

April 10, 1974

CONDITIONAL RESIGNATION FROM N.C.L.C.  
OF A. ROBERT KAUFMAN

Please consider this my conditional resignation from the N.C.L.C.

The following series of events should explain this resignation.

I have been a political activist for 27 years and a socialist for 19 years.

I was a founding member of the Young Socialist Alliance, and led the Baltimore local for several years until the SWP dumped me in a right-wing turn. I spent a few years leading the local Spartacist League and quit a year or so after Lyn and Carol quit. Before, between and after these sojourns I had organized independent socialist study and action groups and conducted several electoral campaigns and sustained a healthy number of arrests.

I saw my role as more or less holding the fort while preparing myself and others until something more viable came along. I was very excited therefore when the SDS LC began to emerge.

After several fruitless attempts in 1968-1969 with Lyn and John Lawrence to have an organizer come to Baltimore to recruit an independent local, I was finally able to get Steve Fraser on a speaking tour through a Philadelphia contact.

This speaking tour was so successful (over 10 hours of radio and TV time, newspaper articles and college audiences of several hundreds) that the L.C. decided to start a study group.

Around 40 people attended the first very uninspiring, slipshod educational that amounted to a repeat of the Fraser lecture which most had already heard.

The following week New York sent us the world's most boring speaker to demoralize the surviving 20 with the same damned speech - despite my briefing this hardhead as to what material had been covered and what areas needed to be gone into.

The next week 12 diehards dozed through the final lecture of this "organizer."

Next a Villanova LC'er, who majored in double talk, moved back home to Baltimore to "take over" our local.

After several more disintegrating weeks of dumbly watching multi-syllable gibberish destroy the last few remnants of the original 50-80 serious contacts, I decided that I had better assert my own leadership.

An intelligence report, exposing the local transit criminal conspiracy, several months in the promising stage, was finally put to paper. This was an important accomplishment as we had intended to use it to intervene in a projected transit strike in a matter of a few remaining weeks. The local unanimously approved the pamphlet.

Faced with the imminent danger that something might get done in our local, New York frantically swung into action and sent another disruptor to sabotage our organizing. These two windbags proceeded to tear up the group. After a series of dishonest and irresponsible shenanigans by these two the local gave final approval to a pamphlet I had put together - and we had only a few days before its projected distribution at the next transit union meeting.

Having been thoroughly censored for lying to the local and for countermanding explicit directives these two diehards phoned Lyn to "intervene."

Between them they pressured a gullible local recruit to "disappear" during the time he was depended upon to duplicate the transit pamphlet.

Returning from New York they informed us that they were directed to set up a separate local because of Kaufman's "personality."

The "personality" boy immediately contacted Fraser in Phila. and Lawrence in D.C. - who presumably were in consultation with N.Y. They agreed with my perspective of no public activities until the two "separate but equal locals were reunited. N.Y. then sent a 3rd fool to buttress this renegade local and, finally, head Bavarian Fraser himself.

At the National Conference I presented a paper describing these events.

With the cat out of the bag, the immediate culprits copping the 5th, Lyn, who had allowed this fantastic situation to develop, covered himself with some irresponsible garbage about Kaufman's difficult personality (when queried later, his rationale was that I drive Carol up the wall every time she saw me, so it logically follows that there must be something basically wrong with me.) But proposed that a committee of Fraser, Boyd, and Kaufman oversee the unity of the two groups within the month. Carried unanimously by the National Conference.

Fraser, Turner and Mary were to disobey this directive but we finally found a unity, in this first victory over the Fraserites.

Several months later, the lone survivor of this clique had formed a secret educational to regroup an anti-Kaufman faction.

Pepper, Mary and Art and Alice Leaderman were all recruited through these factions before they joined L.C.

Pepper and Leaderman were to form an organizational faction to wrest leadership to themselves.

During this period (as I've catalogued in previous papers) numerous unprincipled and destructive acts occurred.

I fought most of these acts (with limited success) while most of my positions were later to become NEC orthodoxy.

Numerous resolutions of the local and edicts of the local "Organizer" were passed censoring and suspending the author for his good efforts. Resolutions were passed (and to this day never formally rescinded) preventing the author from publicly representing L.C. I was even prohibited from participating in worker contact work and making home calls. Efforts to organize new contacts or members were most actively discouraged. I was prevented from speaking or introducing resolutions at numerous meetings, publicly embarrassed, shouted down, made the subject of whisper campaigns and the butt of derisive laughter.

All this, of course, was interspersed with the local's obediently following Lyn's "suggestion" that I be the candidate on two occasions!!

During the T-group period, 2 comrades were incited to physically attack me and I was suspended for a week for "reasons" better left to them to explain.

I have burdened the reader with this background information to dispell among some comrades currently popular rationalizations that, he may be over-sensitive or thin-skinned, or a prima donna who won't cooperate with any one unless he's top dog, or his loss is of no consequence as he's never shown much insight, abilities or guts, and his gripes are as sour as his grapes, or he's just looking for a way out because the CIA has Panicked him.

If anything, I'm looking for a way in - into effective organizing in an effective organization.

In several internal documents I have tried to explain, warn, beg the organization that unless the type of insanity I have been describing was seriously dealt with - we will not be in a position to recruit workers and make cadre out of them when they start knocking at our door.

Even though the NEC has generally (more often after the fact) supported or adopted the numerous political positions I have espoused, it has never given me the consistent political support my positions warranted. It didn't seem opportune to the NEC at the time.

Now workers are beginning to knock at our door. And if the rest of the organization is anything like Baltimore - we are not to consolidate or develop them. And this is the world's greatest tragedy!

On January 15, 1974, I issued a 5-page internal document analyzing the crap which permeates our local. If you haven't read it ask the NEC why it never distributed it!!!

In that document I stated my intentions of making the local shape up or of shipping the saboteurs out.

I had assumed that the NEC was serious about putting its words into practice and I was ready to carry on a faction fight to organize the local to do its job.

I anticipated at the very least passive support from the NEC.

I felt confident that myself and others could do the job if the NEC would only continue its policy of benign neglect.

I was wrong!

I had pulled 3 comrades back into the fold who were drifting away - three of our best comrades.

We had brought back into the fold 3 more who had left in disgust but decided to give it another chance when assured that we were fighting that very reductionism which had so alienated them.

N.Y. sent R. Foster to run the office in Baltimore because of the incompetency of the Balto. S.C. Foster saw us as disrupting smooth office procedure. His attitude toward creativity was "fuck creativity."

T. Pappert and friend buzzed through. They refused to talk with us. They lectured to us. Crude too. We were guilty of the crime of "organizing outside of the L.C." whatever that may be.

Presumably we were to lie to non-LC that our organization had sprung from the head of L. Marcus, perfect in every way, and that they could contribute nothing to our perfection but the swearing of their allegiance.

A new wave of slander, lies and rumors made their debut.

Carol W. phoned a message from E. Spannus that N.Y. wanted me out of Balto. - in New York for two months. A second frantic phone call was to compromise - 2 weeks?

Not knowing what ridiculous rumor had panicked them, two organizers and I went to N.Y.

Carol refused to listen to us (she hadn't even read my paper). But she had a lot to say - all opinionated, ignorant crap.

Nick, Gus read and liked my paper but didn't want to discuss our efforts to implement it. That was supposedly for Lyn to do.

Lyn wouldn't listen. Instead he chose to turn our discussion into a public personality attack with the most degraded, sadistic baiting coming out of him while 6 or 8 of his know-nothing flunkies laughed and clapped on cue.

He was no more willing to face up to the crisis in our local's ability to organize or our willingness to reverse our local's degeneracy than had our S.C.

I was so unready for that irresponsible display of stupid ego that I got disgusted even thinking about it.

As it was obvious there was to be no communication, we left.

The two organizers who accompanied me had had about enough with L.C. by now. I continued to try to organize.

I had been told to stop my fund raising calls (which I was making with some success) and turn in all names to be divided up. I turned in about 60 names - agitated for assignments for a month and was then told my list was

lost. After having carefully gone over a dozen or more of my wealthy contacts with J. Ascher, sensitively detailing how to approach and cultivate these individuals, I was to later find that these contacts were phoned in the most irresponsible helter skelter fashion - absolutely destroying them as possible donores.

I had organized a minister in the all-Black Cherry Hill section where we had been ousted by another church. C. Henry was to phone some deacon to address the church Board for use of building and whatever else. The call was never made, the talk was never held. We are still without a meeting place in Cherry Hill.

I got a \$10 monthly pledge from a minister, to be picked up monthly. As of last month, the first 3 months of his pledge had not yet been picked up.

I got another \$10 pledge from a "Left" professor whom John and Art had previously turned off. And despite my report, John interviews with him again and succeeds in getting him to renig on his pledge.

The local refused to approach Parran Mitchell on commission support work!?!?

After opening up 3 different bookstores to New Solidarity and Campaigner sales - none of them have been serviced - despite promises.

For two years I've been leaving bundles of 50 - 100 New Solidarity at a sympathetic singles bar where they are eagerly picked up and read.

I estimate several dollars a week could easily be collected if a collection box and sign were made. Fat chance!

Despite long-time assignments, I seem to have been one of the few surviving members to have left weekly bundles at colleges, post offices, newsstands, bars, bus stops and various Inner City poverty offices.

Rich, Mary and myself have often distributed back-dated issues from door to door.

Now N.S. just piles up - not even to be picked up from Greyhound on schedule. Most never leave the office - except as trash. This apparently is how we are inundating the Dept. of Sanitation with our propaganda.

While organizing a worker contact at his first meeting, a "comrade" picks a fight with me as to why I dared decline an "invitation" to go on a late nite distribution. I don't think this contact has returned.

After an irresponsible intervention at Morgan State College, where there had been no prior discussion as to how to respond to agent provocateurs at our Boraka forum there and several of our comrades pulled out num chucks and began using them - resulting in slanderous articles in the college newspaper and a black nationalist newspaper, an invasion of a NUWRO meeting by black nationalists and Borakaites threatening to kill us if we show up again in the ghetto - it was unanimously agreed to hold another forum at or near Morgan immediately. That was several months back. The rumors of whites invading "our campus" and beating up black coeds still persist. We've attempted no presence at Morgan to counter these lies - much less to recruit. The reason is obvious. Our S.C. was afraid and too cowardly to admit it.

A lying report appeared in N.S. which makes those familiar with the events wonder what to believe in N.S.

When I demanded an accurate account be submitted to N.S. and that I wanted to proofread it first, Chas H. was assigned to do the job. As he refused to let me see the article before it was sent and as he kept no carbon of it, I have no idea what, if anything, was sent. I only know that no mention in either N.S. or in internal documents was to appear.

New recruits are seen only as warm bodies to send out on distribution - ready or not - where they will burn out in a few months or weeks or days. Little effort is made to develop their understanding other than to order them to "act" potent, i.e. put on a show and macho it up - like the rest of us.

A worker/comrade's plea that he needs time to read and think is dismissed with a frantic, "But you must make all these distributions because if we don't recruit so many more warm bodies by such and such a deadline we'll lose the game. There is no time to read or think. The heavens are falling. So just follow orders and leave the thinking to Lyn, or will Jewish Mother up your guilt feelings until you're a hunk of protoplasm."

The final blow was when I had organized Rick and Fary to pen an excellent leaflet which they were anxious to organize around, for the gas lines. And I submitted an equally necessary one to organize striking teachers. And after R. Foster approved my leaflet and "didn't anticipate any difficulty" in utilizing theirs. Both were summarily scrapped.

Balto. City teachers had struck for several weeks. Our prospects for recruiting a handful and effectively influencing thousands for later recruitment and hegemony - were fantastic. But nothing creatively or sensitively relevant was to be permitted by our local.

The two banned leaflets are enclosed (as we had them reproduced).

That made 3 scrapped leaflets of mine and 2 of theirs.

They are both resigning.

The 3 we had brought back in have left.

Remaining comrades have disintegrated into contemplating suicide; another has been running around with a gun, threatening to kill or mutilate three different comrades at last count. While another has ceased political activities because the organization has succeeded in making him feel so impotent that he could no longer see the sense of going through the motions. An S.C. member's advice to his wife was "to show him no compassion" but to threat him like a traitor.

Other comrades have quit, left town under mysterious circumstances, have become inactive, plan to leave the country to visit old Army buddies and Christ knows what.

The few remaining diehards go through the uninspired motions of doggedly carrying on - business as usual - with all the effective relevancy of a fanatical Samari in the 1973 jungles of Guam or Luzon.

New faces still show up but soon disappear.

Discussion of mistakes we may have made in permitting apparently serious worker contacts to slip through our fingers is strictly "Verboten!" It can never be our fault. It is always theirs. They are "weak" - not part of the Master Vanguard like we.

The more the organization fucks up - the less it tolerates criticism - the more its members "believe" in Marcus in a religious fashion. And this apparently includes Marcus.

When our "organizing" is not reflected in material reality - we regress to religion.

After obtaining \$25.00 donations from him on two or three occasions, with promises of much more in the near future, I had organized my University of Maryland Hospital clinic intern psychiatrist to join the Commission of Inquiry. I had John A. phone him and as John neglected to call him a second time as had been agreed upon, I relayed to John his O.K., gave him his present address and phone number, told him that he was soon to move to Idaho and gave him his new home and hospital address in Idaho.

His endorsement was never used.

The latest rumor being spread by S.C. members Charles H. and John A. is that "No one has ever heard of my shrink, he's not listed in the Yellow Pages" with the suggestion that I'd been brainwashed by the CIA.

In my first draft of this document I labeled John and Charles as liars and cowards, but upon a subsequent brief confrontation with John it is clear that, like a young child, the line between fact and fantasy is so blurred in his mind that much compassion is called for.

But these people are leading our local and our congressional candidate,

As for democratic centralism most comrades literally don't know its meaning. We are told that factions are not to be tolerated because of the current "emergency."

We have centralism but few have much conception of how to change leadership or policy. Most assume that both are a given fact. We are not to see internal struggle as healthy and necessary. But we will not be able to develop qualitatively without it. We will not be able To Do The Job!

Those dealing from a position of power merely slander the "disruptor" and demand an unthinking support upon pain of being made to feel like shit.

The CIA could learn much from such "Comrades."

How can we organize the working class to have the confidence to demonstratively and democratically organize and run the entire world - if we can't democratically organize and run our "Vanguard" communist movement?

What practical good does all my organizing do if it is only to be sabotaged by our S.C. or NEC? As one still semi-active comrade recently confided to me, "I don't dare bring a worker contact into L.C. where he will see comrades running around screaming like maniacs."

Ineffective as my organizing has been in influencing local and national policy, I do not see how my continued activity taking membership responsibility in NCLC could possibly help the working class. It is certainly disruptive to myself.

So I have resigned until such time as the NCLC gives me reason to believe it is serious enough for me to organize with.

I agree generally with its theory and program - although I have a lot of criticism with its mechanistic attempts to implement it and its jargoneering journalism and exaggerated claims which are seldom analyzed after the fact.

Whatever happened to the 200 organizing committees we were going to have by the end of March?

Are we still going to replace the AFL-CIO by June?

If not - why not?

I know there is no other serious Marxist group. I don't think there is time to build one. I see little purpose in life not being part of one.

But I cannot in consciousness recruit workers to the sort of organization it has pained me to describe.

Now can I see how my continued efforts within the NCLC can ever overcome the sabotage the NEC permits and encourages.

The problem in the local, finally, is merely a reflection of the same pompous, frightened, intolerant attitude of the NEC.

I will not go along with the charade.

If you ever become sane, please, please! let me know.

#### Postscript

I apologize for the lateness of this resignation but I've been so filled with disgust that I could not bring myself to pen it earlier.

I have decided to enclose a copy of my previous paper as the NEC has not generally made it available.

Because I could not rely on the NEC to distribute this (or any) packet, I've had to rely on the N.S. published mailing list at my own expense.

(Something many comrades would not be in the financial circumstances to afford).

I therefore request the reader to please concern yourself that these documents are available to all LC members and close periphery.

I am most anxious to correspond with any reasonably serious concerned party at any time. I therefore include address and phone number:

2001 N. Hilton Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21216

Phone:

P.P.S.

These documents were reproduced and distributed entirely at my own expense. Permission to use local L.C. duplicating machine was refused because, according to John A., "Kaufman's papers are just a lot of crap."

Similar sabotage of internal discussion facilitated the degeneracy of the Socialist Workers Party - as Lyn has so well documented.

By the time these papers get to you the expenses of paper, mailing and professional typing and duplicating will have cost me an estimated \$50.00 to \$80.00.

You figure out how some working cadre could afford to speak to his comrades in our "democratic centrest" circus.