

"To face reality courageously; not to seek the line of least resistance; to say things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones... these are the rules of the Fourth International"

Leon Trotsky

How this dispute arose

Last Sunday five out of eight comrades present at the EC voted to change the basic position of the organisation on the conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands. They voted to drop the call for Argentina to withdraw from the Falklands - not to avoid using it in the paper in a way that might blunt the edge of our defeatism towards Britain (which is common ground), but to remove it completely as our basic position. They voted that the WSL should adopt a 'victory to Argentina' position.

I shall hereafter refer to the position we held in common at the last NC and up to the EC as the old position, and that of the majority of the EC as the new position.

Of those absent two (Parkinson and Carolyn were known to be emphatically for the old position. As far as I know neither of the other two (Gardiner and Noonan) had expressed support for a change of line.

Four of those voting for the new position (Smith, Jones, Cunliffe, Levy) argued that it was not a matter of changing the WSL position but of 'developing' it in line with the development of the conflict into outright war. One (Morrow) argued that the WSL's position had been mistaken throughout and should be rectified.

Now either it is common ground between the two sides that there has been an important change in the situation, not taken account of in our positions so far - or it isn't. It isn't. Varying assessments exist on the importance of the 12 mile limit imposed by Britain on Argentina. But on the basic issues a substantial part of the EC rejects the idea that there has been a radical change in the situation demanding a radical change by the WSL. We reject the idea that the EC majority last Sunday voted to 'develop' the old position: they voted to overturn and negate it.

From this arose the question of the status of the EC decision.

The EC has the power of the NC between NCs. It cannot normally reverse NC positions except in response to new situations and important exigencies unforeseen at the time of the NC taking its position. At the April 25 NC there had been a motion from the Merseyside branch calling for the WSL to come out for Argentine victory. No NC member voted for it - two abstained.

It was abadly attended NC. Had there been a serious dispute, then the bad attendance would have meant that the decision lacked authority. But there was no serious dispute among NC members.

The Merseyside NC members were absent, but they would have voted against their branch's motion had they been there. Comrade Eliot spoke in favour of the motion but did not vote for it - presumably she was swayed in the discussion. Cds Jones and Cunliffe were present at the NC and supported the decisions taken.

At the time of the NC it was already plain that the conflict in the Falklands was likely to be a major one. The sinking of the