

internal--for members only

Memorandum to the CC on the Transformation of the SL

1. The tasks facing the Spartacist League and the capacity of the SL as a revolutionary Marxist organization have both been qualitatively transformed through an interacting process. The crisis and breakdown of the post-World War II configuration of the world capitalist system, dominated by American imperialism, has been marked by the catastrophic consequences of the American involvement in Vietnam, the French general strike of 1968 and the definitive collapse of the "American century" with Nixon's new fiscal and economic policies, which mark the forced abdication by the U.S. of the role of world policeman and the reversion of American imperialism to merely the strongest of several competing units. These developments have of course also been conditioned and paralleled by the political decomposition of the deformed workers state bloc, above all the Russia/China split.

These developments have uniquely been continuously noted, analyzed and conclusions drawn from them for the proletarian struggle in the press of the SL over the past several years, and in a comprehensive fashion in the 1969 resolution, "Development and Tasks of the Spartacist League."

2. ◀The working class internationally has now recovered from the destructive consequences of the second World War▶, the primitive effort and failures of the proletariat at the end of the war to assert its power through the framework of massive nationalistic Stalinist and social democratic movements, and the ensuing subordination of the class struggle in many lands to the pervasive anti-Communist mobilization organized and led by U.S. imperialism. A whole new generation of young workers has grown up unscarred by earlier defeats but innocent of earlier hard-won lessons. Skeptical of what it knows as "the establishment," it demonstrates in a sharply increasing way great spontaneous energy and combativity. While as always these struggles are fought out within the framework of given national states their international impact is frequently not only immediate but extends decisively through the "Iron Curtain" which despite the intentions of capitalist imperialists and Stalinist bureaucrats alike goes not to bedrock but only cuts across surface phenomena. The demand "Workers of the World Unite!" has never had greater validity.

3. Thus the stage is being set for a new round of intensified class struggle quite capable of challenging and overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie, and the objective conditions for the building of mass revolutionary parties and for the rebuilding of the Fourth International necessary to consummate such seizures of power by the proletariat is not only objectively highly favorable but crucial in the period which we have entered.

4. The decisive defeat of the proletariat would lead in a direct fashion to the third World War fought with nuclear weapons. With the re-emergence of qualitatively sharpened inter-imperialist rivalries and the corresponding breaking up of the American-imposed system of military alliances, the earlier deterrence imposed by the Russian nuclear shield (the "Workers Bomb" so sneered at by left social democrats) to a nuclear third World War is lost. In the previous period the qualitatively greater contradictions of capitalist imperialism

were counterposed to the lack of urgent expansionist drives by even the deformed workers states which together with the powerful Russian military capacity combined to produce a relative global stalemate. This equilibrium is being superceded by a vista in which the earlier class-differentiated blocs are being absorbed into inter-imperialist power rivalries and the earlier tendency of nuclear military capacity by the deformed workers states objectively to buy time for the proletariat to regroup is undercut. The initial impact of new and major revolutionary workers struggles can be expected to cut across these power blocs and refocus general capitalist hostility on the existing workers states as well, as felt sources of the "red menace."

In the new situation, 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. The vague outlines of the new alignments are already taking shape: the U.S., China, West Germany, England vs. Russia, Japan, India, France, Italy. The outcome of this projection represents at a minimum a terrible setback to human culture and possibly fulfilling the negative alternative of Karl Marx's "either socialism or barbarism" with the obliteration of the human species.

5. Not only has the proletariat acquired renewed capacity for struggle, but it has become urgent that this struggle result in new seizures of power shattering the capitalist system. Hence once again the subjective crisis of leadership within the workers movement comes to the fore: put more concretely the whole outcome hinges upon the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International of powerful sections--mass revolutionary parties.

6. The impact of this world crisis upon social relations and class struggle domestically in the U.S. has been initially contradictory. The freshening of struggle has first shown itself in rebelliousness among sections of the essentially petty-bourgeois youth and student milieux, together with violent outbreaks, bitterness and an inward-turning by the Black section of the population in the face of an apparent hopelessness to improve their lot within a nation which, from their vantage point, appears not only implacably racist and hostile but unchanging. The white sections of the proletariat and lower middle class, also increasingly burdened and disgruntled, and themselves reflecting a conclusion drawn from several decades of social stagnation--that little more can be extracted from the ruling class--react with hostility to the demands of the Black people and with sometime hysteria to the rebellious youth contemptuous of "educational advancement" which has been taken by large sections of the American proletariat as the key to personal emancipation, i.e. class advancement.

7. The most evident of these antagonisms is that of Black vs. white but throughout the productive process the tendency is very strong for one group of workers to seek to advance themselves at the expense of another, and this tendency extends beyond antagonism within the national framework alone: thus Mexican is pitted against Black worker in the Southwest, American auto or steel worker against German and

Japanese, longshoreman against teamster, American against foreign seaman.

8. Thus domestically the central axis for the intervention of Marxists must turn on assisting and transforming appetites in the mass for a larger share of economic and social gain at the expense of other sections of the population into an interlinked and concerted struggle for social gain at the expense of the ruling class, a struggle which tends to go toward the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Powerful objective forces press in this direction, but if the revolutionists are not present to raise those demands which manifestly unify the class by benefitting all its sections, especially the most oppressed, and at the expense of the bourgeoisie, the working people will be deflected by capitalism's lieutenants, the trade union bureaucrats, the revisionists and reformists, the petty-bourgeois nationalists.

9. 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. This union apparatus has now been rendered unstable and can be shattered. Again, whether it is replaced by slicker fakers or by revolutionists depends in good part upon the revolutionists themselves.

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10. The Spartacist tendency had its genesis within the Socialist Workers Party when in early 1961 it crystallized initially around the Cuban question, upholding and insisting upon the validity of the permanent revolution, on the necessarily dominant role of the proletariat in achieving a workers state such as that created by the Bolshevik revolution, and on the necessary role of the revolutionary Marxist party in leading that proletariat to victory.

11. In late 1962 with Healy's connivance Wohlforth split away a minority. At the end of 1963 the tendency underwent expulsion from the SWP. With the first issue of Spartacist in early 1964 there were perhaps twenty-five more or less solid supporters. Over the next two years the tendency grew rapidly, nearly tripling in size by the time of the Founding Conference of the Spartacist League over Labor Day 1966. But there were several weaknesses despite or within this growth and despite the considerable theoretical, programmatic and political development of the tendency.

The main mass work of the Spartacist had been in the civil rights movement North and South. This ended with the defeat and disintegration of this movement and the Black Nationalist freeze. Additionally much of the numerical growth of the Spartacist tendency was of a miscellaneous character, individuals joining on a rather loose catch-all basis because we loomed large as a Trotskyist group to the left of the SWP at a time in which radicals were beginning to recognize its rightward swing. Finally, the definitive rupture with the Socialist Labour League's International Committee, while it resulted within the

U.S. in a small immediate accretion of forces from Wohlforth to us, was discouraging because it indicated that we would have to endure national isolation for an undefined but not short period of time.

12. Through 1967 our membership levelled off and dropped a little, and there was little systematic involvement in mass work. Our most notable failure was our inability to intervene in a systematic and large-scale way in the SDS despite our own recognition since 1965 that this was the prime field for youth and student work. The weakness of the National Office created more overt sources of dissatisfaction through lack of regular production of Political Bureau minutes and especially over our poor press regularity and frequency. The attempt to improve the situation adopted at the New Year's 1968 Plenum was however overtaken by a factional explosion which preoccupied the SL leadership and cadre throughout 1968.

13. That year of factional struggle created the SL as it is presently shaped and completed the pre-conditions for our present transformation. Notably, the main factional discussion material and summaries which have been assembled in four membership bulletins constitute for us our own "In Defense of Marxism," defining again the thinking and tasks of Marxist revolutionaries. A new layer of comrades came to the fore in that struggle and today constitutes a precious enrichment of our leading cadre.

In the aftermath of that struggle we transformed our attitude toward membership from one of coaxing marginal members to keep functioning as a sort of a favor to one of aggressively purging such people with a ruthless attitude of "better less but better." Ross, Ellens and Turner added all together took out of the SL only some fourteen people, but from a high of a nominal seventy-five at our Founding Conference, with the individual drop-outs, factional losses and our own purging we managed to reduce our membership to around forty by the middle of 1969. Ellens claimed that our membership was a half social democratic and Turner asserted that we lacked a collective leadership. By the time we were through fighting them we had developed a hardened Bolshevik membership and a new collective leadership. In short, for the first time the SL had created a homogeneous, developed cadre.

14. By the time of our second National Conference over Labor Day 1969 we had completed the slow, painful process of laying down in written form the essential programmatic basis of our tendency. Program is not completed in a month or a year; it grows out of the conscious synthesis by revolutionists of their experience in struggle as analyzed in the light of Marxist principle. Indeed it was only in 1928 in the period of the decline of the Communist International that the CI after nine years of effort adopted a program as such. The programmatic base of the SL encompasses the material printed in Marxist Bulletin #9 covering the international question, Black question, American question and organizational rules, codified in the period 1963-69.

15. The pick-up of our involvement in social struggle in the U.S. first involved us in a notable way in the student youth field. Fol-

lowing our intervention in the June 1969 SDS split convention we finally began in a systematic and, for us, massive way to intervene in SDS. By New Year's 1970 the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus was formed. As reflected in its present name, it was simultaneously to be a caucus in SDS and, initially rather loosely, an organization of Trotskyist youth.

16. The piecemeal increase in our trade union work led on the West Coast to the production of the irregular printed paper Workers' Action, which was moved to New York and more regularly produced with a more directly political line.

17. Another area of social unrest became evident, women's liberation, and here too our comrades wherever they were around the country found themselves compelled to intervene as a pro-working-class, pro-socialist, anti-feminist contingent. The highest expression of this involvement has been the production from the Bay Area of the newspaper Women and Revolution.

18. The variety of SL-led caucuses, factions and committees in sections of the mass movement has given us a considerable organized periphery, approximately defined by the Mensheviks' old definition of party membership, i.e. individuals who agree with and work under the direction of the party. This has not only given us a greater organized force in comparison to SL membership but has tended to elevate the quality of membership in the SL itself.

19. Our electoral line in 1968 anticipated our work of the next year but was largely drowned out by our own factional preoccupation and by our marginal impact on the rest of the radical and especially the labor movement. Our call for a Labor-Socialist presidential ticket in opposition to the SWP candidacy, our attacks upon George Wallace which almost alone among socialist critics recognized the valid grievances he was catering to with racist demagoguery, in the context of our attack upon the petty-bourgeois elitism and ideological tail-ending of left-liberalism by the Peace and Freedom Parties--i.e. the IS, PL and the CP--and the little model Assembly campaign through CIPA which we ran in New York City were the major points in this work.

20. We have never found a suitable organizational embodiment nor made other than individual recruitment directly from our revolutionary working-class oriented opposition to the Vietnam war. Our refusal to give political support and confidence to the NLF or North Vietnam while resolutely standing for their military victory, our opposition to class-collaborationist Pop Frontism first expressed organizationally in our 1965 break with the 5th Avenue Peace Parade Committee, our opposition to draft refusal, and our constant propaganda for labor political strikes against the war in opposition to endless peace marches and the individualist confrontationism which these gestures breed have however given much content to our mass work in student, labor and women's liberation arenas.

21. Thus almost every aspect of struggle and motion has found us compelled to intervene, and in a way qualitatively at variance with our self-designation as an unstable sub-propaganda group. Since our

intervention has been as a vanguard nucleus while the reality of our forces has been as a sub-propaganda group, in the past three years we have found ourselves functioning under great tension and vastly overextended. The PB has been moving since the beginning of this year to resolve this contradiction by a series of measures to make the leap and resolve the desperate contradictions inherent in our present functioning as a reversible nucleus of the vanguard party.

22. The key is our national center; we have program, cadre and mass involvement. The objective opportunities and demands upon us are great. We are determined to concentrate into the center and so organize our national work as to make this leap possible. When this projection was made it appeared that we would make this shift at the cost of creating a new and ironic contradiction--namely a considerable weakening of our forces in the leadership of local committees and the withdrawal of comrades from important mass work. But we determined on this course nonetheless on the assumption that if our prognosis was correct and our determination steadfast we would win fresh forces.

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23. The erstwhile Trotskyist movement internationally has felt the impact of the crisis and the new challenges. The United Secretariat has both experienced a number of splits to the left and developed a sharp clash between its leading European sections centered on the French Ligue Communiste on the one side and the American SWP on the other. The U.Sec.-SWP antagonism arises essentially out of the divergence between the continuing Pabloist, essentially centrist appetites of the U.Sec. (recently directed at student youth as the springboard of revolution) and the SWP which uses Marxist "orthodoxy" as a cover for their ambition to become the new party of reformist socialism in America.

24. The International Committee, essentially a bloc of the British SLL and the French OCI, together with their respective satellites, teeters on the edge of an open split. The central SLL-OCI difference, which is of some years' standing, has been sharpened intolerably by the new opportunities for building the world movement which the Lambert group is energetically pursuing. The SLL considers that the Fourth International has been rebuilt and that they are it--a posture of sectarian pretense. The OCI accurately subtitles its identification of the IC as "for the reconstruction of the FI." Despite our agreement on this point, we have several serious differences with the OCI: (1) their use and justification of their own violence (in circumstances other than of self-defense) or that of the state against other radicals; (2) their approach to radical youth programatically independent from the vanguard party, i.e. treating student-centered youth as a sort of a separate revolutionary class, i.e. conciliating essentially petty-bourgeois youth impulses; and (3) pretending for years that their bloc with the SLL was a bona fide democratic centralist international organization and hiding from the world movement their many substantial differences with the SLL in order to maintain that bloc.

25. In the context of the instability of the self-styled "Interna-

tionals," a process of several splits among national sections, particularly from the U.Sec. and its periphery, continues to be evident, producing independent groups which are in rapid motion away from or towards one or another of the loosely-defined tendencies of the existing international Trotskyist movement. It is essential that the Spartacist tendency become a pole of attraction in the sorting-out process taking place. The question being posed by these opportunities is whether the IC, possibly reorganized under OCI leadership, will continue to be the main recognized repository of anti-Pabloism, or whether a process of internal differentiation within the sections and supporters of the IC, combined with the accretion of new forces, will produce the political clarification necessary to pose the fight against revisionism on a theoretically and programmatically correct and principled basis.

This perspective--which is nothing less than the perspective of rebuilding the Fourth International through political struggle leading to a process of splits and fusions--requires not only the intervention of the SL in the international arena, but also reciprocally the continued strengthening and development of our work domestically to provide our tendency with the political authority needed for us to have a significant impact on the international movement.

26. One of the principal failures in our current work has been to effectively implement the decision arrived at last winter between our delegation to Europe, the British RCL and the German IKD to launch an international discussion bulletin, for our part at least directed toward the crystallization of an essentially homogeneous international tendency of revolutionary Trotskyists to fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. A complicating difficulty has been that the IKD and especially the RCL have chosen to take a somewhat exclusive approach to the bulletin, limiting invitations to participate in it only to those national tendencies which they know fairly well and which meet particular but ill-defined criteria, rather than throwing it open to all those tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist and standing for example to the left of the U.Sec. However, our main problem has been the press of domestic work such that the comrade assigned to spend at least half his time on the international movement has been compelled to spend half his time away from the center over the last period. It is therefore proposed that an editorial staff of some five comrades experienced in the international movement and/or able translators be established at the Plenum with a collective responsibility for the early production of this bulletin.

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27. In recognition of the unlocking of the existing radical tendencies in the U.S. under the impact of objective events we have raised beginning with Spartacist #14 and pursued through the last eighteen months an active regroupment policy centered upon Progressive Labor in view of their sharp turn against the Stalinist states and nationalism in favor of a crude proletarian revolutionary orientation. But our regroupment orientation has deliberately had a wider character; among the main U.S. tendencies we have noted a certain polarization in the SWP-YSA (now loosely crystallized in the Proletarian

Orientation and Communist factions) and a bulge to the left on the part of the International Socialists (discovery of the working class, for the military victory of the NLF, formal avowal of Leninism on the organizational question). It is not now possible to foresee where this process will end or where it will lead.

28. Account must be taken of the alignment of the ostensible revolutionary organizations at the National Peace Action Coalition in New York in July, organized by the SWP-YSA with some CP support. This conference was the first overt realization of the Popular Front the SWP has been striving for. U.S. Senator Vance Hartke and Victor Reuther, head of the UAW's International Department--i.e. key elements in the liberal Democrat-labor bureaucrat bloc which actively ties the American workers movement to bourgeois politics--accepted invitations to speak. The SWP rammed these celebrities' participation down the throats of the conference, and when their speeches, particularly Hartke's, were vehemently shouted down from the floor, the conference marshals--SWPers, CP trade union goons, led by the SWP's Fred Halstead, assisted by Workers Leaguers--with deliberate brutality smashed and evicted the protestors. Harry Ring's apologia in the 16 July Militant did note accurately how the radical groups responded to this festival of class betrayal:

"The only one of these groups ["political sects" attending the conference, i.e. Labor Committee, International Socialists, SL, Workers League] that supported the motion [commending the marshals in evicting PL-SDS] and offered to help with defense of the meeting was the Workers League. Members of the Spartacist [sic] League actually joined with the PLers in the disruption and were evicted with them. The National Caucus of Labor Committees and the International Socialists took evasive positions."

Ring however did not make clear that even some of the CP-influenced elements at the conference were so anxious not to be associated themselves with the marshals' brutality that they sought unsuccessfully to get the conference to disassociate from the guards' violence.

This division of the tendencies, ranging from revolutionary through centrist to reformist, and sealed in blood, crystallizes the main lines of division within the radical movement over the next period and defines possibilities for regroupment in that period.

29. The "crisis of Maoism" (steps toward Peking-Washington rapprochement) has disoriented and disorganized U.S. pro-Maoist movements and presents the SL with opportunities for influencing and polarizing previously inaccessible Maoist groups and collectives, especially those individuals and groups which had already implicitly challenged "Maothought" by seeking to discover in Maoism a consistent revolutionary proletarian strategy for the advanced countries.

30. Already we note several results from our regroupment orientation, in addition to the recruitment of individuals from in and around the radical movement attracted to us because of our recognition (in distinction to self-styled revolutionaries like PL and the Workers League) that regroupment is at certain junctures a vital part of

the building of the revolutionary party. We are in the process of formally consummating an evidently deeply-based fusion with the comrades of the Communist Working Collective, a Los Angeles ex-Maoist formation; at least a portion of the comrades of the Boston "Mass Strike" group have adopted a fusion perspective with the SL; and also in Boston we have won SL supporters from among members and leaders of the PL-led University Action Group. Including the fusions, in the last four months we will have had a more than fifty per cent increase in direct SL membership.

31. The experienced forces won which in good part are a direct accretion to the SL cadre, taken together with the extremely valuable recruitment of younger comrades to the RMC, give us the human resources sufficient to ensure the strengthening of our center, the production of our press, the extension of our trade union work, the development of a Trotskyist youth league and the consolidation and extension of the SL geographically into more regional centers in the country.

32. In viewing the SL as the nucleus of the vanguard party there is however a vital weakness. In the period through 1968 we suffered the attrition and loss of essentially all of our Black comrades. Without a Black component playing a creative and leading role in the SL it is impossible in this racist country in either mass work or effective general propaganda to have much impact on Black workers or militants. And without the mobilization in revolutionary struggle of the Black section of the proletariat, under some conditions in a relatively leading role, a successful social revolution cannot be realistically projected.

We now have an opportunity in one area to win Black comrades. This work must be pursued at the highest national priority and, if it is to have revolutionary significance, without a trace of conciliation to Black Nationalist inclinations nor of personal patronization. Within the party we do not and will not know any social divisions. Our continuing struggle as revolutionists is "to be in, but not of" this society. Side by side with this adamant inter-party attitude we must take account in our propaganda and mass work of all of the special sensitivities, prejudices, particularities and antagonisms of the oppressed and exploited if these are to be overcome in the course of struggles which aim to channelize all discontent against the ruling class.

33. The spectacular split in the Black Panther Party presents the new generation of Black activists with hard evidence that Black Nationalism even in its most leftist, anti-"porkchop" embodiment, cannot provide a way forward for Black revolutionaries in the U.S. Whatever the organizational fate of the BPP, its former glamorous appeal among wide masses of Black youth, which insulated the overwhelming majority of Black radicals from the impact of multi-racial radical politics, is shattered, and the most thoughtful and dedicated of these youth are again potentially reachable by the SL through its general propaganda and work among this stratum.

34. As we have recognized from our inception, a regular and frequent press is central to our existence as a propaganda group. Now that the SL also finds imposed upon us the tasks of, and key elements in the capacity to be, the nucleus of the vanguard party, the inability to resolve our press question would reduce us to a mockery. We have recognized that we could either liquidate all our other publications (Workers' Action, RMC Newsletter, Women and Revolution, trade union journals) into the Spartacist, thus in imitation of the Workers League retreating from actual mass involvement for the sake of pretense, or we could undertake a tightly regulated expansion centering around Workers' Action.

35. The Political Bureau has opted for the latter and in agreement with the CWC has worked out the following proposal: that we go over to an 8-page tabloid, subtitled a "Marxist working-class monthly, published by the Spartacist League." The PB proposes that the new paper be called Workers' Vanguard and that the early issues note that it incorporates Workers' Action and that special emphasis be given the fusion with the CWC.

The name Workers' Vanguard is appropriate to the kind of paper we intend. From the vantage point of the vanguard it is appropriate to treat the struggles of all of the oppressed and in a fully Marxist fashion, while centering on the class struggle. The July-August issue of Workers' Action was intended to be transitional in its character, and the first monthly issue, September, is meant to be representative in all but the new name of the kind of paper we aim to produce.

36. The Spartacist will continue with approximately its recent frequency as "An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism, published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League." It will have a special area of responsibility toward the international movement and for theoretical material. But all of the SL-directed publications should have an overlapping of content with the new Workers' Vanguard. It is important that the struggles for example in the fields of youth work and women's liberation find expression in the new main organ. It will be necessary for the CC to tightly regulate the size and frequency of the other publications to ensure above all that WV is not undercut.

37. The step of producing and effectively distributing an 8-page monthly has and will require a drastic reorganization of the center and the SL as a whole. In view of the magnitude of the changes involved it is likely that we will find it more difficult to stabilize our monthly than we will in going over to a paper every two weeks, which is the indicated next step for a formation of our relative size.

38. The actual production of the paper rests on several considerations which must be met. One of course is copy. A considerable proportion must be produced in the localities. The branches will have to encourage and direct qualified comrades to write frequently, freeing them when necessary from other responsibilities. The authorization of particular articles in this context is the responsibility of the editors.

It is the intention of the PB that comrade Benjamin be the Managing Editor of Workers' Vanguard with an Editorial Board of Benjamin, Gordon and Treiger, with comrade Rogers as Circulation Manager and comrade Miles as Production Manager; Spartacist with comrade Gordon as Editor and an Editorial Board of Cunningham, Gordon and Robertson, with Rogers also as Circulation Manager. We intend to continue producing Spartacist in a metal shop on the much cheapened basis that we have arrived at; WV is to be offset, composed by us and printed in an inexpensive unionized commercial shop. An early capital expenditure required is a composition machine freeing comrades from the onerous double setting now required.

39. Our own small offset press is intended especially for the production of pamphlets, which are otherwise now financially impossible to produce, as well as miscellaneous printing. Our own shop, managed by comrade Kinder, is intended to evolve into a commercial shop in order to partially subsidize SL production. About two-thirds of the essential equipment cost has been met; some \$1500 more is still required.

40. Second only in priority to the drive to establish our press on a new basis is our calculated and systematic extension of our trade union work. We propose to appoint a national trade union director available at least half-time, partly for the purpose of consultation with our developing fractions but most urgently in this period to direct and assist in the actual creation of fractions. We have no lack of dedicated comrades eager to undertake this work, and who in any case must hold jobs, nor do we lack knowledge of the indicated priorities of one field over another. What generally appears impossibly difficult is the actual placing in the indicated spot of the indicated comrades, a task made doubly difficult given the present recession. The failure under present conditions to tactically implement fully our strategic proletarian perspective would be nothing other than a denial of that perspective. Therefore every resource and ingenuity must be brought to bear in a fully conscious and calculated way to achieve this vital aim.

Put quantitatively, about fifteen per cent of SLers in the past period have been active unionists. By active unionists we mean those comrades who are in a position to and do produce written agitational material within their plant; industry or union. Through the period of our growth, the proportion of active unionists must climb.

41. The two operative words in all SL mass work undertakings in this period remain "concentration" and "exemplary." "Concentration" is to say that we must continue to carefully select our arenas and strongly supervise our allocation of forces so as to maximize our impact. One comrade isolated in e.g. a union is viewed largely as an individual with personal politics; a fraction of at least two comrades is potentially able to achieve a division of labor and constitute a pole of attraction for militants in struggle.

In addition to work which offers a possibility of direct and more or less immediate recruitment of individuals and groups to the SL, we also undertake, in a carefully selected way, exemplary work

among sections of the masses, in order to both generate program concretely through interaction with struggle, and as an essential part of our propaganda--i.e. demonstrating the capacity of our political and programmatic line to focus and lead mass struggles despite our inability, through the limitations of our forces and roots in the working class, to directly vie for leadership of the class as a whole. Thus in these situations we will work with militants who accept our full transitional program for that struggle without necessarily being immediately recruitable to the SL directly through this work.

Any definition of "propaganda" which excludes this element of seeking to offer real revolutionary leadership in a few key situations is mere pretense in favor of an alien appetite; any assertion that an organization such as the SL can be primarily "agitational" ("conquest of the masses") rather than propagandistic in the sense here defined is crackpotism, utopianism or, worse, completely cynical. It is not an accident that the SL--virtually alone among radical organizations in refusing to style itself an "agitational party"--is already involved in more and better mass work than any other group of comparable size.

42. Our determination to implant ourselves in the working class should not be taken as a syndical deviation. Given our marginal propagandistic situation student-centered youth work is not only no less necessary for our existence but interacts closely with our proletarianization campaign. To separate either one from the other would be a major political deviation. Less emphasis is being placed here on the development of the RMC because it is easier and further advanced.

The principal internal obstacle in the consolidation of the RMC is just the opposite of the difficulty experienced in 1958-59 in the founding of the YSA. Then, the founding youth cadre, though few, were very experienced as socialist youth: local organizers, editors and national leaders. But the parent SWP politically undercut the development of a revolutionary youth group by its increasing departure from a Leninist regroupment policy as it pursued, and sought to get the YSA nucleus to pursue, elements moving to the right in the Stalinist milieu. Moreover, significant sections of the party were suspicious and obstructive to the creation of an organizationally separate national youth formation at all. The RMC development was undertaken with the initiative and encouragement of the SL central leadership, and throughout the period of the RMC's dual role as a caucus in SDS and a Trotskyist youth formation, the SL materially supported the RMC and assisted in the development of clear Bolshevik politics. However, through the present, but decreasingly, the absence of an experienced youth cadre has been at every turn a serious handicap. Already one can see in talented and dedicated young comrades of 18-22 the future RMC leadership.

43. The main tasks for the RMC are the development of an experienced center with a regular administration, and the creation of more RMC local chapters. Of special priority is the development of a functioning RMC chapter in New York City.

44. It is the intention of the SL to replace the present interim national organizational relationship with the RMC (the RMC Bureau being simultaneously the Young Bureau of the SL appointed by the PB). In place of this temporary expedient we want to develop at the upcoming RMC Conference and party Plenum a jointly agreed resolution regulating youth-party relations in the fully Leninist mode worked out in the period of the first four Congresses of the Communist International codifying the relationship of the youth league to the party as "organizationally independent but politically subordinate"--i.e. autonomous. This necessarily requires, for the creation of a living communist youth group, rather than a front group of young epigones, that the Youth comrades, party and non-party alike, play a real and full if subordinate role in all discussion and decision-making in our movement as a whole. Correspondingly the youth organization as a whole must be a disciplined part of the movement as a whole in carrying out the decisions it helps arrive at.

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45. Over the next period following the new general allocation of forces already agreed upon with the CWC, we expect that both the Bay Area and Boston locals will become sources for personnel assignment elsewhere, that New York will experience colonization in only for specific functional reasons and will otherwise be kept pruned. The stabilization of a viable Los Angeles branch is our main additional regional priority, followed by the intention to put sufficient additional forces into Chicago to give us a local there. A local in Chicago not only means filling in the largest single gap in our national extension as well as incidentally backing up our student work there, but it also gives us the basis to undertake union work in the industrial core of the country. Our Southern perspectives have been indecisive partly because of the objective lack of one dominating regional center among Atlanta, New Orleans, Houston.

46. At this point in our development money has become our most serious bottleneck. We have suddenly jumped from spending roughly \$10,000 per year to approximately double that, with no significant immediate change in our income! We have gotten through the summer by virtue of \$500 in special donations, a \$500 loan and a \$5-15 surcharge on Sustaining Pledges, which is to be extended through the balance of this year. Following the Plenum it is vital that comrades being newly integrated into branches be brought fully up to SL norms of financial performance.

47. A new major source of income will be from sales of the new monthly. If we are to have effective circulation of the paper, the branches must sell it far more intensively in the much briefer period available per issue. Each comrade will find that he will have to go on sales several times a week or more. In the aggregate this will result in several hundred dollars additionally per month to the National Office.

48. The RMC has been completely financed out of the SL treasury. We intend proposing the following financial arrangement to the RMC National Committee: that all RMC members pay whatever uniform dues

are set by the RMC; that dual RMC-SL members pay the whole of their normal SP to the SL; and that a regular amount be given the RMC by the SL in accordance with the budgeted RMC needs.

49. In this period of many-sided expansion and growth, we must not lose sight of the necessity to maintain the SL as a centralized, highly responsive national collective. Locals must run intensive and systematic educational programs, perhaps modelled on the set of three educational series and reading list developed in New York and the Bay Area several years ago (I-Basic Marxism; II-Leninism and Trotskyism; III-Theoretical and Political Positions of the SL). Any tendencies toward personal or organizational polarization within locals or failure of locals as a whole to follow the national lead must be examined closely and rectified; or, if on examination they reveal the kernel of political differences, they must be fought out on a political rather than an organizationally disintegrative basis. Incidental loss of national cohesiveness or incipient political departures will tend to be arrested both by a more frequent press and by the continuation of frequent national gatherings and tours.

50. The comrades must understand that in the broadest sense we are and will remain a propaganda group. Lenin noted in 1920 that the British Communists, with several thousand members and in London and especially on the Clyde a certain industrial base, were but a propaganda group, even as they passed through a time of great social strife; that until the British Communists had cracked open the British Labour Party and stood at the head of a section of the class they would not yet be a revolutionary party. Our task is above all the propagation of our full program made concrete by and addressed to our fellow militants in every sort of struggle.

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.

--22 August 1971; general line
adopted by the PB 23 August;
extensions incorporated 24
August.

Gr. rules
into
the Dec.

Gr. rules

Mon.

Sec. Law.