

## IS Statement on the October League and incidents in the Gary Tyler campaign

### General

The October League is presently the most important of the Maoist/Stalinist organizations in the US. They have approximately 500 members. Most OL members are not public. The OL has the official endorsement of the People's Republic of China as their political arm in the US. They have a 12 page bilingual newspaper, The Call, which is available all over China, and a quarterly magazine, The Class Struggle. They have local groups in around 30 cities, including most of the important cities in the US. Their concentrations are in Boston, Chicago and Atlanta.

The OL operates primarily through its front group, Fight Back. Fight Back is a national organization composed of the OL and others. 1300 attended its founding convention in Chicago. (Those attending had free hotel rooms and transportation). Most of their activity (industrial, anti-racist) is carried out through Fight Back.

### POLITICS

All Maoist groups look to the early Stalinist Communist Party of the 30's as part of their heritage. They see their organizations today as the only ones true to the politics of Stalin.

Their leaders come from two sources: Those that left the CP after Khrushchev attacked Stalin and "revised" the politics of the CP making, making it from their point of view no longer a revolutionary organization, and the most elitist, Stalinist section of the New Left- in particular that section of SDS. The OL, RU, and CL were all formed in the late sixties from these two political tendencies.

The politics of the OL are Stalinist/Maoist. They give uncritical support to the Chinese Communist Party and to China's foreign policy. They believe fascism is just around the corner. The proof that fascism is coming is the S-1 bill. The left will be forced underground when this bill passes Congress. Because fascism is coming, the OL must turn all movements into revolutionary movements as soon as possible. Fight Back is their version of the anti-imperialist United Front Against Fascism.

The general Maoist strategy for making the revolution in advanced capitalist countries is to unite workers, oppressed groups, the petit bourgeoisie and the "anti-monopoly" capitalists against the imperialist monopoly capitalists. All these groups are to be united to fight imperialism and fascism under the leadership of the party. In underdeveloped countries, their politics are those of the two-stage revolution. The first stage is to make the democratic, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist revolution. The country remains capitalist. After this has been accomplished, the revolutionaries will organize the second stage, or the workers revolution. See the section on Portugal for how this comes out in practice.

### Strategy for building the party:

All Maoist groups in this country are now in the process of building their version of the new Communist party to replace the "social-imperialist Communist Party". The RU and the CL have formed theirs (Revolutionary Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party respectively). The OL is working on theirs. Their strategy is to build their party out of local Maoist collectives and study groups- to unite them under the OL with the OL's political line.

### Black Question:

Their line is summed up under the slogan "Self Determination for the Afro American Nation". Their politics are those of the early Communist Party- that there is a black

belt in the South and that this area is the homeland of the Afro-American nation. Beyond this they believe in black/white unity and of fighting racism among whites. The OL is an integrated organization. They tend to be sectarian and mechanical in the way they raise this question, at times tending toward moralism.

#### International:

The main aspect of their international politics comes down to a defense of China and Chinese foreign policy. Thus, they support the Shah of Iran, oppose anything Russia does, and see Russia as the cause of all the world's problems. They now see Angola as a colony of Russia since Russia supported the MPLA and Cubans fought with the MPLA. They defend NATO and are for heavy military expenditures for West Germany and France. They oppose any movements in the armies of Western Europe as subversive and believe that Russia plans to colonize Italy through the Communist Party. All of their policies and positions flow from their defense of China. China views Russia as the main enemy and has all these positions. The OL's uncritical support of China means that they take each of these positions as well. They are isolated on these questions in the left and do sectarian acts like holding small picket lines demanding Russia get out of Angola in opposition to larger demonstrations supporting the MPLA.

#### Portugal:

The OL's position on Portugal shows clearly their reactionary politics in a revolutionary situation. Today, the OL (like China) supports the UDP. The line of the UDP is critical support to the Socialist Party Eanes government, which it believes to be a patriotic, anti-fascist government. The other main political group in Portugal that supports this government is the CDS, a far right capitalist party. In fact, the UDP is giving critical support because the government gives too much lip service to workers' demands! During the recent presidential campaign, the UDP participated in the GDUPs (Dynamization Groups of Popular Unity) and the Carvalho campaign. There they fought for the line of an anti-fascist, patriotic government because their view is that Portugal must first successfully complete the democratic stage of the revolution before it goes on to the workers' revolution. Thus, objectively, they are allied with the right wing in Portugal, against the militant workers, and against other revolutionary organizations, namely the PRP.

#### INDUSTRIAL WORK

The OL has people in steel, auto, rubber, electrical unions and the mines, as well as local sweat shops. Most of their members have industrial jobs. They have no national link-ups except through the National Fight Back organization.

The OL has no priorities, and no strategy worked out for their industrial work. At present their activities in the shops include heavy emphasis on selling The Call, building "Call Committees" forming 'factory Nuclei' and caucuses which are to be the core of their party.

#### INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The OL is organized into units of 5-7 members, with at most one public member who is usually billed as a "friend of The Call." The units meet weekly and are part of a district organization that meets less frequently. The District Committee has one representative from each unit. There is no communication between units except through the district organization.

Nationally, the OL has a Central Committee similar to the IS National Committee except that it is larger, and a Standing Committee of 4 (2 men, 2 women). Conventions

ARE held annually, are closed to delegates only which are elected from units. Members are not allowed to organize politically outside of their unit.

#### FUNCTIONING

The OL generally functions in a very sectarian manner. This is true whether toward other Maoist groups who they attack regularly in their press, or Trotskyist organizations who they consider to be their mortal enemies, CIA agents, etc. Recently the OL made a "left" turn, but whether they're operating in an opportunist right wing manner or in a left one, the results are similar. Their view is that they must control any movement or caucus they're involved in. If they can't they will set up their own organization which they do control and try to rip off that movement or caucus. This flows from their Stalinist politics. Unlike our Leninist view, Stalinists are opposed to any kind of movement that they don't control whether they be working class, black, etc. Their politics are totally opposed to people acting on their own; Stalinist politics are those of top down control.

It is part of the politics of party and its relationship to the working class. According to the Stalinist view, the role of the party is to make the revolution for the working class, to fight for the movement, not to lead it. Thus, the CP in China took power in 1959 based on a peasant movement in the name of the working class, not as the leadership of a revolutionary workers' movement. The same methodology applies to movements in this country today- whether it's CLUW, caucus plant work, or Gary Tyler Defense work.

#### OL and Gary Tyler Defense Work

The October League has overall operated along the lines written above in the G.P. Defense work. When they first got involved, they brought Mrs. Tyler and Terry to speak in Louisville. They brought them as part of building a defense for Gary. However, the meeting was more a reflection of the OL's politics than it was a defense of GT. Mrs. Tyler felt used by this, and was hesitant to do further traveling or speak for left groups as a result of this experience and a similar one with the Workers' League.

They have consistently refused to organize their work in connection with the committee in New Orleans and have not sent in money they collected in the name of defending Gary. Sherman Miller, one of the top national leaders of the OL stated that the OL and Fight Back didn't "trust" the politics of the Committee in New Orleans and were not going to send money to the committee for that reason.

In Gary, Ind., Fight Back called a meeting about Gary Tyler and in the meeting showed a slide show of the history of black oppression in the US and explained the OL's politics on the question, summed up under one of their slogans "400 years of slavery and capitalism". Very little was said about Gary Tyler and the case, and a number of people were turned off because the meeting was obviously not to build a movement to free Gary.

In Boston, the OL approached us to see if we'd build a demonstration for July 24 with them in the United Front fashion. What happened shows clearly the OL method of functioning. There was one meeting, late in June in which it was decided to go ahead with the demonstration. Our people were then out of town for 2 weeks, which was told to a member of Fight Back. When our people returned and there was a second meeting, Fight Back had already had posters printed as well as a Fight Back leaflet. The poster stated the OL slogans (400 years of slavery and capitalism), had a picture that had

"The Call" in the corner, and was put out in the name of the United Gary Tyler Defense. Our Committee objected to the poster and slogans, stating it was not what was decided that the groups sponsoring the demo should have been listed, etc. They stated that we were irresponsible because we'd been out of town, and denied that they had been notified that we would be out of town. Then, plans for the rally were discussed. We proposed 4 speakers, two for the OL and Fight Back, and 2 for the IS, one of those for the Committee. They countered with their own proposal of 3 for OL/ Fight Back and 1 from our Committee and the IS could have a one minute "solidarity" speaker. They had more people there and won the vote. We then accused them of packing the meeting with all of their front groups (RATS, CYO- youth group, Fight Back), they denied there were front groups and stated that they were all independent groups involved in building Gary Tyler defense. One week before the rally, an individual representing the Fight Back Steering Committee in Boston called us and said that we couldn't take part in the demonstration, that we had no base, had nothing to build the rally, and were only interested in sectarian hassles and had slandered them by calling all the groups present, OL fronts.

We were told we could attend the rally and we did. There were only around 125 people at the rally (we'd had 75 at each of ours), and in the speeches nothing was said about Gary Tyler and his defense. We attended and passed out WP's, Red Tides, and Committee petitions.

In Detroit, when we first got involved and called the first rally/demonstration for May 1st, we invited OL/ Fight Back to participate in it. At that time there were several members of the CYO(OL youth group) around the Red Tide. The OL/Fight Back refused to endorse the demonstration, and it led to a fight with some of their CYO members, who wanted to participate. They did send some people (around 5) who stood on the side lines of the rally. Since that time they have called a picnic and rally in Detroit for August 15 and 21st respectively with their slogans and with no attempt to contact the Detroit Committee. Word was gotten out to us that we were not welcome to attend. The rally/demonstrations were called in the name of Fight Back.

#### New Orleans Rally and Demonstration:

In general, the OL refused to coordinate their activities in relation to the Gary Tyler defense with the Committee in New Orleans. They had no representatives on the Committee, although they had 2 people sympathetic to their position. They know the Committee was planning a big demonstration for July 24 in New Orleans. Instead of coordinating with this demonstration, Fight Back called its own demonstration for July 17th, one week before the Committee's demonstration. When the Committee found out about this, Walter Collins informed Fight Back, in the name of the New Orleans Committee that if they continued with their plans for their demonstration on the 17th, that the national Committee would ice them out of general GT defense work. Following this, Fight Back agreed to call off its demonstration and in return they were given 2 representatives on a committee set up to plan and build the demonstration set for the 24th. They also got one 5 minute speaker to introduce the section of national solidarity speeches of 1 minute each at the rally.

Fight Back then proceeded to build the demonstration through the South under the name of the Soughwide Coalition around their program of 400 years of slavery and capitalism, self-determination for the Afro-American nation, etc. The national committee, and the rally planning committee wanted it built in a much broader fashion, but Fight Back went right ahead with its' plans. They refused to discuss this with the New Orleans committee.

On July 24th, the rally began at around noon. After it had been going on for from 15-20 minutes, a contingent of around 30 marched across a park, across the street from the rally site. This was the Southwide Coalition (read Fight Back). Rather than coming right over and joining the rally they stopped at the edge of the street and waited approximately 10 minutes, to assure everyone at the rally that they were a separate and independent section of the demonstration, then they came across and joined the rally. When time came for their 5 minute speaker, he went on for some 10 minutes, refusing to heed the chairperson's request to end. When he finally finished, it was too late for other speakers. The OL had successfully maneuvered to make sure that no other groups- primarily the IS and SCAR (SWP) got speakers. At the march, their contingent chanted the Fight Back slogans along with Gary Tyler ones. All in all, they functioned in as sectarian manner as possible.

In summary, it should be clear that the OL's politics are reactionary, as are Stalinist politics generally. However, they are deadly serious about their politics, and have a tough, committed cadre and they should not be simply laughed away. Our attitude is that we are willing to work with any group in a principled political fashion to build an on-going movement, whether it be around Gary Tyler's defense or anything else. We should be clear, however, that the likely ability for us to work in such a way with the OL/Fight Back are small. In a very real sense, they represent a political enemy of ours as much as we are of them.