

INTERNAL BULLETIN NO. 33

APRIL 1983

AGAINST NATIONAL TROTSKYISM, AGAINST  
UNPRINCIPLED REVISIONISM

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(This bulletin has previously been  
published in limited numbers.

The Internationalist Faction has now  
informed the Standing Orders Committee  
that it wishes to submit this document  
for voting as its alternative to the  
British Perspectives.)

Conference is April 15-16-17

Comrades are asked to contribute 20p  
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Further material for the Internal  
Bulletin should be sent to the centre,  
typed A4 on Roneo stencils if possible.

The fusion left three key issues unresolved: Afghanistan, the EEC, and the General Strike slogan. The agreement was to have a timetable for resolving these disagreements. It has not been carried out. This is an indictment of both old leaderships. The EEC discussion was not carried out by the whole movement culminating at a special conference, but at a poorly attended NC with no opportunity for the membership as a whole to be part of the debate. We do not intend to discuss the EEC in this document as far more important issues are posed, but suffice to say that the resultant position as published in [redacted] was inadequate in every way. Two key issues did not get mentioned: the rights and problems of immigrant workers in the EEC, and equally significant in our view, the unresolved national question (Ireland, Euzkadi, etc.) and the oppressed nations within Europe.

The Malvinas discussion revealed that the NC majority consider that one of the fundamental principles of Trotskyism, its major scientific conquest and contribution to the arsenal of Marxism - the theory of Permanent Revolution - is not applicable to semi-colonial countries which have gained 'formal' independence; and that one of the other major conquests of the communist movement, moreover, one that establishes the nature of the very epoch in which we operate, and actually provides the very reason for our existence as an organised political current, which poses the socialist revolution as a material possibility and necessity, rather than a task for the undefined future - Imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism by Lenin - is no longer applicable. However, having junked the theoretical justification for our very existence, the NC majority have so far failed to acquaint the movement with the results of their epoch-making theoretical discoveries.

It has also emerged that a number of leading EC and NC figures subscribe to a view of Stalinism which represents a break from the Trotskyist analysis, and which states that the nationalised property relations preserved as the major gain of the October Revolution, are not progressive as such, but only potentially progressive. In addition, that the starting point for our attitude to the anti-bureaucratic workers struggles in Poland should be 'self-determination', posed in such a manner that it implies an 'imperialist-type' of relationship between Poland and the Soviet bureaucracy (the Polish bureaucracy has no material basis in society but is just animated from Moscow), and therefore 'national independence' even in the form of a bourgeois democratic Poland (if such a thing were theoretically possible given Poland's position on the world market, and as Cde. Jones points out in IB 7, Poland would become a vassal of the banks) is both desirable and progressive. This demand can only mean support for a counter-revolutionary overthrow of nationalised property relations and installation of a pro-imperialist regime, as Poland already has 'formal', 'political' independence in the same manner as any non-imperialist backward country.

It is also apparent that while there has been a tendency to adopt an uncritical attitude towards the Walesa leadership of Solidarnosc, downplaying the inadequate reformist politics of this group; a scandalously hostile attitude has been in evidence towards the equally inadequate actions of the Irish republican armed forces of the Provisional IRA and the INLA, on occasions in our press. We believe that this is a reflection of the chauvinism towards the Irish struggle in the British Labour movement on the one hand; and the anti-communist ideology which has recently surfaced among sectors of the petty bourgeois left because of the criminal activities of the Stalinists in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, etc.

We believe that the source of the political opportunism of the former ICL leadership is their earlier background inside the IS group, where they obviously assimilated elements of the Cliff/Hallas/Kidron approach to politics: the eclecticism, impressionism and general theoretical dilettanteri. In addition, the influences from the State Capitalist tradition (although Cliff has in fact elaborated a 'Bureaucratic Collectivist' position in the Shachtman mould) has been compounded by a subsequent adaptation to the politics of left-reformism

in the Labour Party. In fact the one-sided analysis of Stalinism and imperialism gained from the IS does not conflict with the similarly pro-imperialist and anti-Leninist politics of the Labour left; on the contrary they fit in with each other perfectly.

We believe that the right wing of the former W.. represented by, most obviously, cd McVicar and co., have developed similar positions on Stalinism and Imperialism as the former I.. leadership, though via a different route, and as a result of the influence of the I.. leadership. It is clear that this is not a W../I.. conflict, but a difference of method and approach to politics between the right and left wings of both the organisations that formed the fusion.

On the LP issue, it is clear that cd Evington and others are in substantial agreement with a larger number of WSL comrades who formed an, effective, left-wing of the old WSL. In his document 'The Crisis of the British Section' it is clear that he had reservations about the formation of broad groups. From the title of his document it is clear that he sees a parallel between the debate going on in the organisation about how we respond to the O. witch-hunt and the polemic within the French section of the Trotskyist movement in the mid-thirties expressed in Trotsky's book 'The Crisis of the French Section'.

We think that these parallels do exist; that the former I.. leadership have turned O. entryism from being a tactic to being a principle for all time. The absence of virtually any propaganda in the paper for a new party and the need to reconstruct the FI; to organise an international tendency to this end; the failure to go on the political offensive on our programme; the decision to register instead of denouncing the Labour leaders, both left and right as social patriots; the absence of virtually any criticism whatever, of Benn for his loyalty speech to Foot at the recent LP conference (after Foot had gone along with the register); the absence of any sharp criticism of Benn and Race over their chauvinist, pro-imperialist positions during the Malvinas war; the absence of any perspective for challenging the Labour leaders' witch-hunting by a head-one political fight, to win our periphery to an internationalist outlook and an international tendency for a reconstructed FI: all serve to brand the paper as the La Verite of the 1980s (or perhaps it might more accurately be described as the Lutte Ouvriere of the 1980s, having emerged from its La Commune period in the S..V?) The parallels are so obvious as to be unbelievable. Now the former I.. leadership want to close down their Lutte Ouvriere and form a new 'La Commune' by liquidating into the 'B' groups (a 'La Commune' project if ever there was one). We strongly urge all comrades to read 'The Crisis in the French Section' and draw the necessary conclusions for our own practice. We are not, it might be stated in passing, against participating in the 'B' networks, just as Trotsky urged the Rous-Naville group to participate in the GARs then, but such participation must be on the basis of the Trotskyist programme with our own party press.

It has to be stated also, that the Workers Government slogan, as used by the paper (and as implied in the original fusion document), is an incorrect application of this slogan in the sense that it fails to make any propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat; in fact the amendment to the document on 'Organising the left' at the recent broad groups delegate meeting specifically argues against "counterposing the full revolutionary programme of a state based on workers' councils to the actual political processes within the actual labour movement". This transforms the Workers Government tactic into a necessary and desirable strategy, it becomes an 'objective', a 'stage', the dynamic of the demand is emasculated in the time-honoured method of the Pabloites and Lambertists; whereas the Workers' Government slogan was held by the 4th Congress of the CI and the programme of the FI as merely a possible variant.

#### The Workers Government tactic

Compare Lenin's formulation in 'Left Wing Communism an infantile disorder'.  
 "... If I come out as a Communist and call upon the workers to vote for Henderson against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I will be able to explain in a popular manner not only why soviets are better than Parl-

liament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised by the signboard of bourgeois 'democracy') but also that I want with my vote to support Henderson like a rope supports a hanged man - that the impending establishment of a government of Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and Snowdens..."(our emphasis).

In other words the tactical use of the call for the election of a Labour government, and the Workers Government slogan, "break with the bourgeoisie", "kick out the bourgeois ministers", "kick out Callaghan-Healey", etc, is to allow us to gain the ear of the masses for propaganda for a workers government based on soviets, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Radek warned against the dangers involved thus:

"The German, Norwegian and Czechoslovak workers will more readily declare against coalition with the bourgeoisie, preferring instead a coalition of workers parties which would guarantee the eight-hour day, and an extra crust of bread. A workers government usually arises in this manner either through preliminary struggles or on the basis of a parliamentary combination, and it would be folly to turn aside the opportunities of such a situation in stubborn doctrinaire fashion. Now the question arises - shall we recline upon this soft cushion and take a good rest, or shall we rather lead the masses into a fight on the basis of their own illusions for the realisation of the programme of the Workers Government...if we keep alive the consciousness of the masses that a Workers Government is an empty shell unless it has workers behind it forging their weapons and forming their factory councils to compel it to hold on to the right track and make no compromise with the Right; making that government a starting point for the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, such a Workers Government will eventually make room for a Soviet Government and not become a soft cushion, but rather a lever for the conquest of power by revolutionary means...'the Workers Government is not a historic necessity, but a historical possibility'... I believe the Executive (ECCI) on the whole has taken the right attitude when it on the one hand warns against the proposition of either Soviet Government or nothing, and on the other hand, against the illusion which makes the Workers Government a sort of parachute".

It is essential to realise that a government of workers parties is a capitalist government unless it carries out a programme which corresponds to the interests of the working class - this is what makes it a Workers Government, and this is what we demand Labour Governments do - this is the essence of the workers government demand, tactic, and slogan. But we don't just leave it at that; we have to put forward a strategy for the working class itself to form factory (occupation) committees; open the books; form committees (united fronts) of action (joint strike/occupation committees) so as to create the basis for <sup>an</sup> alternative workers government based on these organs of struggle. At the same time we call upon the Labour 'left' KP's in government (the Dennis Skinners, etc.) to actually prepare to form such a government. We also call for the parliamentary Labour government to legitimise legally the workers control of production, the arming of the labour movement, etc. as a tactical means of showing the importance of the LP left.

The amendment specifically rejects the perspective of propaganda for such a workers government based on organs of struggle; counterposing to it instead merely the democratisation of the existing movement - the LP and TU's.

Trotsky in his article 'For Committees of Action, Not the Peoples Front' explains why this by itself is a false perspective:

"...The workers will be able to elect a committee of action only in those cases in which they themselves participate in some sort of action and feel the need for revolutionary leadership. In question here is not the formal democratic representation of all and any masses but the revolutionary representation of the struggling masses. The Committee of Action is an apparatus of struggle..." ('The Crisis in the French Section', P ).