

Philadelphia, Pa.
November 19, 1966

Robert Kaufman
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Bob,

Although rather belatedly, this is a reply to your letter of a few weeks ago. I did not write until now for two reasons: (1) I was rather busy here, and (2) I knew that you were very occupied with the campaign.

In your letter you raise several points and I will try to answer as many as I can remember. Your letter seems to have been written by an angry child, judging by the vocabulary and spelling.

Lately I have been rereading your Conference document and PB minutes.

I'm sure that you know from your past political experience that discussions bulletins should be processed through the National Office, and yet, you came to the Conference and without any prior notification distributed your paper. The paper itself is on a very low level. You begin by saying that at present the differences are organizational but that they will develop into political differences. Then you go on to a very shallow analysis of the present political situation (p.2). In one sentence you write that the CP-USA is "becoming organizationally extinct." Such formulation is entirely false and dangerously misleading. The CP is one of the largest and wealthiest formations on the Left. Since their recent Convention the Stalinists are coming out into the open again. In New York they ran a candidate for office. In Philadelphia they are recruiting the most active DuBois Club members. How is the CP becoming extinct? They still stand in our way and will have to be smashed.

In the pages following you then accuse the national leadership of the Spartacist League of inefficiency and on not sensing the immediacy of the class struggle. Finally you accuse our best comrades--those who have all these years fought for Bolshevism against the revisionist current of Pablo and others who have permeated the international Trotskyist movement--of losing their faith in the ability of the working class to take power. Following this slander you declare yourselves as a tendency in the Spartacist League. No wonder you met with opposition from every comrade!

Shortly after the Conference you wrote to the N.O. that you have decided to publish a local organ under the title WORKERS' POWER. You did this without any prior authorization as to the paper and its title. According to Comrade Nelson, you agreed that you should have gotten prior authorization. In your letter to me, however, you arrogantly ask: "Why should we?" Just because you have no political disagreements with the N.O., comrade, doesn't mean that our organization should not operate on the basis of democratic centralism.

In your letter to me you and Comrade Sherwood accuse the leadership of slanders and lies and criticize the N.O. "in the most uncomradely and sometimes ludicrously personal of terms," to borrow your own phraseology. You also state that you will mail mimeographed replies to all Spartacist locals. May I remind you, comrade, that this, again, is in violation of our organizational practices. Your reply should be sent to the national office, in accordance with democratic centralism.

All this is not yet the end of the infantile behavior of your "tendency." Bob Sherwood sent excerpts from the Politburo minutes to Tom Settle, a new member who at the Conference revealed himself to be a supporter of a political tendency outside of the Spartacist League. Did Bob forget that PB minutes are confidential?

Your behavior within the Spartacist League is contrary to that of a Bolshevik! Had my political agreement with the Spartacist League not been so strong as it is, I would not have joined the organization after witnessing the circus which you made of the Conference.

I want to remind you that our organization has decided to drop you from membership if you are not in good standing by December 1. You agreed to this. Please comply, comrade, to avoid an unhappy and unnecessary incident which nobody wants.

"I PREFER TO DROP THE MATTER AT THIS POINT IN THE PROFOUND HOPE THAT THE ISSUES WILL IN SUFFICIENT TIME BE SUFFICIENTLY RESOLVED TO PASS MUSTER."

Here in Philly not much is new. The Pabloites are selling out to the right wing liberals and pacifists. They evade my questions as to the campaigns in New York. It's amazing how far to the right they've moved since I first joined the YSA! Regarding the YSAers in Washington, I know nothing about them. As for my expulsion, I'm enclosing mimeographed documents with all the facts there. All charges are phony except one; putting one issue of the SPARTACIST in one bookstore. All other charges are fabrications to make my expulsion easier and to discourage further internal criticism. One comrade voted with me against my expulsion, stating that the charges are phony.

I was in New York one week ago and read the galleys of the new issue of our paper. It's got some excellent articles on China, Hungary, SNCC, Principles of SL, et al. The comrades put a lot of hard work in it.

There will be an SDS regional conference at George Washington U. (D.C.) Dec. 2-4. I will most probably go. Are any comrades from Baltimore going?

How did the campaign and elections go? Did the SWP support you? Our comrades were very actively campaigning for SWP in California, while the ACFI-ite distributed leaflets calling for a boycott of the elections. Such is opportunism!

My political work here is very slow. There are several people close to us. I remain optimistic.

Comradely,

Lou D.

P.S. Does that standing invitation you offered me still hold? I'd like to come down for a few days sometime in the near future, possibly on way back from Washington SDS conference.

I hear membership in Baltimore is growing. Excellent!!