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SPARTACIST LEAGUE

INTERNAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Perspectives and Tasks of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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PERSPECTIVES AND TASKS OF THE SL/U.S.

Section One--Perspectives

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The strategic tasks of the Spartacist League are to struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, and to construct a mass revolutionary party, American section of a reborn Fourth International, to lead the American working class to a victorious socialist revolution. These tasks are neither separate nor counterposed, but are necessarily inseparably linked and complementary. The very nature of capitalism, intensified in the imperialist epoch, gives the proletarian revolution its international character and demands the conclusion that the consolidation of the socialist revolution requires the overthrow of capitalism in at least several of the advanced capitalist countries.

2. The road to the realization of these historic tasks is conditioned both by our past experience in struggle and by the opportunities for revolutionary activity and organization which our work has opened up, as well as by the conditions of development of society. The past three years have seen a qualitative change in the SL's ability to intervene in the class struggle and to effectively fight for our perspectives. We are near to realizing our aim of crystallizing an authentic anti-revisionist international Trotskyist tendency, and we have been able to lay most of the basis necessary for the struggle to become the vanguard party of the American working class. These advances pose new tasks upon us.

3. The continuing transformation of the SL is based upon a three-fold growth in membership since 1971, the concentration of leading cadre in our center, the establishing of an effective and regular press, the development of a number of trade-union fractions concentrated in several key industries and the formation of an active youth section. At the same time several of our competitors have suffered setbacks, thus significantly increasing our specific gravity among the ostensibly revolutionary organizations within the U.S. The SL is no longer a nationally-isolated, sub-propaganda group insulated from the American proletariat.

4. The solid foundation for these modest but real gains has been our determined and implacable political struggle over the last eleven years against every sort of social-democratic, Stalinist and centrist revision of Marxism.

"We seek in particular to carry forward the international working-class perspective of Marxism as developed in theory and practice by V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and by the Transitional Program and other documents adopted at the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International. These materials are the indispensable codification of the communist movement internationally, and are fundamental to the revolutionary tasks of our organization."

--"Declaration of Principles of the SL," adopted at the SL Founding Conference, 3-5 September 1966

The critical study and assimilation of the lessons of the struggles of our tendency and of the communist movement internationally are essential to the carrying out of our revolutionary tasks. We aim fundamentally at resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership through waging a political battle against the various revisionist tendencies which compete with us for the leadership of the working class.

5. Our tasks and our capacity to carry them out do not develop in a vacuum, but are powerfully shaped by the conditions of development of society which must be carefully noted and analyzed. Our purpose in making a careful and detailed study of the current world situation is not, however, to simply take account of what has been happening. Rather, in the words of Trotsky:

"We analyze the conditions of development as they take shape behind our backs and independently of our will in order, after having understood them, to act upon them through our active will, i.e., the will of the organized class."

--Perspectives of World Development, 1924

II. ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT PERIOD

6. Three years ago the SL pointed out the breaking up of the post-World War II world capitalist order, dominated by American imperialism. We indicated that this break-up was characterized not only by a renewal of sharp inter-imperialist rivalry, but also by an upswing in the class struggle reflecting both the recovery of the working class from the defeats it suffered at the end of World War II and the growing contradictions of the international capitalist system. We further noted that these developments had been conditioned by a progressive political decomposition of the deformed workers state bloc.

7. Following World War II American imperialism was able to accomplish what it had only partly been able to do in the inter-war period before the victory of fascism in Germany, i.e., to put capitalist Europe, and indeed Japan also, on American rations. Preparing the way for this hegemonic role of American imperialism in the post-war period were precisely the defeats of the working class in the revolutionary situations brought about as the result of the war. As the Fourth International so accurately observed at its Founding Conference:

"In view of the weakness, financially and technically, of the other belligerents compared to the still mighty United States, the latter will surely play an even more decisive role in the settling of the coming war than in the last. There is every indication that, unless European imperialism is smashed by the proletarian revolution and peace established on a socialist basis, the United States will dictate the terms of the imperialist peace after emerging as the victor. Its participation will not only determine the victory of the side it joins, but will also determine the disposition of the booty, of which it will claim the lion's share."

--Thesis on the World Role of American Imperialism, 1938

8. Both the European and Japanese capitalist states emerged from World War II devastated, with their ties to the world market and to their former colonial possessions either greatly weakened or totally shattered. There was no shortage of the most acute revolutionary situations growing out of the war. Yet it is a fact that in this period the proletariat failed to come to power, demonstrating once again not the strength or historical viability of capitalism, but the absolute necessity of forging Leninist parties with the capacity to lead the proletariat in a struggle to smash capitalist rule.

The SL completely rejects the primitive conception that capitalism will fall of its own accord, an anti-Marxist notion implicitly advanced by the degenerate Healy/Wohlforth "International Committee," which postulates that capitalism faces a final "Crisis" that every day grows deeper and deeper. This conception is, in fact, most eloquently refuted by the 1961 Socialist Labour League resolution, The World Prospect of Socialism, written before the definitive degeneration of the SLL into political banditry and during the period when the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP (the forebear of the Spartacist League) looked to the SLL for political leadership.

"They [Marxists] do not assume, however, that imperialism will somehow collapse because the contradictions which it secretes will eventually bring the system to a halt. Such an idea of automatic downfall is no part of Marxism. The history of the last forty years has driven home the lessons so often repeated by Lenin and Trotsky, that there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie. It survived the challenge of revolution and economic depression between the wars by resort to fascism. It survived the Second World War with the complicity of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships--which ensured that the working class would not make a bid for power--and used the breathing space to elaborate new methods of rule and strengthen the economy. Even the most desperate situations can be overcome if only the active intervention of the workers as a class for themselves, with a party and a leadership with a perspective of overthrowing capitalism, is not created in time. The continued existence of capitalism is not a reflection of its strength or a justification for it; it is primarily a consequence of a series of defeats for the working class, the historical responsibility for which rests upon the shoulders of international Stalinism and Social Democracy."

--The World Prospect of Socialism, Fall 1961

9. At bottom the failure of new October revolutions to occur in the aftermath of World War II and the survival of the war by the Stalin bureaucracy reflected the inability of the Fourth International to create mass revolutionary parties capable of successfully challenging the Stalinist and social-democratic parties for the leadership of the working class, and of leading that class to victory over capitalism. This inability represented not a betrayal on the part of the Fourth International, but was the outcome of a courageous but unequal struggle.

"The Fourth International geared itself up for the decisive struggle against fascism and war--and lost. During the course

of the war and the Nazi occupations the very rudiments of international, and even national, coordination were destroyed. The International disintegrated into small groups of militants pursuing improvised policies: some opportunist, some heroic. The 65 French and German comrades who were shot by the Gestapo in July 1943 because of their revolutionary defeatist fraternization and the building of a Trotskyist cell in the German armed forces are a monument to the internationalist courage of a weak revolutionary movement fighting against insurmountable odds."

--"Genesis of Pabloism," Spartacist,
Fall 1972

The Fourth International was reconstituted in the aftermath of World War II on an extremely weakened basis, much of its leading cadre having been annihilated by either the fascists or the Stalinists. Thus:

"When in June 1945 a European Executive Committee met to prepare for the holding of a World Congress, the experienced leading cadres and the most promising of the young Trotskyists (A. Leon, L. Lesoil, W. Held) had been killed at the hands of the Nazis or the GPU. The continuity of Trotskyism in Europe had been broken. This tragic process was duplicated elsewhere with the imprisonment and eventual execution of Ta Thu-tau and the Vietnamese Trotskyists, the virtual extinction of the Chinese Trotskyists and the liquidation of the remaining Russian Trotskyists (including, besides Trotsky, Ignace Reiss, Rudolf Klement and Leon Sedov). The Europeans were apparently so starved for experienced leading cadres that Pierre Frank (leading member of the Molinier group which Trotsky denounced as 'demoralized centrists' in 1935 and expelled in 1938 for refusing to break with the French social-democracy after the 'French Turn') was enabled to become a leader of the post-war French section."

--ibid.

These problems were compounded by the failure of the American Socialist Workers Party, under the leadership of Cannon, to intervene in and assume leading roles in the International. Instead, the most experienced and authoritative leadership within the International abdicated its internationalist responsibilities to the untested and inexperienced leadership which surrounded Michel Pablo.

10. Pabloist revisionism, which took hold in the Fourth International in the period following the end of the war and was eventually to lead to the political destruction of the Fourth International as a revolutionary organization, represented nothing more than the generalization of liquidationist and capitulationist moods that arose out of the intersection of the isolation and weakness of the Trotskyist movement in the postwar period with simultaneous expansion of Stalinism and the defeats of the proletariat's attempts to come to power within the framework of massive nationalistic Stalinist and social-democratic movements.

"The emergence of Pabloite revisionism pointed to the underlying root of the crisis of our movement: abandonment of a work-

ing-class revolutionary perspective. Under the influence of the relative stabilization of capitalism in the industrial states of the West and of the partial success of petit-bourgeois movements in overthrowing imperialist rule in some of the backward countries, the revisionist tendency within the Trotskyist movement developed an orientation away from the proletariat and toward the petit-bourgeois leaderships. The conversion of Trotskyism into a left satellite of the existing labor and colonial-revolutionary leaderships, combined with a classically centrist verbal orthodoxy, was typified by Pablo --but by no means was confined to him or his organizational faction. On the contrary, the Cuban and Algerian revolutions have constituted acid tests proving that the centrist tendency is also prevalent among certain groups which originally opposed the Pablo faction."

--"Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International," Draft Resolution on the World Movement submitted to the July 1963 SWP Convention by the Revolutionary Tendency

The liquidationist impulse of Pabloist revisionism found its theoretical codification in Pablo's conception of "The New World Reality," which in essence stated that in the post-World War II period the global balance of forces had shifted definitively to the side of the proletariat and, in consequence, there was no longer a need to construct independent Trotskyist parties since the objective unfolding of events would pressure the various bureaucratic, petty-bourgeois and nationalist-led formations to carry out revolutionary transformations of capitalist society. Thus the entire experience of the workers movement, codified in the Leninist/Trotskyist conception of the epoch of imperialism as the epoch of wars and revolutions and of the crisis of revolutionary leadership, was junked in favor of a mechanistic, non-Marxist sociology which completely negated an independent revolutionary role for the proletariat and its Leninist vanguard. This revision was and remains every bit as fundamental and pernicious a revision of Marxism as Stalin's conception of "Socialism in One Country," and at bottom leads to the same conclusions.

While the content of "The New World Reality" has kaleidoscopically shifted with the impressionist adjustments felt necessary by Pablo and his latter-day disciples, the central axis of this "theory," the negation of the revolutionary role of the proletariat, has remained unchanged. Thus such variegated Pabloist "realities" as "centuries of deformed workers states," the colonial world as the "epicenter of world revolution," or the collapse of "neo-capitalism" correlating with the rise of the "new mass vanguard" all serve as handmaidens for the Pabloist search for some easy, non-proletarian, non-Leninist road to the socialist revolution.

Indicative of the political bankruptcy of Pabloism in coming to understand the post-war period was the Pabloites' attempt to correlate the post-war stabilization of capitalism in the major industrial countries of the West with a "post-war boom." This objectivist conception--completely overlooking the historic defeat of the

proletariat and its vanguard, the Fourth International, growing out of the war--is a measure of the Pabloists' political denigration of the role of revolutionary leadership in the imperialist epoch.

Commenting upon the relationship between basic economic factors and politics in the imperialist epoch, Trotsky made a fundamental observation of enormous significance:

"What have we in Europe in the post-war [World War I] period? In economy--irregular, spasmodic curtailments and expansions of production, which gravitate in general around the pre-war level despite great technical successes in certain branches of industry. In politics--frenzied oscillations of the political situation towards the Left and towards the Right. It is quite apparent that the sharp turns in the political situation in the course of one, two, or three years are not brought about by any changes in the basic economic factors, but by causes and impulses of a purely superstructural character, thereby indicating the extreme instability of the entire system, the foundation of which is corroded by irreconcilable contradictions.

"This is the sole source from which flows the full significance of revolutionary strategy in contradistinction to tactics. Thence also flows the new significance of the party and party leadership."

Trotsky went on to note:

"Today ... every new sharp change in the political situation to the Left places the decision in the hands of the revolutionary party. Should it miss the critical situation, the latter veers around to its opposite. Under these circumstances the role of party leadership acquires exceptional importance. The words of Lenin to the effect that two or three days can decide the fate of the international revolution would have been almost incomprehensible in the epoch of the Second International. In our epoch, on the contrary, these words have only too often been confirmed and, with the exception of the October, always from the negative side."

--The Third International After Lenin, pp. 82-83

11. Although capitalism was granted a reprieve as a consequence of the defeats of the working class in the immediate postwar period, and an additional reprieve by the political destruction of the Fourth International by Pabloist revisionism, capitalism's recovery from the war could only lay the basis for a new round of international conflicts. World War II graphically demonstrated for a second time that capitalism in its highest stage, imperialism, is unable to resolve the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of the world economy and the national-state barriers. The sharp renewal of economic rivalry between the American bourgeoisie and its European and Japanese allies following a period of American hegemony after World War II spotlights the fatal contradiction of capitalism in the imperialist epoch. Ultimately facing insurmountable obstacles to their further expansion, the various nation-

ally-limited bourgeoisies can only generate the prerequisites for new international and class conflicts, for the crystallization of new revolutionary situations.

12. The new economic policies initiated by the Nixon administration in 1971 (wage controls, devaluation, protective trade regulations) definitively marked the collapse of the post-World War II American hegemony, and signalled the beginning of a period of sharp inter-imperialist rivalry. In initiating these policies the aim of the American ruling class was to struggle to maintain their profits at the expense both of the working class and of America's resurgent imperialist rivals, laying the basis for a new round of intensified class struggle both in the U.S. and in the rest of the capitalist world.

III. THE WORLD ECONOMY

13. The three years since 1971 have seen the continued disintegration of the post-World War II capitalist order dominated by U.S. imperialism. Economic rivalry between the U.S. and the other capitalist countries has grown intense. This has been paralleled by a continued decline in relations between the U.S. and its NATO allies, and a worsening of relations between the European bourgeoisies themselves, calling into question the continued existence of the Common Market, as had been predicted all along by Marxists.

14. These developments take place in the context of and are powerfully conditioned by the world economic conjuncture. Previously the military and economic hegemony of U.S. imperialism had been sufficient to suppress objective conflicts of interest arising from world economic cycles. Thus the major world recession of 1958 had little effect upon the structure of world politics. This is no longer the case. The collapse of American hegemony, signalled by the 1971 devaluation of the dollar, means that differences arising out of changing world economic conditions (themselves reflecting both the level of class struggle and of inter-imperialist rivalry) translate themselves much more powerfully into international political struggles and class conflicts.

Such developments serve as an illustration of Lenin's aphorism that "politics is concentrated economics," yet stand in sharp contradiction to the simplistic and objectivist idea exemplified by Healy/Wohlforth (and shared, e.g., by the Revolutionary Socialist League) that economic conjuncture is the direct and decisive factor governing political struggle. In particular, the Healyites hold that the relative stability of bourgeois democracy in the postwar period is the result of an extended economic boom and that the definitive capitalist crisis (Healy's version of Pablo's "New World Reality") is either taking place or imminent, posing the immediate question of socialism or fascism on a global scale.

In fact, the Healyites (and the RSL) turn Lenin's aphorism on its head, deducing, along with Mandel, a fundamental economic crisis from the emergence of ephemeral political phenomena. Thus Mandel observes the appearance of newly radicalized petty-bourgeois layers,

his "new mass vanguard," and concludes that the boom of "neo-capitalism" is drawing to a close. And Wohlforth, who apparently revels in being sublimely ridiculous, sees evidence for the "Crisis" in events such as the failure of the Skylab space station to perform up to standards.

In reality, economic conjuncture reacts upon an historically evolved relationship of forces, attitudes and leadership which can often suppress or even counter-balance objective economic pressures. Thus, the relationship between changing economic conditions and political struggle is vastly different in different contexts and periods.

15. Following a period of stagnation among the advanced capitalist countries, beginning in 1971 there occurred an exceptionally uniform and exceptionally sharp worldwide boom, the strongest since the Korean war. The unanticipated world demand quickly ran up against a bottleneck of primary product supply, which is at bottom a reflection of the anarchy of world capitalist production (e.g. world food output actually declined in 1972). Induced by actual physical shortages, the supply and pricing of primary products became and has remained overwhelmingly speculative and cartel-manipulated. The oil situation is the most important manifestation of this phenomenon, but far from the only one. World commodity prices consequently increased by 56 percent in 1973.

Spurred by the commodity price spiral and sustained inflationary state finance, the 1971-73 boom qualitatively raised the level of inflation in the advanced capitalist countries. Compared with a 3.5 percent annual increase in consumer prices during the 1960's, comparable prices increased at a rate of 7 percent a year in 1972-73 (OECD, Economic Outlook, December 1973). Maintaining real income in the face of unprecedented inflation has been the primary axis of the class struggle in all advanced capitalist countries during the past period. This struggle has generally taken place in the context of either legally enforced government wage control or "voluntary" agreements between the government and union bureaucracies. Due to effective state wage controls eagerly enforced by the reactionary and entrenched U.S. labor bureaucracy, the real wages of American workers have fallen markedly over the past period. The real wages of British workers have remained stagnant in this period, while working-class income has risen moderately in Japan, West Germany and France.

16. The ability of the British, French, Japanese and West German workers to maintain their income levels over the past several years reflects the high level of class struggle in those countries. In Britain, Japan and West Germany this struggle has produced weak parliamentary regimes. The governments of Tanaka, Schmidt and Wilson are overwhelmingly concerned with remaining in office and only secondarily with holding down wages. (In this context it is interesting to note that the contradictions inherent in the mass social-democratic parties, between their working-class base and their class-collaborationist leaderships, are, with the upsurge in class struggle, coming to the fore. The dilemma of contemporary social democracy is that the upsurge of class struggle tends to catapult

these formations into the bourgeois governments--where they are compelled to crush the nascent labor militancy.) Japan, West Germany and Britain do not now have a foreign policy in the sense of long-term strategic goals, but literally determine their international actions from day to day, adding to the extreme flux and chaos of contemporary capitalist power politics.

17. Independent of the oil embargo/price quadrupling (growing out of a complex of maneuvers in the wake of the October War involving the Near East propertied classes, the American oil cartel, and America's imperialist rivals), it was likely that there would be a general downturn in 1974, with recessions in the U.S. and West Germany and a marked slowdown in Japanese economic growth. Thus, even before the oil crisis, it appeared 1974 would mark the first world recession since 1958. The effect of the oil embargo, followed by the fourfold increase in prices, has been to bring this downturn forward, making it sharper, more uniform and more inflationary. The possibility of world depression is thus greater than at any time since the late 1920's.

18. The combined effect of a general economic contraction and higher oil prices must lead to a sharp decline in world trade in manufactures. The emerging tendency to pay for Arab oil through state-to-state barter is clear evidence of this. Additionally, the massive amounts of speculative money capital in the hands of the Arab ruling classes will play havoc with international financial arrangements. The great increase in mobile, speculative capital will make it fundamentally more difficult for national states to control their currency supplies and exchange rates, probably inducing general financial autarchy (i.e. the absence of general currency convertability).

IV. THE U.S. ECONOMY

19. As indicated above, the U.S. economy seemed headed for a typical downturn in the spring of 1974. The oil crisis arrested certain sectors of the economy (e.g. auto) creating an earlier, uneven recession. The continuing expansion of certain sectors of the economy represents a lag of those elements still affected by the 1972-73 boom--the overcoming of bottlenecks (e.g. primary metallurgy), rebuilding normal inventories and capital investment (much of it the completion of projects already begun). The 1974-75 budget is overall neutral, although it does contain a marked increase in arms allocation, one of the few strong areas of industrial expansion.

20. The effect of the world conjuncture on U.S. trade is likely to be strongly negative. The combination of reduced world output and the relative devaluation of European and Japanese currencies, the latter necessarily induced by the high oil import costs, will severely hamper U.S. exports, one of the strongest elements of the 1972-73 boom. Thus there will be greater economic pressure to expand Japanese and European manufactures in the U.S. market, producing protectionist reactions, which have already manifested themselves in auto.

21. At the same time, the U.S. should be the recipient of huge

amounts of Arab speculative money capital. Some of this should generate real investment, although the U.S. ruling class has shown signs of resistance to foreigners owning significant productive resources. The resulting liquidity of American financial institutions should, however, cushion the bankruptcies which normally occur during contractions. It will also contribute to the inflationary bias in the economy.

22. The most likely prospect for the economy is the continuation of the present situation through early 1975--net zero growth with extreme differences in various sectors and an inflation of about 10 percent annually. By early 1975 the presently strong factors sustaining output should exhaust themselves, leading to sharp contractions whose extent cannot now be judged. Also in early 1975 the commodity price spiral should break in the face of a world slump, easing the U.S. inflation.

23. A less likely, but real, possibility would be brought about if a general wage offensive reduced the current rate of exploitation (this would require wage gains of over 13 percent at the present rate of inflation). With stagnant over-all production and extreme financial liquidity, such wage increases would probably generate a hyper-inflation by traditional American standards--a rate of over 20 percent a year. This would create an immediate and overriding political crisis, probably centering on an attempt to impose state wage controls as in 1971. The outcome of this crisis would determine the state of the U.S. economy and labor movement for the following period.

V. THE WORLD SITUATION

24. The main immediate effect of the oil embargo and economic conjuncture has been to increase the relative economic strength of the U.S., creating new and fundamental problems for West European and Japanese capitalism. The U.S. is qualitatively less dependent on Arab oil than Western Europe and Japan, a concrete reflection of American capitalism's broader material base. As indicated in the previous section, this differing impact of the oil crisis should lead to an influx of Arab and other speculative capital into the U.S. Consequently the dollar could once again become the world currency and the U.S. the world banker in that delimited and shrinking area characterized by "free trade."

25. Japan, which has been undermining the U.S. through the steady expansion of trade and investment in the Pacific basin and throughout Southeast Asia, must now concern itself with securing raw materials through direct state activities. The anomalous situation of Japan being the world's second capitalist power while at the same time having at its disposal relatively insignificant military forces will be quickly resolved. Meanwhile, the stage is set for very acute class struggles. A slowdown in Japan's economic growth must lead to severe pressures on Japan's strongly paternalistic labor system and to a declining standard of living for the Japanese working masses.

Japan's position as the world's second capitalist power and the

prospect of a rising line of class struggle by her powerful and skilled working class makes it doubly crucial for us to take advantage of every opportunity to attempt to crystallize a Trotskyist nucleus in Japan. This task will be very difficult, not only because of language barriers, but mainly because of the extreme insularity of the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in Japan, most of which hold state capitalist interpretations of the deformed workers state position.

26. France, which had partially succeeded in welding Western Europe into an anti-American economic bloc (the Common Market), has seen that fragile structure collapse with the oil crisis. The effect of the oil crisis and economic conjuncture has not been a common European front against the U.S., but the breakdown of the previous level of European capitalist cooperation. Under the impact of the oil shortage/price spiral and economic conjuncture, the European capitalist states have reverted to the narrowest nationalist considerations on all major questions (agricultural policy, regional aid, exchange rates). Italy's throwing up of tariff barriers around most of her major industries is the latest of these developments.

27. While the various imperialist powers struggle to keep their heads above water at each other's expense, the most immediate, catastrophic economic effect of the present world conjuncture will fall on those backward nations which import oil, other minerals and food, while exporting light manufactures, a condition exemplified by India. The disastrous worsening of such nations' terms of trade will not only intensify rural famine (a condition already existing throughout the colonial world), but will cause the collapse of a section of the urban industrial economy, with massive and seemingly permanent unemployment for industrial workers. The effect of famine facing the peasant and urban masses, combined with economic disaster afflicting the industrial proletariat, should produce violent upheavals in major Asian nations with the imminent possibility of social revolution and civil war. The upheavals in India, particularly the railroad workers' strike, and the tense situation in Ceylon are preludes to even greater upheavals, all pointing to the necessity of forging links to the proletariat of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

28. The rivalry of the imperialist powers and the disintegration of the postwar capitalist order is strikingly demonstrated by the events surrounding the October War between Israel and the Arab states. While Washington backed Israel in the war, America's ostensible NATO allies, much more dependent than the U.S. on Arab oil, adopted a position of pro-Arab neutrality. The Europeans refused to let the Americans ship or transfer U.S. arms from U.S. bases in Europe to Israel. The U.S., in response to the alleged Soviet threat to intervene militarily in the Near East, placed all its military units, including those under NATO command, on alert status without bothering to consult its European allies. The subsequent feuding of the Nixon administration and the Europeans over everything from policy in the Near East to NATO troop levels and terms of trade marks a new low in U.S. "leadership" over the Western alliance.

29. However, the effects of inter-imperialist rivalry have as yet been essentially negative. The U.S.-dominated anti-Soviet alliance is now in a state of great disarray. But it has not been superseded by new, stable and counterposed alignments. Capitalist great power politics is in a state of extreme flux and seemingly contradictory maneuvering. Even France, the most consistent opponent of American dominance, is willing to play the U.S. off against other capitalist powers. Thus, the Gaullists favor the maintenance of U.S. armed forces in Germany not only as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, but also as a deterrent against massive German rearmament. And the U.S., while it threatens to reduce troop commitments in Europe unless its NATO partners give it more favorable terms of trade, is nonetheless compelled to keep substantial troops in Europe to counter the USSR and to protect its over \$28 billion in capital investments.

VI. THE ROLE OF STALINISM IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

30. The present period clearly reveals the utter political bankruptcy of the various Stalinist bureaucracies, which in pursuit of their narrow national interests can only maneuver with this or that imperialist power and are incapable of advancing a revolutionary perspective to overthrow capitalism. As we pointed out in 1971:

"In the new situation [renewed inter-imperialist rivalry], the bureaucracies of the deformed workers states, despite their qualitatively greater vulnerability to social upheaval, cannot and do not deter an inter-imperialist holocaust but acquiesce to the game of great power politics. Thus the political revolution destroying these bureaucracies is central to the struggle against imperialist war."

--"Memorandum to the CC on the Transformation of the SL," adopted 5 September 1971

31. Thus while Moscow has poured billions of dollars of its most sophisticated weapons systems into the hands of the reactionary Arab regimes in the Near East, its support for its beleaguered North Vietnamese comrades, facing the full weight of American imperialist air and sea power, was relatively negligible. Further, the desire of both Moscow and Peking to peacefully coexist with American imperialism led them to pressure the North Vietnamese Stalinists to let U.S. imperialism withdraw its troops from Indochina without this leading to the overthrow of any American puppet regimes in the area. Since then Hanoi seems to have reconciled itself, at least for the time being, with building "socialism in half a country."

The reward for Moscow and Peking for this treachery--for helping remove the Vietnam millstone from the neck of American imperialism--was to be improved relations with the U.S. Thus, Washington moved to normalize diplomatic relations with China and to take steps to open up trade. To the Soviets Nixon offered "detente"--i.e., a deal involving Soviet support for the global status quo, particularly threatened in the Near East and Southeast Asia, in return for American recognition of Soviet hegemony in East Europe, American economic concessions and a leveling off of the arms race.

32. However, the Moscow-Washington honeymoon was short-lived. The Kremlin's immediate reward in 1972 for keeping Thieu in power was the massive sale of American grain to the USSR at below world prices. Given the unanticipated inflationary pressures on food in 1972-73, this turned out to be a minor disaster for U.S. capitalism. Partly reflecting a backlash to the Great Grain Deal, sections of the U.S. capitalist class became resistant to granting economic benefits to the USSR, tying up large amounts of capital there, without qualitatively greater leverage over Soviet internal politics.

The significance of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, the fate of the Russian Zionists and of dissidents of the Sakharov/Solzhenitsyn type was as a test of the capacity of the American ruling class to modify the Soviet political system. When the Brezhnev regime took a hard line on these issues and continued a high level of military spending, a decisive section of the American ruling class, whose spokesman is Henry Jackson, checked the continuation of detente, refusing tariff concessions to the USSR and re-invigorating the U.S. arms budget.

What was left of detente was buried in the sands of the Sinai. During and after the October War it became clear that while neither the Soviet Union nor the U.S. could fully control their client states, neither would they permit them to be sacrificed. When Brezhnev approached Nixon, demanding he police Israel during the war, the latter responded with a global nuclear alert aimed at the USSR. Then Kissinger clearly violated the rules of the game by wooing, with some success, the Egyptians away from the Soviets. This was capped by Nixon's subsequent advocacy of an arms budget aimed at guaranteeing the U.S. a qualitative nuclear superiority over the USSR.

33. The agitation of the Cold War liberals over the fate of dissidents such as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn very sharply posed the question of the "dissident movement" to the ostensibly revolutionary organizations. While Stalinists of various stripes predictably offered one or another apologia for the bureaucracy, the response of the groups claiming to be Trotskyist, with the exception of the SL, was not only to defend the dissidents on a completely liberal basis, but to throw political criteria to the wind and embrace all "dissidents" as unconscious Trotskyists. The subsequent revelation of Solzhenitsyn, following his forced exile from the USSR, as a protagonist of religious obscurantism and Great Russian chauvinism in the best tradition of the Black Hundreds graphically demonstrates the political bankruptcy of these fake Trotskyists.

The SL's attitude toward individual dissidents or groupings in the USSR or the other deformed workers states flows from our analysis of the class nature of these states and our perspective of political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and restore Soviet democracy. Consequently the SL is absolutely opposed to blocking with any bourgeois elements around the question of defending the democratic rights of Soviet dissidents, precisely because the bourgeoisie is interested in a "democracy" which is qualitatively different from and counterposed to Soviet democracy. While the SL categorically defends the democratic rights of dissidents to express and publish

their views, including for that matter even the rights of reactionaries such as Solzhenitsyn to do so as long as they do not engage in counterrevolutionary military operations, at the same time it is our responsibility as Trotskyists to hold the various dissidents responsible for their political views.

34. We note that the loose, democratic opposition which coalesced in the USSR around the protests against the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia has largely been dissipated. Isolated from any popular support and lacking a proletarian socialist perspective, the main activists in this heterogeneous opposition embraced pro-Western Cold War liberalism--orienting toward American ruling-class pressure in order to "liberalize" Soviet society. As a result of persecution and exile the dissident movement today appears to have little organizational presence in Soviet society.

However, the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracies cannot help but continually create anew the conditions for the renewal of dissident currents, both among the Soviet intelligentsia and bureaucracy and within the working class. While the current world economic situation finds the deformed workers states and especially the Soviet Union at an advantage over the capitalist states in the sense that the deformed workers states are relatively insulated from the current capitalist economic conjuncture, it is nevertheless the case that the Stalinist-ruled states remain qualitatively more vulnerable to social upheaval than the capitalist countries. This is a direct reflection of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracies as brittle parasitic castes, basing themselves on the planned economies and able to rule only in the name of the proletariat, yet compelled to crush even the smallest manifestation of working-class political independence. Explosive social struggles within the deformed workers states can and may occur at any moment, not excluding the possibility of one sparked by a major class upheaval in the capitalist world.

35. The recent rapprochement of China with the U.S. imperialists, growing out of Chinese support for the Paris Accords ending direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, has shown that Maoism in its militant phase was simply "Khrushchevism under the gun." The projection we made in 1969 is well along the road to being realized.

"At the present time, the Vietnam war and the extreme diplomatic and internal difficulties of the Chinese state have forced the Maoists to maintain greater hostility to imperialism and to verbally disclaim the USSR's avowed policy of 'peaceful coexistence' while themselves peacefully coexisting with Japan. However, we must warn against the growing objective possibility--given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union--of a U.S. deal with China. Should the imperialists adjust their policies in terms of their long-run interests (which would take time, as such factors as U.S. public opinion would have to be adjusted), the Chinese would be as willing as the Russians are at present to build 'Socialism in One Country' through deals with imperialism at the expense of internationalism."

--"Development and Tactics of the SL,"
adopted at the Second National Conference,
September 1969

36. In the intervening five years Peking has indeed learned to peacefully coexist with American imperialism, the former "number one enemy of the people of the world." Today the Chinese campaign for the strengthening of NATO, warning capitalist Europe about the threat to "European security" posed by the USSR. This campaign has not gone unnoticed, either by the administration or by the Cold War liberal ideologue and hawk, Henry Jackson, who has suddenly become an advocate of closer U.S. relations with the "New China." Behind Peking's campaign for a strong NATO lies the desire to keep Soviet troops tied down in Eastern Europe and away from the disputed regions of the Sino-Soviet border.

37. Not to be outdone in this spectacle of craven betrayal, Moscow has been trying to entice Japanese and U.S. capital into joint projects to exploit Soviet Siberian resources, hoping thereby to obtain the support of these countries in keeping Siberia Russian. Likewise, Moscow's initiative in attempting to get NATO/Warsaw Pact troop reductions is aimed in part at freeing up Soviet troops to reinforce its garrisons on the Sino-Soviet border.

38. Nothing so completely exposes the true content of the perspective of "Socialism in One Country" than this cynical maneuvering of the Russian and Chinese bureaucracies in the service of their squabbles over sparsely-settled tracts of Siberian countryside, claimed by each side on the basis of treaties signed by either the Romanoffs or the Manchu dynasty.

39. A parallel indicator of the political bankruptcy of the Stalinists in the face of the increasing labor unrest internationally is their role as the key architects of popular frontism. The disastrous experience of the Chilean popular front, the recent experiments of the Stalinists and social democrats in France and the strike-breaking role of Stalinist ministers in the service of General Spínola in Portugal have once again brought the question of the popular front to the fore and made it a key and burning issue confronting the international working class.

Popular fronts, class-collaborationist coalitions between reformist workers parties and bourgeois parties in which the former subordinate themselves politically to the latter, are roadblocks to revolution and a safety valve for imperialism. The SL has insisted, against all kinds of centrists and reformists, that a popular front government is at bottom a bourgeois government and deserves no political support.

Further, the purpose of the inclusion of bourgeois elements (sometimes representing relatively insignificant bourgeois political currents) in these coalitions is precisely to assure the capitalist class that the popular front will not fundamentally threaten private property or the bourgeois state. By entering into such coalitions the reformist workers parties self-consciously limit themselves to a political perspective agreeable to their bourgeois partners, and defend themselves from attack from the left by pointing to the necessity of maintaining unity with their "progressive" capitalist allies in the face of attacks from the right. Hence, the profound contradiction that normally operates within the reformist workers

parties between their working-class base and formal ideology and the class-collaborationist aims and appetites of their leaderships is suppressed in the bourgeoisie's favor when such parties enter into a popular-front coalition.

40. Thus while the SL recognizes that it may be necessary and obligatory for a revolutionary party to bloc militarily with a popular-front government or formation in certain circumstances, e.g. in the face of a rightist coup, the fundamental demand of a revolutionary party directed to the working-class components of a popular front is that they break their coalition with the bourgeoisie. In electoral contests, support to candidates of working-class parties running on a popular-front slate must be made conditional on the explicit break of those candidates from popular frontism.

Consequently, the SL gave no electoral support to any component of Allende's Popular Unity coalition or to the French Union of the Left, a coalition of the Stalinists, social democrats and the bourgeois Radicals. Similarly, in the case of the recent Canadian elections, the SL adopted a position of conditional opposition to the candidates of the small Canadian labor party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), on the grounds that the NDP had been the main prop keeping the minority Liberal Party government of Trudeau in power through an informal "corridor coalition" in parliament.

41. The SL's line on popular frontism has been most spectacularly and tragically confirmed by the events in Chile. Writing in the fall of 1970, shortly after the electoral victory of Dr. Salvador Allende's Popular Unity coalition, we noted:

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

--Spartacist, No. 19, November-December 1970

The bitter experience of Chile, in which the rightist junta was able to topple the Allende government with no significant opposition and arrest and systematically massacre tens of thousands of socialists and trade unionists, underlines in blood the political bankruptcy of Stalinism and social democracy. Chile once again confirms that the reformism of the popular front, committed as it ultimately is to the sanctity of private property and the bourgeois state, can only serve to disorganize the economy, accelerating the ruin of the small proprietors of the town and countryside, and to disarm and disorient the working class, thereby preparing the way for bloody counterrevolution.

42. The criminal betrayal of Stalinism in Chile is of a piece with the dreams of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies to "peacefully coexist" with imperialism. In both cases this policy of class collaboration leads the working class along the road to the gravest disasters. The imperialist powers are incapable of peacefully co-

existing with each other or of reconciling themselves to the continued existence of nationalized property forms in the deformed workers states. As inter-imperialist rivalry sharpens, the capitalist countries can only drift toward a new imperialist war that can be headed off only by the revolutionary action of the proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist party. The Stalinists, with their policies of "peaceful coexistence" and popular frontism, are incapable of providing any revolutionary leadership to the working class or of presenting a united face toward imperialism, and are thus incapable of deterring the drift toward a Third World War.

International communist unity against imperialist war, against imperialism, requires the organizing of a political revolution to destroy these treacherous bureaucracies, which are, above everything else, an obstacle to the international proletarian revolution.

The call for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist traitors in no way contradicts the Trotskyist policy of unconditional military defense of the USSR, China and the other deformed workers states against imperialist attack. Nor does it have anything in common with the Stalinophobic positions of our third-camp opponents, the International Socialists or the Revolutionary Socialist League, whose opposition to Stalinism reflects above all the adaptation to social-patriotic reconciliation with U.S. imperialism. The difference between Trotskyism and Stalinophobia was eloquently stated by James P. Cannon:

"What is Stalinophobia? Is it hatred of Stalinism; fear of this 'syphillis of the labor movement' and irreconcilable refusal to tolerate any manifestation of it in the party? Not at all. That has been our attitude toward Stalinism from the very beginning; and anybody who feels differently about it is traveling in our party under false passports.

"Is it the opinion that Stalinism is not the leader of international revolution but its mortal enemy? No, that is not Stalinophobia; that is what Trotsky taught us, what we learned again from our experience with Stalinism, and what we believe in our bones.

"The sentiment of hatred and fear of Stalinism, with its police state and slave labor camps, its frame-ups and its murders of working class opponents, is healthy, natural, normal, and progressive. This sentiment goes wrong only when it leads to reconciliation with American imperialism, and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to that same imperialism. In the language of Trotskyism, that and nothing else is Stalinophobia."

--"Stalinist Consciousness and Stalinophobia,"
April 1953

VII. THE SITUATION IN THE U.S.

43. The revival of popular frontism is but one indicator of the upsurge of the class struggle internationally over the past several years. Many of these class struggles have been very sharp, often

over the self-defeating boundaries imposed upon them by the reformist misleaders of the working class. While certainly not all measurable on the same scale, the past three years have seen significant class conflicts erupt in such places as Argentina, Bolivia, Britain, Canada, Chile, France, Italy, Japan and West Germany.

Conflicts such as these pose serious threats to American imperialism, particularly since it is no longer capable of playing the role of unconditional world policeman for the international capitalist order, especially in the light of the renewed inter-imperialist rivalry. Such problems are compounded for the American ruling class by the political and economic situation in the U.S., where the consequences of several years of acute social and economic contradictions, until recently successfully contained, threaten to explode.

44. Heading the list of immediate political woes of the U.S. capitalist class are the widespread revelations of government corruption growing out of the Watergate scandal. This scandal, which has culminated in the unprecedented resignation of a U.S. president, was provoked by Nixon's use of illegal methods (routinely used against communists, blacks, union militants and criminals) against respectable bourgeois elements, notably the Democratic Party. The bourgeois reaction to the Watergate incident was conditioned by Nixon's unusually high-handed behavior toward the rest of the ruling class, particularly by his contemptuous attitude toward Congress.

45. While constituting the greatest Constitutional crisis since Reconstruction, the Watergate crisis/Nixon resignation has had an extremely narrow focus, concentrating on the person, not the politics, of the Nixon administration. In that sense Watergate has not reflected a major political rift within the ruling class, for example along the usual right-wing Republican versus liberal Democrat lines.

The major concern of the bourgeoisie in the crisis was that Nixon had so discredited himself that he was no longer able to administer an effective national government. Rather than go through a lengthy impeachment and Senate trial, which would have resulted in the exposure of further crimes and possibly have implicated more high government officials, the capitalist class opted for a resignation, cutting short any more inquiry into the crime and corruption that are the stock in trade of everyday bourgeois politics.

While political differences existed between the Nixon administration and other ruling-class elements (e.g. over relations with the USSR), the impeachment drive/resignation was simply an attempt to modify the behavior of the President toward the ruling establishment, but not to change the political character of the Nixon administration. This is evident from the apparent willingness of all wings of the liberal establishment to see Nixon replaced by the neanderthal arch-conservative, Gerald Ford.

46. Correspondingly, the American people did not view Nixon's actions as a serious threat to replace bourgeois democracy with au-

thoritarian rule, but as a personal aberration which would be corrected, one way or another, by the rest of the ruling establishment. This is indicated by the mini-cult which grew up around the head of the Senate Watergate Committee, the Dixiecrat traditionalist, Senator Sam Ervin. It was further indicated by the absence of any mass protest against Nixon. This was not because Nixon was popular, but because such actions were not seen as necessary to remove him.

At most, the complete discrediting of the Nixon administration, highlighted by the resignation of both Nixon and his Vice President, Spiro Agnew, over scandals involving corruption and criminal behavior, has introduced a certain cynicism toward bourgeois politics in general. However, it is probably the case that this attitude is shallow and short-lived.

47. Utilizing the crisis provoked by Watergate, the SL called upon the trade unions to reject the alternative of Ford and to force new presidential elections in which the trade unions would field a labor candidate. But with the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO both accepting Ford as Nixon's replacement, our Watergate line could only remain essentially propagandistic, a means of showing how working-class leadership should respond to such a governmental crisis.

48. A seemingly major gain of Watergate has been to undercut the right-wing, racialist offensive launched by Nixon after his landslide electoral victory in 1972. The complete moral bankruptcy of the current administration, still tainted as it is by Nixon, Agnew and Mitchell, makes it very difficult to launch such a crusade under the banner of "law and order" in the immediate future. But while respect for the federal government and the repressive apparatus of the state has declined because of Watergate, it would be myopic to conclude that a fundamental relaxation of governmental anti-communist activities is at hand. In fact, the current situation of the U.S. bourgeoisie impels them in the opposite direction, and it is the case that while the ruling class moved against Nixon, they have also sought to codify into law an entire arsenal of repressive legislation aimed at suppressing the labor movement.

We note that in both 1968 and 1972 the SL recognized the potential threat posed by the election of the virulently anti-communist Nixon to our functioning as a legal communist organization. We correspondingly lowered our political profile in the appropriate manner. The Watergate revelations about the internal methods of operation of the Nixon regime in dealing with its political opponents completely confirm the appropriateness of this policy.

49. The discrediting of conservative Republicanism combined with the ever worsening economic situation raises the possibility of demagogic political currents arising out of the Democratic Party. The war-weariness over Vietnam, which produced a general disillusionment with the Cold War in the 1970-72 period, has been superseded by a different political mood. U.S. support for Israel during the October War, a potential source of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, was broadly popular. And as a result of the confrontation with the Soviets over the Arab-Israeli conflict and Brezh-

nev's treatment of Russian Jews and dissidents, popular anti-Soviet sentiment has risen noticeably in the past year. While not subject to the paranoid hysteria of the 1950's, the American people in large part still regard the Soviet Union as a genuine, if not immediate, threat to their values and interests.

50. While noting that U.S. support to Israel has been broadly popular, it must also be noted that the intensely pro-Israel propaganda circulated by the American Zionists has provoked a mild anti-Semitic backlash which has not yet found overt expression. Further, this virulent pro-Zionist propaganda has led to an identity in the minds of broad layers of the population between Zionism and Judaism, thus laying the basis for a vicious anti-Semitism based upon a demagogic use of the very real crimes of the Zionists in the Near East to whip up anti-Semitic hatred in the U.S.

51. The immediate beneficiary of the discrediting of the Republican Party and of the partial revival of Cold War liberalism is, of course, the Democratic Party. Once again firmly supported by the Meanyite leadership of the AFL-CIO, the Democrats will almost certainly gain very large numbers of seats in the next Congress and sweep the presidential election in 1976. Thus, Meany and Co. may well find themselves with their "veto-proof" Congress and "friend of labor" president. And although it is probable that the Democrats will base themselves on a demagogic but modulated program of Jackson-type Cold War liberalism and massive arms spending, the current economic and political situation of American capitalism indicates that there will be few sops to toss the labor fakers. Thus, the trade-union bureaucracy may face severe problems growing out of their support to the Democrats, since their economic policies will of necessity be directed at increasing the rate of exploitation of the U.S. working class.

52. But the most severe problems facing the U.S. labor bureaucracy in the coming period grow directly out of its role over the past several years as the bourgeoisie's last line of defense against the class struggle. While the other large capitalist countries have all witnessed major labor struggles aimed at maintaining wages in the face of the sharp rate of inflation, in the U.S. there has been an almost complete absence of significant labor struggles over the past three years.

Following the 1969-70 strike wave--a period of class unrest highlighted by the General Electric strike in the fall of 1969, the nationwide postal wildcat (the first strike against the federal government), the Midwest Teamster wildcat in the spring of 1970 and the long General Motors strike the following fall--there was an unexpected lull in strike activity. From the 1970 high of 66.6 million man-days, strikes in the U.S. fell to 27.1 million man-days in 1972 and to 20.9 million man-days in the first ten months of 1973 (Monthly Labor Review, March 1974).

This sharp decline in strikes occurred during a period of strong inflation, qualitatively accelerating with the effective abrogation of price controls in the spring of 1973, so that U.S. workers have suffered a marked decline in real income (of about 5

percent) in 1973.

53. The absence of elementary union militancy in the face of sharply declining real wages appeared doubly surprising in light of the deeply eroded political authority of the American capitalist class. The grinding inflation eating away at the pay checks of the working class has been aggravated by the widely publicized reports of record profits for many of the giant capitalist concerns, and by the maddening shortages of fuel and some foodstuffs, whose prices have soared to astronomical levels. Compounding these problems are the scars from U.S. imperialism's unsuccessful colonial war in Vietnam and the Watergate scandals, which have culminated in the resignation of Nixon.

54. Directly responsible for this "labor peace" is the fossilized, reactionary leadership of the U.S. trade-union movement, typified by the arch-bureaucrat, George Meany. Unlike their British counterparts, the American trade-union bureaucracy did not merely acquiesce to state wage controls but took Nixon's 1971 action as a signal for an aggressive campaign to keep wages down at a level satisfactory to the capitalist class. The actions of the Meany-Fitzsimmons-Woodcock machines in the past two years go far beyond the usual sellouts during contract negotiations and the smashing of wildcats. The bureaucracy has imposed new, unprecedented measures to increase the rate of exploitation and suppress all manifestations of militancy.

Probably the most significant of these new measures was perpetrated by the Abel regime of the Steelworkers. In March 1973 Abel agreed to submit the 1974 national steel contract to binding arbitration, thereby giving up, under law, the union's right to strike during contract negotiations.

55. Concomitant with such elaborate efforts to impose low-wage terms on their members, the union bureaucracies have become increasingly important agencies for repressing union militants opposed to the bureaucracies' sellouts. Under Watergate-type conditions, the general use of police or company goons to crush wildcats or to prevent ostensible socialists from exercising their democratic rights to address workers would be counter-productive to the ruling class. So, to the extent that they are able to, the union bureaucracies have taken over some of the repressive tasks traditionally performed by the state apparatus. A good example of this was the UAW's 1000-man goon squad, made up of local officials, to check a wave of wildcats in Detroit last August, an action justified and accompanied by a major red-baiting campaign. Following the August events in Detroit, left-wing press salesmen were systematically assaulted by bureaucratic goons at UAW plants throughout the country.

56. However, the capacity of the trade-union bureaucracy to hold down wages in the face of three years of retreat and the continuous grinding inflation is not unlimited. Enormous pressures are building up at the base of the labor movement that threaten to shatter the hold of the encrusted union bureaucracy upon the rank and file, leading to episodic outbursts of elemental class-struggle militancy.

The SL's projection that a series of explosive labor struggles are on the agenda, first sketched out in our Political Bureau meeting of 18 February 1974, has acquired tentative confirmation with the March San Francisco city employees' strike. What began as an end-of-contract strike by a single union quickly escalated into a broad and enthusiastically supported workers' action, verging on becoming a Bay Area general strike. The Bay Area workers were obviously ready to use any opening for a militant action against the rulers of American society.

57. The San Francisco labor bureaucracy, acting in collusion with the city government of "friend-of-labor" Mayor Alioto, was able to contain the strike and sell out the workers. However, in an attempt to defuse the explosive militancy of the Bay Area labor movement and to draw attention from his role in the strike, gubernatorial-hopeful Alioto launched the notorious Operation Zebra, a "stop and search" campaign aimed at harassing the black population of San Francisco and deliberately designed to whip up racialist hysteria.

The conscious attempt by bourgeois political forces to deflect the class struggle into the dead end of racial confrontations by manipulating and playing up to racist sentiments will become more and more prevalent with an upsurge in class struggle. In the absence of a bi-racial Leninist party committed to linking the struggle against racial oppression to a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, the tendency will be for major class battles to be vulnerable to being sidetracked into racial conflicts among the working people, ignited by the racist demagogy of pro-capitalist politicians.

58. Since the San Francisco strike, there has been a wave of strikes hitting many industries in diverse regions of the country. Some of these strikes, such as that of the sanitationmen in Baltimore or that of the West Virginia coal miners, have shown the potential for escalating into much broader labor actions than they were at the outset.

59. Particularly significant about the San Francisco events, in terms of our perspectives, was the prominent role played by known ostensible socialists active in their unions. Supporters of Progressive Labor and one of the SWP's very few trade unionists enhanced their reputations as alternative, militant leaders to the local officialdom during the strike.

60. It is important to note that the projected labor upsurge could be deferred by a depression-level collapse of the economy. With depression levels of unemployment, the economic power of industrial workers would be crippled and the individual effort at survival would tend for a period to override a sense of broad social solidarity and purpose. It is possible for the present conjuncture to turn into a full-scale depression. However, a truly massive decrease in employment (if it occurs at all) is very unlikely before the middle of 1975. The mood and actions of the workers would depend upon the rate at which a slump in employment takes place. A truly abrupt drop in employment would almost immediately translate itself into a decline in labor militancy, particularly since the only organs of struggle of the U.S. working class are the trade

unions and the class struggle is conceived of almost completely in terms of strike actions. However, a less abrupt decline in employment would not immediately find reflection in the moods and actions of major sections of the labor movement.

61. The conditions leading to a labor upsurge are likewise acting to produce parallel outbursts in other sections of American society. In particular, the projected labor upsurge may intersect the black question in an especially explosive manner. The runaway inflation and cutbacks in government spending should produce violent expressions of lumpen rage (e.g. riots at welfare centers, disruptions of ghetto schools) on the part of those blacks forced to exist on the edges of the reserve army of the unemployed.

Additionally, the reformist, black-nationalist politicians have definitively demonstrated their inability to improve the living conditions of the black masses, and in fact have been unable to halt the erosion of the minor gains obtained out of the civil rights movement. For example, new studies have revealed that the gap between the family incomes of the white population and the black population in the U.S., which had been narrowing for a number of years, has begun to widen. Further, several recent court decisions and Congressional actions have all but reversed the drive toward school desegregation.

Thus a basis is laid for the renewal of struggles for elementary democratic rights on the part of wide layers of the black masses. The intersection of this movement with a sharp upsurge in labor struggle and elemental outbursts of semi-proletarian and lumpen layers in the face of increasing unemployment and soaring prices is an explosive combination, spelling a major social crisis for American capitalism.

62. The prospect of a labor upsurge intersecting the construction by the SL of a number of trade-union fractions offers us enormous opportunities to root ourselves firmly in the proletariat and to take a qualitative leap toward our goal of becoming a vanguard party. Already our relatively weak and newly-fledged fractions have been approached by local left-bureaucratic forces (themselves a sign of the erosion of the hold of the central bureaucracies' authority) wanting to make deals. In the future we will doubtless encounter other such formations. An explosive period of labor militancy may find us thrust into situations in which we will be directly competing with such out-bureaucratic forces and with a labor bureaucracy temporarily shaken by a turn of events it is unprepared to deal with. It is therefore necessary to carefully study the current relationship between the central labor bureaucracy and the various oppositional left-wing groupings.

63. During the past period there has existed a seemingly contradictory motion within the labor movement. The left has experienced a significant quantitative expansion. On the other hand, the central Meanyite bureaucracy has not at all been threatened and, in some ways, has grown stronger.

The "Transformation Memorandum" asserted the vulnerability of

the existing ossified union bureaucracy in the face of a new proletarian generation:

"It should be stressed that in the U.S. too there is now throughout industry a young generation of workers of great demonstrable militancy and indifferent to the anti-Communism which paralyzed their fathers and older brothers and which led to the present desperately conservative and undemocratic labor movement, which is grossly incompetent even in giving a pretense of serving the workers' needs. The union apparatus has now been rendered unstable and can be shattered."

64. As a general evaluation of the social dynamic of the labor movement this remains an accurate statement. However, the transformation of rank-and-file discontent and disillusionment into an effective opposition requires conscious, organized leadership, provided either by left-wing political organizations or elements within the bureaucracy. In the past period, no significant oppositional element within the bureaucracy has attempted to mobilize rank-and-file discontent and militancy. The left, overwhelmingly composed of implanted youth from the radical student milieu, has been too absolutely numerically small to organize on a scale that could challenge the international apparatus. Moreover, the largest ostensibly revolutionary organization, the CP, the only one with older, well-rooted cadre in the shops, has pursued such a cautious and conciliatory policy that it has not capitalized on the discontent to the extent that its implantation and resources would warrant. Thus, much of the hostility to the bureaucracy has manifested itself in spontaneous, localized outbursts or remains as yet untapped in individual attitudes. It is significant, in a negative sense, that two long, bitter struggles which pitted militant workers against the international leadership, the fall 1971 New York City CWA wildcat and the constant strikes at Lordstown, did not generate any oppositional formations, even of a localized, bureaucratic sort.

65. Nevertheless, the fractions of the left political organizations (including our own) have experienced sufficient success and moral reinforcement to encourage continued trade-union activism. That is, the ostensibly socialist left continues to be centrally committed to trade-union work, characteristically reflecting workerist deviations. In several instances the fractions of left political organizations have intersected low-level bureaucratic groupings to form left caucus-type formations. The most prominent of such formations has arisen in the UAW--a fusing of the Maoists and a bureaucratic out-clique to form a victorious caucus at a West Coast auto plant and the alliance of the IS with an old skilled trades group in Detroit to give the resulting caucus a certain local organizational viability. The existence of even unstable caucuses based on local bureaucrats and left political fractions indicates a political climate supportive of a radical opposition. Such formations could not have existed as little as five years ago. However, the formation and successes of such groups remain essentially episodic and localized phenomena, rather than reflecting a radicalization broad and deep enough to force sections of the bureaucracy to collaborate with the "reds." That the CP recently ended its shallow entry into the United National Caucus in order to give electoral sup-

port to Woodcock indicates the various left-of-incumbent caucuses are in no sense organic expressions of a massive rank-and-file revolt against the established bureaucracy.

66. The weakness of internal union opposition during the past period was conditioned by the unusual lack of disputes at the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy. The current peace at the top is, in turn, a reflection of the general homogeneity of the labor bureaucracy. That labor bureaucracy is, in the main, a product of the 1930's when the conservative business union leaders were forced to accept industrial principles of organization. The greatly strengthened bureaucracy was politically united through the Northern wing of the Democratic Party, replacing a more diffuse situation when union officialdom ranged from Republican to Thomasite Socialist. The present bureaucracy was further homogenized through the anti-Communist purges of the early Cold War period. Thus the bureaucracy which attained organizational unity with the 1955 AFL-CIO merger was a fairly homogeneous formation. The differences between the "right-wing" Meanyites and the "liberal" Reutherites were not fundamental and did not produce continual conflict and polarization. Rather, such political differences that arose were episodic, usually reflecting conflicts within the center-liberal wings of the Democratic Party.

During the late 1960's-early 1970's these intra-bureaucratic differences attained considerable sharpness, largely reflecting the split in the ruling class over the Vietnam war. Highlighting the turmoil and friction at the top echelons of bureaucracy were Reuther's 1969 walkout from the AFL-CIO and Meany's pro-Nixon neutrality in the 1972 presidential election. Since that election the trend has been toward political unity. First, there have been no major conflicts within the mainstream Democratic Party. Second, the McGovern debacle discredited the "rad-lib" petty-bourgeois activists in the Democratic Party and strengthened the influence of the conservative union officials. Finally, the Watergate events have provided exceptional electoral opportunities for the Democrats, giving strong impetus to the organizational unity of its trade-union constituency. This period has been one of a strong episodic tendency for all sections of the bureaucracy to unite around the central Meanyite machine (witness the constant pressure for the return of the UAW to the AFL-CIO). This reknitting of the various strands of the labor bureaucracy, in the light of the unprecedented influence of the central Meanyite bureaucracy in the Democratic Party, is contributing to the return to a common, pro-Democratic Party electoral policy by all wings of the U.S. trade-union bureaucracy.

In the context of severely worsening conditions of life for the U.S. working class, these developments and the almost certain prospect of a huge Democratic majority in the coming elections should much more clearly and obviously pose the necessity of ousting the bureaucrats and breaking with the Democrats to form a workers party based upon the trade unions and committed to a class-struggle program. Our propaganda around this question should find much more support in the labor movement in the coming period, posing the possibility of creating a movement for a workers party and against the class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy.

67. The heterogeneity (ethnic, regional) of the American proletariat, the numerical weakness of the left political organizations and the considerable homogeneity of the labor bureaucracy mean that the internal effect of a projected labor upsurge is likely to be extremely uneven, rather than a unified opposition to or clear split within the international bureaucracies. Spontaneous, localized upheavals, episodic successes for left political fractions and vacillating and contradictory intra-bureaucratic maneuvering will intersect in a way that will produce a complex and confused situation, rather than a clear polarization and motion.

The absence of an "official" opposition to the union bureaucracy means that a major labor upsurge will create situations where our small, unauthoritative fractions will find themselves in a leadership vacuum. Some of our fractions have already experienced this situation. Probably the most difficult problem we will face in the next period is how to handle sudden outbursts of militancy seeking our leadership. It will be only under exceptional circumstances that we will be able to discharge effective leadership in such struggles. Giving leadership to outbursts of rank-and-file militancy requires great tactical skill and self-restraint. If we badly handle wildcats, meeting takeovers or other anti-bureaucratic actions we risk not only our fractions and other militants being purged from the union, but being politically discredited for not being able to control our base--that is, not being able to lead. Thus in the next period, we will probably have to navigate between the Scylla of passive propagandism and the Charybdis of becoming prisoners of spontaneous, militant upheavals.

Section Two--Tasks of the Spartacist League/U.S.

I. GENERAL TASKS IN THE COMING PERIOD

1. The recent growth and qualitative extension of the capacities of the Spartacist League as a revolutionary Marxist organization intersect a number of factors (i.e. economic downturn, record inflation, falling real wages, pervasive government scandal, heightened inter-imperialist rivalry and the reactionary policies of an ossified labor bureaucracy) that open a perspective of sharp social struggle in the U.S. At the same time, a combination of upsurge in class struggle around the world and the renewal and sharpening of inter-imperialist rivalries has led to a fragmenting and/or polarization of the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations internationally. Thus, an extremely favorable situation exists for the SL to make qualitative breakthroughs both in the arena of the domestic class struggle and internationally.

2. Our central task in the coming period is to gear our organization up to realize the opportunities presented us by this intersection of the very real transformation of our capacities for revolutionary activity and the present exceptionally favorable political and social conditions of development of society. Over the next period our perspective should be to construct a stable propaganda group with a weekly press, firmly rooted in the key sectors of the industrial proletariat, with a black and Spanish-speaking cadre component and a youth organization carrying out systematic student work, with local organizations in all major regions of the country, functioning as a disciplined section of an authentic international Trotskyist tendency.

The particular opportunities presented to us by the present crises of the world capitalist order and the political disarray and confusion of our revisionist opponents also present an historic challenge and test to the SL--to its program and its cadres. Today, we represent the nucleus of the Leninist vanguard party in the U.S. Our capacity and, therefore, our responsibility to intervene in mass social struggles is qualitatively greater than it was three years ago. In the next period there will be important union locals, campuses and other arenas of social struggle where our fractions will be the largest, best organized (if not the only) ostensibly anti-capitalist formations. As such, we will find ourselves a pole of attraction for militants in periods of struggle, contending with fake-left or bureaucratic forces from a position of relative strength rather than as an isolated left opposition. During the next period our capacity to provide exemplary leadership in certain mass struggles should be tested.

However, while the terrain of our activity has shifted somewhat with our general growth and increased trade-union implantation, the necessity to expose the revolutionary pretensions of our revisionist opponents continues to be sharply posed. In struggling for the Trotskyist program in the trade unions and elsewhere, we will continue to find ourselves locked in harsh political struggles with the trade-union bureaucracy and our ostensibly revolutionary oppo-

nents. The path forward for the SL is not simply through the linear recruitment of individual raw militants, but through the struggle for our program, that is, through the Leninist method of splits and fusions.

II. THE SL AND ITS OSTENSIBLY REVOLUTIONARY COMPETITORS

3. The tasks imposed upon us by our present situation in part reflect a qualitative and favorable change in the position of the SL vis-a-vis its ostensibly revolutionary competitors in the U.S. This change, in turn, imposes upon us new tasks and responsibilities.

Of the seven ostensibly revolutionary organizations we analyzed as opponents in the 1971 main RCY document, the SL has now effectively surpassed four of them--the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), the Workers League (WL), Progressive Labor (PL) and the International Socialists (IS)--as an effective propaganda organization (e.g. objective resources, cadre in strategic arenas, general political influence). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Maoist spectrum remain ahead of us in organizational weight; the Communist Party (CP) remains qualitatively stronger than we are.

4. While the SL has grown and attained certain successes in this period, our surpassing of important competitors reflects less the SL's forward movement than the major reverses suffered by these organizations. During the past period these organizations have undergone major splits, cadre depletion and/or general discrediting as serious revolutionary organizations.

5. With its campaign to "de-program" members "brainwashed" by the KGB/CIA, the bizarre irrationality of the NCLC has become widely acknowledged. (By widely publicizing some of Marcus' paranoid rantings early on, the SL greatly facilitated the discrediting of the NCLC on the left.) The NCLC now exists in a nether-world between reformist socialism and religious cultism.

6. Accelerating in the past year, the hysterical frenzy of the WL has served to strip it of virtually all of its leading cadre and trade unionists. Almost incapable of serious political intervention, the WL seems to be reduced to recruiting ever younger youth (i.e. children). By its political banditry, its systematic dishonesty and its crisis-mongering (often attaining Marcusite heights of the fantastic), the WL has discredited itself among knowledgeable and subjectively revolutionary militants. The deep and pervasive cynicism of this organization makes it virtually unique on the U.S. left in one respect: the deliberate destruction of cadre. The burn-out Potemkin Village methods of the WL produce disillusioned and demoralized "graduates" whose revolutionary will has in most cases been decisively destroyed by their experiences in the WL.

While a few years ago the SWP regarded the WL as the "ultra-left Trotskyist" group in the U.S., today these reformists regard the SL as their most serious opponent claiming to be Trotskyist. Further, those members of the SWP seeking to break to the left from the SWP's reformism have consistently rejected the WL. In direct competition with the WL over the past period, the SL has regrouped with

subjectively revolutionary elements breaking from Maoism, SWP reformism and New Leftism, e.g. the Communist Working Collective of Los Angeles, the Buffalo Marxist Caucus, elements of the Leninist Faction of the SWP and the Mass Strike grouping in Boston. In contrast, the WL has failed to regroup with a single authentic current breaking from reformism or centrism in the direction of Trotskyism, and in fact was politically defeated by the SWP/YSA in attempting to penetrate the latter's organization in the Baltimore area.

The decline of the WL has been greatly facilitated by our campaign of exposure and open political combat, which has sterilized their operations in areas where we both have a political presence. In particular, the experience of our Boston and West Coast local organizations shows that an aggressive policy of political confrontation drives the WL to abandon political struggle among the ostensibly revolutionary organizations in favor of a policy of apolitical neighborhood "youth work," which very quickly leads them to a hysterical and demoralizing political and organizational stagnation.

Aware of this, the WL has adopted a policy of setting up branches in areas where we don't exist, thereby managing to recruit individuals we could and should recruit, and providing them with the raw material to create new cadre. This must be stopped! The loss of WL cadre is nearly critical, especially given their attempt to maintain a Potemkin Village press out of all line with their capacity to struggle. They are in an extremely weakened state and can be politically destroyed. Active political struggle with them, particularly in the Midwest belt running from Dayton to Youngstown to Pittsburgh, will cut off vital new forces they need in order to continue to exist as serious competitors, and will eliminate them as a potential rival, consequently dealing a deadly blow to Healy's already truncated "International Committee."

7. After wandering in circles in a political no-man's land since 1969, PL has undergone a major split of one of its three geographical centers, Boston. Unable to recruit except on an accidental, activist basis, for PL this split represents a significant setback and may signal the beginning of its terminal dissolution.

8. After a period of stagnation, the IS underwent a major split, of perhaps a third of the organization, in the summer of 1973. The post-split IS is organizationally weaker than the SL in virtually every respect. The left product, the centrist Revolutionary Socialist League, is a hyper-volatile petty-bourgeois formation embodying the untenable contradiction of claiming to be Trotskyist while holding a "third camp" position on the Russian question.

9. The self-destructive processes overtaking a number of our historic competitors reflects the collision of the over-ambitious goals and inflated expectations peddled to their members with the sharp decline in labor and social struggle in the 1971-73 period. It is evident that the hysterical frenzy of the NCLC and WL was caused by the frustration of their grandiose plans to meet the "crisis." The same holds, rather less obviously, for PL. PL postured at being a mass communist party in a period when a propaganda group of PL's size could not lead a single major strike. This contradiction caused PL to zigzag between adventurism and reformist tailism,

thereby creating disillusionment and demoralization in its ranks.

The effect of the 1971-73 lull in class struggle on the IS split is contradictory. On the one hand, it resulted in the economist caucuses (e.g. United National Caucus in the UAW, Turf in the Teamsters) on which the IS centered its trade-union work being stillborn. On the other hand, the Landy-Taber faction regarded the bland Kautskyian reformism of the IS majority as inadequate in the face of the imminent definitive crisis of world capitalism.

10. In contrast, since the Cunningham-Moore-Treiger clique defection from the SL (at bottom reflecting a circle spirit and the inability of the cliquists to engage in systematic, daily party work as required by the transformation of the SL) in the fall of 1972, a period of a year and a half, the SL has grown while losing no Central Committee members and virtually no cadre at the local executive committee level. Our superior capacity to sustain a communist vanguard organization during the past period of relative quiescence rests upon two fundamental characteristics of the SL. First, we deliberately recruit on a firm programmatic basis to a long-term perspective as professional revolutionists, not overinflating the importance of our current activity artificially to drive forward our membership. Second, we have set for ourselves and achieved realizable, yet objectively important, goals in developing the nucleus of the vanguard party.

However, the SL is not immune from the internal pressures besetting our opponents. Many of our recruits in the past period were attracted to the SL because we combined a serious industrialization policy with a program and tactics capable of developing an alternative revolutionary leadership to the union bureaucracy. If our trade-union work does not show evident progress toward this goal, there is bound to be a certain demoralization and doubt within our ranks. And in general, stagnation imposed by objective circumstances or failure to take advantage of the real or apparent opportunities will lead to frictions of the type that have debilitated our opponents.

11. The episodic setbacks of our opponents give us an important but transient opportunity to definitively surpass these reformist and centrist currents, politically destroying them as serious competitors. The clearing away of these barriers to the construction of the revolutionary, Leninist party will be an enormous accomplishment for our organization. We must take advantage of every opportunity to consolidate our edge over these revisionist organizations.

12. At the same time the SL now finds itself in the position of competing with the numerically more powerful and widely based organizations of the CP, the SWP and the Maoists. In particular, we note that the RU and OL continue to have a substantially broader periphery than the SL. The RU-supported anti-Nixon rallies in Washington, D.C., Chicago and on the West Coast indicate that these Maoists have a considerably larger "public face" than we do, although because of their lack of concentration of trade-union fractions in key industries and their sloppy or non-existent security measures, our strengths in the labor movement may be roughly comparable. Addi-

tionally, the OL shows considerable organizational strength, capturing the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), an historic stronghold of Communist Party supporters. This gives them an enormous advantage in constructing a Maoist organization in the deep South, where we presently lack a significant organized presence. OL supporters also recently brought off a relatively large conference in steel, indicating significant strength industrially.

13. Our competition with the SWP poses for us the task of destroying the SWP's reputation as the Trotskyist party in the U.S. While at present lacking any significant roots in the labor movement, the SWP/YSA is a sizeable organization with a history as the party of American Trotskyism, and has an experienced, capable, but cynical cadre able when necessary to gloss over the fundamentally social-democratic appetites of the SWP with a patina of glib "Trotskyism."

However, the SWP faces serious difficulties in the coming period. At present it lacks an arena in which to pursue its class-collaborationist adaptation to petty-bourgeois radical politics. With the end of direct U.S. participation in the Vietnam war and the legalization of abortion by a Supreme Court decision, the SWP's class-collaborationist antiwar (NPAC) and "legalize abortion" (WONAAC) coalitions have withered away. These circumstances, especially in light of the prospects for sharp class conflicts in the coming period, would seem to indicate that these reformists will of necessity be forced to turn towards the labor movement as their "mass movement" for opportunist entrism, possibly through injecting ex-students into the technical apparatus, to function as a social-democratic cover for the more left-leaning trade-union bureaucrats.

But such a turn would provoke considerable problems for the SWP/YSA, which has recruited primarily out of the largely petty-bourgeois protest movements by capitulating to the worst aspects of petty-bourgeois multi-vanguardist politics. Such a turn might pit the present SWP ruling clique, headed by Barnes, against the presently atomized workerist, trade unionist wing of the party. Nevertheless, such a turn is not to be excluded, and, if it occurs, it will exacerbate the already glaring contradictions between the SWP's professed Trotskyism and its reformist appetites.

The SWP's apparent success in some areas in becoming the power behind the scenes at conferences of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) may provide the SWP with a means of teaching its recruits to petty-bourgeois feminism how to manipulate with an eye to the "main chance": the trade-union bureaucracy.

14. The objective problems facing the SWP in the present period are greatly compounded by the continuing factional struggle in the "United" Secretariat, now brought home to roost especially by the SWP's expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency (IT). The uneasy truce negotiated at the so-called Tenth World Congress settled nothing, and the factional pot continues to boil over. In particular, by its continuing attempt to defend its reformist policies against the centrist USec majority of Mandel/Frank by resort to a fake Trotskyist orthodoxy, the SWP cannot help but create a continual turmoil among some of its younger members who imagine they were recruited to a

Trotskyist organization.

The SWP's expulsion of the International Majority Tendency-loyal IT further exacerbates the factional situation of the USec. Both sides in the USec fight have repeatedly shown their willingness to paper over the political gulf between IMT centrism and the SWP's hardened reformist appetite through organizational federalism; however, jurisdictional disputes (the presence of counterposed factions within one national section, and especially of competing "sections" and/or "sympathizer sections" within one country following a split) continue to threaten to explode even the completely cynical pretensions of the USec to "unity." How to deal with the SWP is now a bone of contention among the IMT itself.

The SWP faces the imminent prospect of losing its international fig-leaf, its political affiliation to the "Fourth International"; staving off that break would, on the other hand, require the restoration of the IT to SWP membership. The former course would mean the loss of a prestigious international cover; the latter, the continuation of an unbearable organizational irritant which, no matter how bureaucratically suppressed, would remain a rallying point for disenchanted or leftward-moving elements within the SWP/YSA.

15. The Communist Party remains the largest and perhaps most serious obstacle to the construction of a Leninist party in the U.S. While the CP is not a mass working-class party, its substantial ties to the trade unions and to significant numbers of black proletarian and petty-bourgeois radicals, and its ties to and support from the USSR render it a formidable opponent.

With the waning of the Soviet-American "detente" and the rising line of class struggle, the coming period is likely to see a shift toward a radical-sounding and more "militant" policy of labor reformism on the part of the CP.

Our capacity to launch campaigns such as the solidarity actions around the British miners' strike and the defense of the Chilean left, and our increased ability to intervene in arenas such as the Los Angeles Chicano movement, have increased our political contact with the CP. But at present, our main source of regular contact and political confrontation with the CP arises out of our work in the trade unions. Political clashes with the CP will increase with the growth of our influence in the labor movement, and it is within this arena of struggle that the reformism of these Stalinists must be defeated. Their best young militants must be won to Trotskyism on the basis of a demonstrated capacity on our part to provide revolutionary leadership in the actual struggles of the class.

III. THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT

16. The qualitatively greater weight of the SL among the ostensibly revolutionary organizations in the U.S., our modest but real success in breaking out of international isolation and the political crises of all the revisionist currents under the twin hammer blows of rising class struggle and increasing imperialist rivalry, while leading to an increase in left-centrist formations that stop halfway

between opportunism and Marxism, present great opportunities for the SL to regroup with subjectively revolutionary militants seeking an organization with a proletarian revolutionary perspective.

17. The main source of growth for us in the past three years has been through such regroupments--a process centering on the New Left Maoist milieu, but including valuable contingents from the SWP and IS. All of these fusions have been highly successful, representing not simply numerical accretions to our strength, but in fact reflecting an organic unity around the key programmatic issues of Trotskyism, and have resulted in qualitative extensions in the capacities of the SL as a revolutionary Marxist organization.

18. In this regard, our rejection of fusion with the Passen-Gregorich left split from the SWP reaffirmed, in a negative way, our regroupment policy. During the course of "fusion" discussions, it became apparent that the Passen-Gregorich grouping held an anti-Leninist view on the nature of the revolutionary party and of the relation of the party to the class. That this difference was a question of principle can be demonstrated by the intuitive test that should such a position have gained a majority in the fused organization, we would have been compelled to split. When it became clear that we could not fuse with these elements in good faith--i.e. with the expectation of a cohesive fused cadre--we took the initiative in breaking off discussions.

Passen-Gregorich maintained that the organization of a revolutionary party must be according to the formula "freedom of criticism, unity in action," holding that as a norm the minority in the party has a right to take its views outside the party--to the "working class." While in reality this "right" has historically been demanded by right-wing minorities seeking to appeal to radical petty-bourgeois opinion, on the part of the Passen-Gregorich group this attitude reflected a pervasive workerism--the assumption that there exists a layer of "advanced workers" who, while not members of the Leninist party, are in some sense the repository of revolutionary consciousness. This is an explicit denial of the Leninist combat party as the only section of the proletarian movement that has achieved a scientific, i.e. Marxist, consciousness, and is a tacit acceptance of the latter-day Pabloite conception of a "new mass vanguard."

These views allowed Passen-Gregorich to project a three-way fusion between themselves, the SL and the Vanguard Newsletter circle of Harry Turner. We broke off these "fusion discussions," reaffirming our commitment to the Leninist conception of democratic centralism, declaring that we had no intention of uniting to form a swamp.

19. We then went on to recruit a third of the Passen-Gregorich group. The central leadership however carried out their "fusion" with Turner, forming the professional Anti-Spartacist League, the centrist Class Struggle League. The failure to win over the bulk of the LF leadership represented a setback in our struggle to destroy the reputation of the SWP as the repository of Trotskyism in the U.S. A successful fusion of the SL with the leading core of the Leninist Faction--the first major left opposition to appear inside

the SWP since the expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency, the predecessor of the SL--would have had international impact and set a powerful precedent for future left oppositionists coming out of the SWP.

In this context we note also the inability of the smaller Communist Tendency of the SWP to transcend its pervasive workerism and profound organizational cynicism, and come over to the SL. Instead, its ostensible leader, Fender, temporarily went over to Turner, while the majority of the CT liquidated into the social-democratic IS, only to split with Landy and Taber to form the centrist RSL. Both the RSL and the smaller CSL already show a tendency toward rapid organizational disintegration in the short run. The CSL is an object lesson in how not to have a "fusion," with the old disagreements and animosities being carried over virtually intact into the "fused" organization.

20. The present SL owes much of its rapid growth to the successful application of the regroupment tactic: winning over the Communist Working Collective and the Buffalo and Cleveland groupings and making common cause with the principled factional struggles waged by a wing of the Leninist Faction of the SWP, the Leninist Tendency of the IS and the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency of the United Secretariat.

The regroupment tactic continues applicable and urgent as the rise in class conflicts and the profound political and economic difficulties of imperialist decay are pounding the revisionist organizations to pieces (e.g. the Landy-Taber IS split, the Boston PL split). Although the increased size of the SL means that there will be relatively less organizational significance than previously to the winning over of any given number of comrades, the need for political clarification through exposure of the revisionists and the winning of subjectively revolutionary militants to authentic Trotskyism remains. With our increased strength we can expect to attract leftward-moving formations not only by our uniquely correct program but by organizational successes as well.

In this context, the SL must show that it can make gains in its mass work in order to demonstrate that it knows how to use the cadre it has acquired, consolidating the organization and laying the sound basis for major future regroupments. Concomitantly, we must aggressively seek out opportunities to regroup with even relatively small circles of militants, in order to extend our tendency geographically and to widen and deepen our industrial implantation.

21. The most likely source of small regroupments in the coming period appears to be left-wing elements coming out of the SWP, centering on the IT. The leadership of the IT acknowledges the SL to be the major obstacle to the IT's growth, recognizing the powerful attraction the SL has to the left wing of the IT membership and to the IT periphery. This attraction was shown, for example, by the blatant break of some ITers with the SWP in deciding to participate in the SL-initiated Miners' Solidarity Action Committee demonstration in New York City.

The IT is truly in an unenviable situation. A heterogeneous assemblage of conflicting impulses, containing both the arch-Pabloists and proto-Stalinoids attracted by the IMT's line on questions such as Vietnam and the remnants of the workerist Proletarian Orientation Tendency whose opposition to the SWP majority proceeds from an essentially healthier direction, the IT membership had rammed down its throat a long-term SWP entrust perspective due to the IMT leadership's maneuverist considerations, perhaps hoping to postpone the split with the SWP until the latter had lost its one substantial international ally (the Argentine PST), the better to claim the uncontested organizational continuity of the USec.

The IT leadership was thus forced to sell to its supporters a perspective of continued SWP membership without any credible justification (except that the SWP would recruit a "new mass vanguard" providing the IT with a fertile ground for factional recruitment), only to find itself suddenly expelled.

The IT presently remains committed to a short-term policy of soft-peddalling public expression of differences with the SWP on the chance that its international mentors can force a favorable resolution of an appeal for restoration of the IT to the SWP.

The IT faces the imminent prospect of demoralization and fragmentation in its independent existence. The niche for an ostensibly Trotskyist, workerist, left-of-SWP centrist formation is already over-filled by such groups as the RSL and the pathetic CSL; and it will soon discover that the prestige of the USec "franchise" (which will not be forthcoming until the IMT becomes reconciled to an open split) does not cut a lot of ice. Politically heterogeneous and organizationally unprepared for independent existence, the IT is a prime candidate for polarization and split, to which we must devote serious attention.

The present foundering of the IT under the burden of the IMT's "perspective" for the IT can only aid us in polarizing this formation. It is imperative that in the coming period we do our utmost to insure that the IT is stillborn, seeking every opportunity to polarize it, exposing the revisionism of Mandel and Co. and winning the best IT elements to our banner. This will be importantly aided by our international work, and will itself be a crucial aspect of that work.

22. While the IT is our most likely source of recruitment and small regroupments in the coming period, attention must also be paid to the Maoist organizations. In the past, we have been very successful in intersecting and recruiting to our program small Maoist circles that were, under the impact of the U.S.-China normalization of relations, in the process of breaking from Maoism and seeking a proletarian, revolutionary perspective. We must be prepared to seize opportunities, necessarily transient, when sharp internal contradiction stops subjectively revolutionary Maoist currents in their tracks and forces them to fundamentally question the basic premises of the Mao-Stalin tradition.

Present-day Maoism presents two aspects. First, with the

Peking-Washington detente, Maoism has gained a new respectability among sections of the radical petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and especially among certain layers of students. The rapid growth of right-wing Maoist tendencies, best exemplified by the Guardian and the October League, is partly to be explained by an increase in the liberal admiration for the "New China." Additionally, the OL has grown by operating on the political territory barely to the left of the pro-Moscow CP, recruiting disgruntled youth from the CP orbit who desire to be a little more "left" and active without making a fundamental break with the CP's reformism.

Second, there are still substantial layers of subjectively revolutionary young militants who look to Maoism as a revolutionary alternative to CP reformism. Given the current Peking-Washington rapprochement and the complete inability of Maotought to provide a guide for revolutionary activity in the labor movement, or U.S. society at large, the left wing of Maoism is continually wracked by political crises. First PL, and now the CL and RU have found themselves in the politically untenable position of attempting to be "revolutionary" while adhering to Mao's version of Stalinism. With the expansion of our work in the labor movement, our international activity and a policy of vigorous polemic against the political bankruptcy of Maoism, we should be able to win a substantial number of recruits from the left-Maoist milieu.

In summary, in the context of the relative fluidity of present radical groups and the abrupt shifts in American social/economic/political conditions, both the development of the SL and the fracturing of ostensibly revolutionary organizations provide our tendency with excellent conditions for winning sections of subjectively revolutionary militants to our banner. Additionally, such regroupments are necessary for the expansion of our tendency, which has nowhere near enough experienced communist cadre. While opportunities for particular regroupments are transitory, regroupment must not be seen simply as an episodic tactic, but rather as a consequence of our struggle to create a Leninist combat party, a struggle which is above all a political struggle to polarize, split and destroy the revisionist obstacles to the creation of a mass revolutionary party, in the process winning the best elements of these groups to our banner.

IV. TASKS OF THE SL IN THE CURRENT PERIOD

23. Three years ago the SL recognized that it was being compelled to intervene in all of the main arenas of social and political struggles, in sharp contradiction to our capacities, which were those of an unstable sub-propaganda group. To seek to deal with this contradiction, the SL Central Committee set for the organization ("Memorandum to the CC on the Transformation of the SL," 23 August 1971) a series of tasks to transform the SL from an unstable sub-propaganda group into a propaganda group that could function as the nucleus of the vanguard party.

24. Among the tasks set were: to stabilize an eight-page monthly Workers Vanguard; to extend and deepen our implantation in the labor movement by concentrating a network of fractions in several key industries; to establish a youth section, organizationally independent

but politically subordinate to the SL; to deepen and extend our international work; to acquire a black cadre; and to concentrate sufficient leading cadre into our central office to provide the leadership, division of labor and centralized apparatus necessary to insure that these tasks would be carried out.

The "Transformation Memorandum" projected that: "If we are able to achieve over the next period the historically modest aims set forth in this memorandum we will however have consolidated ourselves as the nucleus of the indispensable vanguard party, and that National Conference of the SL which acknowledges that achievement might well consider adopting the name of a Party in the same spirit that we now take the name for our press of Vanguard: as a deliberate assertion of our intentions and our determination."

With the notable exception of the goal of acquiring a black cadre, these tasks have been carried out or surpassed. Nonetheless, the SL still remains a small propaganda group, with a weight among the U.S. left movement out of all proportion to its size, facing a situation in which there will very likely be sharp class battles in which we will be compelled to intervene with qualitatively insufficient forces.

An upsurge in the class struggle may or may not intersect the fractions we have built in the labor movement. Such an upsurge may or may not be centered in a region of the country where we have a relatively strong and well organized presence. Leftward-moving splits from one or another organization internationally may possibly occur in areas where we have no supporters or co-thinkers, and may consequently prove abortive.

25. Therefore, while the SL's perspective remains one of building a fighting propaganda group whose work is carefully concentrated and exemplary in nature, our situation requires a consolidation, deepening and extension of our work in all areas of activity. Simply put, the SL must get larger.

Yet in attempting to expand, we face a number of acute contradictions that can only be ultimately resolved through consolidations based upon further growth. For example, increased trade-union implantation conflicts, in the short run, with the need for more SL public work, and the necessity to build a strong youth organization with stable campus fractions. Likewise, an increase in press frequency to a weekly Workers Vanguard requires a substantial investment in new equipment, and the allocation of more comrades to staff assignments--composition crew, circulation department, staff writers, etc. A correspondingly greater financial burden is placed upon the organization, as increased staff means the diversion of competent comrades from industrial assignments and/or colonization of new regions of the country, and doubling the sales efforts of the locals implies a cutback in local work and/or greater demands on overextended locals or comrades. Similarly, more international activity means a heavier drain on the financial resources of the organization, and the commitment of valuable cadre who might otherwise be available for important national or local tasks.

Consequently, any projected expansion of a given area of SL activity must be carefully considered both in terms of effects upon other areas of SL activity, and from the standpoint of its contribution to the realization of our perspectives over the next period. Particularly if we experience a sharp drop in income, growing out of an economic downturn which cuts into our industrial implantation, we will be forced to cut back in certain areas of work. This must be kept in mind in discussing our projections for the next period, some of which may have to be modified or curtailed, depending chiefly upon the fate of our trade-union fractions.

SL Trade-Union Work

26. Since the adoption of the "Transformation Memo" in the fall of 1971, the SL has succeeded in developing a number of trade-union fractions concentrated in several key industries. A production boom in several important industries and the numerical growth of the SL intersected to make possible and urgent a heavy implantation into industry which would have constituted workerist liquidationism if we had attempted it with our previously much smaller membership base. The development of these fractions has been crucial to the growth of the SL, and to its transformation from an unstable propaganda group to a vanguard nucleus.

27. The creation by the SL of a network of communist fractions in the labor movement reflects our orientation of struggling for our program in the only independent mass organizations of the American proletariat, and has nothing in common with the "proletarian turn" of the Pabloists, New Left Maoists and assorted workerist tendencies who, after the French general strike of May 1968, discovered a "new force" to tail after. The goal of SL trade-union work has been, and remains, to implant the communist program in the working masses, and to recruit the most politically conscious and militant workers to our banner, constructing a Leninist party linked to the working masses, and capable of waging a successful struggle to overthrow the rule of capital and replace it with the rule of the working class.

In the construction of trade-union fractions, their development and their participation in creating caucuses based upon the transitional program (i.e. upon the action program of the Trotskyists for the trade unions in the imperialist epoch), the SL has acquired a considerable body of experience. Many of the lessons to be drawn from this experience are dealt with at length in the Trade Union Commission's memorandum, "Spartacist League Trade Union Work" (8 June 1974). But it is useful to reiterate some of the points taken up in that document, and to make several additional points as well.

28. In particular, it is important to note the atypical pattern of development of a number of our recently implanted fractions, which have, in a comparatively short period of time, and with relatively little base, moved to constitute class-struggle caucuses. It cannot be overemphasized that these caucuses are in an exposed and dangerous position until they can consolidate a base of active support among the workers in their unions. This is particularly the

case in the volatile mass production sector.

Over the next period our fractions must strive to consolidate bases of support in their plants, recruiting militants to caucuses that we support and to the SL. Comrades working in the trade-union arena must learn to make skillful use of the SL press and SL public activities in contacting potential recruits. Fraction members active in caucuses must not be perfunctory in their interventions into union meetings and into incidents that arise on the shop floor, but must pay strict attention to detail and be tireless in seeking to use every incident and opportunity that presents itself to explain some aspect of our program and to expose the pro-company, pro-capitalist stance of the labor bureaucrats and the political bankruptcy of the fake-lefts.

In this context, it is especially important to note the impact of our interventions upon the workers, and to follow through on interventions with written propaganda and/or contacting. Use of campaigns for elected posts, such as shop stewards, can be very effective in building the authority of a caucus and in recruiting, if they are properly used and the comrades are willing and able to carry out the day-to-day tasks associated with these positions.

29. The recent action of one of the urban-centered caucuses we support in putting forward an anti-racist motion in a local situation that was racially highly polarized is an excellent example of the type of activity we must encourage in our fractions. While this motion passed the Local overwhelmingly, sections of the leadership of the Local and their hangers-on felt compelled to vote against the motion because of their desire not to embarrass the Democratic Party "friend of labor" responsible for the racist outrage.

Immediately following this vote, our supporters should have taken the floor to denounce these bureaucrats as racist stooges of the Democratic Party, drawing attention to their vote, and pointing out the need to oust these bureaucrats and replace them with a class-struggle leadership capable of waging a real struggle against racist oppression and the capitalist system which breeds such oppression. Both by intensive contacting and by an immediate follow-up leaflet, the lesson of this vote should have been hammered home, especially to the black workers who had had illusions about these bureaucrats. Such incidents can be used to great advantage, and, to a fraction, are worth more than five years of issuing leaflets on the trade-union bureaucracy, racism and capitalism. Unfortunately, both the fraction and the party press treated the incident in a matter-of-fact, routinist way.

30. In trade-union struggles, as with social struggles in general, Trotsky made a very useful observation.

"While there cannot be either an intermediary revolution or an intermediary regime, there can and will be intermediary mass actions, strikes, demonstrations, clashes with the police and troops, tumultuous revolutionary convulsions in which the communists will naturally be in the front ranks of the fight. What may be the historical meaning of those intermediary demo-

cratic fights? On the one hand, they may introduce democratic changes in the bourgeois republican regime. On the other hand, they will prepare the masses to conquer power in order to create a proletarian regime."

"The participation of communists in these fights, and above all their participation in the leadership of these struggles, requires of them not only a clear understanding of the development of the revolution as a whole, but also the capacity to put forward at the right moment sharp, specific, fighting slogans that by themselves don't derive from the 'program' but are dictated by the circumstances of the day and lead the masses forward."

--Trotsky, "Down With Zamora-Maura!", 1931

It is this capacity that our comrades must develop. Our fractions are still very raw, and oftentimes overlook incidents which can be used to great advantage. Thus, one of our West Coast fractions did not exploit a company ban on caucus campaign literature, which the company refused to permit on union bulletin boards because it "insulted" the company by calling for its expropriation under workers control. And the union bureaucrats went along with the company, placing our supporters in an excellent position to draw a class line with the company and the bureaucrats on one side, and our supporters on the other. Similarly, an East Coast mass production fraction was slow to protest the victimization of a woman supporter of a Maoist tendency (who had been anonymously and viciously red-baited) by the company, which had arbitrarily changed her shift and gave her an extremely difficult and dirty job.

Incidents such as these can have a profound impact upon the consciousness of workers in a given plant, especially if they are publicized and exploited in the proper manner. Indeed, it is often "small" incidents such as these that trigger sharp struggles which may go far beyond the immediate issues. Our comrades must learn to intervene in these situations and use them to inject our program into such struggles, and drive them forward. In this way we can build a base in the plants where we are active and expose the bureaucrats and our fake-left opponents.

31. In the next period we expect sharp outbursts of class struggle, which we hope to be able to intersect. Our ability to profit from such upsurges will depend precisely upon our ability to advance the proper fighting slogans at the proper time, and our ability to consolidate a base of supporters around our fraction. Otherwise, such upsurges may pass us by or leave us in an exposed position, endangering the continued existence of our fractions.

32. During the past period an increasing number of our fractions have become active, sometimes after a considerable time span in which we purposely maintained a very low profile for security reasons and because of our general inexperience and lack of seniority. Also, where possible, we have taken a "two-tier" approach, holding part of each fraction in a reserve position. While these measures have created a certain amount of impatience in some instances, they

have generally been successful in protecting our fractions during the initial periods of implantation.

The ability of a number of our fractions to proceed to the construction of class-struggle caucuses is a significant step forward. However, comrades must realize that this is simply the first step forward, and that the real tasks of the fraction have just begun. Newly active fractions must avoid the temptation to run ahead of themselves, directly confronting the bureaucracy on every issue that comes along. Insofar as possible, we should attempt to control the timing and content of our confrontations with the incumbent bureaucracy.

An ever-present danger for our unionist comrades, who have of necessity been drawn in the main from ex-students, is the unthinking substitutionism of our fractions for broader sections of the working class. Such substitutionism is the seductive "easy alternative" for struggling to and coming to win leadership among a layer of militants around us. Our fractions must prepare the groundwork for their interventions such that when caucuses supported by the SL move on issues they do not do so over the heads of or in opposition to the overwhelming bulk of their fellow workers. Substitutionism has been willy-nilly an objective tendency, all too easy to get into and even perhaps impossible to avoid in certain situations, but down that road lies our elimination from the labor movement.

Thus one of our urban-based fractions on the West Coast had to fight off a savage red-baiting attack much too much alone, even though on other issues and at other times the fraction had, and sometimes exploited, outstanding opportunities to be the champions of wide sections of the union. On the East Coast the grossest case was the necessary mobilization of industrial unionists, at the very possible risk of their consequent firing, to supply heavy physical protection to a youth demonstration which was threatened with savage physical attack by the JDL.

We should learn from the mass mobilizations in 1945-46 against G.L.K. Smith, where Trotskyist fractions brought hundreds and thousands along with them from the labor and black movements.

A parallel problem is that the treacherous "leaders" of 10 to 30 million workers know who and where we are, recognizing us as their dedicated opponents within the labor movement, yet we would be lucky if 10 to 30 thousand of the ranks presently have some real idea of who we are. For example: CLUW Chairman Olga Madar waving a reprint of WV at several thousand junior-grade union bureaucrats at the Chicago CLUW Conference; Emil Mazey at a Ford UAW Council Meeting giving a rundown on radicals and singling out the Daily World and WV as the significant radical press covering the union. This recognition at the top is not gratifying--it is a source of vulnerability.

33. Experience shows that newly fledged caucuses must devote a great deal of their time to simply fighting for their democratic right to exist, fending off attacks from the company, the union bureaucracy and/or the Stalinists--who often collude among each other in attempting to drive us from the labor movement. Attempts to victim-

ize or railroad our supporters in the labor movement must be immediately and vigorously opposed. Wide publicity must be given to such attacks and defense campaigns must be initiated. In this regard, careful attention must be paid to splits in the bureaucracy and to divisions between the incumbent bureaucrats and the "outs," as these can often be effectively exploited in organizing a defense of our supporters.

34. In pursuing its activities in the labor movement the SL must avoid several pitfalls. On the one hand, we must avoid the example of the RSL, which has implanted too large a fraction of their forces in the unions, thereby liquidating their public work in most areas. At the same time, by pursuing an ultra-conservative policy of "deep entry" into the trade unions, the RSL has liquidated its "face" in the labor movement also. While this may guarantee their survival in the event of a deep anti-communist purge, it also guarantees that they will learn nothing, lead no one and be unable to recruit except upon a one-to-one basis. A caucus capable of providing leadership in struggle cannot be created overnight, but must win its authority through a long and observable history of struggle.

While avoiding the ultra-cautious approach of the RSL, it is also necessary to steer clear not only of the obvious adventurism of groups such as PL and the RU, but also to avoid any overt organizational linking of our fractions with the SL and to minimize implicit connections to the extent possible. This does not mean that SL fractions should strive to adopt the protective coloration of simple trade-union militants. On the contrary, we aim to be the communist opposition in the labor movement, with definite political views on the major social questions. To posture as simple militants would cut us off from recruiting a whole layer of workers who seek political answers to the problems of the working class in capitalist society, and are dissatisfied with simple trade-union militancy. But in pursuing this course, care must be taken to avoid making obvious link-ups which indicate SL membership or enable the companies, labor bureaucrats and our opponents to pinpoint the location of every SL fraction.

In the past we have been too lax in this regard. The American bourgeoisie and its faithful jackals, the labor bureaucrats, are viciously anti-communist. As we become a serious force in the trade unions, they will stop at nothing in attempting to drive us out. We would do well to heed Lenin's advice:

"These men, the 'leaders' of opportunism, will no doubt resort to every device of bourgeois diplomacy and to the aid of the bourgeois governments, the clergy, the police and the courts, to keep the Communists out of the trade unions, oust them by every means, make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, and insult, bait and persecute them. We must be able to stand up to all this, agree to make any sacrifice... as long as we get into the trade unions, and remain in them at all costs."

--Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism

35. The other major pitfall facing our trade-union fractions is the danger of a routinist approach to their work. Such routinism is an "occupational hazard" of communist work in the trade unions. It grows out of the prolonged daily immersion of comrades in an often apolitical milieu in which they are continually exposed to the most wretched trade-union opportunism and the political backwardness of wide layers of the working class. Especially in the trade unions, short periods of sharp struggle alternate with long periods of quiet during which our comrades must necessarily pay attention to a mass of minute detail in order to carry out their daily political work of contacting and education, often on an individual basis. The reluctance of one of our fractions to intervene against the reactionary maritime boycott of the Soviet Union during the recent October War provides us with a good example of how easy it is for comrades to get lulled into a routinist, trade unionist mode of functioning.

For this reason, it is imperative that comrades engaged in trade-union work be drawn into other aspects of party activity insofar as this is possible. In particular, it is desirable to employ temporarily laid-off trade union comrades in public work in areas of the country away from their local union. Organizers of local committees must endeavor to integrate members of the trade-union fractions into other areas of party work that do not endanger their security, such as regional work and work on campuses where we are unlikely to encounter union members from the plants in which we are implanted. Fraction members may also be used in individual contacting work in certain instances.

36. Presently, between 25 and 30 percent of the party and youth membership is actively engaged in trade-union work. As we grow larger this percentage will expand. In the immediate future, our first priority is the reinforcement of existing fractions in need of new forces, and the creation of additional fractions in locals such as Boston where our percentage of industrialization is too low. It must be kept in mind however that the percentage of industrialized comrades will vary from one SL local committee to another, depending on the size and capacity of the local committee as well as the nature of the area.

Geographical expansion into new regions of the country will entail the creation of new fractions. Given the bleak economic outlook, we look forward to the creation of national fractions in several additional industries less likely to be affected by economic slump, e.g. those directly connected with basic resources.

37. With the shift of a significant number of our union fractions to active status the work of the SL Trade Union Commission has increased enormously. In the coming period an increase in personnel allocated to the TUC will be necessary. Comrade Knox, who holds down the two interrelated posts of TUC Secretary and Labor Editor of Workers Vanguard, must be able to draw upon additional forces for editing trade-union articles, particularly when WV becomes a weekly. With the increase in the work and responsibilities of the TUC, we look forward to the creation of the post of National Trade Union Director, a new national officer post, which is already de facto filled by Comrade Knox.

38. The next period should see a rise in the level of class struggle which may reflect itself in a fracturing of the bureaucracy at its base. Thus, in the near future there may be the possibility of intersecting individuals and small formations that have broken with the bureaucracy on some point and adopted a clearly counterposed and qualitatively different position to the left of these reformists. In such instances the question of a united front would be posed, and the tactic of critical support or even common slates in union elections might be in order. However, the application of the Leninist tactic of critical support must be contingent upon a qualitative break from the bureaucracy's policies of class collaboration, expressing at least one salient key element of a class-struggle program. Adoption of a platform of honesty, militancy and democracy does not represent such a qualitative break, and we give no support to out-bureaucrats running on such a platform, no matter how "popular" they are with the workers.

Indicative of the pressures operating upon even the top levels of the labor bureaucracy is the unprecedented response of a number of these misleaders in agreeing to endorse the SL-initiated Miners' Solidarity Action Committee's call for demonstrations in favor of victory for the striking British miners. Even the reactionary Gleason of the ILA decided to endorse the demonstration called in New York City. Unfortunately, we did not have fractions actively operating in most of the particular unions which supported these demonstrations. But nonetheless, such actions provide a good example of how the public work of the SL can complement and reinforce the work of our trade-union fractions.

39. In pursuing work in the trade unions SL fractions must place special emphasis upon combatting the divisions within the working class and the attendant political backwardness which feeds upon these divisions and hinders class unity against the capitalists. Through our interventions, propaganda and agitation we must carry on a continual struggle against all instances of racial, sexual, national or religious discrimination, linking the fight against special oppression to the struggle of the working class against capitalism. Only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat will it be possible to lay the foundation for the ultimate elimination of all forms of special oppression.

The struggle against instances of special oppression must not be limited only to the events that take place in a given plant, industry or union. Instead, where possible, we should endeavor to mobilize the power of the labor movement behind struggles that occur in society as a whole. Again, the initiative of West Coast trade-union supporters in protesting racist round-ups should provide a model of the kind of actions we wish to undertake.

40. In industries which employ significant numbers of foreign nationals or recent immigrants it is crucial that we make every effort to establish contact with these workers and recruit them to our tendency. Such recruits could play a key role in extending the international work of the SL/U.S. and its co-thinkers. Additionally, it is absolutely necessary to defend the rights of foreign workers and integrate them into the unions, thereby undercutting the poten-

tial for scabbing and also combatting the national chauvinism of native U.S. workers. In particular, the call in relevant situations for full citizenship rights for foreign workers must become one of our central demands.

Black Cadre and the Transformation of the SL

41. While the SL has been able to carry out most of the tasks set out in the 1971 "Transformation Memorandum," our most singular exception over the past period has been our inability to acquire a black cadre. We have not been able to recruit the black analogues of those New Left Maoist cadre who were very quickly able to fill diverse leading positions in our organization.

With our numerical growth, increased weight among the ostensibly revolutionary organizations and our expansion in virtually all other areas of work, the absence of a black cadre is now a qualitatively greater weakness than it was in 1971. It is a long-held SL axiom that the black question is key to the question of the American revolution--i.e., in the U.S. racial polarity is the primary obstacle to working-class unity and to the development of class consciousness. In the absence of a bi-racial Leninist party, a fundamental confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie will almost certainly be deflected into a racist sidetrack. Consequently, the absence of a black cadre constitutes a fundamental barrier to the transformation of the SL into a Leninist party.

At present, absence of a black cadre is an absolute barrier to the carrying out of certain urgent concrete tasks of the SL, particularly in the trade unions. Because of the numerical preponderance of black production workers in certain key sectors of the industrial proletariat, and because of the historic racist polarity in American society, it will be impossible for some of our fractions to play any but a marginal role in their unions so long as they have no black members. Thus, despite general success and important opportunities in other areas, the recruitment and development of black cadre must be a dominant concern of our organization. At the present moment in the history of the SL, one black recruit is worth ten whites.

42. The past inability of the SL to acquire a black Trotskyist cadre reflects not only the extreme weakness of the SL in the period from 1968 to 1971, but also the loss of the few capable black comrades the organization had to the virulent wave of black nationalism that peaked during this period, isolating us from the major arenas of black social struggle.

It is important to note, however, that while the SL has historically had few black cadre and was forced for a whole period into a position of isolation from the arena of black political struggle, the organization did not capitulate to these facts or generalize them into liquidationist political conclusions. Instead, the SL has continually attempted to break out of its isolated position, vigorously seeking opportunities to intervene in black struggles and to intersect subjectively revolutionary black militants. Both our early work in the South, especially around the left wing of the in-

tegration movement and black self-defense groups, and our orientation toward the early black power movement, as well as our later orientation toward the Black Panthers and PL, are examples of our attention to such work. Our political writings growing out of this work constitute the solid foundation for our future work around the black question.

The coming period promises to provide much more favorable conditions for struggle of the SL to acquire a black cadre. Today the SL is a much larger and more effective organization than it was in the past, wielding much greater influence among the radical left, and having a modest but significant network of fractions implanted in industries employing large numbers of black workers. Additionally, the SL has been repeatedly vindicated in its programmatic positions and theoretical projections on the course of black struggles in the U.S. Most important, recent developments have strongly reinforced the SL's views and should go a long way toward discrediting the various black nationalist ideologies.

43. From its inception as a tendency, the SL has rejected as false the notion that the American black population constitutes a nation. Instead, we have advanced the view that American blacks constitute a people-caste, overwhelmingly proletarian in composition and forcibly segregated into the lowest levels of American society. Thus, the SL has insisted that the only possible road to the liberation of the black masses from their double oppression, as workers and as a racially segregated minority, is through a linking of the struggle against racial oppression to a class struggle aimed at the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our opposition to black nationalism flows from our view that black nationalism, in even its most subjectively revolutionary variant, is unable--because it evades or denies the relationship between class exploitation, racial oppression and the class character of the state--to pose a solution to the double oppression faced by American blacks.

As we predicted at the time, the 1969-70 split of the Black Panther Party presaged the complete collapse of the ostensibly revolutionary socialist wing of black nationalism. The Newton wing of the Panthers has, since the split, evolved into an organizationally autonomous wing of the Democratic Party. The Third World guerrilla wing, approximately represented by the Black Liberation Army, is now a marginal and essentially residual phenomenon. Although much heralded at the time of its founding in 1971, the Black Workers Congress was stillborn and localized, and can in no sense be regarded as the successor to the pre-split Black Panthers as the hegemonic organization of "revolutionary socialist" black nationalism.

The progressive disintegration of "Marxist-Leninist" black nationalism has allowed the black movement, as such, to become dominated by cultural nationalism, of which the purest expression is the burgeoning Pan Africanism. The extremely heterogeneous phenomenon known as cultural nationalism can be separated into three currents, obviously not rigidly demarcated from one another. One is simply religious cultism. A second is the ideological expression of black Democratic Party ethnic politics, best exemplified by Leroi Jones/

Imamu Baraka of Newark. The third, characteristically Pan Africanist, is a passive propaganda current centered on the idea that the fate of American blacks will be decided by struggles outside of American society. Pan Africanists project the progress of American society. Pan Africanists project the progress of American blacks toward liberation through the strengthening of African nationalism vis-a-vis the West. Thus, the "left" Pan Africanists believe that the victory of the Angolan and Mozambique guerrillas over the Portuguese colonialists would, in itself, be an important step toward the liberation of American blacks.

44. Recent developments are laying the basis for sharply undercutting the various black nationalist currents. Above all, black ethnic politics in power, as exemplified by Gibson in Newark, Young in Detroit or Bradley in Los Angeles, has proven to be completely unable to better the living conditions of the black masses, and, indeed, has proven itself incapable of preventing the erosion of the minor gains won by the black masses as a result of the civil rights movement. In Atlanta, Detroit and Los Angeles black mayors sit in office, yet police victimization and harassment of black people has reached new highs. Further, the historic gap in income between blacks and whites has once again begun to widen. And additionally, recent actions by the courts and Congress on the question of busing have led to an effective reversal of the attempt to modify the de facto segregation of the public schools.

The current erosion of the political and economic position of blacks in American society, and the inability of the various petty-bourgeois nationalist politicians to do anything to reverse this trend, should lay the basis for a renewal of struggles on the part of broad layers of the black masses in the U.S. for simple democratic rights. If this motion comes about and intersects the projected upsurges in class struggle, the combination can only prove to be extremely explosive. Thus, the conjuncture makes it doubly urgent that the SL make every effort to acquire a black cadre, and at the same time makes the SL's line of a class-struggle road to black liberation very compelling.

45. So far, the major beneficiary of the demise of "Marxist-Leninist" black nationalism has been the left-Maoist Communist League, which has been able to regroup with the left wing of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the most important expression of black proletarian radicalism in the past decade. While the Communist League does not represent a long-term threat, this Stalinist formation, given its high percentage of capable black cadre and its hard left face, may be able to recruit a significant proportion of the subjectively revolutionary black militants emerging in the coming period, offering extremely stiff competition to the SL.

Likewise, an upsurge in struggles for simple democratic rights on the part of broad layers of the black working masses will find the CP in the best position to take advantage of these struggles, and, in fact, there is evidence that the CP has precisely this perspective. Thus, in an objective sense, the most important competition the SL faces for black recruits is now apparently the CP and to a lesser extent groups such as the left-Maoist/Stalinist CL. Inso-

far as the SL is able to intervene around the black question in the trade unions and in society at large, we will very likely encounter these two tendencies as our major political opponents.

46. The determination of the SL to drive ahead with the effort to recruit and develop a black cadre in the coming period must find its expression in all areas of work of the organization, and particularly should reflect itself in the press, in the work of our trade-union fractions, in our work among women and in youth work. Serious efforts must be directed toward intersecting circles of subjectively revolutionary black militants and introducing them to SL politics. The organization as a whole must be alert to possibilities for intervening in or initiating struggles in defense of simple democratic rights of blacks. Those precious, few black comrades that the SL has recruited must not be squandered or used for random party assignments, but must instead be concentrated in a key area such as Detroit, in order to carry out SL work in this arena.

In order to insure that these tasks are attended to and efficiently carried out we look to the formation of a permanent SL Black Commission, to be established at the upcoming National Conference. We look forward to publishing a special journal addressed to the black question, analogous in intention to the journal Women and Revolution published by the SL Commission for Work Among Women. These steps form the necessary preparatory work to the formation of a special section of the party to carry out communist work among blacks.

47. In passing, we note that special credit must go to the youth organization which has given work on the black question a high priority, as is reflected in the youth press and in the recruitment by the youth of several black comrades. In this regard, we draw the attention of the youth comrades to the fact that the projected establishment of a major SL branch in the South should open up a whole new area of youth work around the black question, especially on a regional basis.

Latin Work

48. Spanish-speaking workers do not occupy such a strategic position in U.S. industry as do black workers. However, their numerical weight in two key urban centers (New York and Los Angeles) make particular attention to Latin work an important secondary priority, regional in character, of the SL.

49. In California and throughout the U.S. Southwest there are large concentrations of Mexican workers, both U.S. citizens and resident aliens (legal and illegal immigrants). This population is concentrated in the poorest-paying jobs and is the object of consistent segregation, discrimination and harassment. Thus, a major axis of SL propaganda in these regions must be directed toward defending the democratic rights of this population, and, in particular, raising the call for full citizenship rights for all foreign workers.

Work among the Mexican population in California and the South-

west should be pursued with an eye toward assisting the growth of a future Mexican section of our tendency. In this sense, this work transcends in importance work among the Spanish-speaking minority populations from the Caribbean, an area of much less strategic importance to Latin America.

The problem of the Mexican population in the Southwest is a national and a border question, whose resolution requires that a U.S. workers state return to Mexico certain contiguous regions, predominantly Spanish-speaking, that are now part of the U.S. but which were acquired from Mexico as a result of a series of colonial wars. This internationalist gesture would be of immeasurable value in extending understanding of a U.S. proletarian revolution throughout Latin America.

50. The Spanish-speaking population in the eastern U.S. is in its majority Puerto Rican, but with significant components from other Caribbean countries which, unlike Puerto Rico, are not simply colonies of the U.S. The entire Caribbean region serves as a hinterland, providing cheap labor for U.S. capitalism, often for its most marginal industries.

In conducting Latin work in the East it is important that we raise the call for unconditional independence for Puerto Rico, at the same time calling for a socialist Puerto Rico as part of a soviet federation of the Caribbean.

51. At present the SL has few native Spanish-speaking members, in contrast to the several arenas where there is an urgent need for them (Chicano movement, Puerto Rican radical groups, certain industries, Farmworker support, international work). Consequently, a careful use of these comrades' capacities is of great importance. This means concentration in at least one or two areas, beginning with the stabilization of a Chicano fraction in Los Angeles and eventually a Latin fraction in New York.

The key to the SL's Latin work in this period is the development of at least a small number of cadre-level native Spanish-speakers. This is essential for effective international work and for intervention in Latin left groups, and also for dealing with raw monolingual Spanish-speaking contacts. Recruitment of cadre-level native Spanish-speakers is especially essential to achieving a stable Spanish propaganda output, even a sporadic, essentially documentary output. It is likely that these will be recruited largely from left organizations and their peripheries, campaigns (notably Chile defense work and anti-deportation demonstrations) of special interest to Latin Americans, and from student work in particular colleges in which there are a large number of bilingual Spanish speakers. In certain industrial situations the fractions must arrange to have at least one member learn Spanish.

Communist Work Among Women

52. SL work among women is directed by a special SL commission under the direction of the SL Central Committee. The major activities of the SL Women's Commission over the past period have been to

direct the publication of the journal Women and Revolution and to supervise the intervention of SL local committees and fractions in arenas relating to the woman question. While the SL accords to work among women a secondary priority, our determination to pursue this work in accordance with the decisions of the last National Conference has resulted in the establishment of a special party body and by our regular publication of W&R.

The publication of Women and Revolution has been stabilized at three issues per year. Although sales total about 5,000 copies per issue, the current reduced W&R subscription base is completely inadequate and out of line with the broad and lively interest this journal provokes. W&R has proven to be a very effective tool for political intervention, reaching whole layers not accessible to us through the regular SL press or through the youth press. It also provides us with a forum for presenting a broader range of Marxist historical, literary, theoretical and cultural research and analysis than would be desirable or practical for our other publications.

53. The SL has not done a great deal of recruiting in the recent period from the shrinking women's liberation arena. However, interest in the woman question continues to be lively, and there are indications of a resurgence of political activity around this question. Thus, attendance at SL forums on the woman question is generally good and we have had excellent opportunities to present our views on this subject, distinguishing ourselves on the left by our clear understanding and application of correct Bolshevik principles and practice regarding work among women. SL local committees should be alert to opportunities to intervene in arenas touching upon the woman question and should seek to channel interest generated by W&R into Marxist study circles, drawing these participants of such circles into the life of the SL by organizing them to sell the SL press and encouraging them to financially support the SL on a regular basis.

54. While radical feminist circles have, on the whole, declined numerically over the past several years, they do continue to exist and have effected a resurgence in certain areas. Of particular significance is the rise of several new so-called "socialist-feminist" groups typified by the Berkeley/Oakland Women's Union.

The single most important trend within the radical feminist milieu during the recent period has been a clear turn toward workerism. Even among feminists who continue to evidence strong anti-male sentiments, there appears to be a new emphasis on organizing workers--male as well as female--and a new orientation toward working in the trade unions. This turn on the part of the feminists parallels the turn of the New Left toward workerism, and must be seen as part of the same motion. It should be noted however that one significant counter-trend to this general tendency has been the viciously anti-union, anti-communist wages-for-housework movement organized around the writings of Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James.

55. This turn toward workerism on the part of feminist and radical groups has been paralleled by the growth of labor-reformist

women's groups within the trade-union movement, most notably the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Organized and tightly controlled by the labor tops, and aided by their faithful handmaidens, the fake-lefts, CLUW is an effort to give a few female bureaucrats representation in the ranks of the bureaucratic elite while channeling the discontent of the masses of working women into harmless reformist activities. Given its ambiguous organizational structure (it is neither a women's section of the unions nor an independent oppositional formation within them) and the rifts already evident within its leadership, CLUW cannot continue to exist for long in its present state. While it does, however, it provides us with an arena for contacting and recruiting trade-union women, and our perspective is of a highly propagandist and visible shallow entry.

56. While activity around the woman question within the trade unions has been largely limited to CLUW, under the impact of the current economic crisis the questions of unemployment and speed-up may propel sections of women industrial workers into action. Our trade-union fractions should be alert to such developments and seek to intersect them. Our position of support to the Equal Rights Amendment as a supportable minimum democratic reform brings us down sharply on one side of a violently controversial question in the women's movement, the broad radical movement and the trade unions.

The uniquely Leninist approach of the SL toward the question of women's oppression has awakened favorable interest toward the SL on the part of numerous members of ostensibly socialist organizations; however a pedagogical propagandistic approach around such aspects of the woman question as the family and the reactionary role of religion will be important also in intervening among backward or specially oppressed groupings of working people.

Struggle for an International Trotskyist Tendency

57. From its inception the Spartacist tendency has recognized the necessarily deforming consequences of national isolation for a revolutionary organization, above all one located in the cockpit of world imperialist capitalism. Our definitive rupture from the Healyite "International Committee" both formalized the enforced national isolation of our political tendency and underscored our commitment to struggle for disciplined international collaboration based on principled programmatic agreement. With the adhesion of comrades in New Zealand to our political tendency on the basis of the SL/U.S. "Statement of Principles" and the formation of the SL/New Zealand, our tendency achieved its first, if very modest, international extension.

58. Because our commitment to the rebirth of the Fourth International flows from our understanding that subordination to a democratic-centralist international tendency is necessary to the development of our revolutionary proletarian program, the SL/U.S. rejects the pervasive Pabloist practice of seeking the purported prestige of international connections while eschewing the struggle for political cohesiveness. Our adamant refusal to accept the ersatz "internationalism" of the IC, or to solidarize politically with the German Spartacus-BL as against the IKD when it was unclear that either

grouping stood decisively closer to our program on central questions, and our persistent stance toward the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste in the period 1967-74, were important verifications of our principled approach. The deepening political cohesion of our international co-thinkers into an embryonic international tendency stands in sharp contrast to the federalist/bureaucratic pretensions of the deeply factionally polarized "United Secretariat" and the fragmented remnants of the IC.

59. Rejecting the Healyite practice of constructing "mini-SLLs" in other countries--fake "sections" which possess no authentic roots in the indigenous class struggle and whose leaderships derive their only authority from the London "franchise"--our tendency has consistently oriented towards international regroupments with principled leftward-moving formations capable of a creative and leading contribution to a collective international leadership. It is with this understanding that we continue to place heavy emphasis on clarifying the nature, extent and implications of political divergences between the Spartacist tendency and the RWP of Ceylon led by Edmund Samarakkody.

As our initial political exchanges have indicated, the Ceylonese comrades have made a serious effort to break fundamentally from the LSSP heritage of parliamentarism and parochialism. There appear to remain significant programmatic differences between our tendency and the RWP, most notably on the national question. The ability to attain programmatic agreement with these comrades sufficient to permit disciplined unification would represent a significant step forward for the international Spartacist tendency. The active participation of a senior leader of the Trotskyist movement in the leadership of our tendency would provide us with greatly increased authority in the international movement and would qualitatively enrich our collective understanding of our history and tasks. Equally important, unification with the RWP would give our tendency an established presence in Asia.

60. Toward the centrist French OCI we have consistently sought to pursue a patient attitude, recognizing that within a section of the OCI cadre may still reside a continuity with the earlier anti-revisionist struggles against Pablo, which although flawed constitute a component of our tendency's political heritage. We have resisted writing off the possibility of polarization within the OCI, recognizing that elements from among its experienced cadre, if won to the program which is the consistent generalization of the fight against Pablo, could play a valuable role in the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

Understanding the development of Pabloist revisionism not in terms of a "devil theory" but of a weak and defeated Trotskyist movement with its human continuity destroyed attempting to transcend the limitations of its inexperience to comprehend the challenges of the post-World War II period, we are aware of the difficulty of transforming our tendency into an international on the basis of our largely nationally-limited history. An added component from an organization whose cadres experienced the earlier class and factional

combat would assist our tendency, and our national section, in a period in which our tasks threaten to outrun not only our material resources but the developed and tested political capacity of our central cadre.

Our attempt to engage the OCI in political discussion is a continuing but unfortunately inactive priority. Despite the earlier declarations of the OCI's international "Organizing Committee" (OCRFI) of the intention to establish a wide-ranging discussion with the aim of achieving a disciplined international formation, which if carried through would have represented a break from the practices of the IC, the OCI/OCRFI has made no response whatsoever to our initial comradely but highly politically and organizationally critical letter. The OCI's continuing inability to follow through in its internationalist protestations was no doubt exacerbated by the heterogeneity of its OCRFI as demonstrated by the heated polemics between the OCI and the Bolivian POR and the jagged break with the LRSH of Varga. With the latter's departure, the dissolution of the OCI wing of the former Healy/Lambert federated IC into its national components is essentially complete. The Varga grouping is apparently seeking to define a niche for itself as the purported left pole of the old IC.

We note that the OCI's sharp right turn on the recent French election, if not reflected in a sharp oppositional polarization within the organization, would mark a definitive capitulation to popular frontism compelling a change in our characterization of the OCI: from left centrist (i.e. embodying both revolutionary and reformist elements) to right centrist (formal orthodoxy covering an essentially reformist appetite).

61. Just as the struggle to cohere a politically principled and organizationally disciplined international tendency is essential to preserving and deepening the internationalist program of the SL/U.S., the ability of the SL/U.S. to develop influence in the American class struggle is a crucial component of the development of the authority of the Spartacist tendency internationally. The creation of an authoritative international leadership proceeds inseparably from the development of stable national sections rooted in the social struggles of their own countries.

62. The intersection between the work of our sections in their own countries and the building of our international tendency as a faction within the ostensibly Trotskyist movement internationally is shown most clearly in the instance of the "United Secretariat": successes in our continuing attempts to intersect and polarize emerging left wings within USec national sections can greatly increase our ability to put forward our international tendency as the principled Trotskyist pole of attraction for subjectively revolutionary militants within or around other USec sections.

The intense factional polarization within the USec between supporters of the centrist French ex-Ligue/British IMG/Mandel wing and supporters of the reformist SWP wing has left a continuing state of de facto "cold war" in the USec, including open splits in

several sections (Peru, Mexico, Spain, Australia, Canada, Argentina, U.S.) and a sort of "dual power" situation in others (including Germany, England, Denmark). The "Tenth World Congress" was an attempt to codify the factional status quo to permit the maintenance of the USec as a non-aggression pact. A purely organizational compromise, it remains unworkable in all countries where the factional polarization already finds organized reflection within a USec section or in a public split. The recent expulsion of the U.S. Internationalist Tendency from the SWP may well precipitate the final showdown, and at the least will intensify the conflict between elements in the USec Majority anxious to be freed from the SWP impediment to their various impressionistic schemes and those prepared for maneuverist reasons to continue the facade of "unity." The fracturing of the USec further unlocks the international movement for our intervention, as the USec had come to be accepted as the dominant "Fourth International" throughout most of western Europe (due largely to the rapid organizational growth of the JCR/Ligue Communiste/FCR).

The ferment within the USec has facilitated the leftward motion of groupings and individuals, often to the point of calling into question the heritage of Pabloism itself. Especially where a strong SL presence has been able to intersect such groupings, such as in the U.S. and Toronto, we have won over individuals and small groups to the program of authentic Trotskyism; opportunities for recruitment out of USec supporting groups or left splits from the USec orbit continue to exist in Canada, France, West Germany, Sweden or elsewhere.

63. The SL/U.S. acquired an improved capacity for propagandistic intervention in the international ostensibly Trotskyist movement, through the stabilization of a more frequent public press and the establishment of a functioning international department as a subdivision of the SL/U.S. Central Office. Developments in several countries, greatly facilitated by acute factionalism and/or splits within the competing ostensibly Trotskyist "internationals," now provide our tendency with the opportunity to develop and solidify several embryonic Spartacist tendency sections.

These developments in Austria, West Berlin, France, Canada, Israel and elsewhere are a validation of our tactic of revolutionary regroupment--the attempt to intersect previously partially crystallized indigenous left wings and struggle to fuse them with the Spartacist tendency on the basis of programmatic agreement. The achievement of essential programmatic unity, however, does not in itself guarantee the construction of a viable section nucleus. As Trotsky's struggles in France and our own experience with elements such as Owen Gager (New Zealand) bear eloquent witness, the struggle to cohere a grouping of formerly disparate elements on a new programmatic axis requires a testing process through which these elements--if they can transcend personal frictions and the organizational heritage of centrism--establish a division of labor and undertake the selection and development of an authoritative leadership. This intensely challenging process appears to have left behind talented and leading individuals who have claimed substantial formal programmatic agreement with the Spartacist international tendency.

The immediate authority of a newly crystallized section nucleus flows from the earned authority of its individuals in the left and labor movements of that country and the ability of the grouping to undertake exemplary intervention into its domestic class struggle. Although the immediate tasks of such section nuclei center overwhelmingly on the attempt to polarize and split existing ostensibly Trotskyist groupings, as well as to recruit individuals, such groupings also have the possibility through their concrete work to pose as the revolutionary alternative to non-Trotskyist currents such as Maoism and New Leftism. The propagandistic intervention of the Spartacist tendency into countries where we have no organized presence ordinarily is limited to groups which claim adherence to the historic traditions of Trotskyism.

64. Within the context of our central aim of the construction of a programmatically cohesive democratic-centralist international tendency based on strong national sections, we have sought to hold off the proclamation of an international tendency and with it the inauguration of formal democratic-centralist discipline. Our expectation has been the construction of an international leadership with significant authority in the international movement able to transcend the limitations of any "leading section." In the interim we have sought to operate with close consultation with the Australasian comrades, with urgent opportunities in Europe precipitating a series of bilateral programmatic agreements between the SL/U.S. and European comrades.

In addition to their crucial role as part of an international political division of labor, the New Zealand comrades have carried out important international work essentially on their own initiative, especially toward Asia. Having successfully relocated in Australia, they have undertaken despite small forces to establish functioning branches in Sydney and Melbourne, to begin trade-union implantation, and to project, contingent on the stability of these branches and the establishment of a regular public press, another qualitative task of our international tendency, perhaps in about a year.

65. The rapidly maturing opportunities for supporters of our tendency in several countries to undertake many-sided political work, and the problems and complexities of testing and growth, have forced upon us a systematization and formalization of international organization. The need for centralized political direction of work undertaken mainly by the international department of the SL/U.S. compelled the Central Committees of the SL/U.S. and SL/ANZ to propose the "Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency" which was agreed to by supporters of our tendency at the European summer camp in July. Several groupings of our supporters in other countries are presently disciplined sympathizing sections of the Spartacist international tendency. Until the election of an authoritative international leadership by a delegated international congress of our movement, interim bodies will have to assume responsibility for directing the urgent international work of our tendency.

The carrying forward of our perspective of transforming ourselves and our supporters into the nucleus of a democratic-central-

ist, politically cohesive international tendency will require, especially in this preparatory period, visits by leading individuals to other sections and the holding of frequent international gatherings. Given favorable political development, we project the election of a representative and authoritative international leadership as the highest body of a disciplined international tendency, to take place at an early international meeting. Such a leadership would also constitute the Editorial Board of the periodical Spartacist, which is now published in four languages and has already been transferred to international editorship.

Given the almost unique living standard of advantaged sections of the U.S. working class (young, childless, unionized), compared to the standard of living in most countries where we have or immediately expect to have sections, we recognize that the SL/U.S. will bear heavy financial responsibility for the international work of our tendency.

66. We note the historic problem of largely isolated Trotskyist sections founded on a weak or partial programmatic basis and subject to the pressures of real influence among sections of the masses (Indochina, Ceylon, Bolivia). The task of the international Spartacist tendency will be to assure through full political discussion, intransigent programmatic consistency and an iron commitment to international democratic centralism the discipline of our tendency at the highest level, combined with tactical flexibility and the preservation of authoritative national leaderships selected by the sections.

67. We note the special urgency of the Chilean situation as providing a necessarily transient opportunity for our tendency to sink roots in the Chilean movement from the outside. The hard lesson of popular frontism has been clearly demarcated in Chile in cataclysmic events which however have not destroyed the Chilean workers movement at the base. All sections of our international tendency must devote particular attention to seeking out and winning over Chilean refuges, particularly ostensible Trotskyists and supporters of the equivocal leftist MIR, in the context of a vigorous campaign to oppose the junta's extermination of key far-left leaders: a be-headed movement cannot easily assimilate the lessons of events which have shaken up the existing movement and pose the possibility of regroupment along a class-struggle axis. Our immediate aim is the construction of a Bolshevik propaganda assault upon the popular frontist traitors and their apologists.

Youth Work

68. The past period has witnessed a marked decline in campus radical activism. This decline is associated with the dissolution of the New Left, reinforced by the U.S. troop pull-out in Vietnam. A layer of cynical ex-New Lefters has set the tone for campus politics. However, in sharp contrast to the 1950's, this rightward shift in the campus political mood is not associated with any positive affirmation of American bourgeois ideology, from which wide layers of students continue to feel alienated. Rather, the dominant mood has been one of cynicism and personalism, the latter exemplified by the resurgence of cults. A widespread mood of non-

political "life styles radicalism" continues to exist, signalling both disillusionment with New Left radical activism and continuing alienation of student youth from bourgeois values. Thus the student population evinces an indifference to struggle against bourgeois authority without any affirmation of right-wing hostility to socialist ideas.

Since many of the New Left generation students have simply followed out their normal career pattern, there has been a growth and increased respectability of academic Marxism, exemplified by the election of Paul Sweezy to the executive committee of the traditionally conservative American Economic Association. A byproduct of this phenomenon has been a substantial increase in useful scholarship on the Marxist movement, including translations of "classic" Marxist materials. The greater respectability of academic Marxism provides a favorable climate and material support for our propagandistic activities on campus (e.g. speakers' fees). However, there is the concomitant danger of comrades becoming too involved in the academic milieu. Moreover, the existence of a non-party left academic "establishment" poses something of an alternative pole to a revolutionary cadre organization in attracting student intellectuals drawn to a socialist world-view.

69. The disintegration of the New Left contributed to the growth of the SL and its youth organization, but in an abnormal manner. The decline of New Left radical activism and the break-up of the "family of the New Left" mood impelled a considerable number of Maoist groupings and individuals to re-examine the Trotskyist arguments for a proletarian vanguard party. Out of this process came our regroupments with the CWC, BMC and CMC, as well as a substantial number of individuals from the PL milieu and its front groups; this regroupment and recruitment process provided the main component of new forces which laid the basis for our transformation into the nucleus of the vanguard party.

Although derived mainly from the student milieu, these cadres did not however give us a solid base on campus. Our recruits out of New Leftism have tended overwhelmingly to be ex-students and graduate students. In the past period we have had few genuine students--a serious obstacle to building organic campus fractions. However beginning around fall 1973 there appears to have been a noticeable change in the campus political climate characterized by a new generation of students whose consciousness is not shaped by the antiwar turmoil of the late 1960's. For the first time in history, our youth organization has been growing largely through linear recruitment of undergraduates, with a pool of contacts drawn from students with little previous radical involvement interested in a socialist analysis of contemporary political issues (e.g., Watergate, the "energy crisis," the Chilean coup, farmworker struggles). Given the generalized, although passive, anti-establishment mood, major labor struggles should induce polarization among students leading broad and active support among a wing.

With the adoption by virtually all of the organized fake-left of a primitive workerist veneer, the only direct competitors we have

had on campus are the YSA and the RU's Attica Brigade, although PL's "anti-racism" front groups sometimes play a comparable opponent role.

Concrete Organizational Tasks

70. Press: The "Transformation Memorandum" projected the stabilization of a frequent and regular public organ as the task around which the SL would stand or fall in the present period. It stated that "the key is our national center" as the precondition for this central task, as well as for the systematization and expansion of other work (trade-union, international). It recognized that, despite our history of difficulties in the attempt to achieve a regular central organ, the editorial and technical resources for a monthly paper were already within the capacities of our organization, requiring only to be assembled and directed.

Once we had transformed the center and stabilized the 8-page monthly, the transition to the present 12-page bi-weekly (although a more than threefold increase) was essentially a question of simple linear expansion.

71. PB discussions during the winter tentatively raised the question of a weekly Workers Vanguard after the summer; however this has proven to be somewhat premature. Our grossly inadequate circulation base, technical insufficiency and a tightened financial situation, as well as a still somewhat inadequate pool of competent editorial staff, are holding us back from the weekly. We must understand, however, that if we continue to recruit at a fairly rapid rate and to expand our involvement in the class struggle, we must initiate the leap to a weekly WV at an early juncture, although it will still represent something of an over-extension which will only be resolved through further growth.

A weekly frequency would transform WV from an organ which mainly projects and immediately draws the lessons of the work of the SL but is not itself a rallying weapon, into an organ which initiates and leads the activity of our supporters. With a weekly press we would remain a propaganda group, but with the capacity for limited and exemplary agitation over selected campaigns and major political events. Measured historically against other Trotskyist organizations of roughly our size (e.g. the Communist League of America, Workers Party and SWP of the 1930's), the SL's present inability to achieve a weekly press is a serious weakness, which ultimately flows from the lack of depth and experience of our leading cadres compared with earlier movements.

In the present period, as always, the SL requires a "short, tight list of priorities" for consolidation and further expansion. Concretely, this means that we may face hard choices between the intense new demands of our international work, the leap to a weekly WV, and expansion into new geographical areas and new industries. Recognizing the interdependent relationship between domestic and international work and the powerful impact our written propaganda has had in the development of international regroupment opportuni-

ties, it is not precluded that a weekly WV might be the strongest international weapon we possess.

In any event, we propose to continue to seek to accumulate the money to acquire the technical equipment necessary for a weekly and to seek to drive forward the qualitative expansion of our circulation which a weekly would require, without at this juncture being able to project any definite schedule for press expansion to an early weekly WV.

72. We have succeeded in stabilizing the youth press and Women and Revolution and have undertaken the production of a high volume of foreign-language publications, necessarily at irregular intervals. The perspective of the youth organization is to transform Young Spartacus into a regular monthly. The infrequency and irregularity of our English-language theoretical/international organ, Spartacist, remains a serious weakness whose importance increases as our international work expands. We presently do not have the facilities to produce any significant number of pamphlets, and must place extremely heavy emphasis instead on the production of indexed bound volumes of WV as the repository of our past propaganda.

73. Youth Center: Part of the concrete expression of our conscious anti-workerism is the continuation of systematic student work, which means devoting significant material and cadre resources to that arena. Youth recruitment has been an important source of our movement's growth and the consequent favorable change in the relationship of forces vis-a-vis our opponents, particularly those which have liquidated into the factories. While our balance between industrial colonization and student work has in general been correct, there have been instances where the priority of industrialization has tended toward de facto youth liquidationism, and there has been a tendency for campus work to be viewed as less "prestigious" than trade-union implantation.

In particular, the heavy implantation of comrades into union concentrations, as well as the building and strengthening of SL branches in new areas of the country, has meant not only a drain of youth activists but also the drawing into SL branch leaderships of comrades who would have provided the backbone of strong youth locals and a national youth leadership. In the center as well, the comrades of the youth National Office have been heavily and repetitively drawn into important party assignments.

74. With the transfer of older comrades of the youth National Office out of youth work, we are bringing into the national center the elements for a strong youth leadership. It should be pointed out that the relation of the youth center to the youth locals is not parallel to that between SL national officers and party locals. Youth locals have full access to senior party cadre in their adjacent party branch, who will usually be more knowledgeable than the youth center about the concrete problems and work of the youth local. The leadership responsibilities of the youth center toward the youth locals center on mediating serious differences between youth and party locals, directing national campaigns of the youth

organization, determining policy on questions common to youth fractions (e.g., black recruitment, "women's studies" departments, tactics toward campus opponent organizations), encouraging the circulation of the youth press, and directing the work of youth chapters not connected with party locals.

Partly through experience, the common movement has modified its position on youth chapters without party branches. Whereas we had previously encouraged supporters in outlying campuses to liquidate their work and transfer to an area of established SL presence, we have now adopted a more positive empirical attitude toward groupings which must be serviced by regional work. It is the direct organizational responsibility of the youth center to initiate and guide student work in areas that cannot be organized from party centers. The elite universities in campus towns where political life necessarily centers on the campus are an important source for breakthroughs in recruiting student circles. It is no less important, however, to maintain fractions in the large, urban, plebian colleges where we are most likely to encounter circles of black and Latin radical students.

75. International: We are in a process of transition toward a resident political leading body of the international tendency, which in its organizational responsibilities (e.g., international discussion including translations, public propaganda in various languages, financial administration) will rely heavily in this period on the resources of the SL/U.S. Central Office. It will be also largely our responsibility to provide occasional qualified cadres of the SL/U.S. to assist supporting groups and overseas "stations." The key to developing a pool of comrades qualified for such work is capacity in certain foreign languages. Comrades with some fluency in a foreign language must coordinate with the international department the necessary combination of further formal schooling and/or practice in literary political tasks such as political reading and translation. Our language priorities are to maintain our own foreign-language organs in French, German and Spanish, and to give the SL/U.S. capacity in selected other languages, especially Japanese and Russian, and to enhance our Spanish capacity. Particular attention must also be paid to the utilization of comrades with some familiarity with Hebrew, Arabic and Swedish.

76. Geographical Skeleton: In the period since the inauguration of the "Transformation Memorandum" we have been successful in stabilizing Midwest concentrations by colonization into Chicago and later Detroit; successful regroupments also laid the basis for local organizations in Los Angeles, Buffalo and Cleveland, the latter three areas being stabilized as much with colonized comrades as with indigenous comrades. We are in the process of setting up a Philadelphia satellite of the New York Local Committee. With the development of rather larger and more tightly led local committees we have greatly increased the volume of systematic regional work being done in areas near our locals, and in conjunction with expanding the circulation of our press we undertook for the first time some trail-blazing tours.

Our present lack of a Southern base continues to be a serious weakness in seeking to establish an SL presence in all the major regions of the U.S. The competing claims of various large Southern cities may be resolved by the present crystallization of regroupment opportunities.

The implantation of our tendency in Canada was undertaken by the SL/U.S. in conjunction with the obviously intensified opportunity for opponents work and regroupment resulting from the factional polarization of the LSA and the emergence of the USec Majority-aligned RMG. The consolidation of this work and the development of a stable Canadian presence capable of evolving into a viable Canadian organization will require the establishment of substantial branches in Toronto and Vancouver and the initiation of organized work in French-speaking Montreal.

Expansion into new locales and new industries remains contingent upon continued slow but steady growth of the SL, which currently proceeds at a rate of roughly 10 percent a year.

77. Finances: The tenfold increase in our income and expenditures since the 1971 "Transformation Memorandum" is an index of the rapid growth of the Spartacist League, both of our membership (i.e. income) and of our level of activity (i.e. expenses). Moreover, the figures for the first six months of 1974 are roughly double those for the corresponding six months of 1973! Fluctuations in our income and expenditures have at particular junctures given the impression that the SL was about to strangle financially, but in the balance, and at present, money is not our decisive bottleneck; rather, the key to carrying out our urgent tasks is to increase the size and tested capacity of our membership. But faced with the current and projected economic downturn, our financial situation could worsen decisively in an instant.

An urgent task for the center is the organization of the Partisan Defense Committee, to assist in obtaining sizable contributions from sympathetic individuals; PDC funds can be used for some sorts of expenses currently borne by the SL, as we proudly declare our intention to employ PDC funds for the defense of our own supporters as well as for other victimized militants. However, the overwhelming bulk of our regular financing is raised solely through the sustaining pledges paid by the SL and youth membership (as has indeed been the case with most of the money raised thus far for the PDC). Should our comrades experience a significant increase in unemployment, many crucial functions of the national center may have to be cut back significantly, and projected expansions such as press expansion would have to be curtailed. To evade this consequence our continuing trade-union implantation must also take account of financial considerations.

--Political Bureau, SL/U.S.
10 August 1974