

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL TODAY

by Tariq Ali

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Comrades, I don't think it's necessary to speak on this particular aspect of "The Fourth International Today" for too long for two fundamental reasons. One of them being that we have in fact covered a lot of ground in the discussion which has taken place today, in the contributions which have been made today by the other comrades and even though some of these have dealt with various other factors, they have in fact covered a fair amount of ground so that I hope that we will be able to shorten this discussion somewhat.

I want to start by starting with a remark which Comrade Harry Wicke (?) made in his extremely valuable contribution to this cadre school on the Fourth International when he said that the Communist Party of Britain was our life. Comrades may think that this is a somewhat exaggerated way of putting it, but in fact it isn't. It's related to something very concrete which happened on a world scale and which made many militants of the Communist Party think in this fashion and have an extreme loyalty to the party and the International, and that event precisely was the October socialist revolution of 1917, which is why, which put on the epoch, which virtually proclaimed the nature of the epoch in which we live and provided an extremely valuable evidence of the fact of the actuality of the revolution today, which is precisely why many, many militants, hundreds of thousands of militants who belonged to these parties, could precisely feel in that way because their comrades, because the Soviet workers had in fact conquered and achieved, won and maintained state power inside the Soviet Union. I start by saying this because I think that ultimately when we talk about the future of the Fourth International, the Fourth International today, this does become an extremely key question for us, the question precisely of seizing state power, the question precisely of stopping to think in a propagandistic way, often ----- forcibly breaking ourselves away from the old propagandistic conceptions, and of beginning even in our own consciousness to develop more and more an interventionist attitude within ourselves and, of course, within our organization. And precisely the thing which in a sense hampers us, the thing which in a sense, the comrades who founded the Communist International didn't have to face at the height of this international, was the question of state power. Because while it is not only possible, but it's extremely necessary to lay the foundations of a mass revolutionary international, to move towards building such an international, until, and unless we take the question of state power seriously, I think we're really tinkering about.

This, I think, was in fact why, it's one of the reasons I mention it, because none of the other comrades touched upon it, it's one of the reasons, one of the good reasons for bad mistakes, what Pablo in particular was always looking for, shortcuts, because I'll tell you another thing about Pablo, that more than any other leader of the International he realized the question of state power in a much better and in an extremely positive way. Of course, he was extremely wrong in the way he went about it, in the way he was constantly looking for shortcuts to bridge the gap between the International and not having state power. But he in fact understood this question, as he under-

stood it, alas, at the time when our forces were very small, much, much smaller than they are today, when our resources were extremely limited, when the International was in fact very weak.

The question then arises: does it imply in any sense that today the International is well-advanced and strong enough in any country to build, to seize state power? I don't mean to imply that at all. I am saying that we are now in a position, because of the various reasons, which comrades have mentioned who have spoken earlier: the disintegration of Stalinism; the decline of Social Democracy; the decline of British imperialism in this country; the effects this has had; the upsurge, in essence, of the colonial revolution; that new forces have in fact come into existence which give the Trotskyist movement its best possibilities in the coming decades, and which will make it easier for the Trotskyist movement, for the Fourth International, for some of the sections of the Fourth International precisely to pose the question of state power and to move into a dual power situation.

The other thing which I wanted to mention (and that, of course, Pat has dealt with) is precisely what discarding of entrism meant for the Fourth International. It meant that, for the time being, certainly since 1967, I think, or '68, there did exist new layers, new forces outside the control of the traditional working-class movement, who are much more attracted to our ideas; where social democratic and Stalinist ideology was in fact extremely weak; these sectors which weren't vulnerable to this ideology and which in fact have given the Fourth International, not only in this country but virtually all over Europe, a big opportunity to expand, to develop and to grow until today we are in a position where we see that the Fourth International, if you look at it globally, has never been stronger. That's the reality of it. Because when people like Tony Cliff talk about a non-existent International to make polemical points, they forget the times that when they were members in fact of precisely this International, then you could even, if you wanted to be extra-sectarian, have referred to it as such, because the forces were in fact small, except for a few countries. Today what we have seen is a much greater degree of generalization taking place in various different parts of the world, which I hope to deal with when we come to that particular section.

So, despite the fact that Trotskyism as a tendency has been proclaimed dead, discarded, capitulationist, etc., etc., etc., by sectarians, by the Stalinists, by Social Democracy, by the bourgeoisie, we are in fact seeing that we are living in a period when more and more these same people are moved to increase their attacks upon us, because after all, if Trotskyism is a dead tendency, if the Fourth International doesn't exist, why does the Soviet bureaucracy in 1969 and 1970 produce precisely two new books to explain what Trotskyism is? It's a completely meaningless thing to do if Trotskyism and the ideas of the Fourth International don't pose a danger for you, if you see in them no threat to the social, to the political structure which you are trying to preserve. They have done this, and of course, their hacks, following their footsteps all over the world. The British Communist Party in this country felt itself compelled to produce an ap-

(palling little document, I can't remember what it was called -- the Sins of Ultraleftism, or what -- the British Ultraleft, something -- by Betty Reid, who as we know is well versed in this type of dialogue by the training she received throughout the thirties.

Of course, now they have to modify it. That's the difference. That in their propaganda against the Fourth International today which the Stalinists make, which the social democrats make, but more particularly the Stalinists, they have to modify it a bit. After all, they can no longer call us agents of imperialism and agents of fascism. They have to modify it, precisely because even they understand that the international balance of forces has changed somewhat. That the relationship between revolutionary Marxism and between Stalinism on the other hand has modified considerably. Therefore, Pravda attacked the groups in France as mad adventurists, ultraleft lunatics, in these terms rather than denouncing them as agents of American imperialism, though of course L'Humanité, which was confronted with the situation more directly, called them provocateurs, but even that with not very much enthusiasm when compared with what they were in fact doing to our comrades in France during the Second World War. So what this proves very conclusively to those of those people who still doubt it, that the International today, that the ideas of the International today, of Trotskyism, that is of revolutionary Marxism, begin to represent something more and more concrete in the actual class struggle in greater parts of the world than ever before.

(And, of course, one of the reasons, one of the concrete reasons why we have been able to do this, and on this ground we should have no illusions at all, one of the key reasons, how the International has developed and has been able to increase its size, and I'm not going to be going into the specific tactics followed in every different country, is over the last few years the role the International played in defending the Vietnamese revolution. It's a role which, of course, the Vietnamese themselves know of, and are fully aware of, and it was precisely this orientation which helped the International itself to understand the meaning of internationalism and to understand the necessity of an International. Because I'm sure that even among our own comrades many of them before they came to this school, there were obviously clear-cut ideas about why we had to be in an International, but because there's been such a big gap since the degeneration of the Third International, a big historical gap, and the development of the Fourth International from something more than simply propagandist groups into groups which can begin to intervene modestly in struggles which are taking place in different parts of the world -- the gap has been so great that many comrades, for instance, themselves have forgotten or have not understood why even it was necessary to build an International in the first place. I won't go into that here because of the tenor of everything; all the comrades who spoke before me have said makes it absolutely clear why we have to do that.

I'm saying that the concretization of this particular process came by the actions which all the sections of the Fourth International-

al without exception, even in the colonial world, in some countries in Latin America, particularly in Mexico and Bolivia, in countries like India, it was our comrades, as they were in Europe, as they are in the United States, who were in the forefront of in some cases defending the Vietnamese revolution and in the case of the American comrades demanding that all the American troops be brought back home. And this brought it home very clearly to many comrades what the International meant, and what the duties of revolutionary parties would be if they existed.

Because precisely, it's ludicrous, it just shows the complete degeneration of the Stalinist parties, that a country they say is fraternal, they regard it as a fraternal country, North Vietnam, it's being bombed into, it's being obliterated, large parts of it, the Americans have waged the most vicious war ever waged by an armed capitalist country against another, and the so-called fraternal parties of the Vietnamese haven't been able to do anything, particularly in some countries like France and Italy, where they have deep roots inside the working class movement, where they control two large trade unions. Because if these parties had even an ounce of internationalism in their heads, what they would have started to do would have been precisely to mobilize the working class in these countries by bringing them out in political strikes in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution, by sabotaging, where they had influence in the docks and factories, goods from being shipped to Vietnam, planes carrying American troops from taking off from airports. These are very basic elementary things which a fraternal party does with another fraternal party.

It was precisely because in the face of a big advance of imperialism that these parties capitulated, that the Vietnamese very consciously appealed to other forces on the revolutionary left, because they realized the people who they know were behind the setting up of the War Crimes Tribunal were the Trotskyists. They didn't have any illusions about it. The War Crimes Tribunal was attacked in the Eastern European press; it wasn't even mentioned in Pravda. Precisely for this reason, the Vietnamese coming themselves from a Stalinist past, with a Stalinist tradition, coming from the same school of thought, to come to terms with the disintegration and the total and utter collapse of Stalinism and Stalinist parties which was taking place in Western Europe. And I think, to be frank, we also have to say that this was precisely the basis on which many of our sections increased their forces. And while I think -- I don't think that the IMG in that particular sense increased its forces very much at that particular time because of the role it played in VSC -- it has done so later. Because precisely it played a non-sectarian role, it didn't put its own interests above the interests of the Vietnamese. It serviced the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign; it created it, it built it, it worked very patiently with it; and I can tell you honestly at some times at a cost to our own particular organization that it did this.

And today, very clearly a few months ago, starting from several months ago, we reaped the benefits from that, precisely because people understand, and advanced comrades in particular understand, the vital necessity of this internationalism, precisely because the Social

Democracy capitulated a long time ago, at the beginning of the First World War, the Stalinist parties, which have been capitulating from the mid-1920's onwards, that the burden of internationalism, alas not a concrete burden, precisely because the Fourth International today doesn't have a single revolutionary party, and I say this very consciously, I know some comrades have a different conception of this, but I don't think you can call any section or sympathizing group of the Fourth International today a revolutionary party for a very simple reason: one of the best criteria for defining a revolutionary party as such is a party which has a certain amount -- I'm not saying it has mass roots inside the working class movement, of its own particular country, but a party which has a significant number of roots inside the working class movement, which plays a role in the organized, plays a considerable role in the organizations of the working class movement; and once these qualifications have been fulfilled, of course, it follows automatically that if they are capable of doing this, if they possess this particular quality, they also are of a certain numerical size.

We build at the moment at best what our French comrades, who are after all the largest section of the International, very correctly call revolutionary nuclei; the nuclei of the future revolutionary party, which will not simply be built through propaganda, which will also be built through a process of fusion, through a process of struggle, through a process of the correct political line being proved not on the basis of an existing program because that is to fetishize the program, but precisely on the basis of participating in the struggle, because it's only in a period of struggle, when your program is being put into practice, that it's determined whether your political line is correct, or whether your political line is right wing, or whether your political line is nonexistent.

It's precisely during a period of action, during a period of struggle, that these things come to the fore, and if your political line is correct, if your tactics in a particular struggle are correct, undoubtedly the size of your organization will increase. Other organizations who've had incorrect political tactics, who've had completely wrong political formulations, who have completely a wrong strategy, with large numbers of people inside these organizations, when they see this process taking place, will undoubtedly either join you in a large group -- in this case you have a..(break in tape)... where in China, in Vietnam, in Cuba they are correct in that particular sense; but this doesn't mean that there weren't revolutionary situations in Europe, that's the crucial difference, and we shouldn't confuse the objective conditions ... (break in tape)... of the subjective factor, and this also partly explains why our movement was so disoriented after the Second World War; because it's not as easy as that, that Trotsky was 100% wrong and a complete lunatic, no. What Trotsky underestimated was the mystifying capacities of Stalinism in the Second World War. If he'd been alive he'd obviously as a Marxist come to terms with that, seeing precisely the role the Stalinists could temporarily play in countries like France and Italy and how concretely this would prevent the breaking away from the Communists

of large sections, like the CP itself broke away from Social Democracy, large sections breaking away from the CP and coming to positions of revolutionary Marxism. It's unfortunate this didn't happen, because even though capitalism stabilized itself in Western Europe, it did so after three prerevolutionary situations existed: undeniably in France, where the workers were armed, unfortunately under the leadership of the CP which handed back its arms; in Italy, again when the workers were armed, again where the CP under the pressure of the Soviet leadership, under the direction of the Soviet leadership, handed back its arms; and in Greece, where the workers were not only armed, but where the CP was actually leading them, and in the initial stages had also begun a fight against British imperialism which had intervened to strangle the Greek revolution, this CP also handed back its arms and accepted the dictates of Stalin, so the subjective factor and its importance becomes completely crucial in these particular situations, and we can't simply say that nothing happened in Europe after the Second World War.

No revolutions were made, but that doesn't mean that there weren't prerevolutionary situations. And of course it's interesting now, because the Vietnamese war tears through the myth which these CP's gave to their rank-and-file people (if we make a socialist revolution and seize power, the Americans will crush us; American imperialism will intervene in France, it will intervene in Italy, it will intervene in Greece, and we'll be smashed to smithereens). And, of course, one of the reasons for the crisis which affects the youth is that these arguments are understood and accepted by the rank-and-file of these parties and handed down to their contacts to the new generations, and then the Vietnamese war came, and like a big knife, broke through these myths, and in fact set into motion a period where they inspired large numbers of revolutionaries, which is why I took exception to, and had a friendly argument with Comrade Ross on this question yesterday, because you can't, if you are going to be logical and consistent, accept the fact that it's the Stalinists in Vietnam today who are making the revolution. That it's the Stalinists today who have been fighting American imperialism in Vietnam, now since 1960 in Southern Vietnam, and since 1964-1965 in Northern Vietnam, who are now continuing to fight in Cambodia, who are now opening up a front in Laos, and that the Trotskyist movement, what it has in fact been doing is organizing a big movement of solidarity precisely with these very people. That's why one has to be careful.

One has to understand precisely the differences between the parties which have emerged from the Stalinist movement, some, as I said yesterday, undeniably are Stalinist parties, some because of the way they developed, because of the objective factors were left-centrist parties and which obviously had leaderships which were qualitatively different from the parties which betrayed the revolution in Western Europe, precisely under the pressure of the masses, decided to take the correct path. I don't think you can categorize the Hanoi leadership today as counterrevolutionary and call for its overthrow. And this is not because you believe in defending on principle a workers state against imperialism. Defending a workers state is something

different than defending its leadership. At the very time when Trotsky was calling for the defense of the workers state in the Soviet Union, he was also saying that the war would be the best time also to get rid of Joseph Stalin, because precisely at this time the Soviet bureaucracy would be weakened by the war, and while defending the workers state and the gains, the workers should rise up in arms and overthrow Stalin. Obviously, we don't say the same thing today and no comrade has so far suggested, no one in the International has so far suggested, that we do say the same thing today about the NLF in Southern Vietnam or the regime in Northern Vietnam. So that is why I said that we have to be a bit careful.

The other point I make, and that's precisely to stress again -- that in the move which takes place in the Fourth International away from propagandistic concepts more and more in a period of intervention some of the ideas which were laid down by the founders of our movement, whether they were Lenin, whether it was Trotsky, whether it were the other comrades who have been in the leadership of the International, who have formulated these ideas, and particularly some of the early ideas of the Trotskyist movement, which were after all formulated, written down, programmatized during a period when the working class movement had suffered a whole series of defeats, during a period when the Trotskyist movement was after all very very small, being smashed -- that, to be honest, that's what was happening; it was being smashed by Stalinism on the one hand, by the so-called friendly democracies on the other hand, and by Nazism in the third place, and the comrades didn't stress this enough because people should understand this about our movement: that in many cases, and Spain is not the only one, even in Western Europe, the Nazis and the KGB collaborated to kill Trotskyists. They collaborated to murder Trotskyists. So there are also some understandable and explicable reasons why the subjective factor was so weakened during the period of the Second World War, and many of the concepts and formulas which developed from this period will undoubtedly have to be altered, will undoubtedly have to be changed, as the International moves from one period of its existence to another.

That's why we have to stop seeing ourselves and we must cease to be a simple negation of Stalinism, simply because that -- in fact, to be honest again -- was of the early Trotskyist movement. It was a correct perspective, that it did tend to become a negation of Stalinism because that's what it was; all its propaganda, all its resources was geared to defending revolutionary Marxism against Stalinism, extremely valuable propaganda, extremely necessary propaganda, precisely to maintain the thin red line of Bolshevism from that period right on to today, and give us some understanding of the developments which have taken place because if those comrades hadn't done that, it's extremely difficult to see, though of course new groups would have emerged, the understanding which many comrades have today, of the political situation as it evolves presently. But precisely because of that, now we have not only to be a negation, we are now in a position where we are moving to a situation, I think within the next decade, where this negation can be negated! And the only

way you can really negate the negation is by seizing state power.

That's the reality of it, because otherwise, we do tend, whether we like it or not, in fact very much to reflect the fact of what we were; this is changing already, whether some comrades like it or not. We are becoming much more than simple propaganda groups whose sole existence depends on combating Stalinist propaganda, and the reason for this is not only that we have grown; it's that Stalinism has weakened. Stalinism has weakened, because, and in this Trotsky was correct, that the theory of Stalinism and the whole existence of Stalinism was also based on the theory of socialism in one country, and once the revolution developed and extended outside the Soviet Union -- of course, he didn't foresee the particular ways in which this would happen in China.

In fact, in China he did some of his writing, particularly in The Third International After Lenin, and one particular quote, which I don't have with me, but which I remember because it's an extremely useful quotation, is precisely just before the defeat of the Shanghai Commune, and the massacre in Shanghai, Trotsky wrote in a document inside the Communist International, that if at the beginning of 1926 -- this was before Chiang Kai-shek began his expedition to Shanghai to smash the Communist Party and to liquidate it -- Trotsky wrote, and I don't have this as a direct quote, I'll find it if I'm challenged on this, but the essence of the quote was that if before 1926, the Communist Party had moved out of the cities and had started to lead the agrarian uprisings which were beginning to develop, had given these agrarian uprisings some sort of coherent leadership, two things would have happened: (a) we would have had a meaningful Communist Party in China, and (b) more importantly, we would through this process precisely have built for China a strong Red Army. And now, of course, regardless of the formulations which Mao Tse-tung used, and which various other Chinese used, that's not all that much different from what Mao Tse-tung did, with one crucial difference -- that he did only that. That's an extremely crucial difference -- that he did that certainly, but what he didn't do was precisely to maintain a strong organization inside the working class, inside the Chinese proletariat. However, we can discuss that again.

The crucial point I am trying to make is that we've got to break loose from some of the orthodoxy, from some of the rigidity which undoubtedly still exists inside the Trotskyist movement. And the reason why we have to do this is, the reason why it's necessary to do this, is precisely if we are going to grow, if we want to grow, if we don't want just to develop into a -- even we can develop in the -- we can develop and win a few more hundred people, etc., etc., but unless we want to degenerate to a sort of left-centrist type of organization, carrying out a few demonstrations here, distributing a few leaflets here, we have to broach this question -- I won't go into it because it's one of the discussions for our national conference, which we will discuss, is precisely work out how we can develop from being basically a small revolutionary nucleus and increase our forces so that we can begin on a small scale, modestly,

to modify the balance of forces which exists between us and between the organization which controls the vanguard elements inside the working class movement, that is the Stalinist party; even here, the most advanced workers in one sense are undoubtedly in the Communist Party, and these are more so particularly in France and Italy.

So where are we today? What is the Fourth International today? Which are its largest sections today? How are these sections developing? What do these sections represent? Will the way in which these sections are developing be enough to ensure that we can build a united, cohesive Fourth International? The two largest sections today are the Communist League and the Socialist Workers Party which isn't a section because it's prevented from being one by some vicious McCarthyite laws which were promulgated several years ago. But then these are the two largest organizations of the Fourth International, and they undoubtedly act, in particular the Communist League in France, has been acting throughout Europe as a very strong pole of attraction, because that's the importance of internationalism. If you have five comrades in a piddling little country, or if you have no comrades in a piddling little country like Luxembourg, and suddenly you have a massive, bit Trotskyist organization developing in France, then it follows even if you don't do very much yourself, that in a short time you will develop some comrades in Luxembourg. And actually, if one were speaking technically, one would say that if you went by population proportions, the Luxembourg section is probably the only section which one can say is nearest to seizing state power (laughter) precisely because the population of Luxembourg is completely minimal, and if we take the number of Trotskyists per the number of people there, then we are very large. Maybe, maybe we can, in a years time, we can even think of calling them a revolutionary party, but I'm not sure about that as yet (laughter).

But the point I make is that when an organization like the Ligue develops -- and the importance about the Communist League is that it didn't simply develop out of propoganda work -- of course, it did a great deal of propoganda, undoubtedly. The importance of understanding the League's evolution and why today it does represent a very powerful pole of attraction to the Trotskyist movement, particularly in Europe and also to many other people who move toward Trotskyist positions. Because the reality is that in Sweden, where we've just for the first time since a long time established a Trotskyist organization as a sympathizing section of the International, they hadn't -- they had obviously heard of the Fourth International, but vaguely. What had impressed them was the building of the League, how the League developed, and how in fact the League had political hegemony in the revolutionary left in France. This played a very important part, and of course the very first thing they did was to get in touch with the comrades of the League, get Rouge, get their other literature and study it. That's how the process began to take place, and that's one of the reasons why the League took this information to the United Secretariat, and the United Secretariat moved into action and sent some comrades to Sweden at a fairly regular pace. Similarly, if the Swedish organization develops very rapidly, it would act as a pole of attraction for the whole of Scandinavia, where our forces are very scattered and our

forces are very weak.

This is precisely one of the concrete demonstrations of the importance, in the sense of practical importance, of an international organization: that you can use the success of your comrades in a particular country to prove the correctness of the general political line which our tendency has internationally in the revolutionary movement. That's a very concrete advantage which we have, which no other comrades have today in the revolutionary movement, which no one else has in the Stalinist movement, in the Maoist movement, et al. We are the only organized international tendency today, and that is the importance of even the development of one section, what the development of one section can do even on a worldwide scale.

The last thing I want to be is misinterpreted or for some comrades to think a bit mechanistically and say that we don't need to do anything, we just wait for the League to grow and grow and grow and automatically we will grow and grow and grow, because things don't happen like that. The importance is that it does give us a certain definite advantage. There's absolutely no getting away from that: it gives us, it gives the Italians, it gives the Germans, it gives the Belgians a very definite -- more for the countries which speak French -- a very definite and clear-cut advantage.

The other development which has taken place is the development of the Young Socialist Alliance, which is a sympathizing section of the Fourth International, as an extremely large youth organization inside the United States. Because whatever differences one has with the comrades of the Young Socialist Alliance on a number of things, on for instance one can even say, to quote but one thing, the way in which they organize themselves -- the way in which, in their politics, we can all, we can discuss that maybe during the discussion period -- you can say that, you can even criticize them -- and we do -- but, and we do it internally, of course, we don't do it publicly. Because while criticizing them, whatever our differences with them, we have to understand, and let no one mistake this: that they are the only existing revolutionary organization in the United States today. There's been a total and complete disintegration of all the other tendencies in the revolutionary youth milieu -- there are individuals here and there, of course, but the SDS is completely disintegrated, socially (?) disintegrated.

I think that the comrades of the YSA would have been three times their size if they had sent a small fraction into the SDS to do entry work, if you like it; it's not the same as doing entry work in the Labor Party, it's a different sort of entry work because there, you have to be very confident of yourself, very confident of your ideas, and be able to challenge the theoretical challenge which is presented by the Maoists, by the Stalinists, by the Maoist-Spontaneists, by the Kim Il-sung spontaneists, by various other spontaneists, groups which are there. But I think undoubtedly that the comrades were, made a little bit of a mistake in this field, because if they had gone into the SDS, of course it would have disintegrated. If we had had some comrades in there, it would also have disintegrated, but we

would have got a large bulk of them. We are getting many of them now anyway. But large numbers of them have simply left the movement because they've been demoralized. Demoralized by the lunatic sectarianism of the Progressive Labor, which is, if you just remove the "Labor" for a moment, which is organizationally, and in some of its political conceptions, quite close to our comrades from Clapham High Street -- the way they organize, the way they behave, their attitude to the Black question, in very many ways they are very similar to Comrade Healy and Comrade Slaughter's organization. And of course the experience which many SDS militants suffered at their hands has left them sort of mentally disabled for life -- they've just sort of removed themselves from politics. They don't want to have anything to do with politics, and comrades will know that in the case of many sincere and dedicated militants, it's a similar story inside the Socialist Labour League.

So, but despite this, as I say, the Young Socialist Alliance is undoubtedly an extremely important revolutionary organization. The crucial thing is, it's one thing to be big, it's one thing to be extremely dominant when there's an upsurge in the situation; what we hope -- and on this I have very little knowledge; maybe some other comrades have a little more knowledge, and if so they should enlighten us -- is that unless you are very careful and very strong and politically educating these militants, not only about the situation inside the United States itself, but on an international basis, unless these militants are given a very concrete education in internationalism, unless they are told that the revolution isn't 'round a corner -- no, I'm not saying that anyone's telling them that -- but it's got to be stressed time and time again that there are basically no shortcuts, that it's going to be a long haul; you could have the situation, particularly if you recruit people not on a very high political level, or not on a ...reasonable political level, that when there's a downswing, you lose these people. That's the reality of it. And that's the last thing we want to have happen to our comrades of the Young Socialist Alliance. Today they are the only force in the United States. There's absolutely no getting away from it at all, and the only other people who exist are small groups of individuals, some of them write for this newspaper, some of them write for that newspaper. Organizationally and politically their weight in the United States amounts to absolutely nothing.

Now I deal with the situation which exists in the International today. The differences which exist in the International today, and I hope these differences will be sorted out, and how I fear -- not knowing -- not able to predict with a hundred percent certainty the dialectics of revolutionary organization inside an international. How I fear if the situation was even slightly mishandled, how things could in fact get out of hand. One of the differences which are being discussed, I think we've had a very good discussion on this question, on Stalinism, on the nature of the Chinese party; it's an excellent discussion, but of course we should continue to have, it's a discussion open inside the International, there's no reason, in fact it's a very welcome thing that the discussion like this has started in our own organization. I hope that it will continue. It's extreme-

ly important, and that should continue. Basically I mean when it comes to concrete politics, we are all agreed on the necessity for a political revolution in China. The discussion we are having is on whether the Chinese party was a Stalinist party, whether it was a left-centrist party, when it was a left-centrist party, what happened to it when it came to power, etc., which is a very educative discussion which should go on. That's one of the differences.

The other differences are, and these are somewhat more crucial differences, there's a difference on Latin America. The comrades of the Spartacus League who, as a sympathizing section are of course entitled to all the internal literature, the internal discussions of the Fourth International, should read these discussion documents very carefully; as should of course comrades of the IMG: I hope if nothing else one thing this school will stimulate is a greater interest in the Fourth International and the discussions which take place in the Fourth International, inside the British section and the sympathizing section in Britain, on Latin America. The difference, again in my opinion, and I support the majority comrades on the International Executive Committee, is I think very much a difference between -- the differences as I see them developing now, I think, could be a bit more serious than they have been so far, because some of the formulations which our American comrades make tend in fact to cast some doubt on the nature of the present, whether there's a prerevolutionary situation in Latin America today or not, or whether in fact we have moved back to a situation where reformism is on the agenda in Latin America. I think that's basically what is at issue and from there different opinions and different directions.

There are divergences, because if you believe that reformism is on the agenda in Latin America -- I'm not saying the American comrades completely believe that, I'm saying that some of their formulation would give rise to that particular feeling, that the national bourgeoisie in Latin America, today the compradore bourgeoisie, is capable of giving a certain amount of reforms, then of course you have to have a completely different strategy and completely different tactics. Whereas, if, as we believe, the situation in Latin America remains prerevolutionary, then you have a slightly different approach to the question; you have a slightly different strategy; you do project in your propaganda and where the resources permit -- I repeat, because I don't want to be misrepresented on that: where the resources permit -- not only in your propaganda, but also in your actions you project the theory and the principle of armed struggle. At the last world congress the comrades took an orientation to work with the Fidelista organizations in Latin America, to work with them, and... (break in tape)... forces of struggle, this is not liquidationism. After all, the quote which I gave from Trotsky on China does project a somewhat similar method for building a revolutionary party in a revolutionary organization through a process of struggle, through a process of concrete actions ---- then of course the situation has developed further and in one sense, even more to our advantage, in the fact that the Cubans have for the time being, at any rate -- differences on that,

small differences -- the Cubans have, for the time being at any rate, stopped contact -- not stopped contact with, but have stopped supplying aid to the guerrilla movements and to the broad revolutionary fronts which exist in Latin America. So more and more of these comrades approach the Fourth International directly, and that's where the question I raised at the beginning, the question of state power, becomes very important, because while it's possible to give a limited amount of help, and Pierre Frank explained how the French comrades did this during the Algerian war, it's possible to give a limited amount of help, the help which a state can give is, alas, not within our reach.

Therefore, there are difficulties which arise, because more and more Latin American comrades who come to Europe get in touch with the Fourth International, and when you say, "How can we help you? How can we collaborate?" They say, "Well, comrades, what we need are x number of this particular gun and so many mortars here, so many mortars there, etc., etc." Unfortunately, I say we can't give them all this help. We can help them in some very modest ways. I say, unfortunately. If we had, today, in Western Europe, five organizations as large and enjoying the same political hegemony which the Communist League does in France, I say our help to these comrades would be increased ten-fold and twenty-fold. But at the present moment we cannot supply these comrades with the help, but it shows very clearly what the situation is in many parts of Latin America and more important than most parts, Chile, because the last thing which comrades should cultivate is any reformist illusions about the development in Chile.

Chile shows very clearly that the level of consciousness in the masses is very high. That is why these masses have elected a president who refers to himself as a Marxist, who identifies with the Cuban Revolution, who proclaimed openly that Che Guevara would be declared a revolutionary hero in Chile when he was elected, and even proceeded to erect a statue of Che a week after he was in power. That this man -- while he himself is a total and completely corrupt centrist in my opinion -- and well, he has got two options before him: either he removes Chile out of the world capitalist market, and integrates its economy with a non-capitalist economy, because that's the option, either he does that, or he becomes a Chilean version of Harold Wilson and Willie Brandt and these other people. There's no third road. Of course, at the moment it's not clear which direction he will emerge; it's not clear to some. I think, myself, and I hope I'm proved wrong, I think myself he will capitulate. I don't have great faith in Salvadore Allende's power to take Chile out of the world market. What's possible is that when this becomes very clear to the Chilean masses, then a period of struggle will begin, then a period of revolt will begin.

One of the first clashes that took place in Chile was after Allende's victory when the Communist Party, which is after all a member of his new-type popular-front, new-type because it's a popular front between the CP and the centrist party instead of the

CP with a large bourgeois party. That's the difference between the Chilean popular front and the popular fronts of Western Europe in the thirties as we know them. The first clash which took place was between the Chilean Communist Party people who went to the university in Santiago and killed two students belonging to the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). Just shot them down after a political debate. And of course this doesn't, it's a very concrete way of dealing with the situation but (laughter) it's not something which is going to bring the socialist revolution nearer to Chile if these ----- remain in power. So the question, which will be decided, I think, will be decided on the initiative of the Chilean masses. If by some freak miracle Allende accepts this pressure and does move Chile out of the capitalist world market, then you'll have a period of civil war, initially civil war, and probably American intervention. So if anything Chile provides, will in a short space of time provide, exactly the opposite answer to what the Stalinists in fact are saying on the road to peaceful coexistence, etc.

So on Latin America, the differences between the majority and the minority, are essentially, I think they can be summed up basically as the difference between a propagandistic approach to building a revolutionary organization in Latin America, and an interventionist approach to building a revolutionary organization in Latin America. That's the basic difference, and that's how I think the differences will develop. Of course, at the tenth world congress, which takes place next year, it is next year, isn't it Pierre? Yeah. Next year, we hope that many things will be much clearer and we'll be able to have a very fruitful and a very rich discussion with of course the presence, hopefully, of Comrade Hugo Blanco, with the presence of Comrade Hugo Gonzales Moscoso, and all the other leading Latin American comrades, who'll be able to put us in the picture much better.

The third difference which exists at the moment and which emerged at the last meeting of the IEC is a difference on the Middle East, where the differences emerged from two points. That the slogan projected by the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party on the Middle East was a slogan which was no different from the slogan advanced by the Al Fateh organization, and a slogan which, after all, has been somewhat decisively smashed by the Jordanian butcher a few months ago: it's the slogan of a democratic, secular, a democratic secular state of Palestine, which is the slogan which they project. The class nature of this democratic secular state is not discussed in detail. What is this democratic secular state going to be, is it fish or fowl? Or is it somehow a new historical development which is suddenly beginning to arise on us, which we are seeing the first times in the Middle East?

I think that the attitude of the comrades is extremely misguided and extremely incorrect. It puts us for the first

time I think in a situation like this: a section of the Trotskyist movement putting forward what in essence emerges to a development of the Arab revolution by stages, because that's what a democratic and secular Palestinian state in the Middle East means. The Nasserites raise precisely the same slogan in the Middle East today. They project it a bit more concretely. They want the West Bank, and that's what the Russians are also saying. That they want the West Bank to be made into a democratic secular Palestinian state with its sovereignty guaranteed by the four powers and all that jazz. Whereas the line of the majority of the comrades is that the Palestinian struggle cannot be seen in isolation, it is a part of a totality, it is a part of the Arab revolution as a whole, and even if the Palestinians captured state power and hold on to a certain base you can't say this will not stop the struggle there. In fact it will accelerate the struggle if anything.

The other difference is that the American comrades, and again I say this with a certain amount of regret, have in their propaganda, in their public propaganda, tended to side with the largest of the organizations of the Palestinians, the organization known as Al Fateh. Whereas the position of the majority of the comrades in the Middle East is if anything, giving critical support to the Democratic Front, which is after all the only organization in the Middle East which even begins to approach revolutionary Marxist positions and which begins to discuss the whole question of Zionism in a Marxist way. And this is a bit sad now because we have seen precisely where Al Fateh is today. What the theory of Al Fateh, which was precisely a theory of class collaboration, precisely a theory of not understanding and giving all this crap about the primary contradiction being Israel and the secondary contradiction being Jordan. Well, what happened is that the secondary contradiction has suddenly caught up and cut off their head. (laughter) That's precisely what happened. And that comes when you tend to sort of divide contradictions in this particular way in a situation as concrete as the situation which exists in the Middle East today, so that, again, is such a difference on which we can have a long discussion.

The other discussion at the next world congress will be a discussion on women's liberation, where of course at the moment there is no majority position on this question. The only position which exists is the position of the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, as projected in their press, as projected in their publications, but if I could be bold enough to venture a suggestion, I think that certainly our comrades, our women comrades, the comrades in our women's caucuses certainly have very grave doubts about this particular position on the woman question, which they regard in fact as being both feminist and liberal and I think it's very possible that the whole question of women's liberation and how the demands around the question of women's liberation are posed in advanced

capitalist societies will become a fairly key discussion in the coming period in the International.

I think there are some other differences which it is worth mentioning. I think the American comrades disagree very strongly with the attitude the British section has on the Labor party. I think they tend to see us as a sort of ultraleft group which is going to isolate itself by not being aware of the Labor Party. This they have expressed in their press, etc., and they generally have a view that -- Joe Hansen said this in one of his last documents on Latin America -- that we had an ultraleft position on Latin America and that this ultraleft position represented the ultraleft turn which the International had taken also in Europe, and he singled out two countries for particular mention, one being France and the other being Britain. So I think in fact we could have a very valuable, educational and theoretical discussion on precisely what ultraleftism is and what ultraleftism is not in the International. I mention these discussions to put comrades into the picture because we aren't ashamed of these differences. That's precisely the difference between us and between the other organizations, whether they be Stalinist, whether they be Maoists, whether they be Healyite organizations, that we are not upset about political differences within our own ranks. In fact it shows the richness of the movement. That you can have a revolutionary movement in which differences occur, in which differences are discussed.

There's one key question, of course, and that's precisely the question of how the International is organized. Because what happens inside a national section? I mean Ross can get up and call me every other name under the sun, and I'll reply to him in the same way. But when it comes down to what we do publicly, operating as representatives of the IMG, we will adopt and we will carry out in practice the line of the majority, without any questions asked. That's what democratic centralism means: a fully free and democratic discussion inside the organization, I repeat inside the organization. That is why whatever differences we have with the American comrades, we will not state them in our public press, we will not state them publicly at public meetings, we will defend them.

Unfortunately, some of the comrades, particularly the Canadians, don't seem to understand this particular concept, because they seem to attack us sometimes in their public press. Whatever they may do, we will not do the same, because we have a certain understanding. Our loyalty is our loyalty to the Fourth International, but it's not a loyalty to that, it's a loyalty to the principle of democratic centralism and of building a democratic centralist Fourth International. Because you can't -- it's a very illogical position to believe in a democratic centralist national organization and in a federalist international organization. It doesn't make any sense. If we are comrades, if we are part of the same movement, if we believe in the same revolutionary program, then we have to accept our

international responsibilities, and we have to carry out the line of the majority of the International.

That, again, was a difference, which, as comrades have pointed out, it was decided not to raise after the 1953 reunification, but the reunification was in 1963, now we are twenty years -- in 1973. And now ten years later the Trotskyist movement I think is growing at a very rapid rate. So we have to discuss these questions very frankly and very openly. And I say these things and point out these differences to comrades openly so that they can be discussed openly inside the organization. We want to get away from a feeling of where comrades only talk on the basis of rumor or on the basis of gossip or on the basis of slander. We say it openly. There are differences inside the International. We should discuss them. We have a tendency inside the IMG; comrades can discuss with it. Some of them are also in agreement on other questions, on international questions, with the comrades of the International, not as a tendency but as individuals. You can discuss these differences with them so that comrades are aware, so that when we elect delegates to the tenth world congress of the Fourth International, comrades know what precisely is involved, precisely what is being done.

The question which is raised by our enemies: will there be a split inside the Fourth International, that's what they raise, the minute they see differences, they say: "Ah! Ah! The Fourth International is going to split." Well, I don't think so. I don't think that, as far as, certainly as far as the majority of the Fourth International is concerned, we are not interested in any split, and I'm sure also as far as the American comrades are concerned, that certainly the American comrades have spoken at length, like Comrade Hansen, etc., they are not interested in a split in the Fourth International right now. Of course we can't completely rule it out, because that's absurd. Nothing can be ruled out ever. Then if you rule things like this out completely, inside any movement, then ten years later you have another discussion school where some comrade will get up and say we were taken by surprise again.

We don't particularly want to be surprised. We want to understand and follow the developments which are going on, reach a certain analysis. I don't think there will be a split because the International has grown, and when the national organizations of the International grow, then the tendency to split becomes much less, because the sections begin to understand how they rely on each other, how they depend on each other. Our purpose is to strengthen the International, that is why we will argue -- certainly I will argue very strongly inside the British section, inside the sympathizing section, for us to make a big play on building a democratic centralist International. You know what the situation is, that we haven't got enough money to finance a secretary of the Fourth International. That's the reality. The center of the Fourth Inter-

national is extremely weak. Mandel can't be paid a wage so that he can stay and work full time for the Fourth International. Instead he has to take a job to teach in West Berlin for three days a week, so that the other three days he can write, do political organizational work, go and speak for the section, work in Belgium and do his writing. This is the stage we are at in the International.

We want to overcome that stage. We want to build a strong center. We want to build a powerful center which is capable of such things as a revolutionary leadership, and giving a revolutionary leadership to the sections of the International. Which is capable of intervening and tapping a section on its knuckles when it feels that the section is going on the wrong path.

One of the reasons we haven't been able to do this is because we've had a weak center. It's not the weakness of Pierre Frank, or Mandel or Maitan or any other of these comrades necessarily, though they may have made mistakes. It's precisely that we don't, we haven't yet understood how to build a strong center. And precisely, if we are going to be serious about our work in the colonial and semi-colonial world, then a strong center is vital. Otherwise, we are consigned in the colonial and semi-colonial world to endless propaganda discussions.

Today there are possibilities for us in the Middle East. Today the province of West Bengal, our comrades there are in control of land, they are leading a peasant struggle. They have occupied large areas of land. The police is fighting on them, against them. The police is firing on them. These comrades fight back with bows and arrows. Why? Because the International hasn't got enough money to give them so that they can buy guns. Because the International doesn't have enough money to give them so that they can buy a bicycle. Because the International hasn't got enough money to pay them so that they can have at least five or six full time organizers to prepare the struggle. This on the one hand, and, I assure you, because the point on the uneven development -- on the one hand you have this situation, and on the other hand you have a situation, which is good, I'm not opposed to it, I just point it out, that on the other hand in the United States, in New York alone the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party have over 60 full timers. This is the disparity which exists inside the International. And the only way you can change this is by having a centrally coordinated international leadership. And that certainly is what we will fight for.

Because we shouldn't take it for granted, that because we are a revolutionary organization, we cannot degenerate. That there's somehow some magic attached to us. That is, because we have a revolu...[break in tape]...not only on the tendency towards a soft...[break in tape]...which in fact afflicts all

institutions in bourgeois society, but also from existing counter-tendencies. He [Mandel] means the autonomy of the paid full timers of an organization. Among these, the counter-tendencies are the integration of the revolutionary organizations into an international movement which is independent of national organizations, and which constantly keeps a theoretical eye on them, not through an apparatus, but through political criticism. A close involvement in the actual class struggle, an actual revolutionary struggle that makes possible the continuous selection of cadres in practice. A systematic attempt to do away with the division of labor by ensuring a continuous rotation of personnel between factory and university and full time party functionaries. Institutional guarantees, limitations on the income of full timers, defense of the organization and norms of internal democracy, freedom to form tendencies, etc., etc. I agree with him 101 percent. It's an excellent article published in the International Socialist Review, theoretical journal of the comrades in the United States.

An excellent article, but the only way we can reach that situation is if we build a democratic centralist revolutionary International, understand what our duties are, not only as a national section, but as part of a revolutionary International, raise funds for the International, inject internationalism very concretely in the heads and the consciousness of all our particular comrades so that they understand what is going on inside the other sections. That is how we will grow, that is how we will develop, that is how we will build, by having a revolutionary organization in some countries which is strong enough to seize state power -- any country. If the comrades in Bolivia seize state power in six months time -- I'm not saying at all it's going to happen -- but if they did, if they seized state power in six months time in Bolivia can any comrade doubt the phenomenal impact this would have on the international Trotskyist movement? On the movement in this country? On the movement in the United States? Or if the comrades seized state power in Ceylon, or a country which economically isn't very important to the destruction of the imperialist system? It would have a phenomenal impact on the building and the development of the Fourth International. And that is why we should bear this in mind, that is why we should see as our main priority in this country a building of a stronger revolutionary nucleus which allows us to intervene in the class struggles which are taking place, and which will continue to take place. What strategy have we projected for doing this?

Not simply by propagandistic work. Of course, we carry on by doing that, but precisely by creating a youth organization which is capable of attracting an increasing number of militants on a political basis. No one's saying that you recruit low people on a low level and then you manipulate them by making them into sellers of newspapers. And as our comrade Harry Wickes (?) pointed out, burning them out. That is the old fashion of organization -- in both the Stalinist movement and the Trot-

skyist movement, that's how youth organizations have been organized. Today they are different tendencies, different milieus, among young workers who begin to transcend many of their old, many segments of their old consciousness, and in the student movement. This is the way in which we can in fact increase ourselves, qualitatively and quantitatively, if we are going to change the balance of forces in this country, and are going to be able to intervene effectively in the class struggle in this country. This doesn't mean -- and some comrades who tend to do this really deserve to be rapped on the knuckles because I've been misinterpreted on this before -- this doesn't mean that we don't do anything now. That we just wait. Of course we carry on what propaganda we can do, what contact we can make, what possibilities there are within our limits at the particular moment within, inside the class struggle. But they aren't very great. Because comrades who say it's difficult to bring workers into the IMG, they are correct. It's difficult because the workers, the advanced workers understand that the CP, despite its degeneration has some advantages. It has an organization, it has certain other functions which can help these militants inside industry. But precisely those comrades who say that should think more carefully of how you're going to change the situation.

I say that the way we are going to change it is by moving very rapidly and very quickly without compromising politically, to build a mass revolutionary youth organization. I say that this can be done. I say that the school which the Spartacus League has organized, comrades, the Spartacus League -- it's not an IMG school -- the school which the Spartacus League has organized on the Fourth International shows us the potential of the Spartacus League, shows us what the Spartacus League can do, what the Spartacus League will be able to do. And therefore I would end by urging comrades here, from both the Spartacus League and the IMG, to make absolutely sure that the effort they have put into organizing this school is something minimal when compared to moving ahead very fast to organize the Spartacus League conference, because I tell you this conference is going to be very vital in a way. It's going to enable us to judge precisely how we will be able to intervene in the class struggle in the coming months, and therefore I would urge comrades to in fact take the Spartacus League conference extremely seriously, to end any sort of lackadaisical attitude that they have, and to ensure that we go from the Fourth International school not by saying that we've just come to a good school, or we had some very good discussions on Stalinism, we had some very good discussions, but going and putting some of the things we have discussed in a concrete perspective, which in this instance facing us is the Spartacus League conference. This is of course on a local level.

To end I will say that the future of the Fourth International today, and I think all the old comrades will agree,

is extremely optimistic. The Brussels conference was a small sign, not a very big sign, it was a small sign which showed what our International is capable of doing on a propagandistic scale. That was an excellent display of propaganda for us. Let's not get away from it. But if we simply say that this is what we'll do the next year and the next year after that, and have it fixed in our minds that we can't do any more, then I think we won't be getting away from the propagandistic conceptions to enable comrades to move out from simply thinking that we can mandate propaganda conferences, and moving into a period where we can begin to organize in a modest way the vanguard elements in the working-class movement throughout Western Europe, and hopefully also in the United States itself, in the near future, because there too you can't say that the working class is battered. There are some small indications which cost the American ruling class millions of dollars today, like the General Motors strike, which show that changes are beginning to take place.

But we will be able to organize the vanguard left and we will be able to lay a firm base, a firm base for developing and building the Fourth International, and that is why we say that the future of the Fourth International in Europe and in the semi-colonial world -- because the success, the limited success even we have in Western Europe will determine in a large and many many ways the future of our sections in the colonial world. The opposite, of course, is also true. But that means that our responsibilities are not only to build our own section, which is of course the main priority, it is precisely also to help build the sections in the colonial and semi-colonial world, and thus lay the basis for a revolutionary democratic centralist Fourth International which is recognized by the vanguard layers of the working-class movement as the only existing International, and as an extremely serious International who they can look to in the course of the coming class struggle.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION.

Moderator: There'll be about ten or fifteen minutes, so first of all if anybody has any questions which they think will be generally interesting to everybody, we'll take them first of all, then we'll take contributions.

Question: unintelligible on tape.

Tariq Ali: I'll repeat the question. The question the comrade asked is whether I could say anything about the unity in France. I'm sorry I didn't mention that, I should have, because it's a good thing -- between Lutte Ouvriere, the so-called sister organization of the IS comrades, and the Communist League, the

French section of the Fourth International. The comrade says "What do I say about the clause in this protocol which says that the United Secretariat can't change the orientation of a section?"

I think the answer to that is to be found unfortunately in the statutes of the Fourth International, because according to the statutes of the Fourth International, the United Secretariat, at the time of the reunification in 1963, some of the powers of the United Secretariat were taken away to enable the unification process to take place much more smoothly and to remove any bad feeling on both sides. The majority couldn't manipulate the minority, etc. These safeguards exist in the statutes as well, and in fact according to the statutes the United Secretariat, the United Secretariat can't intervene and change the orientation of a national section. I think this is incorrect myself. Because it really is a completely federalist concept which I've been attacking. And it's not a way, I mean I think it was necessary to do this at that stage, because there was factional feeling on both sides, bad blood, etc. I think this is the time of the past. Despite the political differences now. All the sections, all the organizations are mature enough to elect a responsible and democratic and a strong leadership which acts in a democratic centralist fashion.

The reason why it was necessary to point this out rather specifically, is precisely because, as you've heard, the comrades describe earlier in the discussion, that the record of the Secretariat in connection with the French organization has not been a very good one. They have intervened and removed an entire leadership, and of course the Lutte Ouvriere (LO) leaders, who very naturally know all these things, they weren't after all secrets, wanted specific safeguards. But I would argue very strongly that at the next world congress, when we discuss this whole question of statutes, we take this out from the statutes. There aren't any, they are only temporary statutes, to be agreed to by the world congress; they will be amended. But it's an absolutely absurd situation. What's the point of having a United Secretariat in that sense if you don't give it any political power, it simply becomes a talk shop. And I think we have to fight for this very, very clearly. But they can't change the orientation of the British section either. The only body which can do that is the IEC.

However, it points out that Lutte Ouvriere has accepted the first -- that they have -- what it means is it's an annoying problem. But it means that this is after all, this protocol is just an agreement to unite. It's not an actual unification. It's just the first step. But even according to this what it means is that the only body which can determine whether or not a group is inside the Fourth International or outside the Fourth International is the world congress. That's what it means. It's not the IEC or the United Secretariat,

which means that if, by some chance, the IO had a majority and the Soviet Union launched an attack on China, and the Fourth International called for a defense of China and IO defended the workers state in the Soviet Union, in Paris the United Secretariat wouldn't be able to take disciplinary action. The world congress would be able to take that up, and you would have to call a world congress.

But I mean I agree and understand perfectly the feeling of the comrades on this question, and I can assure you that we have conveyed our sentiments in no uncertain terms to both the comrades of the Communist League who after all themselves are involved in this matter and understand, and also to Comrade Pierre Frank -- but maybe Pierre would like to say something.

Alan . Harris: It seems obvious to me that there are a number of comrades in the leadership of the IMG who are raising some very serious grievances against the Socialist Workers Party, which is not a section of the Fourth International, but a part of it. Not formally a section.

From discussing this weekend, listening to reports, it's obvious that there are a whole series of grievances, some of them are quite serious, some not so serious. It seems to me that as Comrade ----- says they are duty bound to put down their ideas in writing, and submit them for pre-conference discussion to the world congress. Because if we take them at face value, the future of the Fourth International is at stake here. That's what comrades are saying. That, in the main, in the center of world imperialism, the United States, the section has somehow gone wrong, it's weak, got all kinds of errors built into it, and we aren't sure where it's going to end up.

It seems to me that if you hold those views you're duty bound to put your ideas down in writing so there can be a fraternal and frank discussion, and we know exactly what we are discussing. I think now if comrades hold these views, then they are duty bound not just to speak about them verbally, but to put them down in writing so that the sections of the Fourth International can consider them.

Tariq Ali: Yeah. Very briefly, I'll speak....Let Johnston speak first, I'll just say one word. [the following contribution is omitted from the transcript because of extremely strong accent, hard to understand -- on Barry's suggestion]

Pierre Frank: I will give some information to (interrupted by moderator, who says: "Very briefly, because we've got to be out of here in two minutes")...[unintelligible]...that is the roots of the working-class composition of Lutte Ouvriere. Their composition, which is the identical to ours [break in tape]

Tariq Ali: There is a slight difference in emphasis between

Comrade Pierre and myself. I think we are too lax in our international organization, I think that we have to definitely change the situation.

Concerning Comrade Alan and the points he's raised. I think it's wrong as he says to say that we have a hostility or a resentment against the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party. (A. Harris: I didn't say that; I said you had a series of criticisms, those were my exact words.) No, you didn't. Grievances, Grievances. Well, we shouldn't speak in psychological terms like grievances and such. There are political differences. We haven't got grievances. We've got some political differences with the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, and we don't believe in discussing these differences only on the level of leadership, because these differences also exist in the International. It's precisely what we want to do is to enable every rank and file member in our organization to understand these differences, and to be able to participate in the discussion which takes place around these differences. One thing -- I repeat -- that we will not do, whatever the comrades in North America do, is that, on paper, we will of course write documents on our position, but internally, inside the International. In our public press we will never, and I repeat as long as we are in one organization, and I think we will remain in one organization, let there be no doubt about that, we will never attack the comrades of the SWP or the comrades of the League for Socialist Action in Canada publicly, openly. That's deliberately flouting democratic centralism, even if the International isn't organized in a democratic centralist way. That's deliberately encouraging the right to federalism. That makes it completely ludicrous in front of the other revolutionary tendencies, when they read attacks on us in papers, public papers belonging to other sections of the International. That is a complaint we have, and it's a complaint we made at the United Secretariat. We've made it to the American comrades. That this is something that we don't like, which we are opposed to, and it's a complaint we will also make at the next world congress. Because we don't believe that organizations belonging to the same International should attack each other openly in their press. This is something not -- it's something completely alien to us.

But, having said that, let me reassure Comrade Alan: and make our position absolutely clear that in public we defend the position of our American comrades in their struggle with the other tendencies, in their struggle with some, in fact, real ultraleftists, and not the imaginary ultraleftists they see in the European sections; in their struggle against the Stalinists; in their struggle against the Maoists. We always defend their positions. I've defended them in Canada myself when I spoke for the Canadian organization. We will defend them here, we will even defend them against these ultralefts and against the sectarians in our press. And on that there's absolutely no question about it. The only thing we ask -- and

it's not, after all, all that big a thing to ask, is that the American comrades do the same. Because what we want to do is to get away from this conception of not having -- I agree with Pierre that you can't have an International without state power. There's a qualification he should have added, which is you can't have an International which is democratic centralist in the same way as a national organization -- no, there will be some differences, of course. Not geographical differences, because you can, once the colonial sections -- you have an Asian bureau of the United Secretariat, you have an African bureau, you have a Latin American bureau of the United Secretariat, based in those countries. That's no problem.

But of course there will be other differences, but this is what we should be consciously moving to, instead of making moves which in fact go away from that. At the end I'd just like to say something on a different plane. I think all the comrades will agree in congratulating the comrades of the Spartacus League, as a rank and file member of the Spartacus League (laughter) I certainly congratulate the comrades, in particular Comrade Dave Kendall, who after all has spent a great deal of time and energy and patience in organizing this school and in seeing that this school was successful, and as I said before, it's an extremely good indication of the way that the Spartacus League is developing, of the way it could develop, and I stress again that it's extremely important that we make it a priority, both the IMG comrades and the Spartacus League comrades, to see that the Spartacus League conference is a political success, that it represents a qualitative turning point in the development of our organization, of our group in this particular country, and that when we go back from this meeting, we go back with one idea 'til this conference is over: to devote our political energies to building the conference and to making it extremely successful.

Now there are a few announcements.

MEMO FROM GEORGE NOVACK ON DISCUSSION WITH BREZARD

March 23, 1971

I asked the French representative what he considered the most important differences. He answered: they fall into three categories. 1) Circumstantial and episodic, like relations with student movement; 2) differences due to our different situations, like the Mideast; and 3) serious differences, like Latin American strategy which involves immediate revolutionary action by our sections. The disagreements over the nature of the British Labour Party were also very deep.

Upon probing, here were his views on the Social Democratic formations. Wilson's BLP is an imperialist party defending capitalist interests. He could not say when it changed its class character which enabled Lenin and Trotsky to advise critical support; it is not necessary to specify the exact turning point. The decisive class difference between the BLP and the French CP was not the connection of the latter with Moscow but the connection with the workers. The BLP does not have the same kind of base in the working class as the French CP which has cells in most factories. (He volunteered that the Italian CP does not have factory cells.)

Mollett's SP turned imperialist at the time of the Algerian colonial war. The fact that the French CP likewise supported it at first is not significant. He would not support the slogan of CP, SP, the trade unions to power.

Brandt's SD Party is also imperialist and cannot be supported. They have not yet worked out a theory about the nature of the Social Democratic formations as such but apparently judge from case to case. He does not know about the Canadian New Democratic Party. His position is shared by the majority of the League leadership and the majority of the German section.

The current axis of the class struggle in Britain is in the factories and unions, not in the electoral field. Suppose, I asked, the proletarian offensive is so powerful it brings down the Tory government and leads to a new national election: what would be your political proposals? He couldn't say but wouldn't vote for Wilson's party.

We have never been able to find out what happened to the Italian section, I said. This is his explanation. The Italian comrades pursued the same line as in France and Belgium but, after recruiting about a thousand young people, they did not have enough authoritative older cadres to educate, direct and hold them. So they were lost to the Maoist-spontaneists.

In Belgium the condition of the section in the French-speaking area (Brussels) is very bad, full of personal bickering. It is much better in the Flemish area. He said a problem is that in Belgium and in other sections in Europe there is a tendency to try to be just carbon copies of the League, which is not always appropriate.

One interesting sidelight is that Germain, Frank and Livio were hardly mentioned throughout the discussion. It was like a power-to-power parley.

He urged again that we send over spokesmen to explain our views to the French comrades. He offered us the opportunity to send someone (or more than one) to tour all the local branches of the League, explaining our position on the international differences. It would be bad to divide the movement into two spheres: Western Europe and North America, Australia, New Zealand.

He inquired about my appraisal of the differences. I put first one he hadn't mentioned: organizational reprisals which could becloud and divert the discussion we both said was desirable. You mean, Moreno, he said. Not only that, but England. And this goes for both sides of the dispute since we do not control the actions of everyone in the minority.

I said we don't want a repetition of 1953 but an inadvertent organizational misstep could precipitate a very bad situation.

On the Mideast, he did not appear concerned about the problem of self-determination but rather with the attitude to take toward the different guerrilla groups. They think most highly of the Popular Democratic Front and are most leery of Fateh because of its relations with the Arab regimes. He attributed our more reserved and uncommitted stand to the fact that they are more closely in touch with the diverse participants while we here in the U.S. are in a different situation and more removed from the scene of action.

On the question of self-determination for the Israeli Jews, he was vague in his dismissal of this question. He didn't discuss it as a matter of principles, but as a demand that was utopian, couldn't be implemented by any process of the revolution that he could foresee, rather than being incorrect in principle.

He considered our Mideast document as "low-level," reflecting what he thought was our just beginning to get involved with this issue. That we put all our thrust on supporting those forces that fight imperialism was, he implied, a sort of defensive reaction because we are in the imperialist stronghold. But in the course of working with Arab students and workers, you have to be able to speak to a whole range of questions regarding revolutionary strategy for the Palestinian liberation movement.

He does not know whether the merger with Lutte Ouvriere will go through but thinks the League will come out the gainer in either event since they now have access to the IO forces.

I asked why Lambert's group maintains its strength. He attributed it mainly to their organizational expertise.

He said the IMG is doing well and recruiting; he had no criticisms of their course.

He remarked that it was surprising to them that so strong a Trotskyist movement was being built in the stronghold of imperialism.

I pointed out another difference between us which it was impossible to resolve by discussion and documents alone: different conceptions on how to build a Leninist party, even though we agreed in principle on the need to build them.

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
March 31, 1971

TO ALL FINANCIAL DIRECTORS AND BRANCH ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

March 1971 Financial Notes

Many branches are now in the process of planning their Spring Educational Conferences. Often one component of these are the party and youth speakers invited from other branches and the center to address the conferences. In line with the growing openings we have to get our speakers before broader audiences, comrades in charge of organizing the speakers for these weekends should shoot for combining the visits of out-of-town comrades with speaking engagements on one or more campuses while they're in town. Fees obtained for such engagements can: (1) defray travel expenses for out-of-town speakers, (2) help raise money for local fund drives (for speakers who aren't national functionaries), (3) raise money for the party nationally for speakers from the center.

If invitations to speak are planned out well enough in advance, it should be possible to get speakers to stay over for an extra day or two before or after the weekend to fill campus engagements.

* * *

The main financial goal laid out at the recent national committee plenum was for all branches to keep current*with their financial obligations to the national office, The Militant, the International Socialist Review and Pathfinder.

Attached is a chart showing the performance of the party branches during March on meeting this goal.

Figures on payments to Pathfinder won't be available for another few days, but we'll send them out as a supplement to the enclosed.

Branch leaderships are urged to use this information in explaining this financial campaign to all members of the party.

Comradely,

Judy White

Judy White
National Financial Director

*Current does not necessarily mean no arrears; it just means that payments were made equal to sustainer pledged for March or February's bills from Militant and ISR.

PROGRESS ON KEEPING CURRENT WITH NATIONAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS
March 1971

Branch	Status with:		
	National Office Sustainer	Paper	Magazine
Atlanta	current	0	0
Austin	current	current*	current*
Boston	current	0	0
Chicago	pd. 60% of pledge	0	0
Cleveland	pd. 25% of pledge	0	0
Denver	0	pd. 25%	current
Detroit	current	0	0
Houston	current	pd. 50%	current*
Los Angeles	current	pd. 40%	current
New York	current	current	pd. 83%
Oakland-Berkeley	current*	pd. 43%	0
Philadelphia	pd. 50% of pledge	current	0
Portland	current**	current	current
San Diego	current	0	0
San Francisco	current	0	current*
Seattle	current	current	current*
Twin Cities	current*	current	current
Washington, D.C.	current	0	current

*also paid some arrears

**paid ahead