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New York, N.Y. 10014

January 24, 1974

TO LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION COORDINATORS

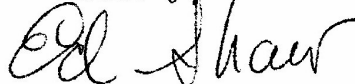
Dear Comrades,

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

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

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

Comradely,



Ed Shaw

Compass Tendency in the GIM

November 28, 1973

To:

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International

cc: Pierre Frank

Joe Hansen

Political Bureau of the GIM

Dear Comrades,

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

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

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

Herbert Obenland  
6 Frankfurt, Nordenstrasse 30

The Steering Committee  
Albert - Juan - Karl

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

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INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY  
in the GIM

Frankfurt, Dec. 4, 1973

To:

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International

The Political Bureau of the GIM

The Control Commission of the GIM

The Steering Committee of the "Compass" Tendency

Copies to: Pierre Frank, Joseph Hansen, IEC Majority Tendency

Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

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

The steering committee of the IT  
Winnie, Urs, Mintoff

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

## COMPASS

Tendency in the GIM  
December 12, 1973

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Carry on.

The Steering Committee  
Albert - Juan - Karl

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

Dear Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

With revolutionary greetings,

Central leadership of the communist organization Spartacus

Essen, November 24, 1973