

The accelerated bureaucratic degeneration of the International Secretariat

Reply to the "IS majority statement on NFF demand for an August IEC" by Eric B (IEC, Belgium), Danny B (IS minority), Tom C (US EC), Sonja G (IEC, Austria), Stephane D (CWI International Auditor, Belgium)

1. During the last 6 months of discussion and debate in the CWI, things have rapidly evolved. This is especially the case for the politics, conduct and methods of the IS majority, in the leadership of the IDWCTCWI faction. Comrades around the world have been shocked to observe an accelerated bureaucratic degeneration. We have seen extremely long-standing, authoritative and respected comrades say, do and write what would have been unimaginable one year ago.
2. The IS majority's latest document - "IS majority statement on NFF demand for an August IEC" - fully reflects how far this process has developed. The two-page document, which we urge all comrades to read, is entirely built upon a rejection of democratic accountability, and a complete distortion of the facts in order to cover up bureaucratic methods. This is part of a plan to walk away from the CWI this summer, and steal the CWI's resources against the will of the majority of its members. In this reply, we will try to briefly dismantle some of the distortions and contortions and explain the true picture to members of the CWI.
3. The IS majority document is a reply to a clear majority of full IEC members, who formally wrote to the IS, invoking paragraph number 16 of the CWI's statutes, which states: "A special meeting of the IEC may be called by the IS and must be convened at the request of one third of the full IEC members." The IS majority replies with 10 paragraphs, basically saying "no".
4. We pose the following questions for comrades to consider: why does statute 16 exist? On what basis does the IS disregard it? On what basis did the IEC majority seek to invoke this statute? We think the answers are illuminating.
5. Statute 16 is also something typically found in the statutes of our sections nationally for the convening of national meetings, including sections where the faction controls the leadership. It exists in order to guarantee that when a crisis arises in a democratic organisation, it is not only the Executive Committee, or in this case the IS, which can decide to convene a meeting of democratic bodies. It is a provision for moments in which those who elect the IS wish to hold it accountable. We think this is a very important democratic provision. The first time in our entire history when it has been invoked it has been disregarded by the IS.
6. After months of lying to members, saying that they wanted an IEC in November instead of August (!), the IS majority itself now clearly explains why they will not participate in *any* CWI IEC: the possibility of "regime change" (ie of some change to the composition of the IS). When the IEC majority, in order to try and preserve unity to allow the debate to continue and assuage any doubts or suspicions, explicitly clarified that it would not seek to carry out the removal of the IS in an August IEC, this is dismissed because even if we did not change the IS in August, then we could change it in the future, after a World Congress.
7. We ask all comrades to reflect on what this really means: a leading body avoiding

the democratic accountability of the organisation, explicitly on the basis that they might be democratically removed from their positions. This means that democracy is OK, as long as democracy does not threaten the loss of a given leading position for a small group of individuals. This would mean the end of genuine internal elections and party democracy in the international and its replacement by a system of permanent self-chosen leadership. We call on all comrades to take a stand against bureaucratic methods in defence of democratic centralism.

8. On what basis did the IEC majority invoke statute 16? The November IEC meeting unanimously, including the faction, agreed to hold a meeting of the IEC in August. Following the implosion of the faction and departure of the former Spanish leadership, the faction withdrew from this decision of the IEC, and unilaterally dissolved the Congress Organising Committee. The IEC majority, after repeated attempts to reestablish this agreement, invoked article 16 in order to implement this democratic decision. The IS majority's disregard for democratic accountability is therefore two-fold. They disregard a decision of the IEC, and then double down on it disregarding the statutes of the organisation.

IEC majority a minority in the CWI?

9. The IS majority's fear of regime change is based on the reality that their faction is a minority in the CWI. If the IEC majority was unrepresentative, then surely the IS could call an extraordinary World Congress to elect a new representative IEC! They do not do so because they realise and openly accept that they would still be a minority in a World Congress, because this is the real situation in the sections.
10. The idea that the IEC majority is unrepresentative of the majority of CWI members is completely false. The truth is the following: the faction has the support of a majority of leading bodies in 9 countries out of over 40 countries where the CWI has forces. Even within those sections where they control the leadership they are increasingly losing the debate. In Germany we believe the majority of rank and file members oppose the faction's plans for a split. In 4 of the above-mentioned 9 countries, there has not even been a debate at the time of writing (when the IS majority is claiming a split has already occurred!).
11. The distorted and dishonest narrative of the faction to try and deny its minority status in the CWI is mostly based on the idea that the biggest section England & Wales, with 2,000 members on paper, supports the faction. This idea is completely fictitious. Let us look at the facts: About 300 comrades attended the 11 regional all-members debates in the England & Wales section (including overlapping comrades who attended more than one and about 50 Full Timers). At the time of writing 127 England & Wales comrades from over 30 branches have signed an open letter opposing the IDWCTCWI faction. The Faction for Revolutionary Internationalism (FRI) has been declared in England & Wales and is mobilising support against the IS-led faction's unprincipled bureaucratic split.
12. In reality, about 75% of the CWI's active membership opposes the IDWCTCWI faction.

Building a real international?

13. The faction's overwhelming emphasis on its base of support in England & Wales is

politically significant. In reality the faction's leaders have drawn the conclusion that only in a smaller international organisation, where a single section's leadership's dominance is unquestioned, can their prestige and positions be maintained, and "regime change" be averted.

14. At the IDWCTCWI conference in July, 10 delegates out of a total of 22 will be from the England & Wales section! This is an unimaginable situation for the CWI! In the CWI, all efforts are made to give decision making structures real international dimensions and to avoid the dominance of any single national section. The faction is clearly moving away from this tradition, which is central to the Bolshevik tradition of international party building.
15. Their conference will launch their new international organisation, based on their assertion that in the CWI today there "are currently two international organisations functioning in one with diverging political analysis and method". According to them, the majority "have broken from the political orientation and methods that the CWI was originally founded on".
16. In reality, the faction is running scared from the political debate, lacking any confidence in its political ability to convince the majority. The IS-majority faction recently produced factional articles in the name of the CWI on socialistworld.net, on China, the trade conflict, Ireland, Austria and the US, which indicate political differences with the position of our sections in these countries. However, it is clear that they lack the will or the confidence to debate these issues in front of the members in the CWI.
17. We reject the faction's endless attempts to de-politicise the debate. Their method of undemocratic manoeuvres unfortunately makes it necessary to constantly respond to them, consuming valuable time and resources so desperately needed for the daily struggles of the CWI and working class movement. IEC majority comrades are on record repeatedly demanding a structured thematic political debate, on all of the issues raised by the faction as alleged "fundamental differences". This has consistently been ignored by the faction.
18. Their arguments could not be more contradictory: They complain we do not take up the political points and at the same time complain about the number of documents we produce. When we point to the need to discuss perspectives they complain we are ignoring their criticisms about the work of sections. When we reply to their criticisms, they complain we ignore the objective situation or simply ignore our replies and jump on to the next topic. Where decisions are taken to discuss specific topics they brush those decisions aside. We must frankly say: after 6 months of debate we are convinced that the faction is doing everything to avoid a serious political debate and have decided to stick to the comfortable ground of unfounded claims, distorted quotes and generalities.

An appeal to prevent the theft of resources

19. The IS majority document makes light of the payment of international subs from sections opposing the IDWCTCWI faction. This turns reality on its head. The truth is that the IEC majority has shown great discipline and responsibility in continuing to pay international subs, to an IS which has abdicated its role in leading the international and cut all ties with most sections, effectively removed the IS minority from the body, and consistently attacked sections. Tens of thousands of euros per month has been paid from the USA, Belgium, Sweden, Ireland and elsewhere, as normal over the last 6 months. We ask the IS majority, if they consider there to be

“two organisations in one”, to which of these two organisations are we supposed to pay money into?

20. However, the situation regarding the finances of the international is completely unsustainable and is part and parcel of the faction's disregard for democratic accountability. The IS presented no financial report to the 2018 IEC. After dozens of requests, a completely insufficient, undetailed and un-audited one-page report was distributed via email. Incredibly, this “report” included no facts about income, expenditure or reserves.
21. One of the CWI's elected financial auditors, Stephane D from Belgium (co-signatory to this reply), has sought over 5 months via dozens of communications with the international treasurer to carry out his duty in democratically auditing the CWI's finances, and this has not been allowed.
22. In the context of the IS majority's now open declaration of its intent to leave the CWI, its continued refusal to submit itself to financial accountability can only be interpreted as an attempt to misappropriate the finances of the CWI. We appeal to all members to take a stand against this and demand that the IS allows for a full financial audit to take place.
23. In this context, and on the recommendation of CWI auditor Stephane D, we suggest to all sections that international subs continue to be paid, but into secure bank accounts, until such a time as the CWI finances are audited adequately. Direct payments can ensure that this does not impact on the funding of the work of the CWI in the neo-colonial world.

The CWI will remain a strong, cohesive and revolutionary international

24. On finance and other issues, the IS majority develop their narrative of “two organisations in one”. This is a rhetorical attempt to present the IEC majority, and the majority of the CWI, as co-responsible for a disastrous, unnecessary and unprincipled split. But rhetoric aside, the reality is clear: it is the IS majority which is bulldozing through a split in our international, driven by fear of political debate and preoccupied with the unconditional defence of their positions and prestige. We stand for principled unity, and for the existing democratic structures of the CWI to decide its future.
25. We appreciate that for all comrades, the events taking place in the CWI and the bureaucratic degeneration of the IS, can be demoralising and disheartening. The only antidote to this is to take a combative stand in opposition to the destruction of the CWI. The majority of the IEC has shown the best of our traditions in standing up to bureaucratic, bullying and sectarian methods during this debate.
26. We assure all comrades around the world that despite the destructive split manoeuvrings of the faction, the IEC majority will guarantee that the CWI remains a strong, cohesive and very significant revolutionary international. Our international will continue, determined to draw out and explain the lessons of this crisis and prepare the foundations for future growth of our revolutionary Marxist, democratic centralist world party.