

February 1983

Amendments to redraft text on Labour Party in IB39 - Smith

1) Page 3, insert after para 2:

"The mass movement which effectively brought down the Labour government created the conditions for the emergence of a left wing inside the Labour Party which was to be the basis of the 'democracy campaign.'"

Page 5: delete para 5 ("Indeed Benn's weaknesses ...")

Page 7: Insert after "Our Work":

"Our task is to build a hard Marxist current in the MO which is clearly politically defined against the left reformists. This implies not only working in a sensitive way, avoiding "ritual denunciations", but also an adequate and consistent political critique. We will not build a Marxist current in the MO (and therefore contribute towards building a Marxist party) unless we are adequately defined. We cannot recruit the left on the basis of simply "organise the left". We must give them a political alternative to left reformism if we are to do that. It is also important that we have an alternative to offer them beyond the MO, particularly our work in the unions and amongst the specially oppressed."

delete para 6, and insert:

"We organise workers in struggle to go into the MO and fight for support and on general issues of principle (such as the cuts) demand active support."

Page 9, delete para 5

Page 10: delete top two paras and insert:

"We recognise that the ideal is a high profile paper which can speak our politics both inside the MO and elsewhere - in the trade unions, the factories and amongst the oppressed. We recognise that it is an advantage to be able to relate directly to militants with our programme and perspectives and our analysis of reformism. Equally we recognised that such a paper would be our most productive approach to left Labour activists - since it could avoid both the danger of restricting our politics to the fight against the right wing, and crude "exposure" techniques which fail to relate to the real movements within reformism.

However it is not possible at the present time, given the importance of being in the MO and given the conditions inside it to have a paper with that kind of profile. We therefore need a paper which is as open, sharp and clear as possible, taking MO rules into account and relating to all areas of work.

In taking that decision we must also recognise that the necessary compromise which this entails contains the danger that such a paper will relate inadequately to areas other than the MO.

The effects of this danger are already evident in SX. The tendency is for MO coverage to be more thought through, more analytical and more methodical than TU coverage. More effort at the core of the organisation goes into analysis of current MO developments (although the conclusions may not always be agreed).

These factors were never adequately considered in the rush to discuss the possibility of dropping SX (or keeping it another 6 months) in favour of a possible new, broader paper when the right wing offensive began last autumn.

We should avoid any temptation simply to erect political and organisational barriers which can prevent steps to deepen the dialogue with the left in the MO and win them to revolutionary politics.

But if the price of our continued political intervention among such

forces is a further dilution of our political line and submergence of our revolutionary organisation; that price, both in terms of MO and trade union work will be too heavy. Our contribution as Marxists in the current phase of acute leadership crisis and political confusion in the labour movement is to show the fight as dialectal - where necessary in confrontation with the Labour bureaucracy - and promote political clarity; not as mere retailers of an anonymous "correct" publication sufficiently vacuous to escape the attention of the right wing witch hunters.

We should examine the work of the broad groups to assess their success or otherwise in carrying out the tactic. How big in reality is our periphery in the MO? How many broad groups function? How many recruits have they produced for the MO? How effective is it in hardening and deepening our internationalist?

It appears at least in the short term that the complications of seeking to purge Militant will preoccupy the Labour NEC; but should they succeed in establishing that precedent, then it could be a short swift step to oust other left currents including SL. Under such conditions we must keep SL, and maintain no less than our current political profile, resolutely maintaining the debate on the level of policies as well as democracy and the constitution, and prepare for a new combination of MO "legal" and "illegal" work in the event of the paper being proscribed.

It would assist neither our work among the surviving "hard left" periphery in the MO nor stick with us through the witch-hunt, nor the work to reach the militants in the unions and other arenas of struggle, were we to reduce ourselves to the exclusive production of a "legal" press which is not able to carry revolutionary propaganda and develop and argue a serious political criticism of the currents of the Labour left. Our relationship with the fighting left must be firmly based on defined common objectives and defined and argued political differences which we take up - with some sensitivity - in the course of our joint struggle against the right wing."

Appendix to 1951 SL resolution on Ireland: - Jones

1) Point 1: after "Catholic minority", add: "and those organisations which fight in its defence"

2) Redraft point 4 to read: "We support the struggle of the republican movement to drive out British imperialism, while we criticise the nationalist and militarist limitations of the IRA leadership. Within this struggle we counterpose a fight to link the struggle against partition with an all-Ireland class movement. This is the struggle to develop a revolutionary socialist leadership. As comrade fails with a campaign of solidarity within the British labour movement. We do not use the socialist programme on nationalism to avoid taking concrete positions on struggles led by petty bourgeois nationalists."

3) Add new point 6: "We are for the guarantee of democratic rights, including religious rights, for the Protestant community within a united Ireland, but we are against "Federalism".
