him to believe that there was more than one involved??) is Karl's brother, who lives in the same city and the same neighborhood as Karl. If only "fragmentary" information about this contact has come out, it is for the very reason that it was not conducted on an organizational level. This is the first time in our organization that family ties have been used as evidence of interorganizational contacts. In the time since the '69 split Karl has never broken off ties with Bernhard and no one in the GIM has ever interpreted this as Mintoff did.

When Mintoff's brother was still with the Maoists, Mintoff did in fact maintain personal and political contact with him and this contributed to winning him over to our organization. What would comrades have thought if the Heidelberg CC members had used this as an argument for internal discussions with the NRF leadership and at the same time declared that this was a local matter since these people are only to be found in Heidelberg. (Of course, the analogy is imperfect because of the different character of our relationship with the NRF.)

The essence of the matter might well be put as follows: the IT letter leads to the conclusion that its discussion in Berlin was OK but that the Compass tendency, no matter what status it chooses for its discussions, is breaking discipline when it also engages in discussion. You can twist it and turn it any way you like. It still means that the IT wants to apply a double standard. This bodes little good for the future, especially if the IT becomes the official leadership of the GIM.

Carry on.

The Steering Committee
Albert - Juan - Karl

OPEN LETTER TO THE "UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL"

Dear Comrades,

The communist organization Spartacus -- which arose from the majority of the Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands [Internationalist Communists of Germany] and the communist youth organization Spartacus -- has discussed the present situation of the world Trotskyist movement and the preparations for the "Tenth World Congress" of your organization:

1. The new rise of the world revolution since the end of the sixties takes place under more favorable conditions for the Trotskyists than those at the end of the thirties, when the Fourth International was proclaimed. Stalinism and Social Democracy today are not in the position to proceed against Trotskyists in the same way that they did in the thirties. Not the least evidence of this was provided by the reaction of the CP and SP in France to the ban on the "Ligue Communiste."

2. Nevertheless, the revival of class struggles, even in the highly developed capitalist countries, has not automatically resolved the crisis of the world Trotskyist movement. On the contrary: Faced with the new demands placed on revolutionaries, the Trotskyist groups have not been the least inclined to wall themselves up in complacent and sectarian conceptions in order to "hold firm" against the pressure of real class conflicts. But today also the class battles are becoming stronger than the programmatic ivory towers of many Trotskyist organizations and groups. Today it is clear that the rising class conflicts are breaking up these sectarian fronts. The split in the "International Committee" of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and the Socialist Labour League, the differences between the organizations adhering to the "United Secretariat" -- which have led to the virtual hamstringing of the "international center" -- are examples of this, as is the history of the IKD/Spartacus, which finally led to abandoning the strategy of a communist youth organization.

3. We view the present discussions in your organization from this standpoint. It is apparent that these discussions cannot result in political unity -- a political conception acceptable to all sides -- among the organizations adhering to the "United Secretariat." The differences among your organizations are obviously so far-reaching and decisive that they call into question the possibility of a homogeneous international organization. On this basis we believe that it could contribute to the clarification of all Trotskyist tendencies -- whether adhering to the "United Secretariat" or not -- if you were to open the general political discussion of your congress to other organizations.

4. We urge you -- as other organizations already have done -- to permit representatives of our organization to take part in your congress as observers with speaking rights. In addition, since most of us came from the IKD or the communist youth organization Spartacus, which the IKD constructed, we feel obligated to explain the reasons that led the IKD at its national conference of January 11, 1971, to leave the "German section of the Fourth International." We count on a prompt positive reply and remain,

With revolutionary greetings,

Central leadership of the communist organization Spartacus

Essen, November 24, 1973

To the Central Committee of the Liga Comunista
from the Editorial Board of Rouge

Comrades,

We have received your letter concerning the position we adopted in regard to the split that occurred in the LCR in December 1972. For the most part it consisted of a sharp criticism of the message we sent to the Second Congress of the LCR, the congress that took place at the end of last year and that publicly sanctioned the split, inasmuch as your tendency refused to recognize the gathering or participate in it.

You acknowledge our right to express our position on the nature of the debate that has unfolded in the LCR, and you even consider it a "positive step that we have rapidly made clear the fact that in our assessment the positions passed by the 'En Marcha' congress represent a thorough-going political clarification."

Your criticism is thus not aimed there but at the method we supposedly chose to express our point of view on this matter. You state that by giving a public stamp of approval to the "En Marcha" faction we have sought to bypass the traditional norms of the International and eject your faction from the Fourth International. You reproach us for having thrown the weight of the prestige of the Ligue Communiste on the scale, hoping in this way to benefit the development of the "En Marcha" Tendency. You represent this initiative as an extremely serious infraction of democratic centralism. And finally, by drawing a more general balance sheet of the participation of certain leaders of the Ligue Communiste in the development of the LCR, you accuse us of having given bureaucratic maneuvers priority over political discussion in order to serve factional interests.

We cannot accept your criticism. First, because it is for the most part based on untruths and pure and simple falsifications, and it would be difficult to believe that this stems from naiveté. Second, because your statements -- and the posture you assume, pretending to be the best defenders of democratic centralism in the Fourth International -- are contradicted by your actual behavior. Your letter blows out of all proportion an "affair" that is open to discussion but cannot seriously be considered of decisive importance by anyone. Thus it only confirms, should that still be necessary, that far from seeking genuine political discussion you are trying to avoid such a discussion by parading "affairs" based on grotesque and absurd interpretations, or even on scandalous falsifications.

We will begin by replying to your allegations, point by point.

1. It is not true that we have given our public stamp of approval to the "En Marcha" Tendency by virtue of the message we sent to the Second Congress of the LCR.

This message was sent to the LCR congress and was addressed to its militants. It was never published in Rouge or Quatrième Internationale. The responsibility for the publication of this message falls entirely on the leadership of the LCR.

From this point of view of the situation in the International, one might think that it would have been better if this message had retained its strictly internal character. But to pretend as you do that its publication had extremely serious consequences within the Spanish vanguard and led to "a loss of prestige on the part of the International" is nonetheless to lose all sense of propor-

tion.

2. It is not true that through this message we tried to expel you from the Fourth International. If we had really thought at the moment you took responsibility for the split (for this is really the case, a point we shall return to) that your positions clearly put you outside the International, we would have asked the leadership of the International right then and there to take a public position on the matter without delay. And we ourselves would have judged the matter sufficiently serious not to try to "resolve" it by a message which could acquire such a content only through your tendentious interpretations. Once again your statement appears to simply lack any real foundation.

3. It is not true that our message tried to justify the split in the LCR. We have always thought and said that this split was not inevitable. We have also felt, and we are in agreement with the comrades of the "En Marcha" Tendency on this, that you bear overwhelming responsibility for the split. It was the impermissible and irresponsible behavior of your tendency that resulted in almost completely paralyzing the LCR for six months and threatened to precipitate its total disintegration. It was in this sense that we said there remained "few possibilities to choose among": on the eve of the congress, the comrades of the "En Marcha" Tendency could, of course, have given in once again to your blackmailing threats of a split and agreed to allow you to impose a new postponement of the congress, although this would go against the unanimous decision of the United Secretariat, a decision you were in agreement with at the time. This is something you seem to have actually "forgotten"; after a discussion with the leaders of both tendencies, the United Secretariat asked that the congress be held during the latter part of December. You did not comply with this decision or with the agreement you made yourself. You refused to participate in the Second Congress of the LCR that did in fact take place in the appointed time. And you did not hold your own Second Congress until more than four months later.

Here you have an example of conduct that really places the functioning of the Fourth International in danger, conduct which, if it's necessary to spell things out, can have the gravest consequences.

4. It is true, on the other hand, that our message expressed our agreement with the positions adopted by the "En Marcha" Tendency. It also acknowledged the fact that these comrades shared our understanding of the correct tactic for building a revolutionary party, an understanding that is synthesized in the document "The Tactic for Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." It is also true that you have a totally different concept, one based, as you put it, on the "strategic orientation of the united front set forth in the Transitional Program."

We had already expressed this point of view quite clearly and frankly in front of both tendencies and prior to the split.

By publishing our message, the leadership of the LCR merely made public a disagreement that existed within the Fourth International, thus making public that its agreement with us runs deeper than yours. Their doing this cannot be called unique. To cite just one case, the leadership of the SWP long ago made public its positions on the political line of the Argentine PST, positions that are in disagreement with the majority of the leadership of

the Fourth International. Are you condemning a political clarification of this sort? Do you believe it's preferable for the revolutionary vanguard in Spain to be unaware of the fact that you have such important political differences with the Ligue Communiste, while still belonging to the Fourth International?

5. It is also true that we have had serious misgivings over the political thrust of your tendency, particularly in regard to the political and organizational circumstances in which you provoked the split. The history of your tendency after the split has shown that this opinion was well founded. The fact that after the split your tendency expelled a grouping of significant size that upheld clearly Lambertist positions (according to what you have told us; unfortunately, we have never been able to gain access to their documents) demonstrates quite well that regardless of your statement that you still situate yourself within the framework of the Fourth International, there is at least a significant section of your tendency that hasn't been speaking about the same Fourth International that we have.

The problem lies above all in the fact that this Lambertist faction was formed in your tendency in September 1972; that you then dissolved this tendency in order to demarcate yourselves from this faction; and that you quickly reconsidered this break, although it was perfectly justified politically, because it weakened your tendency numerically; and that you formed an unprincipled united front with this Lambertist faction in the struggle against the "En Marcha" tendency.

This was the real basis for our misgivings. We hope that this unprincipled alliance with a Lambertist faction in order to carry out a struggle within the Fourth International will remain a unique example in this history of our organization. The fact that you are trying hard to minimize this "episode" leads us to believe that you do not seek to establish it as a model for political debate within an organization governed by democratic centralism.

All that was necessary to lay this matter to rest and to convince us of your genuine adherence to the Fourth International was for you to immediately and clearly differentiate yourselves from this Lambertist faction. But you did not see fit to do this.

6. The accusations you make against the militants of the Ligue Communiste who participated in building the LCR are nothing but impermissible slanders. Accusations of such seriousness should at the very least have been accompanied by a detailed report based on concrete, verifiable facts. We are astonished that your entire Central Committee agreed to sign this document solely on the basis of statements by some comrades who had held personal responsibility for relations with the Ligue Communiste and the International.

The statements in your letter that Comrade R. tried to "build a loyal faction within the LCR," to the detriment of the political debate; that Comrade J. advocated systematic work in the workers commissions, while trying to convince the organization that "this did not imply any change in orientation"; that the same Comrade J. "suggested to the 'En Marcha' comrades that they organize a congress, not to resolve the political problem that had been posed but to resolve the organizational (!) problem of the division in the Central Committee"; and finally that at the time of the First Congress of the LCR Comrade J. "advised setting aside the debate

on a whole series of problems on questions of principle and strategy," are quite simply grotesque.

You have waited until now to make such grave accusations, accusations that relate to supposed facts that are already far in the past. You didn't say a word about this at the United Secretariat meeting at which Comrade Andres, a leader of the international minority tendency and the United Secretariat, was sharply criticized for his scandalous organizational intervention in the debate within the LCR.

The conclusion must then be drawn that your accusations are an invention you judge to be useful at the present stage of the debate in the International -- useful for arguing the thesis that the majority tendency is led by a factional, unprincipled clique.

But if one takes a close look at your organizational and political practices, it doesn't take long to discover your real concept of democratic centralism.

Who are the real factionalists? Let's look at a few facts:

At a full meeting of the Central Committee following your congress, a member of the committee stated that you had succeeded in organizing a faction in the ETA(VI). This was not contradicted, and you would find it difficult to do so. Shortly after this, in fact, the leadership of ETA(VI) informed us that a political tendency based on what are generally your positions had appeared. Obviously we believe it is perfectly natural that militants in the ETA(VI) might form a tendency in order to defend these positions. But what opinion should we form of this factional activity (according to your own admission) behind the back of the leadership of this organization, which for a long time now has had official organizational relations with the United Secretariat? Those are telling facts, comrades.

As for your congress, it finally took place, after the Lambertist faction had been expelled. You refused to invite a delegation from the LCR, although they had allowed you to speak at their congress and although you had invited, on the other hand, a group like the ETA (minority), which had broken with the ETA(VI) on anti-Trotskyist positions. The question thus arises of who is supposed to be expelling whom from the International? Moreover, since the split, we have been able to obtain only one pre-congress bulletin. What's more, only certain resolutions adopted by the congress were available in writing for the participants; a good number of the votes were votes on the general line of documents as presented in oral reports, with the Central Committee left with the responsibility of drawing up the definitive text of these resolutions.

Finally, unlike the LCR, you have not yet published any of the main international internal bulletins, to our knowledge; thus only certain of your members can have access to them. This does not seem to us to be a model of democratic centralism....

8. And where -- in all this -- does political debate come in? Unfortunately, we have very little in the way of recent information for judging your orientation, apart from your affiliation with the international minority, which is now constituted as a faction.

More than four months after your congress has taken place we still do not have any of the resolutions that were adopted. The

same is true for the leadership of the International. On the other hand, you have seen fit to devote your efforts to writing a long document criticizing the position we took during the March 1973 elections, taking up for the most part the criticism the SWP leadership made of us. This is an important debate, but who can seriously believe it occupies the central place in the international debate you have accorded it?

Meanwhile, the little we do know about the politics of your organization calls for severe criticism. The balance sheet of your intervention in the Pamplona general strike, an item that appeared in the most recent issue of your newspaper, unfortunately confirms the criticisms made of you by the ETA(VI), whose major role in this struggle you are well aware of: you conceived of your intervention solely in the framework of a policy of putting pressure on the bureaucratic leadership of the workers commissions, demanding that they assume the task of leading the struggle.

If this is your orientation, we feel there is a great deal of material for a genuine political debate, a debate whose importance and urgency are obvious.

It is this discussion that we hope to carry on with you.

Finally, we have recently learned that the repression by the Franco regime, which has been stepped-up and has dealt a stiff blow to the LCR, has not spared you. We express our total solidarity with you and reiterate our pledge to aid you concretely, to the extent of our means, in withstanding these attacks by the dictatorship.

Communist greetings,
Editorial Board