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Conference is on April
15-16-17

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CORRECTION TO I.B. 45

The alleged statement in the Carolán/Hill/Kinnell resolution, IB45, that "The LP is the vehicle for transitional demands", has been made the centre of polemic in IB48. It is in fact a typing error.

The sentence in IB45 reads: "The LP is the vehicle for developing TU militancy into mass working class politics in the next stage ahead, and for transitional demands, and developing the, presently, reformist working class movement on the basis of experience of political and industrial and other struggles towards a fully formed solution".

As comrades can see by referring to the passage in IB22 from which it is composited, the sentence should read: "The LP is the vehicle for developing TU militancy into mass working class politics in the next stage ahead, for transforming passive reformism into the fight for reforms and for transitional demands, and for developing the presently reformist working class movement on the basis of experience of political and industrial and other struggles towards a fully-formed solution". A clause was omitted by mistake in typing up IB 45.

SL - NEW NAME, SAME OLD SMELL.

Spurred on by that wave of ecumenical unitarianism now apparently animating not a few members of the League who ought to know better, the Glasgow branch decided to make its own contribution to the cause of revolutionary regroupment of the British Left by making a number of approaches to the people in the local SL branch with regard to joint work/debate. Hopefully this document will have an appropriately enlightening effect, by providing a brief outline of what happened, on those love-sick comrades in the League already swooning at the sight of the puckered lips of the SL.

The Debate That Never Was.

We wrote to the SL people suggesting a debate on 'Revolutionaries in the Labour Party' with J. o'M. as our speaker. A week after the despatch of the letter we started chasing them up to find out their response. Contrary to the traditional claim that there's no choice under socialism, we found ourselves confronted with a broad variety of responses (each one of them as dishonest as the next):

- a) we can't have a public debate (not that the debate we were proposing was necessarily public anyway) so we can't have a debate at all
- b) we can't have a debate with you because J. o'M. represents a minority position (on the Falklands perhaps, but hardly on the Labour Party, the actual topic of the debate)
- c) we can't have a debate with you because you'd only use it as an opportunity to raise the question of the Falklands (disregarding the question of whether or not we would, this is hardly any reason for avoiding debate - shouldn't they be so confident of their position on the Falklands that they would welcome the opportunity to debate it out with us?)
- d) yes, we're all in favour of having discussions on joint youth work (only those standing in the tradition of the IMG could read a letter proposing a debate on the Labour Party in such a fashion as to conclude that this was in any way a relevant reply)
- e) yes, we're all in favour of a debate (this was the response of the Castroites, who are openly opposed to both L@ work and fusion; politically bankrupt they may be, but at least they're honest about it, unlike the charlatans who call for unity simply as a standard IMG/SL factional ploy).

One other response should also be mentioned: that a section of the SL membership did not even know that we had proposed a debate. The branch leadership of the SL had not even followed the basic democratic practice of informing their branch membership of our letter to the branch. Such an incident does much to explain the SL's predilection for accommodation to Stalinism: it follows the same organisational practices.

In terms of a written response however, we're still waiting for one, despite repeated attempts to obtain one. Given that we sent our letter off four weeks ago, and given that the proposed date for a debate was yesterday, it doesn't really look as if we're going to get one though.

Joint Work in the LPY@? No Thanks - We're in Revo.

Any organisation serious about work in the LPY@, never mind unity, would, one would have thought, agree to our proposal of a joint intervention into the Scottish LPY@ conference and ongoing joint campaigning work thereafter on a number of agreed issues. And the letter from the SL (23rd February) refers to the LPY@ as one area for joint work in the period ahead.

Their rebuttal of our proposals for such joint work shows them to be nothing but lying factional manoeuvrers. At the meeting which, we thought, would be discussing joint work around the conference and thereafter, our youth comrades were treated to worldly-wise treatises on the virtues of 'Revo', the glories of its democratic centralist structure, this year's sugar harvest in Cuba, the price of fish, etc., etc. But joint work? That just wasn't on - they were in Revo, which had its own programme, democratic centralist structure and a variety of other things, all of which meant that joint work with C@ simply wasn't possible.

Their 'intervention' at the conference consisted of two semi-legible leaflets, being the only people (apart from a couple of self-confessed Stalinists in Clause 4) to vote against a motion calling for the links to be severed with fake trade unions in Eastern Europe, and chasing after our periphery. They proposed to our periphery - not it should be stressed, to us - a follow-up meeting to the conference, for the purpose of discussing our intervention (whose intervention was not actually made clear) and ongoing joint work after the conference.

Another of our propositions regarding joint work in the LPY@ suffered a similar rebuttal. At our initiative a Y@ branch did a mailing to other non-M branches and individuals calling a meeting to set up a Y@forCND group in Glasgow. Not a single Revo

supporter turned up to the meeting which had been called in an attempt to set up the Y@ for CND in Glasgow. Thus, whilst making great play of the need to relate the Y@ to CND, Revo supporters deliberately boycotted a meeting being held for precisely that purpose.

Killing LA@ stone-dead before it even got off the ground.

On the eve of the Scottish LPY@ conference in Glasgow a meeting purporting to be a LA@ meeting was staged. From beginning to end, the whole affair was exemplary of the dishonesty and Menshevik inefficiency of the SL.

LA@ had three members in Glasgow at that time. Two are members of the League. One is a snotty-nosed, stuck-up SL member imported from London four weeks previously because of an affaire amoureuse with a Glasgow SL member. The two League members were never informed about the organising of the meeting. The SL member claimed that there was no record in London of there being any LA@ ^{members} in Glasgow. But one of us had been receiving all the LA@ mailings; the other had been in touch with LA@ about his own expulsion from the LC@. Such an excuse therefore rings a trifle hollow.

The SL had chosen three headings for the meeting, in the following order: defend unilateralism, defend socialist policies, stop the purge. The order shows clearly that more interest was attached to CND than to the witch-hunt itself. Moreover, in the meeting itself the SL member doing the lead-off claimed that LA@ saw the question of unilateral disarmament as the key issue to be taken up. I think I am correct in saying that this is a downright lie: LA@ has never made any priority, never mind fetish, of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The MP due to speak at the meeting had backed out as soon as he had heard of the SL's lying and manoeuvring. Thus, the only speaker was the recently imported SL love-sick centrist. Having only just arrived in Glasgow, he was of course even more ignorant of the situation in the LC@ in Glasgow than the SL average member. He was, for example, unaware that one member of the audience had recently been expelled from the LC@ and inevitably therefore made no reference to this in his tawdry lead-off. The audience was either League members/sympathisers or SL members/hangers-on. One or two real people had strayed into the meeting, presumably by mistake.

Inevitably, the meeting achieved nothing at all, save to drag the name of LA@ down into the dirt wherever word got round about the SL's factional manoeuvring that had been behind the meeting. The SL member promised that he would get in touch with me to 'have a discussion about building LA@' in Glasgow. This was 1½ months ago. He is yet to make the effort to contact me.

Serving Ultimata on the LC@.

The IMG/SL record on Ireland has, in Glasgow (like evrywhere else), been inadequate for a long time. Upto September of last year, just one of them ever turned up to LC@ meetings. And he was such a crank that even the IMG distanced themselves from his outlandish proposals. In September he moved to Edinburgh, since when the LC@ in Glasgow has been entirely devoid of any IMG presence and therefore able to get on with the job. In December of last year the SL in Glasgow was contacted by the SL member responsible for the plastic bullets conference in Manchester, who told them that Balfe, the Euro MP who has campaigned against the use of plastic bullets was willing to do a meeting in Glasgow. The first point about this is that he contacted the SL, not any officer or member of the LC@. If he were ever to claim that he was unaware that there were any LC@ members in Glasgow, in the tradition of the LA@ meeting, this simply could not be taken seriously. That he contacted the SL, not the LC@, was clearly being dishonest with both Balfe and the LC@. Presumably the idea was that the initiative for the plastic bullets meeting in Glasgow could come from the SL and they could grab what passes for the glory in their fading eyesight.

The problem was, of course, that the SL, having absolutely no record on Irish work, could do nothing at all - save sit on Balfe's offer for six weeks, by which time it was too late to hold a meeting with him to build for the Manchester conference.

At the Glasgow LC@ meeting in late January, an SL member appeared on the scene, informed us of Balfe's offer, demanded that a meeting be organised, made a series of nonsensical proposals as to how the meeting should be organised, and tried to get a place on the platform of the proposed meeting for the SL member who had organised the Manchester conference. As soon as the item had been discussed the SL member then left, not even having the political decency to stay for the rest of the meeting, nor even join the LC@. The SL's only interest was to get a meeting off the ground in Glasgow on plastic bullets. They had attempted to carve out the LC@ in Glasgow, which has always been ours, and then, having realised that they were unable to get round the LC@, sent along

one of their more hackified members to place a series of ultimata before the LC@ branch. Their minion was given short shrift at the LC@ meeting, and not just by us but by the non-aligned also, and whilst the plastic bullets meeting did go ahead, it was certainly in spite of, not because of, the role played by the SL.

Miscellanea.

The above are recent examples of the kind of wheeling and dealing in which the SL, which ostensibly dares to propose fusion to the League, has been indulging of late. It goes without saying that the list could be continued indefinitely, given that new instances of their dishonest factionalism and manoeuvring are constantly coming to light. It also goes without saying that the SL enjoys a rich inheritance of such activity from its IMG predecessor. On Poland they manoeuvred to prevent the local campaign taking up the demand for severing the links with E. European fake unions and also got the local campaign to disaffiliate from the PSC nationally, whilst when the question was raised in local LC branches, they were, in some instances at least (perhaps all - we don't know exactly) more concerned with getting themselves delegated to the local campaign than with pushing the issues in the branches which the campaign wanted raised. On the Falklands their record was no better: they turned up to a meeting organised by us/non-aligned to discuss launching some initiatives or a fully-fledged campaign on the issue only to kill it stone dead. And at no time during the Falklands war were they ever prepared to debate it out with us despite repeated attempts on our part to get a debate with them. As usual, they never even bothered replying to our letters. Even after their change in line on the question of Iran, they have also refused to get involved in the Iranian campaign, despite approaches from the Iranian comrades. On every occasion, on every issue, whether it be a nursery campaign in the Gorbals, our proposals for building the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign in Glasgow, or the attempt to set up a Women's Fightback group locally, the attitude of the IMG/SL has vacillated between indifference and straightforward sabotage. Recently they have become more of an obstacle than ever, indulging in manoeuvring and duplicity that has been hitherto unparalleled.

Conclusion.

This bland narrative of IMG/SL duplicity and dishonesty is bland solely as a result of the turgid nature of its subject matter. It is difficult to conceive of a less inspiring task than tracing out the wretched record of a gang of unprincipled shysters who abhor political honesty and accounting even more than they abhor open political debate. At the same time though, one can but hope that this narrative of some of the more obvious recent acts of SL duplicity in Glasgow has the necessary sobering effect on the League members ready to collapse into the open arms of the SL. In Glasgow the SL has done everything possible to avoid open debate or joint work with the League, resorting even to downright dishonesty to maintain their sectarian stance. In other areas, we are informed, the SL has been all in favour of joint work (at least on the surface) with the League. Is this because the Glasgow SL people are different from other branches of the SL? Or is it because the Glasgow League branch is different from other League branches elsewhere? In fact, neither. At bottom, the SL in Glasgow shys away from the League because they know there is no-one in Glasgow they can pick up from us. In other areas the SL believes that there are a few lost souls wandering around within the League's membership whom they can recruit into their own group. That perception of the SL branches may be right or wrong - they might realistically expect to be able to pick up people, or they may be making an error of judgement. That is not an issue here; what is the issue is the fact that the attitude of SL branches to League branches is guided by the assessment of whether or not there are people to be picked up. In other words, their appeal for 'unity' is nothing but a cynical manoeuvre, a not particularly subtle attempt to move in close enough to certain sections of the League membership to have a go at prising them away from the organisation. Throughout the Falklands debate in the League, the IMG, in Glasgow at least, were fairly open about their belief that they could break off the Galtieri-ites from the League. (In Glasgow they could be open about it as a taunt - trying to confront us with a picture of a massive split in the League, a majority going over to the IMG, leaving us in Glasgow, given our opposition to fascism, members of a rump organisation.) That split never took place. The SL's 'unity offensive' is nothing but an attempt to play upon those divisions and drive a wedge into the organisation. It is indeed a sad commentary on the political naivety of members of the League that they should allowed themselves to be swept along in this typical factional manoeuvring of the SL. Certainly, anyone simple-minded enough to be taken in by the clumsy manoeuvres of a Micky Mouse organisation like the SL cannot end up being other than a dupe of the bourgeoisie in the real world.

Casey, on behalf of Glasgow branch

IRELAND

I wish to argue that the question of federalism be voted on at this conference for the following reasons:

It has been extensively debated in the paper. I don't think that much more will come out.

I think it should be voted on because it is a profound difference.

The position cde. Carolan argues is quite clearly a reformist position. It is quite dangerous that the movement is tarred with this. The large number of articles by him give the impression that it is the position of the movement.

At a recent EC when pressed as to how the federalist 'democratic' solution he puts forward would be worked out cde. Kinnell and himself said the following:

that the only way was with a joint meeting between the British government, the Irish government and the two communities in the North.

The original position, which is a reformist, not 'democratic' solution, means that the Protestant working class do not have to break from their pro-imperialism. They can retain their position in their own community. This could only be in the form of a mini-Protestant state.

Now this reformism comes out into the open.

What right has British imperialism to be involved? Of course it has been when other countries have gained their independence, but that is only because they wanted to influence the form of that independence.

What kind of class position is this? Cde. Carolan keeps referring to a class solution. Yet when it comes to practice his only solution involves the bourgeoisies of both Britain and Ireland.

And what about the representatives of these communities? Presumably he means Paisley. So much for a class solution. This solution involves a right-wing cleric.

The WSL must declare its position on this reformist nonsense.

Revolutionaries must fight for 'democratic' demands as part of their fight for a revolutionary solution. It is put forward in order to expose the impossibility of capitalism to resolve the problems of the oppressed.

Under the guise of 'federalism' has come a straight reformist solution to the struggle of the Irish people for their independence.

Jones

COMMENT ON JONES'S STATEMENT ON IRELAND

Carolyn

Comrade Jones has an article in the IB which accuses me of being a reformist on Ireland.

It is reformist, he thinks, to believe that the mechanics of British withdrawal from Ireland will have to include British negotiations, agreements, and collaboration in organizing its own withdrawal with the other forces in the Irish situation - the two communities in Northern Ireland and the 26 county bourgeois government.

This 'reformist' position, even if Jones doesn't know it, is the position of the Provisionals, who call for British Army withdrawal to barracks and for a withdrawal date to be set. We focus the urgency we feel about it in Britain by expressing the demand for self-determination with slogans like 'Troops Out' and 'Troops Out Now'. But practically I cannot imagine by what procedure Britain will get out if not by something such as the Provos want. Certainly a major reason why the Provos want this is that they rely on Britain's good offices with the Protestant community to avoid withdrawal, or the announcement of it, leading to the eruption of sectarian civil war. Even the IRSP (when I debated with a leader of its left wing a couple of weeks ago) appeals to Britain to disarm the RUC and UDR before it goes.

Jones half admits the fact that almost all the withdrawals by imperialist powers in the last 30 to 35 years have been accompanied by negotiations (Vietnam in 1975, with the victorious Stalinist armies sweeping down from the north, is the great exception; but in the establishment/consolidation of North Vietnam in 1954 there were negotiations - in which the Russian and Chinese Stalinists sold out the South Vietnamese). The alternative to all negotiations is for the revolutionary class or army to be able to sweep all before it, and be complete master of its area or even of the international situation. That is easier to prescribe than to arrange in all circumstances.

There are negotiations and negotiations - negotiations from strength and negotiations from weakness, negotiations in which the withdrawing power saves face and perhaps some interests while surrendering its basic position, immediate control, and control over the future actions of the victorious rulers of the formerly subordinate area, etc. Different combinations of political and even basic class forces will have different attitudes about what can be negotiated. Those closest to imperialism, socially and politically, will be more eager to compromise; the more radical and therefore more distant from imperialism will be uncompromising on a more fundamental range of issues and consider it a betrayal to negotiate over their short of victory.

However, among even the most radical - communist revolutionaries in our sense of that term - only the metaphysical ultra-left would rule out negotiations as such. It would depend on what was being negotiated.

The principle, 'The imperialists have no rights', is a fine one: by definition they will in such a situation have might and power. The problem is how to slough it off, throw it off. If effectively that is what is being negotiated, then anybody who would spill another drop of blood needlessly would be a criminal idiot.

Of course the imperialists would want, in negotiations, to shape things after their departure to their liking: it would depend on the negotiations - that is, on the relationship of forces which forced them to the negotiating table in the first place. By definition also revolutionary forces which go to the negotiating table are unlikely to think that they have the option of an immediate clean sweep victory where they drive the imperialists and their allies before them 'like a herd of frightened deer' and need reckon with no-one and nothing but their own will. Or, at the least, they will consider it too costly, where the basics of victory can be achieved otherwise.

We may calculate that if the struggle goes on it will deepen in the social classes it arouses and in the course the transformation will take. There will be classes (peasants and workers) disappointed if the 'national revolution' stops short of

satisfying them. Especially if undifferentiated nationalism is ideologically dominant, they will blame 'sell-outs to imperialism' (the IRSP in Ireland now seldom rises higher than this), when in fact what happens in the negotiations with imperialism will be determined by the strength of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the oppressed country: imperialist deals to prop it up will be secondary. (Again, by definition, if they have taken it to the stage of war, they will not have started out eager to do a deal with the 'national bourgeoisie'). Thus the content of negotiations is what is decisive, and this in turn will be a product of class relations within the national/anti-imperialist struggle.

There are other things wrong with Jones's position.

Jones opposes negotiations in all conditions, and even if Britain were negotiating a settlement in which the main historic demands of the Irish people were conceded: this is straight ultra-left nonsense. It is the stuff that emotionally excites the petty bourgeois and student solidarity demonstrations in metropolitan capitals, rather than serious working class and anti-imperialist politics.

Worse than that, however, is the fact that Jones equates violence, war and physical force politics with revolutionary anti-imperialism and working-class politics. This is plain from what he writes in the IB. It has seemed to me to come across unmistakably in most of the discussions on Ireland over the last 18 months that Jones accepts the Irish Republicans' own central definition of revolutionary politics as in the first place, and irreplaceably, physical force politics.

If you drive them out or shoot enough of them, that's revolutionary; any negotiations are the opposite of revolutionary and debilitate the revolutionary drive.

This is the same error in principle as Jones's formalism - ignoring the content - over negotiations. It is what, I think, the sociologists call ethno-centrism: getting in your own light and judging different, or vastly different, political cultures according to the norms, standards, common experiences, and values appropriate to your own: it is, concretely, to look at revolutionary war and 'guns' with the eyes of someone who in close on 20 years as a revolutionary in Britain has possibly never seen a revolver or experienced anything more violent than the Grunwick picket line.

In Ireland, since the late 1870s, physical force on principle has been the irreducible dogma of republicanism of all shades, from authoritarian right wing republicans to revolutionary populist/socialist republicans.* Adherence to physical force does not tell you anything about their politics. People prepared to 'fight the state' or 'fight imperialism' by physical force in Britain would at least show seriousness; but in Ireland you cannot take that for granted, in a political culture saturated by violence.

One of the dominant features of post-Trotsky 'Trotskyism' has been the proliferation of many mutations under the general tag 'Trotskyism', though in fact what they are is Trotskyist phrases and dogmas fused with alien or half-alien elements - populism, anarchism, etc. This is the concrete expression of the political and theoretical 'crisis of post-war Trotskyism' and the form of its decomposition.

Jones's de facto acceptance of an alien definition of what is revolutionary - physical force - is an example of this process. It comes about, here as in other examples, because of an attempt to relate to the world not by concrete Marxist analysis of the facts, using Marxist categories and theories, but by way of dogmatic recipes and pattern, finding the facts of reality interesting only to the degree that they fit the patterns or illustrate them.

* I.e. the left Provos and the IRSP, who are the equivalent in Ireland of the SRs in Russia - the struggle against whom was a major precondition for the creation and development of the Bolshevik Party. The most important difference is that the Irish 'revolutionary socialist populists' are more or less tainted by Catholic sectarianism.

In fact Jones' denunciation of any negotiations here is probably a late by-product of the denunciation by the Healy tendency of the Evian agreement of 1962 between France and Algeria which brought to an end eight years of the terrible Algerian struggle for independence. Alone of the Trotskyists, the Healyites and Lambertists denounced the agreement, which gave Algerian independence as a 'sell-out' because some secondary or tertiary concessions were made to France.

Their attitude was blind factional animosity towards the others, in the first place the USFI, who had the delusion that Algeria was predestined to have a Cuba-style revolution and no Trotskyist party was necessary. (There are parallels with Nicaragua today).

The Healyite denunciation of Evian was irresponsible ultra-left stupidity.

Jones joined the SLL 18 or 19 years ago, and received his basic political training there. Denunciations of 'the Evian sell-out' and the vile revisionists of the USFI who supported it will have entered his subconscious as part of his basic education. That is one of the main sources of his ultra-left position here. He needs to slough it off.

It is true that to reject all negotiations is to hope for an all-conquering victory that won't come before the definitive breakthrough of workers' revolution. It is therefore in general childish and unreal.

It is especially childish, unreal, irresponsible and ultra-left where Ireland's historic struggle with Britain is concerned. Ireland has 4½ million people, including one million Protestants; Britain, 60 million. The principle governing Britain's relations with Ireland were well set out in the statement James Connolly made to the military court martial that condemned him to death on May 9 1916: "Britain has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland". Nevertheless Irish revolutionaries, including Connolly, had to take account of the fact that Britain had overwhelming might.

A governing notion of Irish revolutionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries (including World War 2) was summed up in the saying: "Britain's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity". It meant that only when Britain was in a major war could Ireland have any chance of successful insurrection. This regulated the ebbs and flows of Irish insurrectionary politics.

The Provos' approach to negotiations with Britain, outlined above, is a continuation of the stark realism that serious revolutionaries (which is what the Provos are, after their fashion) must have. It is simply inconceivable that the whole (Catholic and Protestant) people of Ireland - let alone the ½-million Catholic minority in the 6 Counties - could win such a victory over Britain that nothing would have to be taken into account but the victors' own will.

Of course revolutionaries in Britain would oppose and denounce Britain's self-seeking in such negotiations, and mobilise in Britain against it. But that takes us back to the question of the concrete content and issues in any negotiations.

Given that the central problem in N.Ireland is the Protestant community's attitude to the Catholic community and to a united Ireland, British negotiations which would or might placate the

N.I. Protestant community and avert sectarian civil war - and the hope of averting it is a major reason for the Provos' proposals about how Britain should withdraw - that would be positive and good.

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Finally, something which will have occurred already to the reader: the business about negotiations is not especially linked to a federal solution to the N.I. conflict. A federal bourgeois Ireland, or a Catholic-dominated state (which is now, in real terms, the immediate goal of the IRSP and Provos) - both will inescapably and equally involve negotiations with Britain, this side of the workers' revolution.

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And a word about the discussion in general. Jones says he wants to vote on federalism because it looks like not much more can be expected in the way of contributions. Does this mean he has nothing else to say? I'm sure it does mean that.

That's pretty remarkable! So has the discussion been. Jones started the public discussion with a letter in the paper which libelled us. That was 19 months into the fusion, and the democratic rights of the Irish Protestants had been advocated in the paper a number of times over that period. Jones's sudden interest in the issue seemed to some of us to be a by-product of the factional heat in the organisation.

Having started the discussion with a papal-style letter - i.e. he didn't argue from the facts, but propounded a line - he has been silent since. Has he nothing to say to the 5000 word article I wrote defending my position? It seems not, unless you count the contribution in this IB on my reformism.

Now, in a normal Marxist organisation governed by political ideas, Jones would by this stage in the discussion stand discredited by his silence. A combination of silence with intransigence on a position he cannot defend, on a very important question that he plainly knows little or nothing about, would brand him as not functioning according to the norms of an organisation like ours - that is, by reason, logic, arguments in the light of our common principles and goals.

A departure from those norms was shown in Jones's original letter to the paper. He says we should not follow the Provisionals into support for federalism. The Provos dropped federalism as policy in November 1981, and dropped it from the Sinn Fein constitution in November 1982. Jones first learned that federalism was Provo policy at the first NC discussion on Ireland late in 1981. By the time he came to write his letter, it was no longer Provo policy, but Jones had not taken the implications on board.

There is no shame in not knowing something in the late '81 discussion. It is shameful and scandalous to maintain a full factional mobilisation on the question and not to bother to acquaint oneself with the elementary facts of the issue. It is to downgrade politics in the organisation.

Yet, despite all this, for a certainty Jones can count on the support of at least a section of the organisation. That is a measure of our political problems as an organisation.

POSTSCRIPT 1.

Jones opposes negotiations. That is reformist. Very well. What is his revolutionary alternative? The British Army should pull out without a word. And then who should take over? The Provisional Army Council? The Dublin government? Who? And how?

In the EC discussion Jones answered this question by saying that if we could force British withdrawal, then the political situation in Ireland would have changed and a strong socialist movement there would be a candidate for power. This is wishful thinking. Rationally Jones should conclude from his own argument that troops out is not an immediate proposition; it depends on a socialist movement in Ireland, and at present there is not even an all-Ireland nationalist movement. (Both the Provos and the IRSP are feeble in the South). Rationally, Jones should draw the same conclusions as Militant. He avoids them only by shielding himself from reality with a fantasy about a miraculous transformation coming over Irish politics as soon as British troops pull out.

POSTSCRIPT 2

Jones knows something about trade union work. What would he make of somebody who, starting from a hatred of wage slavery, adopted the attitude to trade unionism that it was a betrayal of principle to negotiate on conditions and wages? Who argued that all negotiations for higher wages were a complete acceptance in principle of the right of the bosses to extract surplus value from the unpaid labour of the workers - as indeed they are?

Such a person would be either an immature person who had not learned the ABCs or either politics or trade unionism - or, a hopeless anarchist idiot. Karl Marx himself more than once had to argue against such people.

Jones's attitude to negotiations with an imperialism which we are not yet strong enough to wipe off the face of the earth is in principle exactly the same as 19th-century anarchist rejection of TU bargaining (and also, as it happens, of the labour movement fighting for progressive legislation under the bourgeois state).

Under the guise of radical 'principles' - which truly express some radical, revolutionary emotions - this is harmful political nonsense which tries to justify itself by calling the Marxists reformists and traitors.

IS THE FACTION PLANNING A SPLIT?

Kinnell

On Friday April 8 I spoke on the 'phone to Reagan, a member of the Faction. He told me that he expected the Faction to split from the WSL; that he was in favour of it doing so; and that he favoured discussions with Workers' Power after a split.

I then 'phoned Evington, the Faction's chosen spokesperson. He told me that the Faction had taken no decision to split, but some members of the Faction were in favour of a split and the issue would be discussed at the Faction's meeting that weekend (April 9-10).

At the Leicester pre-conference meeting on April 10 I raised the issue again. Evington said that the Faction had not discussed the matter at its weekend meeting; it would, however, be meeting each night during the conference and reviewing the question of a split in the light of events. At that meeting also Morrow, if I understood him right, described the present policy of the organisation as centrist and degenerate.

I do not think the conference should discuss the Glasgow resolution for the expulsion of the Faction leaders. Nevertheless, I do not think that the charges in that resolution can be dismissed.

If the Faction is planning a split, then obviously it will say that it isn't. For all that, I am not sure that they will split. The Faction is far from homogeneous in its general politics and in its attitudes to the WSL (though I should say that in all my experience Reagan is one of the most responsible and least hostile of the Faction's members). Many Faction members must be aware of the bleakness of their prospects after a split. Even if they managed to fuse with Workers' Power, they would face a career of relating to the class struggle by way of polemics against what other revolutionaries are doing within that struggle.

If some comrades want to split, we can't stop them. What we can do is demand to know what we're debating at this conference. Are we debating with comrades who are committed to carry out the decisions of the majority? Or are we debating with people who owe more allegiance to external groups than to the WSL?

I think the Faction owes us some clear statements.

A COMMENT ON REILLY'S ARTICLE

Kinnell

In the last few months we have had many discussions in the organisation on c. work - which are reflected in the sections of Cunliffe's British Perspectives (and my amendment to it) and Hill's IB37. Unfortunately Reilly does not relate to these discussions, nor to the discussion around Isl's budget which was reflected in the paper .

Instead, what he does is to take off from real problems that exist in his area - mainly, from his account, disciplinary problems in relation to cd.J... - and make spurious generalisations. If we have problems with discipline over comrades in a particular area of work, the answer should be to apply discipline, not to retreat in panic from the work.

SECT POLITICS AND CLASS MOVEMENT POLITICS

Kinnell

Around last November, I wrote a long article for the IB under the above title, analysing the writings of Trotsky and Cannon in the 1930s and their relevance to our debates today. One point in it was the falseness of the analogy the Faction make between our present situation and the French Trotskyists in 1935. In 1935 Trotsky thought that an aggressive policy could win the SP and win thousands to a substantial new party. 'Aggressive' posturing by us today would not split the LP, it would just isolate us.

With the pressure of other material, my article has still not been stencilled. I am, however, putting into this IB the Introduction to it (written in January): it argues an important point not adequately (I think) made elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

In February 1851, as the Communist League was collapsing, Marx wrote to Engels:

"I am very pleased with the public and genuine isolation in which we two, you and I, find ourselves. It entirely suits our position and principles. We have now finished with the system of mutual concessions, with half-truths admitted for reasons of propriety and with our duty is sharing in the public ridicule in the party with all these asses".

Yet the same Marx and Engels considered their whole political struggle to be one for science against sectarian socialism. In their activity in the First International, and in Engel's advice to his British and US co-thinkers, they insisted again and again on the need

"to go in for any real general working-class movement, accept its actual starting point as such and work in it gradually up to the theoretical level... to work along with the general movement of the working class at every one of its stages without giving up or hiding our own distinct position and even organisation".

There were two aspects to their approach: the consolidation of an educated, clear-headed revolutionary nucleus, unblinkingly critical of all orthodoxies including existing "average left" orthodoxies; and a class movement, not sectarian, orientation, which would enable that nucleus to interact fruitfully with the mass movement.

One of the most mind-stretching of Marx's writings is the Critique of the Gotha Programme. Sentence by sentence he dissects the eclectic "average the German socialists' draft programme, ruthlessly exposing every empty declaratory phrase, every half-baked thought. Yet in the covering letter to his comments he wrote:

"Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes".

It was because it freed him from temporising with the confused, mish-mash, phrasemongering leftism of the existing socialist sects that Marx rejoiced in his isolation of February 1851. It was because of his ruthlessly realistic focus on class politics that he valued "every step of real movement" above all formal, literary concerns. We should try to make the same combination of attitudes ours. And that, I think, is the issue in the current debate.

There is on the face of it a paradox in the fact that those, like the "Internationalist Tendency", who on the tactical issues argue for more distance from the existing movement and a more declaratory revolutionary profile, are on the disputed political positions - third-worldism, Stalinism, Falklands, EEC, general strike - closer to existing "average leftism" than those of us they denounce as opportunists.

The root of it, I think, is that the IT and its co-thinkers lack ideological independence. On practically every issue, from civilian bombings through police accountability to the Falklands and Afghanistan, their position is determined by the wish to say no as vehemently as possible where the bourgeois establishment says yes.

Revolutionary in appearance and in intention, this attitude actually reflects slavish ideological dependence on the bourgeois establishment, lack of a solid theoretical foundation, the nervous impulse always to be proving our revolutionary virtue.

Frequently- because bourgeois society is not quite the simple polarity of reactionaries of all stripes on one side, revolutionaries on the other, which the IT evidently pictures it as - this method of negation lands the IT with the same position as the left reformists. Thus they need declamations, badges, and labels to satisfy their conscience.

The IT would have it that we are "liquidationist" - i.e. dissolving the organisation - or moving towards liquidationism. The charge, I think, merely shows how they mistake the livery and trappings of sectarian 'revolutionism' for real revolutionary activity. In truth the issue of liquidationism is posed the other way round.

Suppose the IT had their way. They would maintain an organisation (though - to judge from their attitudes on issues of party organisation - a somewhat loose and ramshackle one, worse in this respect than our present poor state). They would not be liquidationist on that level.

But what would their independent - oh so independent - organisation do? Bellow out much the same politics that the existing broad semi-revolutionary left advocates, only with a sectarian twist; propose much the same objectives, only with the tag on the end of each article:

"Only under the leadership of a revolutionary party can this be done".

Such an organisation would actually have liquidated Marxism as a positive, fructifying force in the labour movement. Ideologically it would condemn us to a Dark Ages in which every struggle would simply be the occasion for renewed comment on the rapacity of imperialism, the revolutionary drive of the working class, the sabotage of the bureaucracy and the need for the working class therefore to put aside idle diversions and rally round the self-proclaimed vanguard. Marxism would be reduced to permuting a few half-understood and mechanically interpreted formulae.

Against this trend I am arguing for:

1. Ideological independence, intransigence, critical thinking, opposition to phrase-mongering - and rigorous organisational norms in our own ranks.
2. On the basis of that, an orientation to the political life of the working class based on developing the real struggles and movements that exist, using our small Marxist nucleus as best we can as a lever and ideological fructifier within that development - rather than determining our tactics by starting from our own techniques, badges, and labels and regarding the various struggles and movements as so many arenas to propagandise in, like so many shops side by side on a High Street.

To those comrades who may still be bemused by the constant cries from the IT and others about us diluting or junking revolutionary politics, turning the organisation into a squad of Tribune sellers,⁹¹² I recommend this comment from Trotsky on the similar cries raised against Cannon and Shachtman in the US Trotskyist movement in 1935.

"One seems to breathe in a somewhat nightmarish atmosphere when one reads of the suspicions and rumours directed against comrades who have long fought for the ideas of the proletarian revolutionary struggle. Such methods can paralyze and demoralize the party unless they are at once brought to an end by the will of all.

"How does it happen that Comrades Oehler, Stamm, and others take recourse to such means? We have had in France an analogous case with Bauer, who, not content with a political struggle against the 'turn', suddenly became an inexhaustible source of suspicions, accusations, and even unbelievable slanders directed against all of us. He was, however, an

honest and sincere man, devoted to socialism. His misfortune is that he is a sick sectarian. Such a man can remain tranquil and friendly so long as the life of the organisation continues to revolve in familiar circles. But woe be it if events bring about a radical change! The sectarian no longer recognises his world. All reality stands marshaled against him and, since the facts flout him, he turns his back on them and comforts himself with rumours, suspicions, and fantasies. He thus becomes a source of slanders without being, by nature, a slanderer. He is not dishonest. He is simply in irreconcilable conflict with reality."

(Writings of L. Trotsky 35-36, Pathfinder, p 72/3)

METHOD

A brief attempt at clearing up a misunderstanding about the W+ EGM

At the London aggregate last Sunday, some comrades said they thought there had been a deliberate exclusion of women comrades from the W+ EGM. As far as I know, or anyone else I have spoken to knows, this was not the case.

On January 22, there was a W+ National Planning Meeting (NPM) held in Manchester. This had been discussed at the last W++ women's commission held the week before on January 16, at which there was a spread of comrades from both sides of the present discussion on women. Unfortunately, there was only one W++ comrade there at the NPM (this was partly because there was a W++ NC on the same day). That meeting, the NPM (which has the power to make decisions on W+ between AGM's) decided to suspend the campaign, pending an Extraordinary General Meeting. This was decided because the women there were extremely critical of the last issue of W+ paper, especially since decisions made by the W+ Steering Committee on what was to go in the paper had not been carried out, also because the central organisation of W+ was not being done.

The NPM had been called and organised by the Manchester W+ group. They had obtained a list of addresses from R. Lever so that they could send out the notifications. The Manchester women - not in the W++ - used this list also to notify W+ supporters of the EGM, which they had organised for April 9. Clearly, this list was selective (I have not personally seen it, as it is in Manchester). It did not have addresses from Leicester or Oxford on it - comrades from Coventry did not receive letters, I did not receive any letters either.

While there is no doubt that there could have been a better follow-up on who was and who was not on that list, there was no deliberate exclusion of anyone. There were several women at the EGM who had come simply from seeing the notice in the new W+ paper. Parkinson had reported on the situation at the last NC, March 20; I wrote a long note to Cunliffe about R. Lever withdrawing from the campaign (which she has now done), the paper and the EGM; I also spoke to Andrea C about the EGM - she asked me if it was open, and I said it was.

I hope this shows that there was not any deliberate exclusion of anyone from the EGM. I have some copies of the minutes of the EGM, not enough for everyone - please see me at Conference.

Fraser

C..... WORK AND EDUCATIONAL RE-ORGANISATION.

This is written in an attempt to articulate my thoughts on the advisability of c..... work in N..... gain the coming period. There are a number of factors which make me doubt the wisdom of the tactic given the specific circumstances.

1. Firstly, isolation. The organisation has provided virtually no back up in terms of doing c..... work in N..... and consequently I have had to rely on my own resources and contacts. I have in fact been able to build a reasonable periphery of contacts but this probably could have been done as an O member in any case. A recent broad group meeting of 40 people indicates some measure of support although a proportion of these would have been members of the CP. It is worth pointing out here that theoretically we have another League member in N..... - J... .. However J... who is undoubtedly a good orator and an experienced councillor has not sold the paper for at least 9 months and makes no attempt to associate himself with the broad group or the League. The organisation's lack of monitoring of comrades in public positions, such as c....., makes a none-sense of democratic centralism and will lay us open to manipulation by careerists etc. C..... work without a proper whip and caucusing is a farce and that is what we have in N..... at any rate.

2. As a result of isolation it is easy to get drawn into what I would term tactical politics. Essentially this necessitates accepting the basic structures and making the best administrative decisions within them. I am no longer prepared to play this managerial type role since I feel myself being pulled rightwards. The secondary educational review issue in N..... has highlighted this problem for me. This is not a matter of adapting simon pure approach to politics, but a realisation that without an organisation to back up your efforts an individual c..... has limited capacities, potential, and resources.

For example, on the educational review issue I worked with the NUT officer, and various rank and file elements to try to prevent school closures. Giving them information and doing leaflets with the STA has been useful, however from the c..... viewpoint the educational situation is seen as a problem to be solved within a given framework. Within that framework it is clear that some schools are not viable (the NUT and the SWP etc will admit this privately) and thus should be closed. Thus simply to oppose the school closures when there is an alternative tertiary system to which the NUT are opposed - but NATFHE are not - leaves one in the difficult situation of seeing the merits of all sides but ultimately being in a managerial situation of taking a decision - and we all know what happens to the kind hearted capitalist !

Comrades, as I have written on at least two previous occasions, the c..... tactic has not been thought through in my opinion, and it is interesting that our lack of co-ordination and monitoring in this area has not even become an issue. It will become an issue of course when one of our comrades makes a decision publicly with which the League will not want to be associated. When, for example, it is used as a stepping stone for a parliamentary career - not that we are of course opposed to using Parliament as a forum. But it would be politically sound to have decided this politically as an organisation. It seems to me at present that the organisational forms involved in c..... work - at any rate in the specific case of N..... - is leading to incorporation and a loss of sight of the revolutionary nature of our politics.

On pages two and three of my last report raised some of the general political problems which I feel need to be addressed. To date this has not been published in the IB, although a specific request was made to that effect at the time it was written. Whilst I can accept that there are

2. c... work and educational re-organisation.

administrative reasons for this, pressure of work at the centre, lack of peoplepower, it is interesting to note that these political problems have generally been glossed over.

The NUT fraction may be interested in the politics of the current re-organisation in N..... and ILEA which will become, where they have not already, rational issues. As an organisation we must try to work out general formulae for dealing with the issue if we are to give political leadership. In line with this comrades may find the Labour Party document "Lertai" "Learning for Life" useful. (£2 from Labour Party HQ) I would argue however that it is basically from a managerial standpoint (Comrades might refer to Schooling and Culture magazine No 12 £2plus 3Cp p&p from The Cockpit Arts Workshop, Gateforth Street, London NW8 for a critique)

In the present period I would strongly urge comrades to seriously consider the political merits of the tactic. One of the important points to be considered is, why are we standing as c..... in the present period ? Not to be social administrators, surely, or to be agents of the local state, or to play a semi-managerial role ! But, to undermine/destroy the local state & build up connections with the local 'labour movement' - However one wonders whether these connections with the 'labour movement' - which come from our role as C..... or P members - will continue/can be built up in our role as League members. If they cannot - & I strongly suspect they cannot - then there is a danger that what started as a tactic has been elevated to the level of a principle.

REILLY 2/3/83

WIDER POLITICAL QUESTIONS

Being involved in local c..... work is a question of tactics rather than one of principle. We have used it to try and find an organizational form by which we can relate our politics to the wider labour movement without losing sight of the revolutionary nature of our politics. That is in essence the problem which has faced the revolutionary left, the communists, since the days of the socialist revival in the 1870s.

It seems to me at the present time we are in danger of losing sight of the basic principles involved and are getting pulled down by organisational forms which are dragging us to the right politically. Let us take a few examples to illustrate the point. (a) The constitutional changes of the Alliance have hardly been debated in the organization, to my knowledge, and yet they have serious political implications for us as an organization. (b) As yet the organization has not published a single theoretical article on the tactic of standing comrades for c..... and what it entails. For example, how many comrades know anything about the question of decentralisation, whether it is an issue we should be involved in, etc. (Yet a tiny organisation like the Ch..... who have longer experience than us in utilising the bureaucratic structures have published a journal on the topic.)

(c) In fact, since our special conference there has not been a single IB. Instead we seem to be busy changing our hats, attending B..... meetings, Broad group meetings, C... meetings, etc. No attempt has been made to assess exactly what we are trying to achieve in this whirlwind of meetings. The nearest we got in London was an abortive meeting in which we were expected to read pages and pages of closely printed type during a meeting (they had to be handed back at the end) I for one have little idea what the debate was supposed to be about, but it simply reinforced my feelings that I was not the only one feeling uneasy about the current rightward drift of the organization without any discussion in the branches.

3. Reilly (wider political issues)

The question of c..... work is useful here because it seems to me to illustrate well the kind of political dangers we seem to be slipping into.

Whether we like it or not we will be involved in managerial decisions in situations where we do not have any kind of mass support. In this situation we could easily swing to the right. Already some comrades are considering whether or not an 18% to 20% rate increase is OK. It is amazing to find ourselves in this position without having done any theoretical work in the political ramifications of the situation, and to find ourselves being drawn in further without any attempt by the political leadership to thrash out the problems.

The time has come to analyse this situation. For example, on an empirical basis, have we won or lost in terms of our L work? Our political gains or losses may be less easy to measure. Certainly in overall terms the organisation, it is my impression that we have not grown although I stand to be corrected on this. On the specific issue, what gains have we made in terms of c..... work? And this is a question which has to be assessed on a wider basis than just Islington.

To what extent if any have we got comrades with experience in this area to articulate this in verbal and written reports? The answer here is in the positive yet I have yet to see any type of assessment whatsoever. Neither has the organisation tried in any serious way to monitor what individual comrades are doing. Thus we may get situations, rather like the CP had in the 1920s, where communists operating in the Labour Party didn't even attempt to sell their own newspaper.

The situation is all the more serious given the developments at the O conference. The onus must be on the political leadership to initiate a serious debate on O work and on local c..... work.

All in all the time has come to seriously theorize and debate our present situation, which in the case of c..... lasts for 4 years. It may be that fear of compromise makes the overthrow of the bureaucracy less likely, but the whole tactic of playing the game better than the bureaucrats rather than building up a mass base seems to me one of the crucial questions. To date it has not really been seriously discussed in relation to local c..... work.

In view of what I have said in the foregoing I would propose the following:

1. The date for an annual conference to be decided now and a preconference to start on these and other issues.
2. The IB to be published as a matter of urgency.
3. Decide on whether we are having a theoretical magazine or not. If we are, and it should be considered essential, then a proper working group should be made responsible for it.
4. That a detailed financial report be made available for the conference containing recommendations for putting the group on a sound financial footing.
5. That we consolidate our membership. That is, that we make quite clear what membership entails and we hold people to it. (This is simply not happening at the present time with people not selling papers, paying their proper dues and or simply acting in an ad hoc individualistic fashion.)
6. The political leadership of the organization start regional conferences on the current state of the labour movement, and the way forward.
7. That we have an immediate freeze on comrades putting themselves forward as potential c..... & parliamentary candidates until we have a proper discussion and theoretical debate on the current tactic. (As I understand it there are comrades already putting themselves forward in other parts

FOR THE EXPULSION OF THE INTERNATIONALIST
FACTION LEADERSHIP.

"'At least we make an infernal noise' - such is the slogan of many revolutionary minded individuals who have been caught up in the maelstrom of events and who have neither theoretical principles nor social roots."

(Lenin, Iskra, number 23, 1902.)

At its branch meeting of 8th April, the Glasgow branch of the League passed a motion, to go before this week's national conference, for the expulsion of the leading figures of the Internationalist Faction (IF) and giving the other members of the IF the choice of resigning from the IF (whilst having the right to continue the fight over their political differences with the current majority positions within the framework and discipline of the League) or likewise being expelled from the League. This document is by way of background to the motion and is necessarily brief for reasons of time.

The motion raises a number of accusations against members of the IF in Leicester:

a) they have stated their intention of splitting from the League at the conference. This has been stated to non-members of the IF in Leicester, and also to people even outside of the League itself in Leicester.

b) the in-fighting now current in the IF-dominated Leicester branch of the League has been slanderously attributed to the influence of the League majority. This refers to a brief document written by MJ of the Leicester branch, dealing with the sorry state of affairs in the Leicester branch. The document refers to the 'animosity bordering on hatred' in the branch, warns of the danger of total collapse and accuses those members who fail to pull their weight of being involved in "wittingly or unwittingly playing a counter-revolutionary role". These parts of the document presumably refer to the public harangues between members of the IF now apparently in vogue in Leicester, leading on one occasion at least to a youth member of the IF being reduced to tears by PF. Rather than recognise that such is the inevitable outcome of that incestuous inward-looking sectarianism and semi-cultist cliquism which characterises the IF, MJ slanders the League majority (thereby the League itself) by attributing this to the influence of the "inadequate politics" of the League.

c) that recruitment and education in Leicester are on the basis of the IF's, not the League's, politics. We have been informed of this by different sources, of whose reliability and honesty we have no reason to question.

d) that members of the IF have indulged in external factionalisation with members of Workers Power (WP). CS, for example, we are informed, had the doubtful privilege of reading the drafts of the latest turgid publication from WP (that characteristically bland history of post-war 'Trotskyism') at the stage when they were still WP internal bulletins. It is conceivable that WP hand around their IBs to non-members of WP unless they enjoy some kind of working relation with WP. External factionalisation is also reflected in the bloc between members of the IF and WP on the women's sub-committee of Leicester Trades Council, and also in certain aspects of youth work.

e) members of the IF have failed to carry out decisions of the League in their day-to-day work. The League is committed, for example, to building LA@ and the SL@, yet nothing has been done about such issues in Leicester, where the IF-dominated branch enjoys hegemony on the Left. In fact, the record of work (i.e. the absence of such a record) is a pretty shoddy reflection on the politics and pretensions of the IF. Their failure to build any campaign on Ireland, for example, is strangely at odds with their supposedly internationalist, anti-imperialist nature. And the collapse of any broad-based labour movement campaign against racism and fascism (cf. the old Leicester Trades Council Anti-Racist Committee) is another strange contrast to the IF's supposed commitment to fighting around the issue of the various forms of double oppression under capitalism.

f) potentially serious revolutionaries have held back from joining/members have resigned from, the League because they cannot tolerate the idea of being in the same organisation as the leaders of the IF and cannot take the League seriously as long as it tolerates such people in its midst. The former category refers to various individuals in Leicester; the latter category refers, for example, to the former member of the League in Carlisle. We believe that members of the League have left the organisation in Leicester for the same reason but, at the time of writing, cannot vouch for this.

g) the League is organised in such a fashion in Leicester as to better promote the factional manoeuvres of the IF leaders than the work of the League. The League is divided into three branches in Leicester: NHS, TCWU, and industrial workers. This is clearly a useless division when it comes to the need for initiatives on issues which cut across

the three different branches (e.g. racism, Ireland, L@ work etc., etc.) and smacks of pretentiousness to boot. the industrial workers branch has four members, two of whom are unemployed (and aren't TGWU members generally industrial workers as well?). But this division does provide the opportunity for IF leaders and NUT members PF and HF to move around the branches, cracking down where necessary on any dissidence in the ranks. As teachers they don't belong to any branch in particular, in fact none at all. But their positions on the Trades Council could 'justify' membership of the TGWU or industrial workers branches one day, whilst the next day they could pop up as members of the NHS branch, on the grounds that they are also public sector employees, or because their work on the Trades Council involves work around the NHS. The factional needs come first; the politics second; and the work of the League somewhere distantly on the horizon.

Having raised such accusations the motion goes on to commit the conference to demanding a reply from the IF representative. Thereafter the conference will discuss and vote upon the specific motion outlined in paragraph one of this document.

All members of the Glasgow branch voted in favour of presentation of this motion to the conference. At the Scottish aggregate on Sunday, the Edinburgh branch can be expected to add its support to ours for the motion. We are no longer prepared (not that we ever actually were anyway) to see the work of the League blocked and sabotaged by people who have no commitment at all to building the League. We see no reason at all to allow these people to attend the conference of the League, or retain any connection at all with the League, when they are out to inflict the maximum damage upon the organisation, particularly given their avowed intention of splitting the League.

We have nothing but contempt for the politics of the IF. Whilst accusing the League leadership of liquidationism, they themselves liquidate their politics in the face of petty bourgeois Irish nationalism, serve up Argentine chauvinism as 'progressive anti-imperialism, and deny those oppressed by Stalinism the right to self determination. But the reason for the motion for the expulsion of the leading figures of the IF does not flow out of these political differences. It flows out of our conclusion that the IF leaders are committed to sabotaging the work of the League in the run-up to their imminent departure from the League. Hence, in the motion, we draw a distinction between those members of the IF guilty of this wrecking role and those members of the IF who have political differences with majority positions but are not involved in undermining the work of the League.

Where those expelled members of the IF go is their affair. PF no doubt believes he can maintain them as a clique around the unlikely cult figure of himself. But the 'animosity bordering on hatred' existing within the IF is in itself one reason why this is a far from likely outcome. One or two members of the IF will probably join the SL (stranger things have happened), whilst the bulk of those who remain politically active, or at least politically involved, will probably be sucked in by WP. WP are infinitely shrewder operators than PF and HF put together, and the purpose of sending WP members back into Leicester was precisely for the purpose of picking up some fragments of the IF section of the League. (What other reason can an organisation have for exporting people to, of all places, a political rural backwater like Leicester?) In the final analysis though, it is up to the IF members themselves what they do and where they go. The purpose of our motion is simply to cleanse the ranks of the League of those who are so actively and disloyally opposed to our work of building a revolutionary party, as are the (mis-)leaders of the IF.

League Glasgow branch; 9th April.

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OUTLINE POINTS OF A REPLY TO THE LOR ON THE MP

First should be said that the LOR has shown a 'flexible' attitude to entry work. For example, their representatives have said that 'registration' was not a principle, only a tactical question.

My criticism of their positions centre on their lack of experience in this work, and thus their interpreting certain expressions and positions as showing the strategically wrong line of the movement.

It is clear that the subject of their document covers many of the differences within the WSL and that where I would agree with some of their positions others would not.

On the Benn section:

It is correct to say that Benn does not represent a 'socialist' alternative. But to argue against them being more 'progressive' in the abstract is wrong (p.3. para 5).

'Progressive' is a relative question. Benn has no solution, democratic or socialist, for Ireland, but his defence of the Sinn Fein invitation by Livingstone is 'progressive'. Or similarly his statements against incomes policy as opposed to the right-wing.

Certainly his positions as regards democracy in the LP are 'progressive' in themselves. They don't give us socialism but they do, as the document says, facilitate the struggle of revolutionaries and thus moving towards a revolutionary position.

I agree with the points in the document about presenting ourselves as a clear alternative to the 'left-wing reformism' of Benn. It is correct to say that the 'Bennite ideology' represents the present limit of the 'broad left' movement. But to say it is 'preventing' the movement from 'advancing a consistent anti-capitalist project' is one-sided.

The preventing is only insofar as the opposition(us) within the movement comes up against the barrier of this ideology.

In other words the movement gives us the opportunity to present an anti-capitalist perspective by its 'democratic' ideology, and is a barrier by its ~~own~~ own capitalist perspective.

It gives us the opportunity, if we work within it, and it is a political barrier.

This is why we have to be careful about simply using the word 'preventing'.

At the present moment Benn's ideology is that of the movement, but the movement will be continuously thrown into conflict with it. This can be a development if revolutionaries were able to politically develop the movement, in the process against Benn's ideology.

I agree that we shouldn't call ourselves 'Bennite'. But having interviews or articles by 'authorities' of the Broad Left movement is correct. Where we haven't had replies, such as the Benn articles or Reg Race on the Malvinas, was incorrect.

The fact we have the interviews shows that we are part of the movement, that we go along with its 'progressive' side. The replies are to attack the ideological role that is a barrier to the development of a revolutionary alternative.

Whilst I have agreed with some of the criticisms above, I do not agree that "The mentioned WSL positions reflect an organic line, not only tactical but at least to a large extent strategical" (p.5)

They can only be this if they represent the whole of the way the movement works. There is in my opinion an incorrect drift ~~away~~ but this does not mean the organisation has become 'revisionist'.

Workers' government:

I think in all movements, of any size, there are disagreements over the Workers' Government slogan. The WSL is no exception.

But the position on it in this document is wrong.

It is noticeable that not one of the examples they quote is from the period of the 4th International. In the Transitional Programme the slogan is presented as a weapon for "exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organisations of the Second, Third and Amsterdam Internationals".

