

GREETINGS to the 28th CONVENTION of the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
from SPARK

The comrades of SPARK send our revolutionary greetings to the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party in your 28th National Convention.

We are pleased to be observers, and we send our best wishes for success in overcoming the problems which confront us today.

We think this convention is important because, in it, the SWP, in effect, addresses itself to two serious problems which confront the Trotskyist movement; the first is the question of the relationship between the revolutionary movement and the working class in this country; the second is the question of the relationships within the Trotskyist movement both nationally and internationally.

We are pleased that the SWP has made the decision to direct more of its efforts toward the working class.

Ever since the time when the Communist Party turned its back on the working class, there has been no big revolutionary party with real roots in the working class. The end result has been that for nearly 2 full generations, revolutionary ideas were absent from the working class; the results of that were a break in the militant traditions of the working class, the growth of intense demoralization as the working class saw no alternatives to its present situation, and the growth of racism in the ranks of the working class. Revolutionary ideas have never automatically evolved from the day-to-day struggles of the class; neither did they during the period of the 50's and the 60's, the low point of revolutionary influence and implantation in the working class.

During those years, the years of repression and reaction, the revolutionary movement for all practical purposes was not present in the working class. If it had been, of course, the chances are likely that the revolutionaries would not have made big gains in the working class. But, if it had been, the revolutionary movement today would have had a certain -- if small -- implantation and influence in the working class; the revolutionary movement would have been in a better position to move forward today as the working class begins to stir. And certainly -- at least in a small way, in some sections of the working class -- the demoralization would not be quite so bad, nor the racism quite so pervasive -- if the revolutionaries had regularly, for the past 30 years, raised the revolutionary alternative to the class.

We think a large mistake was made in the past.

And that is why we are encouraged to see that today the comrades of the SWP are addressing themselves to the problem of the relations between the revolutionary organization and the working class. It is a good sign that this year's convention continues to consider the turn taken last year. We hope that the turn will be broadened, so that all comrades of the SWP, either as factory militants or outside militants, will eventually direct the major share of their activity to the working class milieu.

The second important question which this convention has addressed is the problem of the relationships within the Trotskyist movement -- more accurately, we could say the lack of comradely relations within that movement. We think you have made an important step in inviting other groups and other tendencies to your convention.

The situation of the Trotskyist movement currently is a situation of division and mutual distrust. The theoretical acquisitions of our heritage are often lost in the maze of the sectarian pretensions. The already weak forces of revolutionary Marxism are further weakened.

The solution of this problem is not to continue on in the same roads which have taken us to where we are today.

There is another road-- and that is the road of common work, mutual aid and discussion carried on in a comradely way. Through this approach we can begin to break down the sectarian barriers which divide us.

Certainly we in SPARK feel that we will be part of the development toward building a revolutionary party of the working class--a Trotskyist party. But we have no illusions and we make no pretenses that we will carry out this activity alone. We think that the Trotskyist movement--as weak, and as divided, and as mistaken in its political positions as big sections of it often are--must form the starting point for the formation of a revolutionary party of the working class, both on the national and the international level.

That isn't to say that within the Trotskyist movement we should hide our political disagreements with each other. Just the contrary. The differences exist, and they are very deep in some cases, particularly on the question of how we approach activity in the working class.

But if we try to function toward each other in a comradely way, we each have the possibility to win over the other tendencies to our political ideas and to our conception of building a party--if we are correct. And if we are wrong we have the possibility to check our own ideas.

Therefore, we think it is a healthy sign that our comrades in the Socialist Workers Party have invited groups from other tendencies to the 28th National Convention. Certainly, we believe that much more than this is necessary, that continuing contacts on all levels, national and international, must be established. But this convention is a positive step.

For these reasons, we gladly take part in your convention and send you our warmest greetings.

SPARK, August 1976