

# **INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN**

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- The Tasks of the Trotskyist League of Germany in the Next Period (June-August 1975)
- Critical Support Controversy
- Trade Union Discussion
- Italy
- Other

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THE TASKS OF THE TROTSKYIST LEAGUE  
OF GERMANY IN THE NEXT PERIOD

I. General Tasks

The Trotskyist League of Germany, section of the international Spartacist tendency, is a revolutionary Marxist organization whose goal is to construct in Germany the vanguard party of the proletariat as section of the Fourth International, which must be reborn. Only a determined class leadership based on the foundations of the revolutionary program laid down by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky can lead the working class to victory on both a national and international scale and thereby open the road to socialism. Pabloism organizationally dissolved and destroyed the Fourth International, founded in 1938 as an answer to the counterrevolutionary betrayal of the Stalinists. The revolutionary continuity of the German section had been broken even earlier through the reign of fascism, which broke up its organization and politically disoriented it. As part of the international Spartacist tendency, the TLD's task is organizationally and politically to overcome the break in continuity of revolutionary Marxism in Germany.

The international Spartacist tendency has briefly defined the tasks of the TLD:

"In Germany three inextricable tasks are posed for Leninists: to programmatically win over subjectively revolutionary elements from among the thousands of young left social democrats, centrists, revisionists and Maoists; to fuse together intellectual and proletarian elements, above all through the development and struggle of communist industrial fractions; to inwardly assimilate some thirty years of Marxist experience and analysis from which the long break in continuity has left the new generation of German revolutionary Marxists still partially isolated."

--"Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency," Workers Vanguard No. 49, 19 July 1974

The political activity of the TLD is determined by its present character as a relatively weak propaganda group, albeit a fighting propaganda group; i.e., programmatic regroupment on the basis of the Trotskyist program demands exemplary political initiatives such as the solidarity campaign for the RAF comrades. Such exemplary initiatives must put into perspective what the task of a revolutionary party would be, what steps it would have to indicate for the struggle and what slogans it would have to raise. The TLD is likewise duty-bound to begin exemplary trade-union work, as soon as its forces permit. The areas of exemplary work must, however, be selected with the utmost care in order to prevent what would in the last analysis be a liquidationist overburdening of the organization. In its exemplary activity, in all its interventions and in its publications the TLD must carry on a sharp political struggle against ostensibly revolutionary organizations, so as to unmask the half-hearted character and lack of direction of these organizations to the members and their sphere of influence.

## II. The Major Tasks of the TLD in the Immediate Future

1. The TLD is, with its limited forces, exposed to constant pressure from the West German left, one which would seem to compel it to wide-ranging interventions against competing left organizations. In the immediate future, the TLD will counter the danger that its public activities expand into a liquidationist overburdening of its cadre by centering its efforts on the internal consolidation of the organization. The TLD does not intend to burn out its members through hyperactivism; rather it must develop them into cadre capable of functioning as bolsheviks in our international movement for their entire lives. For this reason the TLD will increase its program of internal education in the immediate future. The conscious policy of stabilizing the core of cadre we have won must be supplemented by systematic efforts to recruit on the periphery of the organization.

2. The struggle of the TLD must aim at asserting itself as a pole of the revolutionary regroupment process. Through this struggle the TLD must politically and programmatically attain recognition as the sole Leninist-Trotskyist organization in Germany. Only in this way can we win the best elements of reformist and centrist organizations to a revolutionary course. In our approach to this task we must be guided by a correct evaluation of the various OROs, namely, which organizations present the most important barriers for subjective revolutionaries on the way toward revolutionary Marxism, which organizations, on the basis of their political and organizational structure, seem to offer particularly favorable opportunities in which to intervene. In general terms our thrust in the coming period aims primarily at ostensibly Trotskyist organizations.

a. The Spartacusbund remains a left-Pabloist organization with a workerist orientation. It is characterized by its readiness to abandon the Trotskyist Transitional Program, which it claims to defend, for the sake of any tactical maneuver: its (mainly simulated) trade-union work, its attempts at "political debate" with other political tendencies and its strivings to acquire a distinct international profile. Characteristic of it are its desires for a cozy nest in rotten propaganda blocs.

As the largest and best-known organization in Germany claiming, at times loudly, to be carrying out orthodox Trotskyist politics, the Spartacusbund is the most important barrier for young class struggle militants standing impressionistically to the left of the USec Majority and subjectively seeking the way to Trotskyism. The Spartacusbund has a small but not unimportant core of experienced cadres. Its facade of "mass work" continues to attract a few workerists and advocates of jerry-built work in the trade unions, although it by no means constitutes an attractive organization for such tendencies. More important for our evaluation is, however, the fact that serious, subjectively revolutionary militants still continue to join the Spartacusbund--although this is largely excluded where we have a real existence. In spite of heightened activism, the Spartacusbund seems to be stagnating in Berlin, and its little Cologne local dissolved after the expulsion of the Trotskyist Faction.

Programmatic polarization of the Spartacusbund must be considered our most important task. Because of its political eclecticism and its organizational federalism, but also because of the amateurishness with which it sets about creating a political apparatus, the conditions for producing such a polarization remain favorable for us. The recent right split of the Spartacusbund's Bolshevik Tendency (which brought with it the loss of many of its "exemplary proletarians" in North Rhine-Westphalia) is only further proof of its brittleness and vulnerability. The differences between Tendency 1 and Tendency 2 (as well as the differences within Tendency 1) will continue to exist; like the organization as a whole, neither tendency has any clear programmatic bases.

Hence it is the TLD's duty within the local framework of Berlin and Cologne, in the regional framework of North Rhine-Westphalia and also beyond this, to expose the claims of the Spartacusbund and to go on the offensive in stigmatizing it as a left-Pabloist organization. A further important point of criticism in doing this must be the Spartacusbund's nationally limited perspective which is coupled with pathetic attempts at internationalism. The same amateurishness displayed by the Spartacusbund in its disputes with other left organizations in Germany also characterizes its international work. By avoiding hard programmatic conflicts it is able to approach international work with the most varied notions and to publish the most contradictory statements. Since the Spartacusbund lacks the basis for constructing its own international tendency, since it avoids a serious consideration of our tendency and at the moment does not wish to return to the womb of the "United" Secretariat, it will continue stumbling around indecisively internationally and will remain a national organization with undeveloped international appetites.

b. Vis-à-vis the GIM, the German section of the "United" Secretariat, the TLD has so far not succeeded in finding an effective polemical confrontation. In West Berlin this confrontation is rendered difficult by the sponge-like character of the local GIM--constructed by Mandel out of the rotten remains of the academic New Left after the split of the German section by the IKD/KJO and after the Maoists won hegemony in the West Berlin far left.

Although the GIM has acquired its laurels not as the German section but rather from the relatively high exposure of the LCR and the facile pen of the superstar Mandel and although it generally works through front groups of the "new mass vanguard" (Chile Committee, "independent" women's groups, Portugal and Spain Solidarity Committees, etc.) we should not underestimate its importance. Aside from the traditional centers of left Pabloism (i.e., the former KJO and BL as well as of the present-day Spartacusbund) it is often the sole functioning ostensibly Trotskyist group and consequently recruits comrades whom we should like to attract. The GIM has produced a national opposition to the IMT and LTF of considerable size, the Kompass Tendency, which is not without international significance in the USec; but this tendency is collapsing into fawning loyalty to the USec, into impressionism (the SPD is a bourgeois party) and into workerism. It is the TLD's unconditional task to press forward an intervention into the GIM milieu (particularly in North Rhine-West-

phalia, where the Düsseldorf local of the GIM seems to be significant).

c. We have scarcely had an opportunity to intervene against the two successors of the split International Committee in Germany, primarily because their centers and areas of work nowhere coincide with ours. Despite its relationship to the centrist OCI in France, the IAK is an unambiguously reformist organization. Its entrism in the SPD offers a simon-pure example of the reformist and liquidationist consequences of the strategic united front conception. Its entry and trade-union work exude a primitive sucking-up to the bureaucracy; the social-democratic bureaucracy is consciously using the entrism forces of the IAK (the SAP group)--aided by their "anti-Stalinism"--to do their dirty work on ostensibly communist tendencies such as the Maoists and the SEW/DKP (as for example in the GEW in Berlin).

The SAB is a classic Healyite organization--with a youth organization on the basis of a minimal program, with the permanent and last, decisive "crisis" as its shibboleth and with a "mass paper" (Der Funke). Its members are relatively young, inexperienced and generally without a political past; as a rule they are completely burned out in a short time. Although the political line of the SAB is extremely "discontinuous," it is clearly to the left of reformism.

d. Maoist Stalinist organizations: Our interventions against Maoist Stalinist organizations cannot realistically aim at intending to split these organizations politically or decisively weaken them in the foreseeable future. In view of the present weakness of the TLD we cannot hope to endanger these groups seriously, which are considerably larger than we are. During decisive tactical turns by these organizations, during crises or rapidly changing situations (as with the Socialist Plenum movement in the KPD periphery), we do, however, as a hard anti-revisionist Leninist organization, have the possibility of moving subjectively revolutionary elements from these organizations or their front groups to a break with Stalinism and to attract them programmatically to us. Such a regroupment out of the Maoist milieu would qualitatively increase the weight of the TLD in the West German left.

Our present intervention work in this milieu pursues two goals: 1) to lay the programmatic basis for a direct, comprehensive political confrontation with the Maoist organizations when our forces permit this on a broader scale; i.e., at present to make ourselves known as hard, orthodox Trotskyists as an important prerequisite for aggressively effecting left or ambivalent splits from Maoist organizations; 2) to acquire a profile for ourselves as Trotskyists vis-à-vis ostensibly Trotskyist organizations which have never succeeded in carrying out an effective political debate with the Maoists, i.e., the beginnings of our regroupment perspective toward the Maoists also offers a chance to break elements out of the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations.

Regarding the Maoist organizations discussed below it must be noted that they are all Stalino-menshevik organizations which (at

least since the KPD and KPD/ML took over the policy of the "National Front") can neither be clearly located within a left-right spectrum nor unambiguously identified with a definite historical form of Stalinism (Third Period, Pop Front/Seventh World Congress).

- The Communist League (KB) is one of the most contradictory of the Stalino-menshevik organizations. It propounds the theory of a creeping fascization of the "big monopolies," to which it attempts to oppose broad democratic action alliances. On the one hand this thesis makes it relatively unreceptive to the Chinese pro-Nato line (for after all, to the KB this means an alliance with "fascist" politicians); on the other hand it leads it methodologically toward an alliance with the "liberal" "anti-fascist" bourgeoisie (i.e., classical popular frontism). The KB readily criticizes, albeit impressionistically, China's foreign policy. It reproaches the Soviet Union for "revisionism," but without taking a clear position on its class character.

If possibilities exist for a policy of united action vis-à-vis the KB, we shall make use of them. But since the KB is virtually insignificant in Berlin and Cologne, i.e., where we are working, our attention cannot be directed primarily at this organization.

- The Communist League of West Germany (KBW) was born out of widely dispersed Marxist-Leninist circles, i.e., out of a merger of the ML circles which has produced an organization by no means unimportant on a national scale. The essentially uninterrupted passage of these circles from the New Left to the KBW has--despite the programmatic discussion before the fusion, despite the accepted authority of the circle New Red Forum--resulted in a particular regional heterogeneity which can provide us with opportunities for intervention. Although in Berlin the KBW is a downright mushy organization with only a small number of cadres, it is significant in Cologne because of its size there and its relative openness.

The KBW starts from the Second International's programmatic approach and Lenin's early radical interpretation of the Erfurt Program. Out of the democratic elements of this program, which paraphrase the bourgeois-democratic character of the radical demand for a republic, the KBW constructs a democratic action program "proved" by Lenin quotes and with an ultimately utopian-reformist character. Despite the KBW's claim that the democratic struggle constitutes a genuine mediation between the daily struggle and the struggle for socialism, a classical menshevik-Stalinist stages model is concealed behind this "bridge." The KBW's programmatic approach contains unmistakably revisionist elements: a) it derives its programmatic approach from an antagonism between "people" and "state" which supposedly constitutes the political dimension in capitalist society; b) its conception that the proletariat will seize power through an "expansion of democracy" is based centrally on a classless conception of democracy.

- The KPD after overcoming its internal difficulties, which found expression essentially in the Socialist Plenum split (which, taking as point of departure a critique of the "Social-

Fascism"-Line has since developed essentially rightwards), has in the meantime carried out an adaptation to the pro-Nato line of the People's Republic of China without internal contradictions. Although the KPD had previously placed itself rather in the Thälmann tradition of the Third Period, it has in the meantime, after its turn to Nato, placed itself in the continuity of Ulbricht's "National Front." Whereas its trade-union work was previously aggressively for splits, the RGO [Red Trade Union Organization] seems--despite the perseverance of a tendency toward tactical adventures--to have lost immediate relevancy for the KPD.

The KPD is a homogeneous organization which always prepares its political line very precisely. It disposes over a hard Stalinist core and a notable apparatus. Fluctuations occur mainly in the KSV [Communist Student Union].

e. The DKP/SEW is, as a result of its firmly established apparatus, its tradition and its scarcely radicalized membership, not approachable by the TLD in the immediate future. In carrying out exemplary actions we must however attempt to make use of appropriate occasions for our propoganda, in order to be able to demonstrate that a policy of unity in action can be extended to Stalinist organizations of the Moscow variety as well. We do not fail to recognize that in the long run the DKP/SEW constitutes the strongest and potentially most brutal political support of the bourgeoisie to the left of the SPD in the working-class movement.

At present, left-social-democratic organizations like the Socialist Bureau, the SAG and the like are scarcely of direct interest for us, although we should not ignore left splits. The reformist catch-all Socialist Bureau has some relevance for our politics insofar as it serves as pole of attraction for ostensible Trotskyists with a workerist orientation. In the framework of the TLD's propagandistic work we need to dispel the illusion that such organizations can carry out "concrete socialist" trade-union work. We need to expose their function as flag-bearers of left Social Democracy.

3. As part of its development toward a national fighting propoganda organization the TLD must strive for an increasing orientation toward the proletarian mass movement. Of course this orientation is not independent from the perspective of revolutionary regroupment; rather it is part and parcel of this tactic. In building communist trade-union fractions we must build an image as an alternative leadership in the struggle against all the treacherous tendencies in order to win over the adherents of competing currents in the working-class movement.

However at present the TLD cannot set out directly to build communist trade-union fractions. Our forces are not such as to permit industrializing comrades at the present moment. We will not amateurishly leave a broad, long-term communist intervention into the trade unions to random "footholds." Instead we shall be guided by such criteria as the importance of the given branch of industry to the West German economy, the degree of trade-union organization and traditional militancy (active trade-union structures, shop stewards, etc.) as well as the presence of competing tendencies.



However, should the possibility of trade-union work result from recruitment or the like, then its realization must be very seriously examined and prepared in the greatest detail. For the TLD to slip prematurely into a situation of trade-union struggle can discredit us just as much as an exaggerated timidity, a fearful postponement of our intervention out of overscrupulousness due to solely negative experiences in German trade-union work.

The TLD's immediate task is to treat questions of the proletarian mass movement publicistically (and this means above all discussing them internally). The TLD cannot ignore basic problems of the class struggle such as unemployment, inflation, training, etc. In its publications the TLD must take up various struggles, as for example the struggles of the workers in Erwitte, important trade-union events, etc. in order to exemplarily explain our line and to be able to better attack the activities of other organizations.

#### 4. Other areas of intervention for the TLD:

a. Work among women: Our intervention in the feminist milieu and in ostensibly socialist women's organizations will continue to have a reactive character. If possibilities of programmatic polarization in such a women's organization exist and if, after considered examination, we decide on an ongoing intervention, a cell for work among women should be formed. But even independent of concrete possibilities of work among women our defense of the Bolshevik position on the woman question is an essential programmatic element of revolutionary regroupment. This is true both for Maoist and ostensibly Trotskyist organizations, all of which, with various nuances, capitulate on the woman question.

b. Student work: At present we can carry out only individual scattered interventions, essentially in support of our general intervention against OROs. Only in the case of extremely important points concerning political implications of educational questions will we take a public position. At present the TLD lacks the personnel to set up a student cell. Systematic work at the university should be accompanied by a permanent revolutionary critique of the entire capitalist educational system; in doing this the TLD must pay special attention to the experience of the RCY/SYL.

c. Army: In the foreseeable future ongoing intervention in the army is impossible. Where there are good possibilities of contacts with soldiers these should be utilized; however the TLD is not working in the reformist soldier circles on an ongoing basis; we shall utilize such circles for introducing our propaganda materials. In this way the TLD will propagandize its programmatic line on the army and on the anti-militarist struggle.

### III. The TLD's Press Policy

#### 1. On the character and function of our publications:

a. The German edition of Spartacist: The German-language Spartacist is an organ of the international Spartacist tendency. This means that it must contain central programmatic articles of our

tendency. Every issue will demonstrate the international character of our organization. In particular it will debate and attack tendencies which are themselves internationally organized and constitute barriers to the rebirth of the Fourth International (like the "United" Secretariat). Above and beyond this the German-language Spartacist must particularly demonstrate the historical continuity of our movement, i.e., we shall publish important documents from the history of our tendency but without turning it into a "historical archive." The German Spartacist is not a delicacy for aficionados but rather a weapon in the battle to construct German-speaking sections of our tendency.

b. Kommunistische Korrespondenz: KK is the central propaganda organ of the TLD; it serves to present our entire politics, the positions and politics of our international tendency. The content of KK is essentially determined by the concrete tasks of our regroupment perspective, as we have fixed this for the immediate period in Germany. That means it will use the most important national and international topics to polemicize against the OROs. Our task is to make the analyses and positions we publish demonstrate our claim to being the nucleus of the future vanguard party of the German proletariat. The framework of our polemics with the OROs will be determined not by the limited point of view of their positions but by the proletarian movement in Germany; i.e., along with analyses and perspectives on the situation and the struggles of the working class and the trade-union movement, our propaganda must be determined by the central questions of the German revolution--the German proletariat's subjugation by the Social Democracy and revolutionary reunification.

Despite the great scope of these tasks KK will, due to the TLD's present "strength" (better: weakness), appear bi-monthly (with an extra month's break in the summer). The multiplicity of KK's tasks shows that great effort and care must be invested in every issue. Independent of the character of an article, whether it contains central programmatic statements or is a short report on a topic of current interest, we intend to publish a paper whose positions will be significant even years later. An organization derives its public face (which establishes its continuity over a longer period of time) essentially from its publications.

c. Special editions of KK and leaflets: As a bi-monthly, KK requires supplements for important TLD interventions. Such supplements have, like KK itself, national importance; they reflect the main centers of the current politics of our organization in Germany. Leaflets, on the other hand, tend rather to have a local character, although naturally no hard and fast line can be drawn. Both leaflets and KK supplements are produced for special occasions. They require an immediate aggressive distribution, i.e., as a rule we will even give away the KK supplements like leaflets to a broad left public; only after they have ceased to be immediately relevant, no longer directly accompany our intervention, will the supplements be sold.

It is, however, also possible to put out supplements to KK around certain limited themes (such as the army, education, unemployment) without there being a particular current occasion for them.

Such supplements have the character of special issues of KK. We employ this means only in exceptional cases, since in general we strive to integrate all areas of our politics into the regular editions of KK.

d. Pamphlets: Publication of pamphlets has secondary importance, after the above-named organs. In the Little Library of Kommunistische Korrespondenz we publish documents that belong to our propaganda in a broader sense, e.g., texts by Trotsky or Comintern documents. In particular we shall publish texts that are unavailable or difficult to obtain; however the decisive criterion for publication is the political significance of the text. It is appropriate to preface reprints (Trotsky, CI, etc.) with our own introductions. Such publications must pay their own way, since they are not a main priority for the politics of our organization. In addition it is politically necessary to put out our tendency's comprehensive analyses in pamphlet form, above all the series "Trotskyism and Stalinism in Vietnam" along with the documents of MB No. 8, "Cuba and Marxist Theory."

2. On editorial activity: Editorial work takes place under the control of the Political Bureau of the TLD, which appoints someone to be responsible as editor. But we must also make KK into a real organ of the TLD as a national section, i.e., to reflect our activity in Cologne and North Rhine-Westphalia; this requires a greater integration of our West German comrades into the overall planning of future issues of our publications, as well as in writing articles. The ÖBL comrades should also participate to a limited extent in KK, since KK is taking over certain functions for Austria. In addition to editing KK the Political Bureau of the TLD also assumes responsibility for translations into German (e.g., for the German-language Spartacist).

3. Sales and distribution: These must be greatly improved for KK and German Spartacist. When a new issue appears, direct sales must be expanded immediately. Systematic sales must include left events, universities and technical schools, special meeting points such as left pubs, movies, etc. Above and beyond this we must strive to expand the sub base in the next period. We must attempt to penetrate as broad areas as possible of the left milieu--including possible utilization of commercial distributors; in particular this "anonymous" distribution should be used to reach localities where the TLD is otherwise not represented.

#### IV. Organizational Tasks of the TLD

1. Between conferences (or national plenums) of the TLD the Central Committee constitutes the highest body of the organization. Therefore its personnel must also embody the highest authority. In the framework of the guidelines of conferences and plenums and CC directives, the Political Bureau assumes responsibility for day-to-day work, including responsibility for editorial authority. PB meetings take place at short intervals as needed. The CC meets at least quarterly; it is absolutely necessary to integrate CC members not functioning in the PB more fully into the leadership (in contrast to the functioning of the interim central office between Easter and the



1975 summer camp). The creation of an effective division of labor is a priority for stabilizing the organization: a Central Office is to be set up where the PB sits.

a. Berlin: The TLD's greatest weakness is the absence of a division of labor between the PB and the local. It is necessary to overcome this condition by increasing the size of the local. The Berlin local has a small, firm core of sympathizers in addition to an even smaller periphery. We must strive to expand these by means of our own public events (despite only moderate success) perhaps by setting up a second sympathizers circle, also by systematic contact work, thereby bringing our sympathizers closer to the TLD. Such efforts must be made with a view to future recruitment. Berlin continues to have manifold opportunities for interventions, even though limits are increasingly being imposed on us: the Maoist/Stalinist organizations make our interventions difficult by their hostility to Trotskyism (including the use of physical force); the Spartacusbund and GIM attempt to keep their meetings free of our "disturbances" by bureaucratic methods. On the other hand our interventions are also limited by the state of development of our own organization, i.e., by the tasks of consolidating our cadre and of a planned building up of the organization.

b. Cologne: The most important political task of the Cologne Organizing Committee is to firm up its leadership collective and to develop an effective division of labor. The political center of the Cologne OC's work must be regional intervention against the Spartacusbund and GIM. In Cologne itself strong emphasis must be placed on our own public events and on interventions against the KBW. The comrades of the Cologne OC must be increasingly integrated into the national tasks of the TLD.

3. Expansion: In the case of slow linear growth of the TLD further expansion to other cities in West Germany is excluded in the short term. The CC of the TLD and its apparatus must be further consolidated. In addition the TLD has to fulfill increased international obligations. A special priority here is political support and direction of the ÖBL by the TLD.

Independent of perspectives for expansion we must devote sufficient attention to contacts outside the areas of the two locals: regular shipment of propaganda material, letters, personal conversations. Trips must be made to important centers of the West German left (e.g., Frankfurt, Hamburg) at well-spaced intervals.

4. The ÖBL: The situation of the ÖBL is characterized by the following contradiction: on the one hand it consists of comrades devoted to our movement and confronted with political tasks whose fulfillment would constitute a gain for our tendency; on the other hand the ÖBL is a leaderless organization. Without support by the iSt the ÖBL will hardly succeed in creating an integrated leadership for a section of the iSt viable for the long term. This task falls principally to the TLD leadership; the creation of an integrated ÖBL leadership means the formation of a collective leadership and its integration into the iSt. To fulfill this task the TLD assumes direction and control of ÖBL activities; several cadre of the ÖBL

will be trained directly by the TLD in Germany; others are to come to Germany for longer visits; the TLD must support the ÖBL to the full extent of its forces.

--passed by the Standing Committee, 18 June 1975

revisions adopted by PB, 5 August 1975

ON THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT  
TO THE GRM AND THE LSA

by Viktor (ÖBL)

Vienna  
21 October 1975

Interim Secretariat of the iSt  
TLD

"...the LSA program outlines a series of reform (minimal) demands which in no way can provide a bridge to the stated ultimate goal..."

"...the LSA was the only organization in the campaign which represented an independent working-class pole. For this reason the Trotskyist League called for a vote to the LSA candidate..."

--Workers Vanguard No. 79,  
p. 4

"...in the GRM one recognizes a clear split between minimal and maximal program. The classical method of reformism.

"Therefore no vote for this new proof of the degeneration of the USec and its Austrian section, the GRM."

--Bulletin of the ÖBL,  
September 1975, p. 11

The TLC calls for critical support to the candidate of a reformist propaganda group presenting a reformist program. The ÖBL rejects critical support of a centrist propaganda group because it presents a reformist election program.

In the framework of our regroupment efforts, we use two main weapons to fight against such ostensibly revolutionary organizations (OROs), namely: absolute ideological irreconcilability and flexible united-front tactics, with the first being constant and the second variable--that is, no united-front tactics, however "flexible," at the expense of principles.

The tactic of critical support in elections is an element of our united-front tactic.

As opposed to the reformist mass parties, which we support critically based not on their program, but because of their historically evolved role in the workers movement (when their organizational independence from the bourgeoisie appears assured), we draw the noose of critical support much tighter concerning critical support of OROs (considering their thinner neck).

The tactical principle behind critical support to mass parties is no more and no less than a tactical approach to the members and sympathizers of these parties, which should enable us to expose the leadership and split the parties horizontally.

But when the type of person to be hanged changes, our tactical principles also change. In relation to small reformist and centrist propaganda groups the audience changes and the election program becomes the focal point of our critique.



That is why the TLC's support of the LSA's reformist election program violates our tactical principles. True, these tactical principles do not exclude support for reformist propaganda groups if their program contains centrist elements worth supporting, that is, when there are programmatic toeholds available for our critical support.

But what should we do in the case of a reformist electoral program? What can we "critically" support--the minimal demands or the maximal demands?

The decisive criterion brought to bear by the TLC is that of the "independent working-class pole."

It is not only that this criterion alone is completely inappropriate for critical support (which is subordinate to our regroupment tactic). For then it is impossible, based on an application of the electoral program, to demonstrate to the supporters and members of the OROs the contradiction between their organization's revolutionary claims and its opportunist or reformist practice.

Based on this evaluation, in Austria the LSA<sup>1</sup> (as well as the GRM) would have had to support the CP, since it at least attacks "social partnership in the form it is presently applied" (ROTFRONT at the University), and is not currently trying to form a popular front to our knowledge. The GRM's vote "for a non-bourgeois party" (ibid.) is the equivalent of the TLC's vote for the "independent working-class pole."

The common declaration on the 1975 national parliamentary elections by the newly-hatched Spartacus-Vienna, and the VMA/FMR,\* was far more cautious than the TLC, in that it transforms the GRM's reformist program into a centrist one.

The danger that the tactic of critical support will gradually change into a strategy, i.e., critical support at any price--since an "independent working-class pole" can almost always be found, given the present number of OROs--tends to be inherent in applying the TLC criterion. But this is only secondary here.

The expression "independent working-class pole" is fluid here and is taken from the Pabloite vocabulary. It is absurd in relation to small propaganda groups. Who is circling about this mini-pole? Only an ever-diminishing section of the class.

Our ideological irreconcilability toward reformist and centrist OROs does not allow us to have a united front--however flexible--on the basis of a reformist program.

Unfortunately the contradiction between the TLC and ÖBL positions is expressed at the most undesirable possible moment. Roberto and his Austrian outlets will set upon us overjoyed in the event that while weaving their intrigues and their combinationist maneuvering they ever find time to read our press.

With Bolshevik greetings,  
Viktor

\*The VMA was a left split from the Austrian social democracy. It has now fused with a small group that split from the Austrian USec and declared itself the "Revolutionary Marxist Faction" (FMR) in solidarity with Roberto's FMR. After a further name change it is now the MAB (Marxistischer Arbeiterbund; Marxist Workers League).  
[-tr.]

<sup>1</sup>sic? should it read "TLC"?

EXCERPTS FROM  
BULLETIN OF THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS (AUSTRIA)

September 1975

The GRM's Candidacy

No doubt more than a few people, on hearing of the GRM's announcement it would run candidates for the national parliamentary elections, were reduced to uncomprehending shakes of the head. It is clear that the idea of running candidates did not accidentally spring full blown from the heads of the Pabloite leaders, but was dictated by the need to put the brakes on the internal ferment, the centrifugal tendencies within the USec bloc, at least for a time. Namely by reducing or laying aside discussion of the principles of Trotskyism, by an unheard of blossoming of the organizational apparatus and, as a result, by organizationally throttling oppositional voices. This policy can be carried out only at the price of recklessly plundering material resources and largely suspending all other activities. Everyone who has been watching the GRM's activities recently must inevitably recall the fable of the frog who wanted to blow himself up as big as an ox. Seen in this way, the fact that the GRM will probably not get the 500 signatures it needs to run a candidate will save its members from their own madness. Certainly the GRM will not be more stable because of this campaign. When this madness comes to an end, the organization's internal contradictions will break out again, even more strongly--all the more so since the leadership has completely disqualified itself by its criminal adventure.

...

The second variant of critical support [the first being support to mass reformist parties-tr.] is support to small centrist organizations. A precondition for this is that these organizations present central elements of the Trotskyist program. The GRM election program is, as we shall demonstrate below, not such a program. It goes without saying that critical support is not an end in itself, nor does it express our sympathies. In every instance, the tactic of critical support is a Trotskyist weapon in the regroupment process. It enables us to approach tactically the members of hostile organizations. Critical support consists of criticism and support: that is, by linking up with the Trotskyist elements of the centrist program, we deepen the contradiction between revolutionary claims and the half-heartedness of their politics. In this way we can set in motion a process of splits and fusions and win the best elements for the revolutionary program.

...

The GRM's Electoral Program

"But an election is a completely different dimension. Here it is not a matter of limited particular questions. In elections, comprehensive programs are counterposed; each party presenting its overall conceptions."

--GRM pamphlet: "Why are Revolutionary Marxists Running Candidates?"



But anyone who expects, say, the Transitional Program as an "overall conception" from the GRM is doomed to bitter disappointment. What the GRM presents as a comprehensive program is two completely distorted, foreshortened transitional demands, a couple of democratic demands and the avowal of faith in socialism and council democracy [Råtedemokratie]. Not by chance has the orthodox formulation "dictatorship of the proletariat" yielded to this avowal of socialism and council democracy--council democracy has a much sweeter sound to petty-bourgeois ears than the harsh word "dictatorship," even of the proletariat. Likewise it is hardly accidental that the 11-page GRM pamphlet cited above maintains an embarrassed silence on the fact that revolutionaries unconditionally defend the USSR and the deformed workers states against every imperialist attack. The GRM Pabloites, so practiced in the formulation "We don't want socialism à la CSSR" [Czechoslovakia] probably are afraid (correctly) that such harsh words would scare away those petty-bourgeois elements whose trust they have won. Therefore unfashionable slogans from the Transitional Program, such as defense of the USSR, political revolution, expropriation of the capitalists, and workers' militias, tend to vanish into the drawers of the GRM desks. Defense of the gains of the October Revolution means nothing to these fine gentlemen and when they emerge onto the democratic platform they do not boggle at despicable anti-communism.

The GRM's adaptation to petty-bourgeois currents is not unique but rather characteristic of the politics of the USec since the victory of the Pablo faction in 1953. This adaptation has assumed the most variegated forms in the history of the USec. Beginning with the rediscovery of the Stalinist CP's revolutionary forces (impressed by the formation of deformed workers states), [the USec has taken up] self-liquidation into entrism sui generis, guerrilla-enthusiasm, Tito as an unconscious Trotskyist (an honor subsequently accorded Castro, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, the NLF and the Khmer Rouge), uncritical enthusing over bombing assassinations in Spain, support of the IRA and many other petty-bourgeois nationalist movements in the Third World, down to its present "theory" of the new mass vanguard. Thus the essence of Pabloism consists in abandoning a revolutionary perspective based on the proletariat in favor of adaptation to petty-bourgeois currents. This adaptation, this descent to the level of economism, is the yellow thread running through the GRM's electoral program. The transitional demand for a sliding scale of wages is reduced to the point that it becomes acceptable for every democratic trade unionist and can be realized under capitalism without any difficulty: "To make real wages secure, clauses must be included in the overall contracts providing for an automatic rise of wages with rising prices ('sliding scale of wages')." The Pabloist author of these lines felt so uncomfortable as to place "sliding scale of wages" in quotation marks. Thus he "merely" forgets the close link between this demand and the struggle for workers control over wages. Our interest lies in carrying out this slogan nationwide. Any other variant, e.g., the GRM's, would break the political struggle up into a number of particular economic struggles. A proletarian price index must be counterposed to the deceptive price index of the bourgeoisie. To do this committees of housewives and other control organs of the working class must be created. This slogan is robbed of its point, which comes up against

the limits of the bourgeois state and thus directs the struggle of the workers toward the seizure of power.

This phenomenon is even more evident in the case of the slogan for dividing up the available work among everyone. The GRM "forgets" that this demand corresponds to the socialist organization of the economy. That to carry out this demand proletarian state power and a national plan are required is somehow overlooked by the GRM, which after all is hoping to harvest the sympathy of petty-bourgeois democrats. Workers control will show that the state of the productive forces permits shortening of the workday. This is the thrust of the slogan of a sliding scale of wages and hours. A bridge must be built between the present consciousness of the working class and the revolutionary over-ripeness of the objective situation.

For the GRM dividing the available work among all workers is a matter for each individual plant to negotiate with its respective capitalist. The GRM in its economist amateurishness overlooks the fact that such an application of the sliding scale of hours is directed against hiring the unemployed into the various plants. Here too, the transitional demand is robbed of its political thrust and is transformed into a series of individual economic struggles. Neither the demand for expropriation of bankrupt industries under workers control, nor the call for public works for the unemployed to make them capable of struggling once again, nor the demand for their organization by the trade unions, find their way into the GRM's "comprehensive" program. The GRM is silent on the subject of plant closures.

...

#### The Reformism of the GRM

Aside from the pitiful remnants of two transitional demands--which, posed in isolation, lose their transitional character and degenerate into reformist demands--the rest of the GRM's electoral program consists of purely democratic demands, such as are raised even by the Mao-Stalinists. Indeed, the Maoists are even more consistent on the question of foreign workers: they demand complete civil rights, whereas the GRM has sunk to the level of demanding active and passive electoral rights. Note that we do not say that the GRM's demands are wrong, but they have a purely democratic character and are not suited to leading the struggle of the working class toward the seizure of power.

The Trotskyist program is a scientific program, that is, it provides answers to the demands of the objective situation and, unlike economist programs, does not reflect the present political backwardness of the working masses. The gap between the objective revolutionary tasks and the political consciousness of the masses is the party's field of battle. It is precisely the Transitional Program which creates a bridge over this gap by getting a hold on the current burning needs of the working class.

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands

and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

--Trotsky, The Transitional Program

The GRM's program lacks such a bridge. The slogan of socialism and council democracy is completely separated from the remainder of the program--a goal for an indefinite future. Whereas the Transitional Program constitutes a system of interlocking slogans which as a whole culminate in the conquest of political power by the proletariat--the creation of a workers government--in the case of the GRM's electoral program one discerns a clear split into minimum and maximum program. The classical method of reformism. Therefore no votes for this new proof of the degeneration of the USec and its Austrian section, the GRM. Cast invalid ballots in the 1975 parliamentary elections!

...

by Thompson (TLC)

Toronto  
27 November 1975

IS  
New York

Dear Cdes.:

The PB passed a motion that I write you regarding the ÖBL letter on critical support (cs). While it is clear that there are differences between the TLC's and ÖBL's recent positions on cs, it does not seem that the ÖBL is calling for an international faction fight, but rather for further clarification and an elaboration of criteria on this question, probably as part of an IDB. This is the proper way to handle this discussion.

(1) The cs tactic, while it is part of the general united-front (uf) tactic, has a specific character. The uf-for-action tactic can be used up till the insurrection, while the cs tactic should not be used except in situations where the revolutionaries do not have a mass base. While as a revolutionary propaganda group we would deceive ourselves if we believed that we could force the mass reformist parties into Leninist uf's with us, we can give them cs whenever we choose. On the other hand, for a mass revolutionary party to use the cs tactic would be liquidationism.

(2) While it would be an illusion to believe that we, as a small propaganda group, will be able to split mass reformist parties, in a usual situation, via the cs tactic, still it can be useful to give cs to mass reformist parties, in an exemplary manner, in order to split the small OROs--our main target as part of our regroupment orientation. Also, it can be useful to give cs to the OROs themselves, in order to win away members from their ranks, or facilitate a split.

(3) While the tactic of cs would be dropped if we were a mass party, the criteria for cs should not change, in general, if we became a much larger propaganda group, or a genuine stable party nucleus. Thus, the cs tactic was developed by the CI for the situation in which the CPs outside of Russia, qualitatively larger than our tendency today, were not really mass parties, and needed to win the base away from the social democrats in order to become mass parties. The methodology we use in giving cs does not differ from the methodology developed then, whether it is cs to a mass party or to a small ORO. To a degree, we use the cs tactic today in an exemplary way, i.e., we demonstrate to other OROs how to use it, prefiguring a time when we will have enough political leverage to make some workers sit up and take notice of our cs. One could say we are "rehearsing" for the real thing; if the rehearsal is wrong, it is likely the real thing will go wrong.

(4) While we are not obliged to give cs to mass reformist parties even when they run independently of bourgeois parties, we should take into account what would be the result if a reformist

party is not elected or re-elected. In a usual situation, under bourgeois-parliamentary conditions, to feel that we have to give cs to reformist parties slides off into a strategic uf conception. But in a very sharp situation (e.g., when there is a serious fascist, or anti-democratic rightist, threat) to take the responsibility of bringing down a reformist government would be a stupid act of betrayal, Stalinist third-period type (e.g., the "red referendum"). That is why, for example, that while the TLC is not calling for the re-election of the B.C. NDP government, it is completely correct for the SLANZ to call for defense of the last labor government, although this government did not behave any differently in power than the B.C. NDP.

(5) The way that Bolsheviks who are still a propaganda group carry out uf tactics (except for the cs tactic) toward the OROs is the same as when the Bolsheviks are a mass party. A very common revisionist argument of small propaganda groups which seek to avoid Leninist uf's with the Bolsheviks, or even with other left tendencies, is by claiming that there is no place for principled uf's with small left groups, or even rejecting altogether the possibility for any uf's (e.g., Healy).

(6) The uf cannot be built on a program, neither a reformist nor a revolutionary one, but around minimum and/or transitional concrete demands. Otherwise, it is not a Leninist uf but liquidation into the uf. A "uf" on a minimum program, which it is possible to arrange, represents liquidation into reformism. On the other hand, a "uf" on the maximum program is not possible to arrange; the reformists would never liquidate themselves into the maximum program and such a "uf" conception is no more than the "uf-from-below" conception of 3rd-period Stalinism, a conception which cannot be concretized as conceived.

(7) The ÖBL believes that the TLC has a right deviation from the 1st political line. Furthermore, it seems to the ÖBL that it knows the roots of the sickness, namely, Pabloist pressure--which is revealed in the use of the obscure "Pabloist" expression, "independent working-class pole," as a basis for cs in an election. It should be sufficient to show the ÖBL that by chain-reaction logic there is not any way it would have been able, in the French elections, to give cs to Lutte Ouvrière, which had an even more rightist program in those elections than did the GRM in the Austrian elections.

(8) As a matter of fact, the ÖBL has a deviation from the SL/U.S. line in the French elections. To note that the SL/U.S. used in these elections, the obscure expression, "working-class pole," proves that the Pabloist-pressure theory is a house of cards. Furthermore, it seems that the ÖBL reflects some naiveté to believe that revisionists generally do not use Marxist terms. Political life would be much easier if this were the case; however, the revisionists prefer to use Marxist definitions and change their meanings--usually by enlarging the meaning to fit their adaptation to the class enemy, without breaking openly with the language of Marxist tradition.



(9) But we should go further and try to explain the roots of the ÖBL's theoretical mistake. It seems that there are two key points to the ÖBL theory: (A) That while cs to mass reformist parties is given regardless of the reformists' program, we can give cs to small centrist organizations only if they hold a (qualitatively) better program than the mass reformist parties and since the GRM holds a reformist program and not a revolutionary one, to give them cs would amount to a uf on a reformist program; (B) That tactics and principles are the same. This finds expression not only in the term "tactical principles," but by the fact that the ÖBL believes that our enemies can use to their advantage the difference between the ÖBL and TLC in applying the cs tactic differently in two different countries.

(10) In responding to point (A): Some of the arguments against this are taken up above, in paragraphs 1-6. In addition: to expect of a centrist organization to hold a qualitatively better program than a reformist organization is to spread illusions about the political nature of centrism. Only the Bolsheviks can have such a program. And if we shall have to wait for the happy day that centrist organizations will come out with a program very similar to ours, we will wait to the end of our days. Furthermore, in such case the tactic should not be critical support but a proposal for fusion negotiations! There is a tendency in the ÖBL logic to arrive at a position where the only group it will be able to critically support will be the TLC.

This sharp differentiation between the way we should use the cs tactic toward centrist and reformist mass parties can be turned into its opposite, namely, adaptation to the mass reformist parties in other situations, i.e., since we give the reformists cs regardless of their program, no matter what they are doing as long as they run independently from the bourgeois parties, we should give them cs. But although we do not expect the reformists to change their program, we do take into account the way they carry out their program, i.e., even if the reformists run a government or electoral campaign independently of the bourgeoisie, we may not give them cs, e.g., if there is a reactionary war going on, if they have smashed a strike wave, etc.

A uf should never be built on program, contrary to the suggestion of the ÖBL. Neither on a reformist nor a revolutionary program but on concrete demands!--which may be minimum or transitional in character. To build a uf on program is to liquidate the revolutionary party into the uf. And while it is possible technically for communists to liquidate themselves into a reformist program (i.e., cease to be communists), the reformists would never "liquidate" themselves into the revolutionary program, to enter a "uf" on the revolutionary program. Again, to try to build a uf on the revolutionary program is the methodology of the famous uf from below of the third-period Stalintern.

(11) In response to (B): To believe that tactics and principles are on the same level is wrong politically and organizationally. It means either that one lacks tactics (i.e., you are an abstract propagandist), or one lacks principles (i.e., you are an opportunist).

ist). Tactics are subordinated to principles, they serve principles. Several different tactics can serve the same principles. In order to prove that tactic "A" is wrong it should be proven not that it is different from tactic "B" but that it contradicts a Marxist principle. Of course some tactics are smarter in certain circumstances than others, but this aspect of "right" and "wrong" should be distinguished from questions of breaking or keeping principles. Furthermore, there are right and wrong tactics per situation, but just because you have found the right tactic for one situation does not mean that this tactic will apply in another time and place which, on the face of it, presents a similar situation. The fact that the ÖBL and TLC made differing applications of the cs tactic in different countries and different situations does not automatically mean that either group has been incorrect. I do feel, however, that with holding cs from the GRM was incorrect, reflecting a certain sectarianism. This is borne out by the arguments of the ÖBL in their letter.

Organizationally, this mechanical view of tactics (i.e., uniform application of tactics internationally) conceivably could lead to the view that it is not the sections of one international party which are responsible for implementing different tactics according to the specific situation (taking into account the relationship between the classes, and between the class and the vanguard party), but the central working leadership body of the international tendency, i.e., the interim International Secretariat. While of course the IS is responsible for intervening if it believes a section is proceeding incorrectly, tactically or otherwise, the main working responsibility for developing/carrying out tactics lies with the separate sections.

Our tendency is opposed to the federalist conception of the international and is against exceptionalist arguments, such as those used by Cannon in the struggle against Pablo in '53-'54. Then, all the tactics of Pablo were in contradiction to the independence of the vanguard party and the fight had to be carried on this ground.

But from here we should not go to the other side of not developing sections which are responsible for carrying out specific tactics according to their situation, as long as such tactics serve the common political principles of our movement.

All Toronto CCers have read this before mailing and are in general agreement with it, with some agnosticism on the specific question of critical support to the GRM.

Comradely,

Thompson

cc: TL files, Vancouver, Bay Area

THE ORGANISATION OF COMMUNIST  
WORK IN THE TRADE UNIONS

SLANZ PB, 18 May 1975

The development of limited support for the politics of the Spartacist League at Plesseys Meadowbank plant requires us to define carefully the working relationship between the Spartacist League and its collaborators in the plant.

In its relationship to a Leninist propaganda group a minute initial industrial caucus in a single plant need not be a model for the relationship between a larger caucus and the nucleus of the vanguard party. However, we do wish to establish relationship both suitable to our present circumstances and conducive to the later transformation of the caucus into a real revolutionary alternative to the bureaucrats who divide and rule the unions in the metal industry.

The experience of our tendency in the organisation of trade-union work is mostly in the context of the extremely anti-communist union movement of the United States of America where there can be no question of explicit links between a caucus and the Spartacist League. In Australia, conditions are different in that there is no proscription of communists in the trade-union movement, and the norm is for ostensibly communist groupings to work openly, usually through a "branch" of the party in an industry, with its own publications. This approach opens the alternative roads of dividing off the members of the party in an industry from its potential sympathisers there, or more usually, of attempting to recruit relatively raw elements directly to the party. The Spartacist League's approach to this problem is to establish not industrial branches of the party, but caucuses, transitional organisations in the industry.

Only the most extraordinary worker coming in contact with our cadres in industry could be expected to be capable of recruitment directly to the Spartacist League, and in future, even more so than in America because of the much larger layer of elemental class-consciousness in Australia, we will win older workers who can contribute much but who have deeply established personal lives incompatible with recruitment to an organisation of professional revolutionists. A caucus is thus not only a fighting arm of the party against the misleadership of the class, with a special part in the division of revolutionary labours, but also a vehicle through which the vanguard trains its sympathisers as revolutionary politicians and makes recruits to the party nucleus, and through which militants incapable of membership in the party can play an honourable, valued and disciplined part in the revolutionary movement under the leadership of the SL.

It is the view of the PB of the SLANZ that the purposes of a transitional organisation can be best facilitated in Australian conditions by an explicit and openly declared relationship between the caucus and the party, and by some consequential variations from the actual relationship between the caucus and the party which prevail in the US. Specifically our caucuses must be organisationally independent from, but openly politically subordinate to the SL. This will make it possible for the SL not to organise its members in the

caucus as a fraction, not to act as a disciplined force against non-party members. And non-party members of the caucus can play a much fuller part in the internal life of the common movement, giving them far better training. In at least its formal aspects the relationship would closely approximate that between the SLUS and the Spartacus Youth League.

At Plesseys we already have supporters not ready for membership in the SL who are nevertheless at different levels willing to fight for the program of the SL, particularly as applied to the metal trades unions. These comrades will shortly be ready for organisation as the small nucleus of a caucus attached to the SL on the manner outlined.

The PB has drafted the following organisational guidelines to be discussed in the organisation nationally and internationally, and in the existing Plesseys group. Guidelines such as these should come into operation by agreement between the Local and the Plesseys group.

#### 1. PRINCIPLES OF THE SPARTACIST SUPPORTERS PLESSEYS GROUP

The SSPG seeks to build a revolutionary socialist alternative to the present leadership of the metal trades unions, to work as a disciplined part of the revolutionary movement as a whole in political solidarity with the Spartacist League, and to fight for the formation of a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class to lead the struggle for a communist revolution.

#### 2. PROGRAM OF THE SSPG

The program of the SSPG is the program of the Spartacist League, particularly as applied to the situation of the metal trades unions.

#### 3. MEMBERSHIP

The SSPG is open to workers at Plesseys who agree with the principles of the SSPG and accept its program and discipline. Applications for membership must be submitted to the SSPG. Contacts may be invited to meetings for a period before joining the SSPG. There may be a period of candidacy in which the member has voice but only consultative vote. All SSPG members must carry out in a disciplined way all decisions and actions decided on by the SSPG.

#### 4. POLITICAL SUBORDINATION

The SSPG is an industrial section of the SL. Politically subordinate to the SL and part of a common movement with the SL, the SSPG remains independent organisationally, electing its own leadership and making its own decisions within the framework of political subordination to the SL. The organisations of the common movement each discuss disputed questions, and, being bound by the discipline of the common movement, carry out all decisions arrived at. Therefore, given these conditions within the SSPG the SL members in the SSPG will not function as a fraction separate from other SSPG members; all members of the SSPG including members of the SL have the right to express their own political views within the SSPG and par-

ticipate in its decisions.

The SSPG is associated with the SL at the level of the Sydney Local Committee, which is the body through which the SSPG is politically subordinate to the SL. In the case of unresolved political disagreement the SSPG is obliged, insofar as its public political activity is concerned, to subordinate itself to the party.

The SSPG shall have a representative with full (voting and speaking) rights to the Sydney Local Committee, who shall also have full rights on the Local Executive. The Sydney Local will have a representative with full rights to the SSPG. The representatives are bound to carry out the instructions of the body they represent.

#### 5. FINANCE

The SSPG will set up its own books of account. SL members shall pay dues at the same rate as other members of the SSPG, and shall pay SL dues reduced by the amount of the SSPG dues.

It should be noted that a caucus that was organised on a national basis would be politically subordinate at the national level. Disputes between the caucus and the party at the local level could not be resolved by resolution in the Local Committee but would be referred to the national executive of the caucus as first arbiter. If they remained unresolved they would be referred to the SL Central Committee and finally the SL national conference. In the case of such a national caucus, representatives would be exchanged at every level, and would be bound by instructions of the body they represented except that the caucus representative to the SL national conference and the central committee would not be bound by instructions.

--general line approved by the  
PB for discussion, 18 May 1975



ON TRADE UNION FUSIONS

by Lafitte (LTF)

Introduction

This document is not a perfectly worked out text on the problem of trade union fusions. It has only one goal: starting from the debate which took place at the European Summer Camp, to outline the general framework which will enable us to be the only political group in France to have a correct position on this subject (as on every other subject).

1. The Objective Bases for the Slogan of Trade Union Fusion and Trotskyists' Principled Tactics!

a. For several decades, there have been several trade union organizations in France. In "calm" periods, the trade unions regroup the most advanced section of the French working class on a political basis: the CGT regroups workers close to the Stalinists and the CFDT those close to the Social Democrats. In general, FO regroups those workers close to the Social Democrats mainly characterized by their anti-communism. However, although the workers become accustomed to and forget the split in the trade union movement during these periods of ebb in the mass movement, in periods of rising struggles the slogan of trade union unity invariably takes on new life!

The reason for this is simple. Almost nine-tenths of the French proletariat is outside the unions. The mobilization of these masses of unorganized workers, completely alien to the splits between Social Democrats and Stalinists, always brings up the need for a united fight and therefore the workers' need for a single trade union organization. Up against a bourgeoisie that working masses who have recently entered the struggle experience as being united behind its state, they feel the need to have a single union.

b. Our whole task consists of using this pressure of the masses to make the advanced workers and the masses of workers understand that the existing splits in the union movement are only the reflection, or rather the result of their treacherous leaderships' policy of dividing the workers' ranks. For us, therefore, the problem consists of turning the mass pressure for unity against the treacherous leaders, of sharpening the contradiction which exists between the base and the leadership. How?

2. No Principled or Programmatic Condition for Fusion!

a. A Fundamental Distinction:

Our basic position concerning all questions of the fusion of mass organizations, from unions up to Soviets, is the following: "The future of the revolution does not depend on the fusion of trade union apparatuses, but on regrouping the working class around revolutionary slogans and forms of struggle" (Trotsky).

If, as we have said in point (1), we think that the masses al-

ways have an instinctive drive toward unity proper to them, we know that consciously seeking unity on a revolutionary basis is specific to the Trotskyist party. That is why it is criminal to pose the unity of the reformist-dominated trade union movement as a precondition for defending the fundamental interests of the working class.

However, such a fundamentally correct position only poses, it does not solve, the tactical problem, which is: how do we bring about "regrouping the working class on revolutionary slogans and forms of struggle"?

For the Party, realizing this task first and foremost implies the need for its own construction. To build the Party and to keep its full and complete independence on the basis of a specific program, the Party must not hesitate to split with the reformists and centrists.

"But precisely, such a solution of the question with regard to the party not only admits but, as a general rule, renders indispensable a quite different attitude with regard to the question of the unity of other mass organizations of the working class: trade unions, cooperatives, soviets" (Trotsky).

This basic distinction established by Trotsky is based on the following conception: the more a working class organization contains broad masses, the more our work to sharpen the opposition between the base and the leadership is objectively favored. Evidence a contrario is given by the reformists themselves, who have always taken the initiative of splits in the trade union movement, whereas even after the October Revolution the Bolsheviks put up with staying in common unions still led by the Mensheviks.

b. The Transitional Program and the Fusion Slogan:

The slogan of trade union fusion is not in the Transitional Program. We have no desire to add it because it would be out of place! Indeed, tactics, even principled ones, should not be contained in the program valid for all sections of the world party of revolution.

Only the principles on which these tactics may be based are contained in the program. Thus the principles on which the slogan of trade union fusion is based are contained in the Transitional Program: "They (we) take active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy" and, in speaking of the "sectarians," "At their base lies a refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands, i.e., for the elementary interests and needs of the working masses as they are today."

c. No Programmatic Preconditions!

The slogan of trade union fusion has a place in an LTF action program for France, but in no case can we make this program a condition for trade union fusion. The slogan for fusion proceeds from the same method as that which consists in proposing factory committees or soviets: "...a historical perspective, even the most correct one,

cannot replace the living experience of the masses" (Trotsky). In other words, our program should always tend toward setting the base against the top and our tactics should be to lead the masses to our program on the basis of a common experience. That is why our program can in no case be a precondition for fusion.

The only thing that we pose as a condition for voting for fusion is the right to defend our entire program at the reunification congress and in the reunited organization!

### Conclusion

We do not fetishize trade union unity, we do not make the struggle for the defense of the interests of the working class depend on achieving unity: "...it is not a question for us of a panacea, but of a lesson in specific and important things that must be taught to the workers who have forgotten or who do not know the past" (Trotsky). It is obvious that at the present time a trade union fusion could--like the CGT-CGTU fusion, and given the policies of the Stalinists--result only in a right turn which could itself culminate only in an even more totalitarian internal regime. Faced with such a situation, we absolutely should fight on our whole program by centrally advancing the demand to break with the bourgeoisie and posing trade union democracy as a condition for our pro-fusion vote. That is, an unacceptable condition for the trade union leaderships. In any case, the union bureaucracies' participation in the Popular Front excludes programmatic demands such as "defense of the USSR" as a precondition for fusion. Quite simply because we do not make programmatic demands on working class leaderships in a bloc with the bourgeoisie!

The only programmatic precondition that partisans of such a position might raise is the demand to break with the bourgeoisie. But breaking with the bourgeoisie cannot be a precondition for trade union fusion. For our struggle for trade union fusion has nothing to do with the tactic of critical support, it is an open battle against the bureaucratic leaderships! We cannot really refuse to fight against the reformists on the pretext that they are in a Popular Front!

That is why a Trotskyist trade union opposition can only be an opposition which aims at being inter-union, fighting for trade union fusion on the basis of trade union and workers' democracy.

That is why, if it is criminal to put off defending the interests of the class until unity is realized, it would be idiotic to support reformist splits on the pretext that the reformists have a majority. Of course the reformists will be in a majority, to fight for fusion so as to make the masses understand that it is the reformists that have to be thrown out.

The only principled position, which we should adopt on the subject of trade union fusions, is to lead advanced workers and the masses to our revolutionary conclusions starting from our common experience.

Our fight for trade union fusion is therefore inseparable from our organization's possibilities for expressing itself and hence

from the fight for workers' and trade union democracy as a precondition!

Finally, our current size, insignificant in relation to the class struggle front, minimizes the practical and immediate importance of this fight, but does not make it any the less necessary if we think that our program is already a program--the only one--to defend the general interests of the working class!

Our slogan can only be:

For trade union fusion based on working class and trade union democracy; Convening by a parity commission of a fusion congress in which all union organizations in the country can participate!

--13 October 1975  
Paris

MOTIONS ON CANDIDACY FOR  
"DELEGUE DU PERSONNEL" (November 1975)

[On 11 November 1975, after a heated debate, the LTF adopted two motions concerning a proposed intervention by supporters in a trade union (one of which was not disputed, thus is not recorded here) and defeated a third. Discussion between members of the IS and the Trade Union Commission of the SL/U.S. led to a consensus that the motion concerning Cazenave's candidacy was flawed. For that reason, and in light of the sharp division in the LTF, an alternate motion was proposed by Comrade Sharpe, which was adopted by the LTF executive in time to alter the thrust of the intervention.

--John Sharpe]

Motion (Robert):

That Cazenave not run for delegate. That he give as explanation for not running:

1. I have sharp political disagreements with the CFDT program.
2. I cannot accept a nomination to run on a program I do not accept.
3. I will fight on the general council for full freedom of factional democracy and full freedom of criticism, both in and out of the union, so that union dissidents will be able to run for delegate on their own program. Motion carried

(VOTE: For: 5, Against: 4)

[Counterposed] Motion (Lafitte):

1. We don't run anybody for delegate. We strongly advise our sympathizers not to run. (VOTE: For: 3, Against: 6)
2. This being determined only on the basis of our size and our tasks, the comrades concerned will give the following explanation: "I could only run to fight the CFDT line, but since I can't do it, for individual and political reasons I won't run." (VOTE: For: 4, Against: 5)

Motion failed

[IS Substitute] Motion (12 November 1975):

Given the differences within the LTF and among the IEC members involved in the discussion, there is an obvious need to continue discussing the criteria by which it is possible to run for délégué du personnel in the French situation.

Due to the need for an immediate public statement, the IS recommends to the LTF exec that it have comrade Cazenave not run for délégué, offering the following grounds to the union meeting:

1. That his disagreements with the line of the CFDT have already led him to resign from the Bureau [exec] so as not to continue to be a front man for the CFDT bureaucracy
2. Because at the present time there is no real avenue to express these differences, to accept a position on the CFDT slate would mean continuing simply to front for the CFDT bureaucrats
3. That he will continue to raise his programmatic differences on the Union Council and to fight for the need for the right to factions and for freedom of criticism in the union

Motion carried



[translation]

SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENTS  
(AFTER) THE DECISION TO NOT RUN CAZENAVE IN  
THE ELECTIONS FOR DELEGUE DU PERSONNEL

1. Meeting of the "Sector" which decided on the list to be presented for approval by the Council.

It should be remembered that this meeting brings together rank and file militants in one center (or Agency) and sends a mandated representative to the Council. In fact only the most conscious unionists are present.

The explanations for not running me in the elections did not encounter strong protests, except for two insinuations which may be developed later at the Council or perhaps the Congress:

a) Since you say that you don't have the means to defend your program, would you not run on the second round?

b) If everyone did what you are doing, that would mean the destruction of the union when faced with attacks by bosses, scabs and fascists.

These arguments (quickly dealt with) were not taken up by others. On the other hand one unionist said he agreed with my position and, attacking the bureaucratic leaderships, said that he would not run in the elections.

This intervention led to the only real debate of the meeting: the question of program.

- The unions and the Union of the Left, the role of the popular front
- Transitional demands and the question of power

A lively debate! After this meeting, it appears of some interest to have informal discussions in depth with two of the people present.

2. Council Meeting to discuss the candidacies and make the choices.

There too my statements did not make waves or provoke violent attacks. Two reasons for that:

- The fact that I am isolated (3 of the 5 sympathizers are running, the other two are not, but they didn't have a position before). The bureaucrats think that the well-known "faction" is finally desolidarizing.

- The fact that at the same meeting there was a debate concerning a right Social Democrat who, running for election, subordinated continuing his mandate to a change in the current line of the section at the next Congress (a more or less PSU line). Run by the PSU, the Council decided against his candidacy. In these circumstances, my intervention appeared more honest and consistent (in fact perhaps not fully understood either).

### 3. Sympathizers.

Two out of three are not running, on the one hand because they are perhaps closer to the organization (although new to politics), on the other hand because they did not have any responsibilities in the leadership before.

The three others ran due to a fear of being discredited in their workplace (don't forget that they spent weeks recruiting potential candidates given the lack of them) and certainly due to the lack of understanding of the position given its newness.

The result is that they did not firmly put forth their program to their fellow workers, that is, we cannot consider their presentation to be principled, and we disapprove of it.

--Cazenave

1 December 1975 (Paris)

DECLARATION OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE IST

by the [Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia]

The undersigned, following a period of working together in the GCR, Italian section of the USec, decided to join the TMR.

This act was based on impressionism, both because of the tremendous lack of education in international work to which they were accustomed in the GCR, and because of the TMR's lack of a clear programmatic basis. In fact the TMR was constituted in the fall of 1973 on a rather empirical and heterogeneous basis. It had not drawn up a balance sheet of the politics of the Fourth International, and was not homogeneous on the question of the crisis in Italy. At the national conference of 1-4 November 1973, the TMR declared itself in substantial agreement with the IEC minority's criticisms of the draft resolution on Latin America, voted at the Ninth Congress. The agreement with GIM/KOMPASS (Frankfurt document, 18 November 1973) was arrived at on a completely empirical basis: even recently Comrade R. declared that he had not read the Kompass analysis concerning the nature of the social democratic parties. The same thing was true concerning the relations with the French comrades Contre le Courant and of Tendency 4.

At the Tenth World Congress, the Mezhrayonka Tendency demonstrated its unprincipled nature, coming together and then dissolving itself on the sole basis of unity within the USec and in defense of democracy. Once the Tenth World Congress was over, and with some TMR comrades having already been expelled by the GCR, Comrade R. understood the impossibility of continuing a struggle within the GCR, because of the noticeable loss in membership (gone to the FLT), and he understood the impossibility of participating in the congress of the national section. R. pressed for a rapid expulsion from the GCR to veil the political bankruptcy of the FMR. The occasion was sought in the external distribution of the document "Le origini storiche del centrismo sui generis" and in having V. (already expelled from the GCR) sign the document. Following the expulsion, at the meeting held in Turin on 21-22 February 1975, the comrades from the Venice region verified the complete lack of any connection or international orientation on the part of the FMR. Priority in relations was given to:

- 1) The Spartacusbund, without knowing anything about it.
- 2) GIM/KOMPASS, while knowing that they were opposed to the project of a public faction.
- 3) The French comrades of Tendency 4 (who were in a rotten bloc with the French FLT), even though there were substantial differences on the nature of social democracy.

At this stage our knowledge of the positions of the SL was limited to the Spartacist, French edition ("Les Visages du Pablistisme"). The subsequent exchange of correspondence with comrade Sharpe, begun when the crisis in the FMR became openly apparent (resignation of comrade M. from the secretariat, dated 4 April 1975), brought us a fuller knowledge of the ist.

The examination of the documents sent by the SL confirmed the correctness of our conclusions on the USec, which Comrade R. tended to consider as the Trotskyist arena with which to maintain privi-

leged relations, with the perspective of reintegration, in spite of the deviations and the centrist vacillations, opportunism, etc., while for us it was to be considered a centrist formation.

The differences which emerged on various occasions inside the FMR, as a result of our pointing them out, became more acute, leading to the dissolution of the FMR on 10-11 May 1975.

The 1 June meeting in Belluno reconfirmed the most complete empiricism in the orientation of the Turin GRP, while it laid the basis for a meeting with the comrades of the GBL.

The meeting in Milan and Genoa, in which Comrade Sharpe participated, and the subsequent meetings in Belluno and Mestre between us and Comrade Sharpe, brought us to the decision of requesting formal membership to the iSt on the basis of the examination of the basic documents (Genesis of Pabloism, Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency, Towards the Rebirth of the Fourth International, Report of the London Conference of the International Committee, Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League), and the acceptance of the principles contained therein.

We agree particularly with the following points which have emerged from the basic documents and from discussions with the comrades of the iSt:

- 1) The concept of the popular front (in recent political experience, Chile; in the current situation, France, Italy, Portugal).
- 2) The necessity of the rebirth of the Fourth International, destroyed in the 1950's by the Pabloists. Only the iSt has worked to define the programmatic basis for its reorganization.
- 3) The concept of the united front as a tactic and not a strategy.
- 4) The nature of social democracy.
- 5) The concept of the dual nature of the USSR and the deformed workers states.
- 6) The acceptance of the methodology and the essential conclusions of the "Transitional Program" and its present-day relevance.
- 7) The struggle in the trade unions which emerges from the Transitional Program.

--[Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia]  
9 July 1975

[TMR: Revolutionary Marxist Tendency. Italian "Third Tendency" led by Roberto. Forerunner of FMR (Revolutionary Marxist Faction), now a separate public organization linked with the Spartacusbund. The GRP (Group Permanent Revolution) was led by a co-thinker of Roberto (an expelled leader of the Italian USec). It split with the FMR without political differences. The GBL (Bolshevik-Leninist Group) represents a fusion between ex-OCIers and comrades leaving Bordigism toward Trotskyism. The GBL has declared a desire to fuse with the iSt/Spartacist Nucleus and, although we are sceptical, we are discussing with them. --Sharpe, 20 April 1976]

THE ORIGINS OF THE SPARTACIST NUCLEUS OF ITALY

The Spartacist Nucleus of Italy was officially constituted in July 1975 at the European summer camp of the international Spartacist tendency. The comrades who formed the group came from the Frazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria (FMR--Revolutionary Marxist Faction), which officially dissolved itself at the Turin meeting of 10-11 May 1975. Prior to that, the FMR was an integral part of the projected International Third Tendency within the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (Usec). Within the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR--Revolutionary Communist Group), Italian section of the Usec, the FMR tried to develop a role as the political leadership to oppositions against the centrist oscillations of the Livio Maitan leadership. In reality, the FMR completely failed to accomplish this task because it was unable to recognize that the battle against the majority should have been one of principles and of program. The TMR\*long continued shamelessly to tail after the LTF (the international minority faction affiliated with the American SWP and the Argentine PST), discovering only later that a substantial number of comrades from Naples and Turin deserted the FMR for the LTF which, along with the SWP, called on Federal troops to protect the rights of Blacks in Boston and betrayed the Transitional Program and the interests of the working class. This was not the only example of a "skewed tactic": even in the leadership of the Rome local the TMR comrades collaborated with the "Linea di Condotta" tendency on a purely anti-majority basis.

At the present time we must stress the link between the depth of the degeneration of Trotskyism in Italy and of the Usec internationally and the necessity to proceed toward the rebirth of the Fourth International. The Italian section of the Usec was organizationally destroyed by the 1969 crisis, while the Maoist groups grew at the same time (Avanguardia Operaia, Servire il Popolo, Avanguardia Comunista, etc.). Even today, the Maitan leadership (which produces an uninterrupted flow of worthless pamphlets) has been unable to make a political evaluation of that defeat, which had a tremendous effect of the current size and presence of centrist groups in Italy. On the other hand, political analysis inside the Pabloist international has been relegated to the domain of "pedants" and "historians." This procedure has by now become so much of a habit that the GCR militants (as well as those in other sections of the international) are not even inclined to ask why. Until the problems explode for objective reasons, they just rush blindly forward in their "sector of intervention." Thus none of the comrades were interested in finding out what comrades Maitan and Beauvais were cooking up in Chile.

The Spartacist Tendency dates the death of the Fourth International in the period 1951-54. This crucial period for the workers' movement also affected the history of other political groupings, the Bordigists for example. During that period the Trotskyists' organizational unity exploded, but this was only the external manifestation of the revolutionaries' definitive capitulation to the change in the political framework which took place during World War II. The development of the "cold war" multiplied the destructive effects of this change on the revolutionary heritage. The breakup of the International was accompanied by vast revisions which went to the heart of fundamental questions of Marxist-Leninist theory and



of the Transitional Program. The principles of the International concerning the role of the Party in the proletarian revolution, the independence of the class and the centrality of the proletariat, the relation between the revolutionary organization and Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships were all revised.

Today, proceeding along an intricate parabola whose oscillations exhibit a movement plunging ever more to the right, the SWP and the PST join in covering up open manifestations of class collaboration, while at the same time the compromises of the Tenth World Congress have brought into the open the non-existence of the International as a centralized political organism based on a common program (we will not say revolutionary, since it had not been for some time).

Comrades who are on the lookout for the August 4 of the Fourth International generally objected that while there were a long series of errors, yet at the last, and decisive, minute the errors were corrected. This is clearly a self-justifying thesis which serves only to cover up other centrist ambiguities and oscillations. In all the cases which can be examined (Algeria, Cuba, the 1969 crisis in Italy, Chile, etc.), the "corrections" came after the working class movement was defeated. Not only that, but the fact which makes most explicit the nature of the leadership of the International is that a revolutionary Marxist critique of these defeats was never made. This is the explanation for our militants' repeated silence and mis-education. The comrade apologists commit the grave mistake of substituting "corrections" for the dynamics of centrist oscillations.

Faced with these tasks the FMR went aground. It preferred an organizational escape clause: an attempt to force the hand of its Third Tendency partners (Germans, Austrians and French) by confronting them with the fait accompli of the FMR's expulsion from the U.Sec.

In the final convulsive phase of the FMR's existence many comrades reacted to the wide-spread tendency to take refuge in "agitation," thus objectively placing itself outside Trotskyism and its program, and gradually linked up their own activity to that of the international Spartacist tendency. Today the continuity of the revolutionary Trotskyist tradition lives in the experience of over a decade of struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International by the comrades of the Spartacist League U.S. and in the international Spartacist tendency.

--Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia  
August 1975

\*TMR--Revolutionary Marxist  
Tendency, predecessor to  
the FMR

[This document was published in Italian in Italian Spartacist No. 1  
(September 1975)]

by Sharpe

New York  
7 October 1975

TLD (B,K) CC  
OBL

Dear Comrades,

Most of you will recall the debate at the first summer camp on the problem of translating "Rebirth of the Fourth International." At that time, we acquiesced to the objections against "Wiedergeburt" (more or less grudgingly, depending on the comrade involved), but urged you to find some other equivalent besides "Wiederaufbau."

I want briefly to reiterate our objections to "Reconstruction/Wiederaufbau." As you know, we feel that "reconstruction/Wiederaufbau" tends to imply simply picking up the various pieces of stone lying around on the ground in the vicinity of a ruined building and trying to put the building back together again with the same stones--in this case the empty shells of wrecks of organizations. Now while in theory this problem might be avoided in part (but only in part, since it is the slogan that is remembered and not necessarily the explanation), there is also a second, and in this case definitive argument. Namely, that the practice of our opponents confirms the first objection. There are currently two main groupings internationally which use the slogan of "Reconstruction/Wiederaufbau of the FI": the OCI and the "Spartacusbund International."

The OCI's practice is sufficiently well known so that I don't have to go into detail: I will mention only two examples. The OCI uncritically accepted the POR into the IC as just such a "building block" (i.e., as a factional maneuver). As the Greek Workers Vanguard group (a member of the IC at the time) pointed out, precisely because the POR was a finished, hard established group it was all the more important to have a full evaluation of its past. This was never done, with the resultant problems (around the Popular Assembly, the FRA, etc.). The second example is the recent report that the OCI has taken over the POUM (! and double !!) and expelled its left wing. From the space the OCI paper has been giving to the POUM lately, I think this is probably either true or in the process of happening. Need one say more about a group that wants to "reconstruct" the FI with the POUM?

The example of the "Spartacusbund International" is equally eloquent. Its maneuvers with us, with the late unlamented CSL, and now with the Gruppe Internationale and split-offs from the "Third Tendency" in Austria and Italy speak volumes.

Under these circumstances, one may well ask: do we really want to have the same slogan as the Spartacusbund?

The other side of the problem is that the comrades' objections to "Wiedergeburt" do, I think, have a certain foundation. We have therefore spent some time over the past year and a half considering

this problem, and have come up with some alternate formulations, all of which seem to us equally valid, since they all (a) differentiate from simple "reconstruction" and (b) in some way make the point that the process of reforging the FI will require qualitative transformations in organizations--or more likely, parts/splits/factions of organizations--which are won over--as well as in individual comrades (I think some of our ex-Pabloite comrades can testify to that).

Our current alternatives are:

reforging the FI  
recreating the FI  
regenerating the FI.

Now while I am not sure exactly how these might be best translated into German, it seems at least possible. Or, there may be other alternatives. Dimir objects to "Neuschmiedung" as "ikky" (but when pressured admits that it is a theoretical possibility and will accept it if it is to be found in Wagner). Alternatively, he suggests "Neubau" and "die Internationale neu erbauen."

The point is that we should actively seek some alternative to "Wiederaufbau." It might also be a good idea to suspend the use of Wiederaufbau until a new formulation is found.

I look forward to hearing from you on the subject. Also, Jim will be in Berlin about 1 November and will no doubt have some things to say on the subject.

Comradely greetings,

Sharpe

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF EUROPE

by Sharpe

New York  
13 October 1975

Group II

Dear Comrades,

I have recently become quite concerned that we may very well be in for serious problems somewhere in Europe in the immediate future. This is not intended as a specific prediction, but as a general concern. Let me outline the components.

First, there appears indeed to be some sort of regroupment around the Spartacusbund. This centrist swamp involves as many as 20-25 people in Vienna and some in Italy. In addition, it will give the Spartacusbund a new lease on life. The important fact here is that this regroupment seems to be passing us by (we are getting nothing from it) and thus lays the basis for demoralization of our comrades. Depending on developments within the USec, this may also be accompanied by some motion in the German Kompass ("Third Tendency").

Second, we have a high profile vis-à-vis the USec. Not only are we being expelled in France, not only does the SWP/LTF feel compelled to deal with us in Europe, but we are very visible. Thus Lafitte vs. Mandel in Vienna; we have had Albert intervene against P. Frank on several occasions; we will make a big splash at the Rouge fête on 18 October, etc. The problem is that we are very visible, but basically have no forces in back of our visibility. This poses problems similar to those in a trade union when one is elected to a leading position with no base. It can easily lead to demoralization, over-heating, etc. I believe that the problems we have had with people in the Ligue are examples of the kind of problem which can occur.

Furthermore, our visibility leads to pressure on us to "compete" with USec groups--a pressure which is increased when we have the beginnings of a technical apparatus (e.g., in France) and hence the possibility of putting out (too many) leaflets. A similar problem exists in Germany, although attenuated by the printing situation.

Lastly, our recruitment has been slow (except in France, where there is a serious problem of assimilation), and we are beginning to get attrition. Austria has seriously reduced forces; the loss of H. in Germany is a blow, and two other comrades have resigned for personal reasons (demoralization); the Italian group is fragile; and in France the comrades are exhausted from over-work and their work has been somewhat deformed by rapid recruitment (neglect of key components of work, such as finances).

I feel that this situation could at any time lead to a serious crisis in any of the European groups. Comrades should be prepared for this possibility and should take steps to ensure that it does not happen or is minimized. The most important counter-measure is to

regularize their political work in line with the real capacities organizationally available. If we do not have false expectations, demoralization is less likely to reach crisis proportions. Regularization also means a division of labor, systematic development of cadre, etc.

Nevertheless, all is not for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds. We do have a number of things in our favor in addition to our programmatic basis (which is of course the essential point). In particular, the operation of Station London will provide a big boost. In addition, the definitive recruitment of the Mexicans would provide a tremendous psychological reinforcement, as would the possible establishment of a working relation with a group in Greece.

Comradely greetings,

Sharpe

\* \* \*

New York  
20 October 1975

Group II

Dear Comrades,

A minor error crept into my letter of 13 October 1975. Although it does not affect the argumentation or the conclusions, this should serve as a correction. The error concerned the TLD: of the two members who had reportedly resigned, one has retracted his resignation as due simply to a momentary demoralization; the other is on what is expected to be a terminal leave of absence.

Comradely greetings,

Sharpe