



CWI MEMBERS' BULLETIN 1

Congress Organising Committee

January 2019

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Approved IEC resolution

This IEC notes the intensity and sharpness of the debates at this IEC meeting in relation to the issues in the Irish section. We reaffirm the democratic tradition of debate and discussion in the international and opposes any threat of a split.

The IEC unreservedly condemns the [breach of protocol]. The IEC believes that the response of the leading Irish comrades, while rooted in genuine concern for safeguarding and defending the party, was deficient in a number of important aspects. The IEC feels there were mistakes, in particular the length of time that there wasn't a formal democratic oversight by the NEC of the investigation; not to work through the holiday and conclude the investigation quickly to establish the acts; not to inform the IS in July. The IEC recognises that the leading comrades in Ireland accept these points.

However, the discussion has moved far beyond Ireland related issues. The IEC agrees on the need for a plan of democratic discussions, with documents, throughout the international on the issues of difference raised at the IEC, relating to our perspectives, orientation and interventions, questions of programme, methods and building. While important differences of approach have surfaced the IEC does not believe these represent fundamental issues of principle, and believe such an organised discussion in the best democratic traditions of the CWI can result in principled agreement and strengthening of our forces to face the historic challenges facing Marxism in the next period.

The IEC believes the IS and the leading comrades in the sections should review their responses in this particular situation to help ensure any lessons are learned. All comrades should also strive to improve and repair any damage in relations that has taken place in the interests of building the international.

The IEC notes the establishment of a faction including IS members who think there are fundamental political differences. The IEC agrees that the next World Congress will take place in 2020 in Belgium, with an IEC meeting at the end of August.

For the preparation of this congress we agree to form a Congress organising committee to oversee all aspects of the pre-congress debate period

starting now, up to and including the congress. This committee will be comprised of 6 members on the basis of parity between the recently formed faction and other IEC members. We agree 3 members – Tom Crean, Danny Byrne and Eric Byl – from the IEC meeting and the newly formed faction to nominate 3 members. ■

Defeated IEC resolution

This IEC has had a full and extensive discussion on the crisis which has developed between a majority of the Irish leadership and the IS.

and other IEC members. We agree 3 members –Tom Crean, Danny Byrne and Eric Byl – from the IEC meeting and 3 from the faction. ■

During the debate between the Irish section and the IS and at the IEC meeting, the IS and some IEC members believe that fundamental political issues of difference have emerged. Other members of the IEC did not agree. These involve the questions of programme, tactics, orientation and the concept and methods needed to build a revolutionary party and international, based on the methods of democratic centralism.

The IEC agrees that a full discussion needs to take place in the international on all these issues.

The IEC unreservedly condemns the [breach of protocol]. The IEC believes that the response of the leading Irish comrades, while rooted in genuine concern for safeguarding and defending the party, was deficient in a number of important aspects. The IEC feels there were mistakes, in particular the length of time that there wasn't a formal democratic oversight by the NEC of the investigation; not to work through the holiday and conclude the investigation quickly to establish the acts; not to inform the IS in July. The IEC recognises that the leading comrades in Ireland accept these points.

We therefore agree that this debate take place in 2019 in a structured manner through the structures of the sections of the CWI.

The issues under dispute are: 1) On programme and orientation and the issue of the centrality of the role of the working class and our approach to the trade unions; 2) Identity Politics and the international women's movement; 3) Methods of building the party and the International; 4) Perspectives.

The IEC agrees that a World Congress of the CWI shall be conveyed in January 2020 to debate all of these and related issues and an IEC in August.

For the preparation of this congress we agree to form a congress organising committee to oversee all aspects of the pre-congress debate period starting now, up to the congress. This committee will be comprised of 6 members on the basis of parity between the recently formed faction

Platform of 'In Defence of a Working Class Trotskyist CWI' Faction

1. At the recent meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC), twenty four comrades took the very considered decision to declare a faction in the CWI. This important step was not taken lightmindedly but because we believe that there was no alternative, given the deep political differences that were revealed in the highest level of the leadership of the CWI, the IEC.

2. We believe that two main political trends emerged at the meeting, revealing sharp differences on principled questions for the International. They include democratic centralism and its application to internal democracy and the membership, the methods needed to build revolutionary parties and a Trotskyist International, and key issues related to political perspectives and our orientation and tactics needed to intervene in the class struggle.

3. This development will undoubtedly come as a big shock to comrades throughout the CWI. At root, this crisis has an objective basis. It reflects the contradictory political situation in the class struggle internationally, which has developed since the crisis of 2007/8. In many countries, an extremely polarised situation is opening up, reflected in Trump's victory, Modi's rule in India, the coming to power of Bolsonaro in Brazil, and AMLO in Mexico, and now the explosive situation in France and the Spanish state. These illustrate the character of the period we have entered. Reflected in the debate in the CWI is the issue of preparing the revolutionary party to be ready to face up to the new era which has opened up.

4. At the same time, the working class has not yet put itself at the head of the movement, with a conscious socialist programme. The new radical left forces that emerged from the crisis of social democracy and the communist parties have demonstrated not only their reformist confusion but also their incapacity to lead the mass movement and orientate it towards a struggle for the socialist transformation of society. At this stage, the crises within capitalism, the turn towards the left, and advances in an anti-capitalist consciousness among layers of the masses, especially the youth, have not yet resulted in the emergence of powerful, distinct new workers' parties. A strong socialist consciousness has not yet emerged as a viable alternative to the global crisis of capitalism. This is the price

we are still paying for the consequences of the collapse of Stalinism, the bourgeoisification of social democratic parties, and the opportunism of the new left formations, which inevitably creates difficulties for the development of a Marxist force such as ours.

5. Under these conditions, the pressure to look for opportunist shortcuts is extremely strong. It has affected other organisations on the left, including the revolutionary left, which have dissolved or partially dissolved as a result. The CWI is not immune from these pressures. This is a central aspect of the debate which has now opened up. It can, and has, led to a tendency to lower the profile and programme of the party to accommodate to these pressures. This is not necessarily a conscious decision but happens as a result of the objective pressures.

6. The crisis that erupted at the IEC emerged initially because of criticisms raised by the International Secretariat (IS) of the methods used by the majority of the Irish leadership when it confronted indefensible actions taken by a member of the Irish section. These criticisms were not raised in order to question the great achievements of the Irish section in crucial struggles, such as the anti-water charges and Jobstown Not Guilty campaigns and, more recently, the intervention comrades made in the recent Repeal the 8th campaign. All of these are recognised as great achievements throughout the CWI.

7. In spite of these achievements, the IS has, for a period of years, had serious concerns regarding the political orientation and methods used by the Irish leadership. In the opinion of the IS, Philip S (Scotland), who has participated in the work of the Irish section, and other comrades, there has been a marked tendency to lower the profile of our party and our socialist programme for a period.

8. From our point of view this reached an alarming point during the Irish section's election campaign in 2016, and again during the recent campaign on abortion.

9. In the 2016 election, the programme the Irish comrades put forward in the AAA (Anti-Austerity Alliance) and in their media appearances to a mass audience advocated the central demand for tax rises on the corporations and the rich.

The Socialist Party had little profile during the entire campaign. In general, the comrades did not go further, to put forward a socialist programme, including the nationalisation of the banks or strategic sectors of the economy. Nor did they raise how a socialist government would respond to the attacks that it would confront from the ruling class and the EU. This was particularly important following events in Greece in 2015. After a series of sharp discussions with the IS and Philip S, in which comrades said they were “indignant” that such issues were being raised with them, they formally accepted that the IS had a valid point of view. Following these discussions there were some changes in the Irish comrades’ public material. Socialism was mentioned more frequently, although often in an abstract way and not as part of a transitional programme.

10. However, even today, much of the public material on the website of Solidarity (the successor to AAA) still does not include a socialist programme, despite our overwhelming influence within Solidarity. The same weakness in programme was revealed during the recent abortion campaign. ROSA – the comrades’ socialist feminist platform – was the main vehicle through which the comrades participated in the Repeal movement. Yet the primary ROSA campaign leaflet was completely devoid of any mention of socialism, capitalism or even the working class. It did not include any of ROSA’s anti-capitalist and anti-austerity demands, which formally ROSA stands for, or explain how the fight for a woman’s right to choose is also a class issue, linked to the fight against social cuts and for better child care, a living wage, equal pay, etc.

11. The tendency to downplay class and socialist demands is evident in the Irish comrades’ material when they engage in mass campaigning. Rather than use the mass audience they have to raise consciousness of the tasks facing the working class in fighting capitalism, they tend to limit themselves to reflect existing consciousness and to adapt to ideas which could be advocated by the new reformist left.

12. In our view, one of the crucial issues that emerged at this IEC is the centrality of the collective role of the working class and our orientation towards it. Linked to this is how we engage in the women’s liberation movement – which in the last period has been a very important axis of social mobilisation and the class struggle in a large number of countries – and other move-

ments, such as those in defence of refugees, LGBTQI people, and on the environment.

13. The IS majority and supporters of the ‘In Defence of a Working Class, Trotskyist CWI’ Faction are fully convinced of the importance of these movements and of intervening in them with the view of trying to push them forward, on the basis of a working class, socialist revolutionary programme, and without bending to petty bourgeois prejudices and identity politics which attempt to separate these movements from the broader workers’ movement. We must support the legitimate rights and demands of women, LGBTQI and trans people but maintain a class approach and oppose tendencies to split these movements from the working class. Petty bourgeois prejudices are common in the movements and organisations, and often dominate the outlook of the leadership. In order to ensure we have the strongest possible intervention, and to educate our own members, we need a scientific, Marxist analysis of these movements and how they are expressed in different countries.

14. The main characteristic of movements of this kind is that they are multi-class in nature, and it cannot be otherwise. It is important that we recognise this when we plan how to intervene and what our central slogans should be, and how to confront the confused petty bourgeois prejudices and ideas which are present.

15. We must ensure that we intervene with the aim of winning, in particular, working class layers and young people from working class backgrounds to the banner of revolutionary socialism. We need to intervene with a view to using the methods of the working class in struggle and to link up with other sections of the working class. This has been exemplified in the demands of the Spanish section and how it has driven the call for general and students’ strikes.

16. The traditional sections of the industrial working class have been numerically weakened due to the decline of manufacturing industry in many countries of Europe and the USA. Yet in parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America there has been a strengthening of the working class. Globally, the working class remains the most powerful force because of its collective role in social production and in the international division of labour. We have also seen that other sectors, including transport, communications, etc., are also potentially extremely powerful sections of workers. In addition, new sections of the

working class are beginning to emerge, in logistics and other sectors, and there is an increasing proletarianisation of other social layers that formally comprised layers of the middle class.

17. Another crucial aspect of this discussion is our attitude towards the trade unions. This is an issue which has arisen in the debate with the comrades from Ireland and in the IEC. In Ireland, as in most countries, the situation in the trade unions is one of increased bureaucratisation and a weakening of the active membership base. There are exceptions to this of course. The bureaucracy in the trade unions has, in general, acted as a gigantic brake on the workers' movement and has often become the guarantee of 'social peace', resulting in the bureaucracy losing authority in the eyes of many workers and young people because of their collaboration in cuts and austerity. In many countries, traditional unions have lost support among some layers of workers, with the majority of young people and precarious workers not organised, in the main. This has resulted in some workers' struggles taking place outside the official union apparatus or even in opposition to the bureaucracy. In such conditions, we cannot of course adopt a policy of waiting for the official trade union apparatus to be transformed. Where necessary it is correct to circumvent the official apparatus, organising opposition groupings of workers to take unofficial action, etc. We have done this on many occasions. Even during the anti-poll tax struggle in Britain, the movement we led did not go through the official trade union structures, which refused to act.

18. At the same time, the trade unions are – or, in some countries, potentially – the mass organisations of the working class and retain a mass base. It is essential that we maintain a consistent orientation by placing demands on them, and by attempting to build rank-and-file opposition groups.

19. Unfortunately, this has not been the approach of comrades in Southern Ireland or as expressed by some other comrades at the IEC. It was argued that the comrades in Ireland had previously drawn the conclusion that the mass anger against austerity would not be reflected in the trade unions because of the sell-out by the leadership. It was also argued at the Irish NC and the IEC that comrades turned away from the unions, with a plan to return later, and that it was not necessary to maintain a consistent, systematic orientation towards them. This was clearly reflected in the political propaganda

of ROSA in the South of Ireland during the campaign for abortion rights. There were no concrete, consistent demands made on the trade unions to mobilise the working class in defence of that right. Our approach to the trade unions was even equated to the 'Open Turn' away from the bourgeoisified British Labour Party that we undertook in the 1990s, which meant an end to our entry work. This is mistaken. We have always argued that our orientation to the trade unions' base and workplaces is strategically necessary to sink roots in the working class, while fighting against any adaptation to the union bureaucracy and its policies. That has always been a Marxist approach.

20. The CWI must – in our programme, activity, campaigns and propaganda – reassert the centrality of the role of the working class for us in the struggle for socialism. This is now even more necessary when a conscious movement of the working class has not yet placed itself at the head of the struggle.

21. We have always emphasised the importance of youth for the revolutionary party. We are in favour of building a strong base in the universities and among school students. We are in favour of winning students to the revolutionary party, including those from a middle class background. In the initial stages of building our sections, it may be necessary, sometimes, to begin with a base among students. Yet it is essential they put themselves on the standpoint of the working class and strive to win a working class base for our sections.

22. It is essential that a revolutionary party builds its strongest base among the working class, especially young workers. We do not agree, as some comrades argued at the Irish NC, that students in higher education from a working class background have the same consciousness as the working class. While in many countries more students from a working class background are in higher education, their role in the struggle will never be comparable to the role of young workers in the workplaces, who develop a collective consciousness as a class.

23. Other issues of disagreement have also emerged in relation to the national question. Comrades from the Irish leadership explained their disagreement with the position adopted by the Spanish section on the crisis and revolutionary movement that developed in Catalonia. This was fully discussed at the IEC in November 2017, and has been covered in many politi-

cal publications and statements not previously challenged. At the same time, other differences have emerged between the IS and the Irish leadership on the application of elements of the method of the united front, particularly how it applies when dealing with petty bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist parties which have a significant base among sections of the working class.

24. All these political issues were questioned by the majority of the Irish leadership and by some IEC comrades. In addition, comrades from Sweden, Belgium, Greece and others strongly criticised the IS for not understanding the importance of the new women's movement, the LGBTQI movement and the environmental movement, and of not giving sufficient emphasis to them. One Swedish comrade even argued that we lack a political strategy to intervene into these movements. We entirely reject these allegations and re-state our position on them, as we have argued. These movements can and do have a radicalising effect on the consciousness of significant layers of workers, young people and the layers of the middle class who participate in them. However, we need to intervene to assist the most advanced layers to draw more rounded-out conclusions about the role of capitalism as the cause of their oppression, the need for a socialist programme, and the central position of workers in the struggle against any kind of oppression, while linking these movements to the broader working class movement which is the decisive force to change society.

25. In our opinion, these are fundamental questions for the CWI and its sections. The leaders of the Irish section, together with the comrades from some of the sections which supported them against the position put by the IS, complained about the 'tone' of the debate and also about the fact that we have used the term 'Mandelism' in the course of the debate or have warned about the danger of a degeneration of our party similar to what happened to the former Scottish section in the 1990s. The comrades have protested insistently against our use of these terms. However, for the IS and the supporters of this faction, these terms are a political characterisation. Mandelism has represented a trend which has weakened or loosened the Marxist programme to the point of abandoning it, advocating methods of building the party which represent the liquidation of the revolutionary party. This trend developed in our former Scottish section. In our opinion, the pressures and dangers of such petty bour-

geois trends affecting some sections of the CWI are clearly emerging as a reality that we need to confront and were clearly reflected at the IEC meeting. Defending the CWI from this threat was the reason we took the step of forming the faction and to raise the level of the debate onto a clearer political foundation.

26. The present crisis initially erupted because of the methods used by the majority of the Irish leadership and the stand taken by the IS in opposing them. As a response to the indefensible and reprehensible action by one comrade, a part of the Irish leadership took counter-measures which the IS believed to be totally alien to our democratic norms and regime. These actions were taken by this small group of leaders without being discussed or approved on any of the democratically elected structures of the party or International – and who were not informed of the situation for almost two months. The majority of the Irish NEC and the IS were not made aware until September, despite this small group of leading comrades taking those measures in July and discussing it amongst themselves at the CWI school. In our opinion, this and the other steps taken by this group in the leadership of the party in Ireland broke the norms of democratic centralism and constituted a threat to the democratic rights of the party.

27. The IS majority attempted to discuss and resolve these issues with the Irish leadership. A meeting with the IS took place in London in mid-September. Then two IS comrades went to meet the Irish NEC. Following this, a full debate took place at the Irish NC in October, involving four IS members and Philip S from Scotland. However, despite these discussions and debates, the Irish NEC comrades remained insistent in defending their actions. At the Irish NC meeting, the NC endorsed the actions of the group of NEC members. When the methods used were challenged some comrades defended them on the grounds that the successful struggles of the Irish section showed that the comrades who led the party must have had correct methods. We do not accept this argument. In other meetings, the actions of the NEC grouping were defended as "proletarian methods".

28. The IS was not prepared to agree or endorse such methods which broke the norms of democratic centralism.

29. The differences were then taken to the IEC meeting. It became clear at the beginning of the IEC that a group of leaders from a number

of sections – initially, Belgium, Sweden and Ireland, then Greece and the USA – had been co-ordinating to oppose the IS’s handling of this question, which is their right. This grouping acted to defend the Irish leadership from criticism, arguing that the IS wanted to discredit and even “crush” the Irish leadership and provoke a split in the CWI. In discussion with IEC comrades, IS members had simply stated that, given the significance of the differences on methods and programme, a split was possible, depending on how the discussion unfolded. At the IEC, the IS simply proposed that the debates with the Irish leadership were discussed openly and publicly. There was no proposal for a vote or decision on any issue.

30. From the beginning of the IEC, this group of leaders organised numerous meetings among themselves outside of the plenary and acted in a co-ordinated way against the proposals and interventions of the IS. They denied they were, or are, part of a faction but operated as a ‘non-faction faction’ in the run-up to the IEC meeting and during it.

31. It was in this context that the political issues emerged during the IEC. The supporters of this platform reached the conclusion that we had no alternative but to declare a faction. This was done to oppose the methods and ideas of the political trend that had developed around the leaders of the Irish section during the IEC, and also to allow the political differences on method and programme to be raised in the clearest possible manner throughout the whole of the CWI and its membership.

32. This step provoked angry protests from the Greek, Belgian, Irish, American and Swedish leaders, and from some other sections. They refused – then and now – to recognise that some IEC members were acting as a faction, even though they had not openly declared one. Lenin, in July 1911, pointed out: “In these circumstances the shouts against ‘factionalism’ are so empty, especially when coming from those who have just formed their own faction. Surely it is time to understand that shouts against factionalism are meant to distract attention from the really important question - that of the party or anti-party content of the activity of the various factions.” (The State of Affairs in the Party, July 1911)

33. Then, at the end of the IEC, we were presented with a resolution from a leading Greek IEC comrade. Arguing for this resolution, he

demagogically congratulated the IEC, especially younger members, for taking a stand against the IS: ‘And it has happened with very young comrades with little experience [as] members of the IS. This means that in the CWI there’s a powerful cadre being developed.’ He argued: “We think we had an obligation to send a very strong message to the IS that if they are determined to crush the Irish leadership, because this was the plan ... if they are determined to crush the Irish leadership, they would have to crush the Greek leadership. Then they would have to crush the Belgian and Swedish leadership, and they would have to crush the US section leadership.” Yet all the IS had proposed was that a full discussion and debate take place on the methods used by the Irish leadership, which we think were indefensible and not in line with the methods of the CWI.

34. Previously, over two days of discussion at the IEC the majority of Irish comrades had defended their investigation. Yet, on the IEC’s last day, this Greek resolution, stated that the Irish leadership recognised many of the criticisms that had been made of how the confidential investigation had been conducted, criticisms that had originally raised by the IS in September. However the resolution also stated that the paragraph dealing with the criticism of the investigation should only be circulated to the ECs of the sections and the Irish NC. Why such fear of informing the members of the International of this conclusion? We find it unacceptable that such conclusions should be kept from, at least, the leading NCs/CCs of all the sections of the CWI. Moreover, following the IEC, the subsequent meeting of the Irish NC took no decision regarding the criticisms made of the Irish leading group by the IEC. The Irish comrade who reported on the IEC meeting to the Irish NC did not mention the IEC resolution’s criticisms of the Irish NEC and the investigation, but concentrated most of his remarks on attacking the IS. The Irish NC’s previous decision, to endorse the actions taken by the leading group as “democratic and principled”, has not been corrected or modified. The Greek resolution – adopted at the IEC by a majority of three full IEC members – was, in effect, a protective shield placed around the undemocratic methods used by the leading group of the Irish leadership. The IS majority and supporters of this platform find this unacceptable in a Trotskyist International.

35. The IEC comrade who moved the Greek resolution argued that the IS had to accept the decision of the Irish NC to endorse the actions

of the leadership in Ireland and that, while maintaining its criticism, the IS had to move on. Yet the same comrade was moving a resolution – carried by the IEC – that made criticisms of the Irish leadership – criticisms that had been previously rejected by the Irish NC in October. The IS majority and supporters of this platform find these methods unacceptable and undemocratic. These methods by some IEC members provide a cover for actions which broke with the methods of democratic centralism and created the basis for the emergence of cliques. We are not prepared to accept this.

36. This goes to the issue of the type of International we want to build and the methods that should be used. The CWI is not a federation of parties and groups. It is a revolutionary International based on the methods of democratic centralism. The leadership, the IS and IEC, have never adopted the method of bureaucratically imposing a position on national sections. Yet this does not mean that the leading bodies of either the International or its national sections should be party to ‘moving on’ and covering up serious mistakes in method or programme. The role of the IS is to intervene politically when important political and organisational issues arise in sections, to clearly express its views and opinions, and make proposals.

37. During this debate some comrades have argued that the IS should intervene to provide political leadership and ‘mediate’ in disputes which arise. We do not agree with this approach. While sometimes it is correct to attempt to mediate between comrades, the primary responsibility of the International leadership is to state its political opinion in any debate or dispute. We do not aim to build a looser International where the role of the IS is to make general political comment but not to intervene in a concrete way in the work of the sections. This is not the concept of a unified revolutionary International, based on democratic centralist ideas that we can agree with.

38. Where a leadership thinks a serious mistake has been made on programme, tactics or method, it has a revolutionary obligation to say so, and to debate the issues out. When principled issues are on the table for discussion, such debates should be conducted in a comradely manner. However, where serious issues are at stake, the debate will inevitably assume a sharper character. Diplomatic formulae should not be used as a means of masking or obscuring serious political or tactical questions. This issue

also consistently emerged at the IEC meeting, with some comrades complaining about the tone of the debate. In any polemic or debate there should be an effort to avoid exaggerations or excesses, but they are inevitable. However, the central issue is not the ‘tone’ but the political content and the character of the International. It is very significant that those comrades insisted on the ‘tone’ of the IS and accused it of not understanding that the Irish section has a “very special” position because of its mass influence and lack of cadres. But, at the same time, these comrades remained silent about the fact that the party apparatus in Southern Ireland is soon to be comprised of 27 full-timers, plus three TDs, overwhelmingly financed by the state via the elected positions we hold. A majority of full-timers are connected to work associated with the elected positions.

39. The debate has now opened up throughout the CWI. We look forward to an open and honest political discussion which we believe can clarify the decisive issues and tasks we face in order to build revolutionary parties in the era which has now opened up. We urge comrades to engage in it to clarify all of the political and organisational issues, and draw the necessary conclusions in relation to the methods we use, and the tasks we are involved in, as we face up to the working class battles in the coming period, such as we see developing in France, Belgium, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, the Spanish state and many other countries. This is a debate to prepare the revolutionary forces for the era which has now begun, and to discuss and clarify the programme, tactics and methods we need to build a revolutionary Trotskyist International, based on the working class and using the methods of democratic centralism.

IEC members and alternates

Weizmann Hamilton (South Africa)
Michael Koschitzki (Germany)
Philip Stott (Scotland)
Clare Doyle (IS)
Peter Taaffe (IS)
Sascha Stanicic (Germany)
Hannah Sell (England & Wales, IS)
Judy Beishon (England & Wales, IS)
Shaun Arendse (South Africa)
Babara Areal (Spanish state)
Juan Ignacio Ramos (Spanish state)
Victor Taibo (Spanish State)
Carla Torres (Mexico)
Miriam Municio (Spanish state)
Miguel Campos (Spanish state)
Felix Martinez (Veneuela)

Christine Thomas (Italy)
Jagadish Chandra (India)
Niall Mulholland (IS)
Ravi Chandra (Malaysia)
Srinath Perera (Sri Lanka)
Siri Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka)
Bob Labi (IS)
TU Senan (IS)
Tony Saunois (IS)

We ask to be able to address all sections' CC/
NCs and meetings where the International de-
bate is being discussed.

Comrades who wish to get in touch with our
platform can contact local supporters or write
to us at cwi.platform@gmail.com ■

For a Serious and Constructive Debate in the CWI - for Principled Unity

Reply to 'Working class Trotskyist' faction platform

By DB (IS), TC (EC, USA), SB (IEC, Ireland)

The platform of the recently formed international faction, made up of a minority of IEC members from 11 sections of the CWI, correctly states that recent developments in the International will “undoubtedly come as a big shock to comrades throughout the CWI”.

We are no less surprised or disappointed by this sequence of events than any other comrades. Despite these sentiments, the task now facing every member of the CWI is to take a serious and responsible approach to the issues under discussion, based on a sober assessment of all the facts and views put forward. For Marxists, this means to put the political needs of the organisation first, above any concerns over sentimentality, hurt feelings, personal or collective prestige.

Where mistakes have been made and clarified through discussion, these should be taken on board and corrected. Where there is agreement, this should be recognised, rather than dismissed or undermined in the interests of “point scoring”. Where there is disagreement, this should be clarified and openly discussed, with an honest, political and responsible approach to measuring the scale and character of any disagreement. Differences should not be artificially exaggerated to fit in with a preconceived narrative. We are convinced that on the basis of such an approach, the CWI can benefit and be strengthened from the international debate which is now beginning.

However, based on our experience so far of the discussion and debate which took place before, during and after the IEC meeting, we have serious concerns about the approach which the comrades who make up the recently formed faction have adopted. These concerns have been confirmed and reinforced by our reading of their platform, dated December 21, and of their latest statement, dated January 9.

What is the political justification for the faction?

We fully uphold the democratic rights of all members, including the right to form a faction. On this, there is no disagreement.

Many factions have been formed throughout the history of the working-class and Marxist movement, and many have played a necessary role. This requires that a faction aims to clarify political issues and thereby strengthens the united political power of the organisation as a whole. It must also be based on serious and clear political differences with those not in the faction, which justifies its existence.

We do not think that the faction has made, either at the IEC or in its platform, a clear and convincing political case for its existence and will attempt to explain why in this reply. In fact, we think a striking feature of this debate, reinforced by the faction's platform, is how little real substance the faction has so far provided to support its claim of “two trends” in our ranks. Of course, the faction's members have the opportunity to make such a case in the discussions over the next period, which we look forward to.

In the platform, many concrete criticisms are raised of the leadership of the Irish section, which we will comment on below. However, no concrete political criticism is made of the work or positions of any other section of the CWI, despite IEC members from 14 sections opposing the approach taken by the faction at the IEC - US, Brazil, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, China/Hong Kong/Taiwan, Russia, Australia, Sweden, Israeli-Palestine, Nigeria, Poland.

The platform states that “pressures and dangers of such petty bourgeois trends affecting some sections of the CWI are clearly emerging as a reality that we need to confront and were clearly reflected at the IEC meeting.” The faction thus alleges that this trend - loosely characterised as Mandelite, petit-bourgeois, opportunist and liquidationist (standing for the liquidation of a revolutionary party) - is clear and was “clearly reflected at the IEC meeting”. Yet many weeks after the IEC, outside of its original case against the work of the Irish section, no specific cases or examples of this “clear” process of petty bourgeois adaptation are presented for comrades to discuss. This does not reflect the careful method of analysis, always with concrete examples, that has been a historic strength of the CWI. We fear that the comrades of the faction have rushed to

declare a position first, in very stark language, but only now are looking around for the evidence to support this pre-conceived position. This approach has never been the method of our organisation.

In other material, and in discussions in the England & Wales section, comrades from the faction have stated that the US section is not part of the aforementioned “Mandelite” and “petty bourgeois” trend. This is despite the fact that the leadership of the US section, the second biggest section in the CWI, opposes the faction’s approach to the current crisis. Of course, we welcome this admission. This reinforces our concerns over the faction’s narrative of two clear political trends in the CWI.

The only concrete political criticism of the leadership of other sections in the platform is the following reference: “comrades from Sweden, Belgium, Greece and others strongly criticised the IS for not understanding the importance of the new women’s movement”. Is such criticism of the IS proof of a trend which endangers the working-class, Trotskyist nature of the CWI? This has been implied in other written material by faction members.

We feel that the above mentioned criticism is perfectly legitimate and worthy of discussion within the parameters of regular, democratic discussion and debate within our organisation. To paint this criticism in itself as proof of a Mandelite, petit-bourgeois or opportunist approach would be an extremely crude exaggeration, which has more in common with the methods of debate in sectarian organisations than with the methods and traditions of the CWI.

The faction’s platform makes many points on the centrality of and role of the working class, the necessity for a strategic orientation to trade union work, democratic centralism and the character of a Trotskyist international.

If these fundamental aspects of a Trotskyist outlook were being questioned or disputed in the CWI, then we would support a fight to defend them. However, we saw no evidence of this at the IEC meeting. We ourselves uphold these fundamental principles of the CWI and our adherence to them was never questioned until now. Of course, we are open to all such criticism, based on genuine evidence. However, we find it surprising that comrades who disagree with the IS majority and the faction’s approach over Ireland are now being presented as a threat

to the CWI’s adherence to these fundamental principles of Marxism, coinciding with the moment in which they made criticisms of the IS majority.

After a long and sometimes sharp discussion, the IEC rejected what it considered to be an unbalanced and incorrect evaluation of developments in the Irish section by the IS, including attempts by leading IS members to bulldoze the IEC into supporting its position. We believe that the faction was formed in the middle of the IEC meeting as the IS majority and its supporters sensed their position was going to be rejected in the final vote. These facts about the origins of the faction need to be borne in mind. In our opinion, a major reason for the formation of the faction was for the IS to oppose a majority decision (democratic centralism) within the IEC, the body which, in the first instance, is responsible for holding the IS accountable for its actions. If the IS majority had found itself in a majority at this meeting, it is unlikely a faction would have been formed.

The faction, in our opinion, does not accept the truth about the IEC meeting. Incredibly, it tries to belittle the majority “of three full IEC members”, “on a question mainly about procedure”, at the IEC. But a vote in any of our leading bodies is a serious matter. To vote against a proposal of the leadership is not done light-mindedly. If it happens, even in the case of a minority, it is a signal to a leadership of the need for more discussions. Surely, if the IEC majority resolution was only on a question of procedure, the IS majority and the other IEC members who have joined the faction wouldn’t have been so ardent in opposing this resolution. Comrades who voted for the IEC majority resolution wanted to de-escalate the situation in favour of balanced and democratic discussion, which has always been the hallmark of the CWI. The rejection of this approach, and the faction’s platform unfortunately confirms this, is to take the path of escalation.

Faction for a Working Class, Trotskyist CWI or Faction for a Split?

As is clear from the faction’s platform, and has been outlined in other material distributed in some sections, there are different views on the trigger for the current crisis in the International. The faction asserts that the trigger for the crisis was the IEC majority acting as a “shield” in defence of the Irish leadership. The view of many IEC members who do not support the faction,

including the authors of this reply, is that the trigger for the crisis was an attempt by leading IS members to push towards a damaging, reckless and premature split with the Irish section. This was based on the experience of numerous IEC and IS members who reported that leading IS members had been pushing for and canvassing for a split in the runup to the IEC and during the IEC itself.

The faction comrades say that, on the contrary, no concrete organisational proposal was made at the IEC to remove or expel the Irish section. This is true from a formal point of view. However, the purpose of all the calls beforehand -- in reality, an orchestrated campaign by leading IS members -- and then proposing to start the week with the Irish discussion and go "as long as necessary" was clearly to isolate the Irish organization with the view that this would have created the path to a split.

Additionally, the dynamic of the meeting was clear. When Irish comrades accepted mistakes and suggested proposals to address them, and outlined the comprehensive measures they have already begun to implement to address political weaknesses, rather than these being welcomed as a basis to move forward, they were dismissed as maneuvers. The only "way forward" which seemed to be presented by the IS majority and their allies was on the basis of comrades acknowledging that they had betrayed Marxism and the methods of the organization.

When many IEC members spoke out against this approach, advocating instead a clear, political debate in the traditions of the CWI, of patient and balanced discussion and criticism to explore what differences exist and what is their nature, the response of the IS majority and of IEC members supporting their approach was of a further escalation.

This escalation first took the form of accusing IEC members critical of the IS approach to this issue of operating as a secret faction in a conspiracy to undermine and remove the IS. This was not the case. Leading members of a number of sections did indeed come to similar conclusions and then began to attempt to coordinate their efforts at the IEC and to exchange ideas about how to proceed. This was part of the effort to put a brake on what they saw as a clear attempt to put the CWI on the path of a split. To equate this with creating a faction is completely false.

This was followed by the assertion that the debate at the IEC, in which most IEC members were critical of both the IS majority approach and some aspects of the work of the Irish section, had revealed two clear political trends in the CWI, representing fundamental differences of principle, which we deal with above. This was then followed by the formation of the faction and the proposal for an extraordinary World Congress in July 2019. This was a further indication of an attempt to rush things and move to a conclusion as fast and possible.

The truth is that the plans to isolate the Irish section and move towards a rapid split were confounded by the resistance of so many sections. The faction now claims that we introduced the issue of a split into the IEC. If the faction is changing its approach, we would certainly welcome it. But their material does not point to any real re-thinking of the position which was rejected at the IEC

We reject the idea that this mistaken approach is not a political question, but simply one of "tone". The faction has tried to distract attention from political comments they made at the IEC and in various other meetings by saying there should not be an over focus on the "tone" of their contributions. For us, the "tone" of these contributions is secondary - our primary concern is with the content. But the approach was illustrated in the very first contribution in the discussion by Alec T of England and Wales when speaking about the sections who opposed the approach of the IS majority, describing this as the actions of an anti-IS clique.

The political role of Marxist leadership is not only about writing good articles and making good speeches. The conduct of a leadership in internal political discussion, especially when faced with political disagreement, is a political question of the highest order. The way which an executive (day to day) leadership interacts with and responds to the views expressed in and positions agreed by higher leading bodies which elected them is of first-rate importance.

We feel that the IS majority has made serious mistakes in the course of the current debate, in sharp contrast with its earlier approach. We assert this with no intention of unnecessarily undermining the IS, and we make no proposal to replace the IS or remove any IS member from their position. But these mistakes need to be taken on board and corrected in the interests of the CWI.

We do not believe that any convincing political case has been made which would justify discussion about a split in the CWI being imminent. Of course, splits have also been an inevitable part of the history of our movement, reflecting the inability of a layer of members to adapt to the demands of a changed situation. Only last year, a split took place from our US section where a small minority left the organisation following a year of debate, centred on the methods of a Marxist leadership. This debate has many lessons for the whole international and for this debate.

In the past, the IS took the following approach: start with political discussion to clarify issues and the extent of actual disagreement, with the organisation and all comrades given time to draw political conclusions. At the start of the US dispute, the IS strongly argued against a method of debate which makes blanket political characterisations in a hasty and premature way, and poses the question of organisational measures or divisions before the extent of any differences have been properly explored.

Another important example comes from the “name change debate” in Britain in the 1990s. In that debate, which at points became quite heated, Peter T explained that even on the fundamental question that divided the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, of the need for a democratic-centralist revolutionary party, this did not lead to an immediate split:

“the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) divided into two main factions, the Bolsheviks (majority) and the Mensheviks (minority) in 1903. They remained factions of the same party, however, contrary to what some of the sects have argued in the past, right up to 1912. Lenin only split to form a separate party at this stage when the Bolsheviks commanded the support of four fifths of the organised workers in Russia.”

What we are now confronted with is a very different approach. Before a discussion has even begun in our ranks, we are being told that our differences are fundamental and IEC members are being told that a split is virtually inevitable. We are being told by the faction that there is an international trend in the CWI which represents a “political and class position alien to the traditions and methods of the CWI”; “the methods of cliques and a break with democratic centralism”; and a different “model” of revolutionary party. We are being told that entire sections of

the CWI, and respected leading comrades who only months ago were held up as examples by our leadership, are suddenly politically and organisationally “Mandelite”, opportunist, liquidationist, and represent alien class forces in our party.

We appeal to all comrades to seriously consider this situation, and urge leading comrades who are part of the faction to reconsider where their approach is leading the international.

A Turn Away from the Working Class?

There is great stress in the faction’s material on reasserting the central role of the working class in the revolutionary transformation of society, on the importance of an orientation to the unions and on opposing Mandelism. Again, while various allegations are made against the Irish organisation on this score, no concrete examples are given from any other section of how they have abandoned the centrality of the working class or an orientation to the unions, etc.

We fully accept the general points being made by the faction about the dangers that exist, but we are also struck how the comrades fail to address how they are concretely posed for our sections (except Ireland, of course). To be blunt, it’s not just in one section that we face pressure to “turn away from the working class”.

Any engagement today with the new left that has emerged in many European countries, in the U.S. and elsewhere, means engaging with and having to fight for the correct class ideas within a general context of massive political confusion. An aspect of this is the influence of identity politics which can be seen in many parts of the neo-colonial world as well. This confusion reflects the throwing back of consciousness since the collapse of Stalinism and the failure of the new left to sink real roots in the working class in most countries, important points which the IS has correctly stressed in the past period. But the challenge is not just describing the problem but figuring out how to engage with the best people who are drawn to the new left while also facing towards freshly radicalising layers and maintaining a clear working-class orientation. This requires clarity in our approach but also considerable tactical flexibility.

We need to give a more precise definition of Mandelism in this context. Mandelism is described by the faction in their December 21 statement as “a trend which has weakened or

loosened the Marxist programme to the point of abandoning it, advocating methods of building the party which represent the liquidation of the revolutionary party." This is true but insufficient. Ernest Mandel and his co-thinkers concluded that the working class in the West was unlikely during the post-war boom to be able to play a revolutionary role. They increasingly looked to petty bourgeois guerrillism in the neo-colonial world and to other "new vanguards" like the student movement. In this way, they turned away from the centrality of the working class and the building of mass revolutionary workers' parties because of false perspectives.

How do we see such ideas concretely manifested today? To take the example of the U.S., where we have grown rapidly in recent years, we have come into conflict with neo-Maoist ideas which openly attack the centrality of the organised working class, as well as variants on the old idea that "the most oppressed are the most revolutionary". The latter overlaps with current "intersectional" concepts that point to "centering the voices" of those facing the most "oppressions". Elements of these outlooks have been expressed by some of our new members in the U.S.; we have had to patiently take up and discuss these issues in the American organisation and will need to continue to do so going forward. We do not see how, in the short term, our sections can grow without being forced to take up such ideas, not just outside our organisation, but also to a degree inside. We are sure that this will also be the experience of leading comrades who support the faction

.The Irish section has also written tens of thousands of words over the the last five years exposing the limitations and mistaken approach of identity politics. They have successfully used this theoretical debunking of ID politics to begin to develop a new layer of youth cadre, some of which would had been previously influenced by these petit bourgeois ideas.

It is ironic in this context that the world perspectives document draft, written by the IS, most of which is now in the faction, actually exaggerated how far our U.S. section has sunk roots in the working class when it stated "[Trump]...without intending to, has given an enormous impulse to the left and the ideas of socialism, particularly amongst young people and workers who are rallying to our banner in record numbers in the U.S. and will continue to do so in the next period." (paragraph 26) The U.S. comrades themselves brought forward an amendment to cor-

rect this and it was accepted.

In the past, the Irish organisation was described as the "jewel in the crown" of the CWI by the IS, a designation the comrades themselves did not seek or particularly like. While, of course, this description was valid on one level, it also frankly served to obscure the actual and very serious challenges we faced in building the party in Ireland. Likewise, today we should celebrate the successes we have achieved in the U.S. but exaggerating them will not help the international to learn from the complex challenges we actually face there.

We need to briefly comment on a couple of other points made by the faction regarding the changing composition of the working class and our orientation to the unions. While correctly stressing the continuing potential social power of the industrial working class globally and the emerging importance of the logistics/distribution sector, it is a major omission that the comrades do not mention the role of public sector workers, who in many countries now make up the majority of the organised working class in the trade union movement and who have been key to working-class resistance to austerity in many countries.

Also, the reference in the platform to the working class being strengthened in Asia, Africa and Latin America [paragraph 16] is too sweeping and one-sided. Potentially, in terms of the specific weight of workers in the overall economy, this is correct. However, we also need to recognise that trade union organisation has been pushed back in many countries in the neo-colonial world, while precarious work, outsourcing, anti-strike laws and other neo-liberal features are difficulties facing many workers in the advanced capitalist countries.

We have a role to play in assisting workers to use the existing trade union structures to rebuild and recruit new layers and, when appropriate, to bypass bureaucratic impediments to struggle with the organisation of new trade union structures.

We also feel that the description of third level students in the statement is somewhat simplistic. The comrades state: "While in many countries more students from a working class background are in higher education, their role in the struggle will never be comparable to the role of young workers in the workplaces, who develop a collective consciousness as a class."

The essence of this statement is correct. However, as is acknowledged, there has been an increase in the numbers of young people from working-class backgrounds who attend higher education in many advanced capitalist countries. This is in large part because of the collapse in apprenticeships and the decimation of manufacturing industries and the lack of 'decent jobs' for school leavers

Many students not only may come from a working-class background, but in many cases they also have to work in order to make ends meet. 57% of UK higher education students work and in the U.S. the figure is 70%. In some countries, the figure is even higher. There is also the question in the U.S. of the emergence of a significant layer of underpaid "graduate student employees" who teach while earning higher degrees. In Ireland, Unite have highlighted that up to 33% of staff in universities are now casual and this includes many graduate students, as in the U.S. There have been extensive unionization campaigns among these workers in the U.S., including by traditional industrial unions like the United Auto Workers.

Of course, for the majority of these students from a working-class background, their time in third level education is only temporary before, in most cases, becoming workers and, in ever increasing numbers, joining the ranks of the super-exploited precariat.

Notwithstanding this, we recognise that the bourgeois university represents an alien class environment which can have a profound effect on the outlook and consciousness even on students from a working-class background.

While we agree with the need to orientate to the unions, both in trying to build forces inside the existing unions and in directing demands at their leaders, we must also understand the specific elements of the situation that exist in particular countries. In a recent contribution to the debate, the Greek EC explained the extreme disgust of the mass of Greek working people with the role that the trade union leaders played in the years of the "Memoranda" and how we had to adjust to this reality: "Especially after the defeat of the Greek working class under SYRIZA it is not possible to 'put demands' on the GSEE (Greek TUC) to lead the fight against austerity! This would be incomprehensible to the mass of the working class, who will think that we live on a different planet." As the Greek EC goes on to explain, "what is necessary in such conditions

is to strongly attack and expose the trade union leadership, explain what they should have done if they really represented the working class, and also explain what is required to rebuild the trade union movement starting from a rank-and-file level."

In the U.S., our comrades long ago stopped focusing demands on the leadership of the main trade union federation, the AFL-CIO, not so much because of the disgust of workers with its leaders but because it is generally seen as irrelevant. Instead, we focus our demands on particular unions as well as on other organizations of the oppressed and figures like Sanders, while stressing the need for mass movements to be centered on the social power of the working class. The U.S. comrades have also explained how the very important teachers' revolt this spring involved going around the union leadership, using social media to considerable effect.

One can go so far as to say that an important factor in the teachers' success was, counterintuitively, the relative weakness of teacher unions in the Southern states where the revolt was initially concentrated (it has now spread further) and the lack of authority of their leadership, ie they weren't able to stifle the revolt from below. By comparison, in the Battle of Wisconsin in 2011, public sector workers suffered a huge defeat at the hands of the newly elected right-wing governor Scott Walker as the national leadership of the public sector unions were able - in a state with better organized unions - to stifle the widespread demand for a public sector general strike.

A different type of "non-typical" working class campaign that won a major economic victory was, of course, the victorious 15Now effort that we led in Seattle, which resulted in the enactment of the first \$15 minimum wage in a major U.S. city. This undoubtedly historic victory laid the ground for many other cities and even states adopting \$15. We did have some union support in Seattle and we certainly sought more engagement from unions and called for workplace action. But the biggest element was a grassroots, neighborhood-based campaign and the truth was that the bulk of working people who supported the campaign were still affected by "proxy consciousness", willing to give a few dollars to support what we were doing but not prepared to get active.

None of this in any way is to suggest "turning away from the unions", but these examples show

the complexity of the situation today, with various conjunctural elements. This poses the need in some countries to attack sellout leaders more boldly than in the past while skilfully pointing the road to the renewal of the unions or even building new organizations. We are concerned that the statement of the faction points away from the flexible and concrete approach to these issues adopted in the past by the CWI.

Irish Organisation Put Under the Microscope

To turn to the Irish organisation, which is the central focus of the faction's critique, it is not true to suggest that there is no serious approach to the unions. In the North, where the organisation is part of the unitary Irish section, we continue to have a very developed position, particularly in NIPSA, the main public sector union, as well as in Unite. But in the South, the situation has some elements of what the Greek comrades describe, with a series of terrible sellouts in recent years by the union leaders and a widespread disillusionment among working-class people in the role of the unions. This must be skilfully counteracted but it cannot be ignored. It is false to claim, as the faction does, that the Irish section has taken a decision to turn away from the trade unions in the South, when in fact comrades are engaged in work within a number of unions and have made important interventions into industrial disputes.

The Irish leadership wrote a 12,000 word document in 2015 on the importance of our work within the trade unions, the centrality of the role of the trade unions in building working-class unity between Catholics and Protestants in the North and the need to defend the all-Ireland unity of the trade union movement in opposition to the increasing shift towards nationalism amongst some of the leadership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. All recent perspectives documents of the Irish organisation have contained extensive material on the unions.

In the beginning of the campaign leading up to the 2018 referendum on abortion, the Irish comrades did take concrete initiatives towards the unions. It is true, however, that they focused more on initiatives aimed at working-class communities. This is a legitimate position for a Marxist organisation to take under some circumstances and does not in itself prove that the comrades have abandoned an orientation to the unions. We would agree, however, and the Irish comrades themselves accept, that their material should have included points explain-

ing what the unions should have been doing to fight for a 'yes' vote as part of the necessary work of educating the broader working class about the potential power of the organised working class and its role in achieving social change.

In the critique of the Irish comrades' trade union work, as well as other aspects of the faction's critique of the Irish organisation, we see the application of a microscope used to collect evidence in a one-sided manner. While it is absolutely correct to look at the work of the sections in detail, especially those who have had the biggest successes and face the biggest threat of deforming pressures, we think this approach is being applied in an extremely unbalanced way. In a very important contribution at the IEC, DT (Nigeria) made exactly this point that putting other sections under this microscopic analysis would reveal many problems and mistakes. This is normal for revolutionary organisations that are actually engaged with the real struggles of the working class.

Of course, the central issue raised by those who formed the faction was the investigation of the breach of protocol which represented a serious threat to the party. Many of these comrades seemed to believe that the investigation was worse than the attack itself. We believe that there were mistakes in the investigation but this narrative is frankly a gross exaggeration.

The December 21 faction statement points to a paragraph in the resolution passed by the IEC that summarised a number of issues accepted by the Irish IEC members in relation to the investigation. It was agreed that, in written form, this paragraph would not be circulated beyond ECs, with the exception of the Irish NC. The faction asks "Why such fear of informing the members of the International of this conclusion? We find it unacceptable that such conclusions should be kept from, at least, the leading NCs/CCs of all the sections of the CWI." They go on to claim that these points were then not reported to the Irish NC.

This is incredibly dishonest. As the members of the faction who attended the IEC know full well, the reason for this stipulation in the resolution was first and foremost because of security concerns. In fact, in numerous sections where IEC members voted for this resolution, the points have been reported verbally to NC members. The full IEC resolution, including this paragraph on the breach of protocol, has in fact been distributed to the Irish NC and the issues are now

being reported to the wider Irish membership. Finally, the Irish leadership itself recently communicated to the Congress Organizing Committee that the paragraph, with a slight modification, could, in their view, be used throughout the international. So much for these claims of an attempt to hide the Irish comrades' acceptance of mistakes!

Of course, the faction statement again repeats the claim that, at the IEC, a number of comrades came together to "shield" the Irish section from legitimate criticism. A transcript of the speeches of many who voted for the majority resolution would conclusively disprove this. But let us state it clearly here: of course, the Irish section has made mistakes. Given the scale of what they have undertaken over the past 20 years, it would be very surprising if there weren't real mistakes. One of these mistakes was the failure to adopt a sufficiently transitional approach in the election material in the 2016 election. The real question is not whether there have been mistakes or problems but what the approach of the section has been to dealing with these and how the international leadership should respond.

Elements of a Balance Sheet on the Work in Ireland

At the IEC, numerous comrades who joined or supported the faction that was declared at the end of the week stated that their goal was not to attack the excellent work and achievements of the Irish section over many years. But this was frequently followed up by saying that winning victories for working people was not in itself proof that the Irish leadership had not abandoned a revolutionary position.

In reality, the victories of the Irish organisation were the victories of the whole international and a vindication of its approach and method. This includes the recent victory in the abortion referendum in which the Irish comrades' played a key role. It was shocking that a number of comrades at the IEC did not wish to admit that the referendum victory was historic. Clive of the England and Wales section, for example, stated that referendums are a form of parliamentarism, indicating that that this victory was therefore not as significant as other forms of working-class struggle. This is truly out of touch. We did not take such a dismissive approach towards the outcome of the Brexit vote or towards the vote on Scottish independence which were also plebiscites and neither of which could be described as representing 'chemically pure'

working-class phenomena.

To have a real estimation of the challenges facing our Irish comrades and their strengths and weaknesses, we must register how remarkable it is that our comrades have played such a key role in mass campaigns – from the water charges in the mid 1990s to the defense of the Jobstown protesters – while winning seats in the parliament and many positions in local councils. These victories were won during a time that all comrades recognise as a difficult and challenging period, when there has been a serious throwback in mass consciousness, which has begun to be reversed since the economic crisis began. While winning victories in mass struggles and having a higher profile in the working class than any other section of our international in the past period, building the party in Ireland was very difficult and developing cadres was very challenging, as it has been for a majority of our sections.

The fight with our ex-Scottish comrades in the late 90s registered very strongly in the Irish organisation and its leadership, as it did throughout the international. This was precisely because Scottish Militant Labour had also led important mass struggles but then, in a new period, had become disoriented and rapidly abandoned the idea of building a revolutionary party in favor of a "broad", essentially reformist, party. It was understood that this was a potential danger facing the Irish organisation as well and had to be consciously resisted. A key emphasis was placed on counteracting the depoliticising effect that constant immersion in mass work, in particular the electoral work, can have on some of our cadre. In fact, the first comrades to raise the dangers of a "Scottish scenario" developing in our Irish section were the comrades of the Irish NEC majority.

In a sense, one could say that some of the weaknesses of the Irish organisation were the cost of its mass successes. But in a different period, like the 80s, before the collapse of Stalinism, when there were significantly more activists within the trade union movement and working-class consciousness was markedly higher than now, there were fewer complications impeding the ability of the working class to win mass struggles, and the objective situation was more conducive for building the party and its cadre. In the future, we will again experience opportunities to make rapid gains on all fronts simultaneously.

Mick B, in the IEC discussion on Ireland, stated that it was in no way wrong to raise the possibility of a Scottish-type degeneration in the Irish organisation today. Indeed, besides the national question and the complex challenges it poses for maintaining a revolutionary position on an all-Ireland basis, opportunist pressure from mass work and elected positions on an organisation with an insufficient cadre base is the main challenge we face.

In 2015-16 the organisation faced difficulties. Some comrades had lost confidence in building the organisation and the distorting effects of the elected positions were becoming sharper. The Irish leadership raised with the IS that choices might have to be made between seizing every possible electoral opportunity and building the party. The answer they received was basically "you have to do both." Irish IEC comrades also raised with the IS that there was "a threat to the integrity of the revolutionary party" because of the pressures of the mass work and the difficult struggle to revitalise our cadre layer. Unfortunately, some IS comrades dismissed these warnings, believing they were a ruse to excuse deficiencies in our general election material.

As was outlined at the IEC, the Irish leadership in the meantime has made a concerted turn towards party building. The results of this can already been seen in the new layers of developing youth cadre and, in our view, it points to the determination and a willingness to wage a battle to defend the revolutionary character of the party.

Meanwhile, a different problem has developed. In the absence of decisive moves towards a new mass workers' party, the Southern Irish comrades sought to initiate broader formations involving the hundreds of activists around us from the water charges movement, first the Anti-Austerity Alliance, then Solidarity. These were good initiatives which, if they had taken off, would have allowed us to develop as a powerful revolutionary trend, contesting with other trends in a broad formation, testing ideas and pointing towards a new workers' party. But despite our best efforts, these formations did not flesh out and Solidarity at times impedes the development of our own party's profile. But, as with previous challenges, are the Irish comrades prepared to address this? Ruth C. stated at the IEC that the comrades are looking at standing in the forthcoming European elections as the Socialist Party rather than Solidarity. In all previous European elections, including when Joe

H was elected in a stunning victory, we stood as the Socialist Party. The Irish leadership also made clear that they are considering the future of Solidarity and the possibility of the winding up of Solidarity has been raised at the NC.

This brief balance sheet is not the record of a perfect organisation with a leadership that does not make mistakes. But we must seriously ask, is this the record of an organisation which has abandoned revolutionary Marxism? We believe that, at the IEC, the Irish leadership demonstrated that they are fully committed to the CWI, to address shortcomings and that they are in no way afraid to take on board genuine criticism.

The faction also makes the following assertion: "It is very significant that those comrades insisted on the 'tone' of the IS and accused it of not understanding that the Irish section has a 'very special' position because of its mass influence and lack of cadres. But, at the same time, these comrades remained silent about the fact that the party apparatus in Southern Ireland is soon to be comprised of 27 full-timers, plus three TDs, overwhelmingly financed by the state via the elected positions we hold. A majority of full-timers are connected to work associated with the elected positions."

In the South, the party has 11 full-timers and one part-timer, and there are 11 full-timers working in the Dáil or for Solidarity plus three part timers, and Rosa has one part-timer. The Irish leadership does indeed see this as a problem and the Irish NEC majority for many years has consistently warned of the problem of a revolutionary party being over-reliant on state funding. But as the faction itself says, the majority of these full-timers and part-timers are the staff of members of parliament and councillors. Is it actually being suggested that we not use state funds provided for staffing? In Seattle, our council office employs a number of comrades as well. The crucial issue is whether our organisation struggles consciously for financial independence and instils the membership with the correct, revolutionary approach to this issue.

The experience of the Irish comrades, both positive and negative, is full of rich lessons for the whole CWI. They have faced, in the sharpest possible way, the challenges any Marxist organisation would face in the past two decades if it made real gains against the current. To say this is in no way to "shield" the comrades; it is to demand a serious and balanced approach to criticism of their work.

For a Balanced Debate on the Women's Movement

The platform raises many points on women's struggles which no comrade would disagree with. There is general agreement that a full discussion on this crucial world phenomenon is both necessary and long overdue in our International. Mass movements against violence against women played key roles preceding general strikes in Argentina and Brazil. In the US, the Women's March in 2017 was the single biggest day of protest ever. In Poland, women organised strikes against further attacks on abortion rights. On IWD in the last few years, international coordination has been more extensive than ever. These events must be discussed in our international and reflected in our material and campaigns.

The sections of the CWI have played an outstanding role in this movement in recent years, adding a new and historic chapter to our revolutionary history. In Ireland and the Spanish state in particular, where we have played decisive roles, as well as elsewhere, we have intervened in this movement with a clear common strategic goal: building a socialist-feminist, working-class cutting edge capable of challenging alien class forces and ideas for the leadership of the movement.

In the struggle to pursue this strategic goal, mistakes have and will be made. No revolutionary organisation is immune to the dangers of adaptation to specific pressures presented by our role in these movements, which are often dominated, as the faction states, by anti-Marxist and non-working-class forces and ideas.

Fully and regularly discussing these pressures and dangers throughout our organisation, and how to combat them, is essential. We must educate our membership to be conscious that the most important aspect of our role in these movements is not to merely build them up, or make up numbers, but to carry out a distinct revolutionary intervention.

However, this is not a new issue. Sections have been involved in these debates over a long period, as was shown at the commission on women at the IEC in November 2017, as well as at the recent IEC meeting, where a broad majority of contributions on this issue disagreed with the position of the IS majority. Within the international, many sections already have considerable experience of the need to highlight the

danger of adaptation to petit bourgeois ideas and the brands of 'Identity Politics' which can dominate these movements and which we consciously combat.

We aim to polarise these movements along class lines and wage political and ideological struggle against bourgeois and petit bourgeois feminism. This means attacking the bourgeois "false friends" of the feminist movement (eg, Oprah Winfrey, Hillary Clinton etc) and exposing the cynical attempts of bourgeois politicians to fly the feminist flag - with the new Spanish government a clear example.

This has been a key element of our propaganda and interventions in the Spanish state, Ireland, the US and elsewhere. Examining whether this is being done enough, and clearly enough, in our work in all countries is important and a welcome part of this debate. However, we believe that the faction's assertion in its platform that the Irish section and ROSA do not emphasise class demands and a class approach, or that there is a significant difference in this regard between the Irish and other sections, is a gross exaggeration.

A class orientation goes far beyond propaganda, and the question of criticising individual bourgeois and petit bourgeois feminists. This should also be reflected in our activity and methods of struggle. The popularisation of the idea of "strikes" in the women's liberation movement worldwide - originated in Poland - is an extremely significant development and shows the potential for the movement to embrace working-class methods of struggle. This has moved onto a much higher level with the examples of militant strike action in Google, McDonalds, Glasgow Scotland and most importantly in the Spanish state's magnificent feminist general strike on 8 March 2018.

This intervention must be developed further by our sections. In the Spanish state, we have played an outstanding role, using the crucial tools at our disposal (especially the Sindicato de Estudiantes and our new feminist platform Libres y Combativas). The Irish section and ROSA, following the historic referendum campaign, took the important initiative of calling for strike and protest action on 8 March 2019, including initiating important work in trade union structures. Ruth C used her speech in the Dáil on the treatment of a rape victim during a trial in November (which went viral and global, not just on social media but also in the main-

stream media) to issue the call for strikes and walkouts on International Women's Day.

We completely agree with the need to highlight the danger of adaptation to petit bourgeois ideas and the brands of "Identity Politics" which can dominate these movements and which we must consciously combat. The debate currently opening up in our International will play an immensely useful role in sharpening the consciousness of all comrades in relation to this vital task.

However, as well as the danger of adaptation to these movements - and their multi-class nature - there is also another side of the coin. This includes a danger posed in the opposite direction of, at best, over-emphasising the dangers of intervening in these movements while underestimating the revolutionary potential and the need for our forces to turn decidedly towards them. At worst, it includes the danger of a dismissive, sectarian approach to these movements, which we are not saying any section in the CWI has displayed. These dangers have an objective basis in reality and are reflected in the position adopted by both reformist left leaders in some countries and on the so-called revolutionary left.

As Trotsky explained: "Every political turn poses a certain element of danger. However, it is much more dangerous to repeat old by-passed formulas in a new situation because of fear of such dangers." [Writings: Supplement, 1929-33, p229].

There are dangers of a dismissive and therefore passive approach, which pose equally grave consequences for our organisation as the dangers of adaptation referred to above. We would ask the supporters of the faction if they also acknowledge these dangers and the need to discuss them in our ranks?

We feel there are important differences of political emphasis on this question among the comrades of the faction. These differences are completely normal and healthy and, if discussed out, can assist in clarifying our ideas. However, we think this creates complications for a faction which has asserted that a common approach to the women's liberation and other movements is central to its political basis.

The IS majority document "Women's oppression and identity politics - our approach in Ireland and internationally" has been distributed to

some extent in most sections of the CWI. While no one would disagree with many of the general points made in this document, we strongly disagree with the unbalanced, exaggerated and generalised criticisms of the Irish section. We also feel that the document over-emphasises an approach of caution and conditionality in relation to the intervention of the CWI in the women's movement. This includes emphasising the danger of "overestimating" the importance of these movements.

The faction platform asserts that "the main characteristic" (our emphasis) of the global women's movement - and similar movements - is that they are multi-class in nature. We agree that these movements - as with national liberation movements, anti-racist movements and others - are objectively multi-class in nature and that this has very important consequences for our interventions and strategy within them. However, to assert that this is the main characteristic of the modern women's movement risks pointing in a misleading direction.

Our comrades in the Spanish state, Ireland and elsewhere have pointed out and emphasised that one of the major characteristics of the women's movement in many countries today is precisely the tendency for the working class (working-class women in particular, though not only) to be more and more central to it. We have seen in these countries and elsewhere how the demands and methods of the working class are increasingly prominent in these movements, often marginalising the bankrupt prejudices of bourgeois and petit bourgeois feminism.

The IS majority document also emphasises points on our language in relation to the women's movement. This starts with points cautioning the use of the term "feminist", before ceding that it is "not incorrect" to use the term feminist alongside clarifying terms (for example "socialist feminist"), something which CWI sections have been doing already for over a decade.

The question of the language we use is complex. There are many factors to weigh up in each country, including mass consciousness. While correctly warning against the adoption of certain language in an unbalanced way, the document criticises the Irish section for the use of terms like "misogynist", "patriarchal" and "rape culture". Many sections use some or all of these terms in their material. Our Spanish section, for example, uses these terms far more regularly and prominently than our Irish section.

We have, therefore, been surprised not to hear leading Spanish comrades, who are part of the faction, comment on these issues.

The same applies to the position of the IS majority in relation to movements around rape trials, and the #metoo/#YoTeCreo phenomenon which has been central to mass mobilisations, protests and strikes in many countries over the last years. In discussions with sections in recent years, comrades from the IS majority have consistently advocated that the position of CWI sections in relation to this movement places more emphasis on “fair trials” and the possibility of false rape and sexual assault accusations.

The same IS majority document points concretely in this direction. Also, during the IEC meeting, an IS member debated with Irish comrades in relation to their concrete approach to the protests following the ‘Belfast rugby rape trial’ last year. The IS comrade was defending the need for Irish comrades to have been more sensitive to the idea that the “jury had spoken” and that Irish comrades should have mentioned defendant Paddy Jackson’s mealy mouthed “apology” for misogynistic Whatsapp messages in their articles.

While we, of course, agree objectively that accusations should not be automatically believed, we disagree with the idea that these points should be given more emphasis in our public material in relation to the high-profile rape and sexual assault cases which have led to these mass movements. If the above approach is adopted, there is a danger of not clarifying that the central injustice being perpetrated by the oppressive capitalist “justice” system is not related to any woman’s “false accusations” but to the leniency which capitalist courts around the world often give to rapists and sexual abusers.

Again, we were surprised that leading comrades from the Spanish state - who have carried out exemplary work in leading these movements under the banner of “Yo te creo” - did not comment on this aspect of the IS majority positions.

We are concerned that the faction presents legitimate and inevitable discussion on this issue as evidence of a fundamental break with Marxist methods. In material presented by leading faction members in England & Wales members’ bulletins, the position that the IS majority were potentially “underestimating the women’s movement, LGBTQ work and issues around the

environment” was described as reflecting “pressures from alien class forces who do not see the working class as the decisive force for change”. We think that this approach of exaggerating criticism and jumping to finished characterisations can actually serve to discourage open discussion and debate, not encourage it.

But women’s struggles and the environment are not “new”, supplementary questions for Marxists; they are integrated parts of debates and struggles since the days of Marx and Lenin.

The National Question

The reference in the faction platform to the national question - a key field for Marxists in the current situation - is puzzling. During the IEC meeting, a number of points were made by IS members which made criticisms of the Irish section’s approach to the national question in Ireland.

The faction’s platform makes no reference to the national question in Ireland, however, apart from vague references to the approach taken to bourgeois and petit bourgeois nationalist parties which we would be interested in clarifying further. The main idea they assert is of a difference between the Irish comrades and Spanish comrades on Catalonia! It is very difficult for us to comment on an issue presented in such an imprecise way. What disagreements did the Irish comrades raise with the Spanish comrades and when? For our part, we consider the approach of the Spanish section to the Catalan national question - an extremely different situation to the Irish national question - to be a valuable addition to the overall unique contribution of the CWI to the national question.

Against a “Federal” CWI, for a Strengthening of Democratic Centralism

Another issue which is raised by the faction is the nature of the CWI, and democratic centralism in a genuinely Trotskyist international.

This is a key question which defines the CWI in opposition to other so-called Trotskyist trends. Rather than a loose “federation of parties” like the Mandelites, our conception of a real international is one of a single, world party of socialist revolution. This starts from political cohesion around a world perspective and a common programmatic approach, and is reflected in our activity and organisationally: our democratic centralism operates on a world scale in our

world congress, IEC and IS.

At the same time, we are opposed to the bureaucratic centralism of other trends, including the IMT and the IST led by the British SWP, where national sections are micromanaged and small differences are exaggerated.

The debate which is beginning in our ranks represents a test of the health of our international democratic centralism. We will try to outline some constructive ideas about how democratic centralism can be strengthened in our international, and where, in our view, the real threat of “federalism” comes from.

The need to discuss and improve on the cohesion of the CWI predates and was apparent, in our opinion, prior to the explosion of the current crisis in the organisation. We feel that this has been illustrated by a number of factors.

The dramatic change in the pace of events on a world scale in this historical period, and the demands of this situation on our forces, has sometimes “stretched” our ability, as an international, to stay fully abreast of developments on a world scale in sufficient depth. This has been reflected in difficulties for our day-to-day international leadership, the IS, to itself discuss out fully international developments, produce regular political material in response to them, and to have sufficient in-depth discussions with the leaderships of national sections about the political situation in their countries and the work of their sections.

Healthy relations between IS members and IEC and national EC members is an extremely important factor in building a unified and cohesive international organisation. Comrades of the IS and the IEC have to exchange ideas, experiences, etc on an equal and collective basis, with the aim of learning from each other.

The time and resources of the IS and International Centre - where only seven full-time comrades work - have regularly been consumed with pressing political and organisational matters in particular sections in the last period. This has, inevitably, impacted on the above mentioned difficulty.

The IS itself has not regularly discussed the international political situation for a number of years, outside of preparatory meetings for Summer Schools and IECs where leadoffs and documents are discussed. Key political questions,

which are now being cited as central to this debate, such as the global women’s movement, perspectives for trade unions, have not been discussed by the IS at any time.

The European Bureau (an annual meeting of IEC members from European sections), one of only two significant annual international leadership meetings, has in recent years ceased to be an annual meeting. It met twice in the last six years and not once in the last three years. Such a situation inevitably carries a cost in terms of the political and organisational cohesion of our international.

Two consecutive meetings of the IEC (2016 and 2017) passed motions, both proposed by comrades who are now members of the faction, for the publication of a regular internal international bulletin. This agreement was not implemented on either occasion. We feel that a regular and well prepared internal international bulletin could also strengthen our international democratic centralism, promoting more discussion on an international level and emphasising to all our members that we are a world party.

These issues all point to a broader problem: the failure of the IS, in recent years, to launch more wide-ranging discussions around a series of issues which, while possibly exposing differences, would have helped to arm the whole international and prepare it for the next period. This has contributed to the building up of issues which have exploded in this crisis.

We do not raise these examples to attack the IS. One of the authors of this document is an IS member. We also do not allege that these problems are the exclusive responsibility of the IS. The IEC of the CWI also has a responsibility in not having sufficiently discussed and taken steps to resolve these problems. Resolving this situation is key, in our view, to maintaining the CWI’s character as a centralised world revolutionary party, as opposed to a club of national parties which meets once a year.

The health of democratic centralism in an organisation is not only reflected in the strength of “executive” bodies (ECs on a national level and the IS internationally) but, just as importantly, in the health of wider leading bodies who elect and hold these bodies to account. Although the current situation, in which the IS approach to an extremely important issue was opposed by a majority of the IEC, should not be a day-to-day occurrence in our organisation, the fact that it

can happen is, in our opinion, not a sign of an unhealthy situation but of a healthy one! A situation in which our wider international leadership is independent and critically thinking and is prepared to, when necessary and in a balanced way, exercise a check on the day-to-day leading body which it elected.

In “The Scottish Debate - CWI reply August 2000”, the IS wrote:

“Democratic centralism is a method that allows the party to function on a democratic basis, giving the members the right to hold the leadership to account and subject to recall. Without freedom of discussion, comradely debates, then a common understanding of the situation today, and clarity on the demands and programme required, a genuine agreement and understanding of how to intervene in the class struggle is not possible.”

In such a situation, the responsibility of the IS, according to the norms of democratic centralism, is clear: to accept and carry out the position of the IEC, which was for a de-escalation of the conflict to avoid a split. In this context, the resolution (included in this bulletin) which was passed by the IEC following the formation of the faction, which is the agreed position of the IEC, must be respected. Of course, the majority of IS comrades have a right to continue to disagree with this position, and their formation of a faction is an expression of this. However, it is worrying to us that this agreed position of the IEC is twice described as “unacceptable” in the faction’s platform.

We favour a stronger, more cohesive, more united CWI, with stronger international ties between our sections. We have made a number of concrete proposals which we think could point in that direction above: the re-establishment of annual European Bureaus (which should be supplemented by other regional IEC bureaus in Asia, Africa and Latin America if possible), the re-establishment of a regular internal international bulletin, and more regular general and collective political discussion both within the IS and between the IS and IEC members.

We also believe the international is suffering from a deficit of party building discussions and written material. Recruitment, consolidation, developing and using our paper, finance – real discussion on these issues has unfortunately been squeezed off the agenda during the past decade for lack of time. This has been the case

at both the IEC and at the Summer School, where the key party building discussion has been replaced by a limited “rally” format where a few sections are chosen to report, mostly on successes, meaning that insufficient attention is given to overcoming problems and getting to grips with the very complicated situation most sections have been facing.

The fact is that a majority of sections have not grown in the past few years, and almost all sections report that recruitment and contact work is difficult. Similarly, several sections have had problems getting out a paper on a regular basis. Nobody disputes the perspective for intense class battles and crises which is opening up, but we must also start from the real situation on the ground and the problems our sections are grappling with. Yet these issues have not been given sufficient attention at the international level. This situation can be improved dramatically with specialised material on organisational methods and well prepared discussions on the paper, recruitment, political education, workplaces, youth work, etc.

Another text which has been circulated to all sections (“Develop A Constructive Debate and Avoid An Unnecessary Split by Sonja G, Yasha M and Shahar B) makes other proposals, such as internationally coordinated campaigns and materials for International Women’s Day and the 2019 European elections, which we agree with.

“Non Faction Faction?”

Another key element in democratic centralism is the right of all members to freely express their opinions and to make criticisms of any comrade, either in their own section or another section of the CWI. This right is especially precious when it applies to the right of members to criticise the leadership of the party, and of the actions of the leaders they themselves elect.

There is a very important difference between not agreeing with the leadership over an issue, or two or three, and even sharing that disagreement, or some of it, with other members, and “factionalising”. The formation of a faction is a very advanced and developed form of expressing disagreement in the party. The CWI statutes (our world party constitution) actually deals explicitly with this, stating: “Members have the right to form factions around specific issues and ideas where disagreements exist, after exhausting all possible procedures for discussion”.

While we do not agree that the recently formed IEC minority faction “exhausted all possible procedures for discussion” or presented a common political basis - given that they literally did not discuss their disagreements at all in any body beyond the IS and the leadership bodies of the Irish section until four days before forming their faction - we accept their right to assert that they did. What we do not accept or understand is the fact that the faction accuses others who are not in the faction of being a secret “non-faction faction”, representing a fundamentally different class political position, method and model of party, and being part of a conspiracy. Is this simply an attempt to deflect from the widespread criticism of the premature declaration of a faction that has happened across many of our sections?

The faction has stated that some members have discussed and cooperated with each other about their opposition to the faction. This is true and it is something which happens naturally in any polarised political discussion. No other justification has been presented. This does not meet any reasonable political definition of a faction.

It is also bizarre that the IS majority insisted in Ireland that Paul M. and other comrades who were critical of the leadership there and clearly were coordinating over a period were in no way a group, stating that “comrades have the right to discuss” before forming a formal opposition. Now Paul M. and others have themselves declared a faction in the Irish organisation

Of course, IEC members who are not part of the faction have discussed with each other since the IEC meeting. The contrary would be truly bizarre. This document itself is a reflection of this. However, we assert that we are part of no secret faction. Just because some members of the organisation decide to form a faction, this does not mean that those who disagree automatically become another faction. Will this accusation of secret factionalism now be levelled against any comrade in any section who disagrees with the faction? We are concerned that this unfounded and extreme accusation by members of the faction could have the effect of discouraging the free expression of opinion and disagreement if it is persisted with.

Conclusion

One of the many strengths of the CWI has been its ability to stand against the revisionist and liquidationist pressures that have engulfed and

destroyed so many other so-called Trotskyist and Marxist organisations and internationals. We have done this by basing ourselves on the program and methods developed by Lenin and Trotsky, including the primacy of building an international revolutionary party; putting the interests of the working class first and foremost; developing a transitional programme, allied to patient explanation of our ideas to the working class and youth; defending the unity of the working class and advocating the need for an international struggle for socialism. We believe that, if all comrades in the CWI engage in an honest and fraternal debate, we can emerge from this crisis having collectively learnt many important lessons that will place us in a strategic position to intervene in mass movements and to play a leading and key role in the revolutionary struggles of this epoch. ■

