

Internal Bulletin 118

How Should the NC be elected? - Hughes/A response
to Hughes - Kinnell/NC minutes May 5/NC minutes March 31/Reject the Appeals, support
the NC, build the WSL - Entwistle/Some briefing notes on 'world Trotskyism' - Kinnell
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How Should the NC be elected?

The forthcoming conference will determine how we build the League and what kind of organisation we will be building. An important part of this will be the leadership we elect to carry out these decisions. How we elect these comrades will inevitably reflect the kind of organisation we are trying to build.

Any tendencies or factions at conference will have the right to minority representation guaranteed by being allotted NC places in proportion with their size. The question is how will the 'majority' portion of the NC be elected.

STV or Multi-X-vote

If we are to continue with an NC which reflects the broad spectrum of politics in the League - and that means more than just comrades who closely agree with Carolan or Kinnell plus faction members - it is important we elect it by STV. The other option - the multi-X-vote system, each member has as many votes as there are people to be elected and then its first past the post - could completely fill all the 'majority' NC places with comrades from a slate proposed by the current NC majority. All that would be needed to guarantee this is 51% of non-faction members to vote solidly for such a slate. This means that 51% of 80% of the organisation (NCs currently account for about 20%), or 40.8% of the total could elect 80% of the NC. The other 49% of non-faction members may have voted for only part or none of the majority slate.

Why STV is better is explained very well in the following extract from the report carried at the April conference recommending electing the NC by STV.

"STV is more complicated to count than the multi-X-vote system. But it also has many advantages. The crucial political (emphasis in original) advantage for our purposes is that under multi-X-vote even large minorities tend to get wiped out. In a conference where 51% support group A and 49% support Group B, if each group votes solidly for a group slate, then group A will sweep the board and group B will get no representation on the committee.

"This cannot happen under STV. STV produces proportional representation. As long as members of a 49% group vote for candidates on their own group as top preferences (in any order they choose), they are bound to get about 49% of the places on the committee."

(Report on the Single Transferable Vote, IB 53,
Cunliffe, Kinnell, Smith)

An example of a comrade not on the majority slate but attracting enough support at conference to justify election to the NC is Callaghan. It is unlikely that Callaghan would have been elected at the April conference if the multi-X-vote had been used. This is because if some members broadly supporting the majority slate decided to vote for him they would have been splitting the majority vote and probably would have only achieved letting an extra supporter of the Smith group get elected instead. So STV avoids intensifying factionalism. The necessity to whip comrades into line to vote solidly for your faction or risk splitting the vote is removed.

Charity

Of course you may say that we can trust the NC majority to put forward a balanced slate which covers most of the spectrum of views outside the faction. But why should the question of whether the full breadth of the organisation is reflected on the next NC be left to the charity of the 'majority' when STV can guarantee it.

Regional Representation

It has been pointed out that STV does not guarantee regional representation on the NC. This is true but then neither does the X-vote system. Only electing representatives region by region separately could achieve this and I hope no one is proposing such a federalist notion.

Party Unity

STV was proposed for the election of the current NC to avoid either minorities being crushed or the conference dividing into several 'factions' to elect their portion on the NC. In short to avoid or at least reduce the possibility of a split. To reject STV now, in an even more factional situation would be to further reject the fight for party unity.

Hughes -- June 1984

A RESPONSE TO HUGHES -- Kinnell

Comrade Hughes' concerns are reasonable. But on balance I think that the 'multi-X-vote', with a nominating commission independent of the outgoing NC, is better.

STV is designed for a situation where the electorate is divided into a few fairly homogeneous blocs. It gives those blocs proportional representation.

For an electorate which is not sharply divided into blocs, but rather includes a spectrum of shades and differences on particular questions, STV has bad effects. It tends to generate 'microfactions'. It tends to divide up the electorate into small groupings - geographical groupings, 'interest' groupings, whatever - each trying to get their own one or two people on. For example: if some branches vote to put their local candidate preference no.1, then that creates a pressure on all other branches to do likewise. The NC, which should represent the organisation as a whole, ends up representing a myriad of 'microfactions'.

Put it another way. Suppose the nominating commission does a reasonable job, so that the final NC - or at least the non-faction part of it - corresponds to their list with 3 or 4 changes. Under X-vote the 3 or 4 non-list people elected will get on because of having the majority of electors voting for them. Under STV they will get on, probably, because of having organised 4 or 5 associates to put them no.1.

Hughes' fears about X-vote are unfounded. It is practically inconceivable that 51% of non-faction members will vote for a straight nominating commission list. All our experience is that very few people for the straight list: most people vote for most of the list, but always with variations. I looked through the files and found the 1978 I-CL voting as an example. One candidate on the recommended list got only 25 votes: one not on the list got 52.

Last year was exceptional. There were sharply defined blocs. In that situation X-vote would produce a pressure to tightly-whipped factional voting and quite possibly odd results. Having X-vote would drive the Smith group into forming a faction to get onto the NC. We wanted to avoid that. As it happens they voted as a tightly-whipped faction anyway, but we did what we could to avoid that. That was the overriding consideration then. But it was exceptional.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE: MAY 6 1984

1. LIVERPOOL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hill introduced. There was a discussion about whether Liverpool committee had timed its solidarity conference (June 23) too late; on the possibilities of support for Liverpool from other Labour councils, and what slogans to raise; etc.

Agreed:

- a) We mobilise for the June 23 conference, and argue for it to be a real conference rather than a rally.
- b) We call for the Parliamentary Labour leadership to combat any Tory legislation to send commissioners into Liverpool by parliamentary obstruction.
- c) Hill moved that we call for the conference to be held earlier. This motion was LOST.
- d) It was agreed that we should raise the call for other councils to refuse to pay debt charges. Kinnell moved that this demand should be put forward as a response to action by the banks against Liverpool council. Hill moved that the demand should not be tied down in this manner. Kinnell's version was CARRIED.

2. MINUTES

Levy moved: "In view of the allegation of disloyalty against comrade Levy contained in Carolan's 'Open Letter' IB, repeated in the NC meeting of April 14 and at the OSC meeting of May 4, and in the light of comrade Picton's comments, accepts that the evidence justifying this charge is false. The NC further opposes any discrimination against comrade Levy as a result of this unproven allegation".

In support of his motion he cited this letter from Picton: "I write to confirm the content of our recent telephone conversation as follows. I have never heard you try to encourage comrades to join the new Smith/Jones group whatever it may be. To my recollection the nearest approach to this in your position was to state: 1. That you regarded the internal democracy question in the group as of very great importance. 2. That you considered the prospects of an internally democratic regime to be better in the Smith/Jones group than in the organisation. I'd like to add that I have no recollection of speaking about this issue to comrade Carolan. Finally, this note is to confirm facts as I'm not prepared to be used as a chopping block for further expulsion/splitting and although I have the greatest respect for you as a comrade that I fervently want to see staying in the organisation this note should in no way be seen as any form of support for the new tendency which I understand is in the process of forming".

Carolan moved: "This NC accepts that Levy did not explicitly urge Picton to leave the WSL and go with the Oxford faction. However as Levy does say that if Smith and co. are not readmitted the WSL will be a bureaucratic rump and that the best prospects of a democratic organisation capable of development lie with the Oxford faction's prospective organisation. In substance the message of this position is in fact to suggest to comrades that they should join the Oxford faction."

Collins moved that Levy's resolution not be put. This was lost.

Levy's resolution: First sentence carried by 9 votes to 3. Second sentence carried by 6 for, 1 against, 8 abstentions.

Carolan's resolution: First sentence carried unanimously. Second sentence carried by 10 votes (Callaghan, Carolan, Collins, Fraser, Hill, Joplin, Kinnell, Lewis, Parkinson, Whettling) to 6 (Cunliffe, Gunther, Levy, Oliver, Parsons, Jagger).

March 31 NC minutes: not done short of brief note in circular. To be done for next NC.

SL: There was a resolution from East London, with an EC recommendation to endorse it. In view of the forthcoming split in the SL*, the resolution called for education and information on the issues involved, and the publication of a pamphlet. Gunther moved an addition: that we should also carry material in the paper. Cunliffe moved an addition: that a commission be set up to draft the pamphlet (the EC had proposed that Collins do it).

Gunther's amendment was carried. Cunliffe's amendment was carried: Collins to convene the commission.

The resolution as amended was endorsed, with everyone voting for except Parsons.

4. PREMISES

Joplin reported on the possibility of new premises. It was agreed to authorise the EC to launch a moving fund as soon as a costing for the operation could be established.

5. PAPER SALES

Levy reported. Agreed to try to use the miners' strike to boost sales, especially estate sales.

6. MINERS' STRIKE

Hill reported, and there was a discussion.

7. GENERAL STRIKE

Kinnell moved a resolution against the 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' slogan - see below.

Cunliffe moved that the NC endorse the line of the O'Connor/Ellis document, 'For a General Strike to kick the Tories out', in IB 110.

Parkinson moved an amendment to delete the initial clause of Kinnell's resolution.

Parkinson's amendment was carried, with 1 against (Kinnell). Kinnell's motion as amended was carried with 3 votes against (Cunliffe, Levy, Parsons). Cunliffe's motion was defeated with 2 votes for (Cunliffe, Levy), 3 against, and the rest abstaining.

Motion as carried: "We should not pose 'kicking the Tories out' as the aim of the general strike. We should link the general strike call to immediate demands (support the miners, stop the cuts and closures, smash the anti-union laws), while explaining that the general strike once underway is in its essence a challenge to state power".

Kinnell's original text began: "We should raise the call 'kick the Tories out' together with the general strike call, but not pose 'kicking the Tories out'..." Parkinson's amendment deleted: "We should raise the call....". It was made clear in the discussion that the amendment did not mean that we should never use the slogan 'kick the Tories out'.

8. CONFERENCE AGENDA

See branch circulars no. 53 or 54, or IB 116, for details.

Oliver moved that there be a separate session on the Saturday on 'Balance-sheet of the fusion'. This was agreed, with the understanding that it would be on the basis of existing documents.

Cunliffe moved: to delete Afghanistan from the agenda - LOST - to delete 'international work' (proposed by Hill on the basis of the November 19 NC resolution) - CARRIED - and to add an 'international report' based on the 5 areas of international solidarity work decided at the March 10 NC - CARRIED.

NC/3

Appeals procedure. Motion from the EC that it should be as at NC - i.e. one representative from Smith group plus one witness. Carried 6 votes to 4. Alternative proposal, from Parsons, was for all members of the expelled faction to attend, with $\frac{1}{2}$ hour speaking time to divide among themselves as best they wish.

Also agreed that the representatives from the expelled faction should be present to speak and to hear the case for expulsion, and for direct questions: then they would leave the conference to permit an internal discussion.

Place in the agenda. It was moved that the appeals be taken as first item - carried 7 votes to 4. Alternative proposal was that they be taken later on Saturday - lost 4 votes to 7. It was also proposed that the vote on the appeals be taken later on, after the main discussions on Saturday - lost 5 to 6.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MARCH 31 1984

AGENDA

Gunther challenged the chair's ruling that the resolution on the Smith faction in IB 99 was in order. Challenge lost 8 votes to 14.

Jones challenged the basis of the NC meeting. The previous NC decision had implied a six weeks gap before this NC. Challenge lost 8 votes to 14.

MINUTES

Smith asked for an addition to the minutes of the March 10 meeting on the special conference call. This was agreed as follows:

"Smith called for a special conference on the basis of the required number of members calling for it.

The chair (Hill) ruled that he would not accept the names from Smith but would require the actual signatures. He further stated that on receipt of the actual signatures the conference would take place automatically within 8 weeks. The EC would deal with the request and make arrangements. No further NC would be necessary to do that".

Kinnell asked for it to be noted that the EC had received the signatures for the special conference at its meeting on March 29 and had referred the matter to the NC in view of the fact that it was only two days away.

Oliver said that a procedural challenge from him at the March 10 NC had been missed out, also that he had 'not voted' on a number of other items in addition to those recorded.

Parsons: arguments for his resolution on Control Commission had not been included. Agreed that the minute of Callaghan's arguments on that item should be deleted.

SMITH FACTION

Carolan moved the resolution in IB 99.

Oliver moved the Coventry resolution (IB 99).

Gunther moved the S.W.London resolution (IB 99).

After discussion, the Carolan resolution was carried by 14 votes to 8.

On Smith's resolution on the Control Commission^(IB99), Carolan moved that the CC report be published together with the relevant correspondence and submissions. Agreed.

MINERS

Kinnell opened a discussion. A resolution was drafted in the course of the discussion, and carried by 14 votes to 3. (It is printed, slightly expanded and edited, in paper no.173).

Cunliffe moved a resolution that the editor should ensure that the arguments for a general strike are put in the paper. Callaghan moved that the resolution not be put. Carried, 13 votes to 3 with 1 abstention.

There was also a preliminary discussion on the use of the general strike slogan, and in particular the slogan 'General strike to kick the Tories out'.

MEETING CALLED BY IB 92 FOR APRIL 1

Carolan moved that the NC send a representative to address the meeting. Motion carried by 14 votes to 2. Agreed that Keith should go.

SOME BRIEFING NOTES ON 'WORLD TROTSKYISM'

Kinnell 13.6.84.

The following are some information notes on various would-be Trotskyist currents internationally. It is partly based on discussions at the Lutte Ouvriere fete last weekend.*

a. The USFI

Its world congress is currently scheduled for January/February 1985. The USFI, as comrades will know, is sharply polarised between the SWP-USA and its co-thinkers on one side, and the current around Ernest Mandel on the other. A split seems likely at or before the world congress.

The SWP-USA, over the last five years, has become a political satellite of the Cuban government. Before then it had never been very sharp in its analysis, and certainly not adequate, but generally it had been more critical of Castroism and Stalinism than the Mandel current.

On December 31 1978 SWP national secretary Jack Barnes made a speech announcing a turn towards uncritical political identification with Castro. The turn was rapidly developed after the death in January 1979 of the SWP's veteran theorist, Joseph Hansen.

Until July 1979 the SWP-USA had been highly critical of - indeed, sourly sectarian towards - the Sandinistas' struggle against Somoza. After the Sandinistas' victory it swung over to total endorsement for the Sandinistas, and even retrospective approval for their policy of alliance with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie.

Now:

a) The SWP-USA identifies entirely with Castro. Large sections of its press are given over to descriptions of life in Cuba and Nicaragua in the style of 'Soviet Weekly'. On international questions, Castro and the Sandinistas are habitually cited as authorities and models of socialist-internationalist policy.

b) This attitude has been extended to other Stalinist-type regimes. The Vietnamese government is applauded almost as enthusiastically as the Cubans. While supporting Solidarnosc, the SWP condemned solidarity demonstrations for it in the West organised by social-democratic labour movements as cold-war exercises. The SWP vigorously insists that there is no economic crisis in the USSR, and a recent article in its press was headlined: "US worker, visiting Soviet Union, sees economic progress".

c) The SWP has adopted a thoroughgoing "two camps" view of the world - everything is a matter of Imperialism versus the Revolution. Criticisms of Cuba, of Nicaragua, of Vietnam, of the USSR, etc are dismissed as "imperialist lies". Even the SWP's (weak) support for Solidarnosc was justified by the (tortuous) argument that imperialism would gain from its suppression.

For example, this is how the SWP justifies its support for Iran in the Iran/Iraq war:

"All [those on the left who do not support Iran] capitulate to the pressure of the imperialist propaganda campaign against the Iranian revolution...

"The Militant has a completely different starting point in looking at the Iraq-Iran war. We view this war - and all wars today - from the standpoint of

* Five comrades went over for this. It is perhaps worth noting that this activity was organised not by the DCF enthusiasts for the warm bosom of the 'world Trotskyist movement', but by some of those who (so the DCF says) are interested only in hearing the sound of our own voices. Also, the DCF view that we are discredited among would-be Trotskyist currents internationally was belied by the interest we found. It is their own lack of interest in our politics that the DCF projects onto others.

the international fight against imperialism and the struggle to advance the world socialist revolution. Iran is a semicolonial nation that had a deep-going revolution against dictatorship and imperialist domination in 1979. That revolution succeeded in shattering the 25-year dictatorship of the shah installed by Washington. Ousting the shah opened the door to further mobilisations by the nation's toilers for social, economic and political demands that posed the need for a workers and peasants government. The overthrow of the shah weakened US imperialism and strengthened the world working class. For this reason, imperialism has been trying to reverse the gains of the Iranian revolution ever since - through overt means and through proxy means, such as the Iraqi war". (Militant, 18.5.84).

The barbaric repression of the Khomeini regime is, in the eyes of the SWP, an unfortunate detail in comparison to its 'anti-imperialism'. The SWP condemns the Mujahedeen's fight to overthrow Khomeini as "reactionary" and "pro-imperialist".

d) The SWP has explicitly renounced Trotskyism. In particular, it has rejected the theory of permanent revolution in favour of Lenin's old formula, discarded in 1917 but later picked up by the Stalinists after Lenin's death, of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry". (See our pamphlet, 'Trotskyism or Castroism').

e) The SWP has recently completed a purge of the internal opposition to its Castroite turn. Those purged include almost all of the SWP's veteran members. They are now mainly organised in two groupings, Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. The main immediate difference between these two groupings is that the FIT considers itself an external faction of the SWP, and SA considers itself a separate organisation. Both are more or less aligned with Mandel, though SA appears to be more favoured by the USFI centre. There are some people in this milieu who are looking for a more radical alternative to Castroism than Mandel's, and we have some contact with some of them.

The Mandel current's response:

a) It has gone at least three-quarters of the way with the SWP-USA on Cuba and Nicaragua. In 1978-9 some quite lucid articles on Cuba appeared in the USFI press, but now it considers the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments as authentic revolutionary working-class leaderships, only weak and inconsistent on some political questions - the word it uses is 'centrist'. (On the basic issues here, see the WA pamphlet, 'Marxists and Nicaragua').

b) The French section - the central organisation of the Mandel current - has responded relatively vigorously to the SWP-USA on Poland, with quite uninhibited solidarity with Solidarnosc. Mandel's draft theses for the forthcoming USFI congress also insist quite categorically on the reality of the economic crisis in the USSR.

c) A lot of the Mandel current's polemics against the SWP-USA take up the falsity of "a strategy which gives priority to the confrontation between the 'camps', that is between the imperialist states and the bureaucratised workers' states (beginning with the USSR) rather than to the worldwide class struggle" (Mandel draft theses).

Yet the basic analytical framework of the Mandel current's documents - now and for 35 years past - sees Imperialism and the Revolution as the two great motive forces in the world. The Mandel current adds more qualifications and refinements to that framework than does the SWP-USA. But the SWP-USA is developing the logic of a root idea which is common to both them and the Mandel current.

On the immediate question of the Iran-Iraq war, the Mandel current is in sharp opposition to the SWP-USA, condemning the war on both sides.

d) The Mandel current defends the general ideas of historic Trotskyism

against the SWP-USA. But it does so while maintaining politics on Central America which flagrantly contradict those general ideas.

The SWP's conversion to a variant of Stalinism makes the Mandel current look relatively good in comparison. And certainly there is a serious difference between the SWP current and the Mandel current. But the Mandel current both incubates the general ideas from which the SWP had developed its politics, and is far from basic Trotskyism itself on issues such as Cuba.

The present politics of Socialist Action on the Labour Party - determined by the Mandel current - give a closer-to-home test of them.*

b. The Lambertists

This current has a very feeble presence in Britain, but some weight internationally, and - in the French PCI - perhaps the largest nominally-Trotskyist organisation in the world today. Until 1971 it was allied with the Healyites in Britain. Comrades can perhaps get an idea of its general politics if they are described as a mixture of the Healyites' ferocious polemical self-promotion and organisational regime and tendency to focus activity round periodic monomaniacal campaigns, with the (British) Militant's ritual faith in the 'historic process'.

The PCI has recently taken a new turn. It is campaigning (by its characteristic methods - petitions and mass rallies - and also through a Euro-election effort) for a "workers' party". The programmatic basis for this "workers' party" is set out by them as follows:

"Our programme: Democracy. Considering that the majority made up of SP and CP deputies, sent by the people to the National Assembly, is in a position, by decreeing itself sovereign, to vote through laws... [they call on that SP-CP majority to vote through various measures]. They call for workers, youth and peasants to "unite for respect for democracy, against exploitation and oppression and for socialism". ('Informations Ouvrieres,' any recent issue).

The analytical basis for this perverse version of the parliamentary road to socialism is that the chief - and insoluble - contradiction in France today is between parliamentary democracy and the various undemocratic features of the current (5th Republic) constitution. (For more on this see WSR2).

This campaign goes together with a complete alignment of the PCI (it was already fairly close) with the bureaucracy of Force Ouvriere, the third largest (and generally most conservative) of the French trade union federations. The rationale here is less spelled out, but appears to be the fact that because FO - unlike the bigger federations - has no ties with the CP and SP, it is more critical of the government.

According to LO, LCR and French Morenist comrades I discussed with, the practical effect of this campaign is to group a certain number of Socialist Party and Force Ouvriere people around the PCI.

Together with this campaign has gone the expulsion from the PCI of Stephane Just, long their leading writer and polemicist, who opposed the shift to a programme of parliamentary democracy. From "two hundred" to "several dozen" members (according to different estimates I heard) were expelled together with Just. They have not yet set up any new group.

* The document on France in WSR2 gives a critique of the French LCR, the central organisation of the Mandel current; the basic points of that critique still apply today, judging from their press and discussions with LCR comrades last weekend. On available evidence the LCR is in a bad state organisationally at present.

c. The Morenists

This is the third large current of would-be Trotskyism. In comparison to the Mandel and Lambert currents, it has a much less clear historic identity and much less of a stable body of doctrine (good or bad). It undoubtedly has some organisational flair, shown by its ability to build organisations at least of a few hundred from scratch in several countries over recent years (most lately in the USA). Its main forces are in Latin America. It has none in Britain.

It seems to operate mainly by campaigning on just one or two issues at any given time, with little coherent overall view. Their big issue at present is the Contadora peace plan (drawn up by Nicaragua and various Central/South American bourgeois governments): the slogan is 'Down with Reagan, down with Contadora, victory to the Central American revolution'.

I asked the Morenist comrades last weekend about their position on Afghanistan. They hadn't got one, they said. Their position at the time of the invasion (that the Islamic resistance was part of 'the proletarian revolution in the region', but they did not call for withdrawal of USSR troops) did not make sense? Well, yes, it didn't.

Their position on the Iran/Iraq war? They didn't have one: it was being discussed. (The comrades I spoke to obviously inclined towards supporting Iran, and the May Day 1983 manifesto of the Morenists' central organisation, the MAS in Argentina, hailed 'the Iranian revolution').

Nicaragua? What was their view on the forthcoming elections? Did they call for a Constituent Assembly? They weren't sure, but yes, they thought so.

The MAS had a very poor result in the Argentine presidential elections (43,000 votes - while they claim a print run of over 100,000 for their paper).

d. Ex-Morenists

There is a current of organisations and groups which have recently broken from the Morenist organisation - in Italy, Portugal, Cape Verde, Greece, Uruguay. Apart from complaining about bureaucratisation in the Morenist organisation, they dissented on the Falklands/Malvinas.

Although supporting Argentina in the war, they objected to the call by the PST (forerunner of the MAS) for 'national unity' in the course of the war.

This criticism is not based on exaggeration or misrepresentation of the Morenist position. The Morenists themselves, in a pamphlet defending their position, describe this aspect of their policy as follows:

"To beat imperialism, let us strike in a united way. The war must be won. 'The socialists, who at no moment have hidden and will not hide their irreducible opposition to the military and bosses' regime, are the fervent advocates of the participation in the framework of this national anti-imperialist mobilisation of all sectors, in or out of uniform, workers or bosses, on only one condition: that they should be to defeat the aggressor and to mobilise the people for that end. That is why the socialists call on the CGT, the CNT [the unions], the Multipartidaria [the bourgeois opposition], all political parties and all sectors who are in agreement to resolutely confront the aggressors, to push forward all the mobilisations and actions possible so that the Argentine people can strike with one fist, and smash the aggressor'." ('Malouines, les revolutionnaires et la guerre', p.9: internal quote from Palabra Socialista, May 1 1982).

They called for the trade unions to open recruiting offices for Galtieri's army. (Ibid. p.9).

Since the war, the Morenist policy in Argentina remains one of profound capitulation to Argentine nationalism. The MAS's main, indeed practically its only, slogans are the 'Second Independence' of Argentina and non-payment of

the foreign debt. This is how they define their attitude to Peronism, i.e. Argentine bourgeois nationalism - and it isn't just an over-enthusiastic attempt to relate to the consciousness of the mass of Peronist workers. (Solidaridad Socialista, July 21 1983).

"To regain, continue and surpass Peronism such as the workers feel it we need a socialist and revolutionary party... a party which continues and surpasses the peronism really felt by the working people and which is opposed to Isabelism..." (i.e. to the Peronism of Isabel Peron).

The ex-Morenists - or at least the Italian comrade I spoke to - consider the position of opposing the Falklands/Malvinas war on both sides "certainly better" than the Morenist position.

They also criticise Moreno's book on 'The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat' (in which he describes the Stalinist states as "one hundred times more democratic" than the western bourgeois democracies, and argues for revolutionary repression with a vigour which seems to underly the attitude to such questions as Ireland, where they favour driving out the Protestants). Their criticism is in the right direction, though how adequate it is I could not say on the basis of the brief discussion I had.

This ex-Morenist current is keen to discuss with us. They are setting up an open international discussion bulletin, and perhaps we should try to contribute. My general impression, however, is that they are likely to gravitate towards the Mandel current. The USFI already claims to have won over two groups from the Morenists - in Uruguay and in Mexico - in recent years.

Apart from this organised ex-Morenist current, last weekend I also met a Turkish comrade, part of an ex-Morenist group with members in Turkey. The group is small, and it is not clear how homogeneous it is, but the comrade I spoke to agreed with defeatism-on-both-sides over the Falklands/Malvinas (he had broken with the Morenists on that basis), USSR withdrawal from Afghanistan, opposition to both Libya and France in Chad, a secular-democratic state in Palestine with rights for the Jews (which the Morenists downplay, to say the least), our position on Poland, and our position on the EEC.

e. Others

Last weekend we also met a breakaway from the Spartacist organisation in W.Germany. The breakaway is in the right direction (they criticise the Spartacists for reducing their position in world politics to an alignment with the USSR), and the comrades did seem serious and relatively open-minded; but the distance they have moved politically from the Spartacists is terribly limited. They still oppose Solidarnosc and support the USSR in Afghanistan.

On Solidarnosc itself: I talked to Zbigniew Kowalewski, who is the nearest to Trotskyism of the prominent Solidarnosc leaders and seems to be close to the USFI. In France the Solidarnosc exile organisation is split into two groups, one led by Kowalewski and one close to the CFDT union bureaucracy. (This split is not new, but I did not know about it before). According to Kowalewski himself, he is fairly isolated at present: the current within Solidarnosc in Poland to which he was closest, represented (he says) by the regional leadership in Lower Silesia, has been shattered by repression.

f. In conclusion

I hope these notes give some idea of the current state of affairs in the would-be Trotskyist movement, and where we may most fruitfully look for dialogue and contacts.

The picture given by the hard facts is rather different from the general image of the 'world Trotskyist movement' promoted (with a minimum of factual evidence in support) by the DCF - a big warm happy family, with faults and black sheep and quarrels to be sure, but nevertheless representing a rich wealth of political inspiration, much better than the 'discredited' 'sectarian' politics of the WSL. I hope comrades will think about this.

REJECT THE APPEALS, SUPPORT THE N.C., BUILD THE WSL

Entwhistle

Having just returned from the Midlands aggregate I feel the need to put on record some thoughts about the forthcoming conference future of our movement. The importance of this conference cannot be overstated. Every comrade has a duty to take this conference extremely seriously. This conference could be the turning point for the WSL or it could kill it.

EXPULSIONS JUSTIFIED

The expulsions were correct, they must be upheld. The fusion had broken down, only a handful of people now deny that. The NC had a duty to act and lead the organisation. The organisation was being wrecked from the inside. The leading committees had been ruined. The NC asked the Oxford faction to decide 'to go out of the WSL or come into it...' Read again IB 83, 'Enough is enough'. There was no positive response. The NC had to act or risk further disruption of our work during the miners' strike. If it hadn't acted we would have lost people who were fed up with the situation of two organisations in one, with no firm leadership.

THE 'CASE' FOR READMISSION

The new 'DC Faction' say that the Oxford faction were 'bureaucratically expelled', so they are going to vote for their readmission, but comrades should vote for their readmission only if you believe it will benefit the WSL, not because of the way that they were expelled. Ed Smith at the Midlands aggregate came out with the usual attacks which have become his forte. The WSL is "bureaucratic, rigid, sectarian, degenerate, bankrupt regime", and all this is caused by, wait for it... Carolan and Kinnell. All the rest of the 12 on the NC who supported the expulsions are just 'handraisers' and the support is made up from the 'new raw youth'. (This latest patronising comment is another of Ed Smith's. However, can you remember when the youth were the future of our movement, so Smith said when the Flackites were around). Smith also said today that towards the end of ^{last} year the bureaucrats, Carolan and Kinnell, started to 'get tough' with the faction. Yes they are baddies aren't they, carrying out League policy and enforcing discipline, it is a bit much, isn't it!! Given all this it's a bit surprising they want to rejoin.

THE WSL AFTER CONFERENCE

If they were readmitted the WSL would be a sham. It would be doubtful if the League would recover. The Oxford faction would carry on as before, discipline would be impossible to implement, we would break up before very long. The only way forward is to uphold the expulsions. True the new 'DC Faction' have said they would join whatever organisation Smith set up, but this must not hold us back. If they are prepared to join the Oxford faction, even though most of them agree with the majority politically, their new organisation would be a farce anyway. To be honest, to lose Cunliffe and Parsons would be no loss to the WSL either. They share Smith's contempt for the League.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

It's been a long hard slog these past few months, but there is reason for optimism. There can be no doubt that when the expulsions are upheld there will be a move to leave the conference by Cunliffe, Parsons etc. Any comrades going with them to the Smith group should think long and hard before they do so. You will be entering the political wilderness. The political arguments in the new group will be immense. Take the differences between Parsons and Smith on the orientation to the LP. The new group won't last.

For those of us who remain we can only go from strength to strength. We should sort out at the conference on the first day, as soon as possible, who is interested in building the group. The rest of the conference should be our best ever. There is a new mood of optimism in the group in large numbers of comrades. We have taken enough in the past. We should tighten up our organisation and build. Comrades should not be fooled or sidetracked, the return of the Smith group would wreck the organisation we have just saved. To talk it through, as the DC Faction want to do, will serve no useful purpose. We would split very soon. We've talked enough, the issues are very clear, let's not lose the opportunity, we have an organisation to build.