

The Expulsions

A Summary of the Political & Organizational Issues

Change the internal life of the organization!

Struggle for independent program of Marxism in the working class movement!

Oppose the role of the I.S. & British E.C. leadership!

**Document of the Expelled US Minority
P.O.Box 10614
Oakland CA 94610
USA**

e-mail: aactivist@igc.apc.org

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The Expulsion of the U.S. Minority

Introduction

On Saturday May 24th, the Majority in the US, acting in concert with the IS, expelled five members of the US Minority faction - R.M., J.R., R.R., L.H., S.O'T. This is the first time in the history of the international that Comrades have been expelled for their political differences. This development opens up a new period in the internal life of the international, one that is marked by a deterioration of its democratic norms. We, the expelled minority will be appealing against our expulsion at the next conference of the US organization and at the coming World Congress. We have already demanded that the international Control Commission be activated to investigate the expulsions.

Many Comrades internationally have claimed that there has been too much material coming out of the debate in the US. We accept that Comrades are busy. But it was a mistake for Comrades not to read the material. It is part of every Comrades responsibility to follow the internal developments in the international and to take an informed stand on the issues under debate. This was done in relation to the debates on Sri Lanka and with the ex-International minority. The main reason this was not done to anything like the same extent in this debate is because of the role of the IS in slandering the Minority. The IS argued that the debate was not political and that the Minority were going to split thus discouraging Comrades from studying the issues.

The IS also discouraged debate by repeating at every opportunity that the Minority had been outvoted at both the US and International level. Time and time again discussions between the Minority and Comrades would start and end with Comrades saying: "Well, you lost the Vote". The tradition that we come out of, Trotskyism, would not exist if its founders had approached things in this way. This tendency to take a position based on which view is the majority rather than by searching out and debating the political issues is a sign of the mistaken approach of our organization in relation to internal debate.. It is not a question of which view wins this or that vote but of which view corresponds to the objective situation and the needs of the working class. A majority is not correct just

because it is a majority, our organization, our tradition, above all should be clear on this.

We produce below a short summary of the issues involved and the main events that occurred in the struggle in North America. If Comrades want access to the actual documents produced during the course of the debate they should contact the IS to whom we have sent copies. We requested on many occasions that these be circulated. After the IS printed five hundred copies of the eighty plus page document which was their reply to us, we selected the main documents putting our view and once again asked the IS to print and circulate these. The IS refused to do so. When we initially announced our faction we sent a document stating the basis of the faction and another document dealing with the main political issue at the time, the Labor Party Activists, (LPA) to the IS for circulation. The IS sent out our declaration of faction statement but refused to circulate the LPA document. Again and again throughout the debate the IS has refused to circulate our material. We tried to overcome this undemocratic action of the IS by sending our material to as many addresses as we could. We do not have the resources to continue to do this. So we ask all Comrades who want copies of the original documents of the debate to ask the IS for copies.

For the past year the IS/Majority have been slandering the Minority by saying that we were going to split. We explained that we were going to be expelled and that the slander that we were going to split was put around to discredit our ideas and to prepare the international for our expulsions. We have now been proven correct. We call on the IEC members and the membership of the international to read this document and conduct a rigorous study of the issues. And irrespective of what position Comrades take on our political position we call on the membership of the organization at all levels to intervene and insist upon our right to remain within the organization.

PART 1. The Political Issues — The Essence of the Dispute *The Changes In the World Situation That Led to the Mistakes of the Majority*

The essence of the crisis in the US organization is political. It is rooted in the change in the world situation of the past ten years. The collapse of

Stalinism was followed by the re-introduction of capitalism into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. China is presently well along the same road. This re-introduction of capitalism had been ruled out by our organization. This was followed by the victory of Imperialism in the Gulf war. An element in the economic background to these events has been the long growth cycles in the 1980's and the 1990's something which the organization did not foresee and which still has to be discussed and explained. The failure of keynesianism was exposed when the world upswing of the post war decades gave way to a new period of world depression in the mid 1970's. There has been an increased globalization in world capital markets over the past years.

These processes combined to push the labor leaders internationally to the right. They openly and determinedly embraced the market. The mass forces of left reformism also collapsed over this period. These developments deepened the crisis of leadership of the working class and as the capitalist offensive unfolded world wide the working class suffered a series of defeats. While the power of the working class remains intact and while there are increasing struggles of the working class unfolding at present, over the past two decades, and in particular the past decade, the working class has been on the defensive.

The combination of these events led to a crisis in the left organizations which claim to stand on revolutionary principles. This crisis also unfolded in the strata of the lefts who had formerly come out of revolutionary organizations and who were active in one way or another in or around the workers movement. The possibility of world revolution seemed more remote than ever to the majority of these elements. As this opinion grew Marxist principles were thrown overboard. There was a decline in numbers of these left forces as many of them abandoned any struggle whatsoever and moved to make their peace and new careers with capitalism. The majority of the lefts were afflicted by this malaise, that is there was a move to the right amongst these forces.

However not all lefts were pushed to the right. A small but important minority of those who considered themselves to be revolutionary are resisting any capitulation, are seeking to rededicate themselves to the struggle, and are prepared to debate their history and ideas openly and with a view to building a more substantial revolutionary nucleus. The Minority believes the organization should be engaging these elements in discussion and activity whereas the Majority are linking with the lefts who are moving right, which of course is understandable as the Majority

are taking the same road.

In the Staley workers' struggle the Majority linked with the local leader who while taking a stand against the national union leaders and management, on every opportunity prevented the strike from becoming more militant and breaking the law. As a result they offered no alternative to the layer of more combative workers involved. In the Labor Party the majority link with the soft lefts and offer nothing but advise to be "patient" to the few more combative workers who are present. In the unions the majority are increasingly involved in an unprincipled relationship with sections of the lower levels of the full time officials and office holders as well as the soft lefts, and thus are offering less and less of an alternative to the more combative layers. In the single issue struggles the emphasis of the Majority is to use these to build the Labor Party. This puts them at odds with the activists in these struggles, the overwhelming majority of whom have never heard of the Labor Party, and those who have can see no reason to join an organization which is not fighting on the main struggles of the day. These policies of the Majority backed by the IS do not add up to a strategy which will result in the building of a revolutionary nucleus. Most of the possible growth that the Majority will have will come from the soft lefts and the less combative layers and on the basis of the organization as a whole shifting more and more toward centrism.

Our international organization was not immune from the pressures of the more difficult objective situation of the past eight years. The split of the Ted G. minority and the decline in the size of the international are testimony to this. This split-off refused to recognize the re-introduction of capitalism in the East and at the same time developed overly pessimistic perspectives for the capitalist world. These ideas were defeated in the international. In almost all sections the pessimistic worn out elements were debated and went with the Ted G. minority. Most of the forces around the Ted Grant split were part of the move away from revolutionary politics that afflicted the majority of the left.

However, at the time, none of these forces within the US organization were willing to express their views. They kept their heads down, went along with the majority in the International, and bided their time until a more favorable opportunity arose. They then provided the political core of the present Majority in the US. One of the three most prominent leaders of this current and a leader of the New York organization, T.T. played the most vicious role for the majority faction. But as soon as the Majority won

the majority he dropped out of the organization stating that he no longer believed in socialism. The second leader of this current J.S. also dropped out saying that a revolutionary organization could not be built at present. The third remains in the Majority and is the leader of their work in the LP.

Here in the US while the objective processes were similar they were not identical to those taking place internationally. The left and our organization were under greater and more negative pressures as the processes explained above unfolded. The collapse of Stalinism and the reintroduction of capitalism had a negative effect especially on the left and the youth. It was not so easy to argue for the idea of the socialist alternative as in the past. However there was no large layer of labor activists who had illusions in Stalinism. And in the US the existence of Stalinism was used to give weight to the red scare. Nationalism was also strengthened by the existence of the Stalinist bloc as the capitalist class was able to claim that the "communists" the "Russians" were just waiting to take over. The collapse of Stalinism weakened the red scare, weakened national unity and when combined with the attacks by the bosses on the working class gave rise to an increased anger against the bosses and the rich. An increased appetite for reform, for an improvement in life, was discernible amongst the working class.

Out of these processes some cracks began to appear at the top of the workers organizations, the unions. The Kirkland/Donoghue leadership was defeated by the Sweeney slate. While this new leadership continues with the policies of class collaboration, especially in the form of the "team concept", and concessions in wages and conditions for all workers except the very lowest paid, it is attempting to organize low paid workers and to win some small increase in their wages. These latter differences with the old Kirkland leadership are what makes it an improvement over the old leadership. At the same time as this process was unfolding the Carey reform forces won the leadership in the Teamsters. And in the Service Employees International the Stern(reform) slate won. And in general there was an increase in the number of challenges to old established leaderships in the unions at various levels. The Labor Party Activists arose partly as part of this process. Wages and Mazzocchi of the Oil Chemical and Atomic workers have played the leading role in this but a number of other smaller unions have also joined.

So in the US, contrary to what was taking place in most other countries, a slightly more progressive wing was rising in the leaderships

of the workers' organizations. For those elements on the left and for the ex-lefts who were on the verge of despair this development seemed like a lifeline. This strata, many of whom had viciously attacked us for raising the demand for a Labor Party in the past, now became cheer leaders for the Labor Party leaders and for the slightly more progressive elements emerging in the leadership of the workers movement in general.

Capitulating to the Pressures

The task for Marxists was to support the slightly more progressive elements against the old guard, while at the same time clearly pointing out the mistaken policies of the new leadership and explaining our own policies. As this task became more and more immediate we, who were to become the Minority, began to see that the Comrades who later became the Majority were beginning to shy away from this task. Articles began to appear in the paper which was edited by one of the present leaders of the majority which did not put our own independent position. A major article on the Staley lock-out raised no alternative for the best workers and the 25,000 strong support network that had been built throughout the country. Two separate meetings were organized in New York where the leader of the Staley local spoke along with other union officials. The organization had no speaker on the platform and our position on how the strike could be won was not put forward at either meeting. This leader of the Staley local who at crucial points in the lockout blocked more militant action was praised to the skies by the majority and spoken of as a possible recruit. The more combative workers who were coming into conflict with this leader and his supporters were given no direction by the Majority. Two of the most prominent of the leaders of this group of workers are described as "sectarians" by the Majority.

In the Labor Party Activists the Comrades of what was to become the Majority protested every suggestion of the Comrades of the Minority that we had to openly separate ourselves from the LPA leadership's refusal to mobilize their members to build the Labor Party and their refusal to break from the Democrats and campaign in the ranks of organized labor against the union leaders support for the Democrats. The Minority explained that the organization was in a united front in the LPA with the Mazzocchi forces on the need to build a Labor Party, but that on the policies for that Labor Party, the nature of that Labor Party, and how it could be built we had differences and we had to state these differences, fight for our position

and recruit to the organization. At the same time we should try to assemble the best activists around a fighting anti-capitalist program and build oppositions within the Labor Party chapters. The position of the Majority amounted to trying to cobble together a loose alliance of lefts in the Labor Party around the ideas of a more democratic structure and the need to run candidates at some distant date without making any open criticism of the policies of the leadership.

Time and time again the Majority have refused to put forward the socialist program in the Labor Party. At the January 1997 NC they voted down a resolution of the Minority where we called for a resolution explaining the need for an alternative to capitalism, for public ownership of the dominant sectors of the economy under workers control and management and for a democratic plan of production, to be put to the convention of the Labor Party chapters. Neither at this convention nor at the full LP convention were the Majority prepared to raise socialism.

This was not an issue of whether the organization would move and have the Labor Party adopt a socialist program. Given the balance of forces such a possibility was ruled out. But what was at issue was whether or not our organization would challenge the idea of the market and put forward the socialist program, that is initiate a debate on socialism versus capitalism. The Majority, backed by the IS, again and again refused to initiate such a debate. Meeting after meeting went by, two Labor party conventions have gone past, and the Majority continues to refuse to initiate a debate on socialism versus the market.

As the 1996 elections to Congress and the Presidency drew near the Sweeney leadership in the AFL-CIO poured its resources and backing into the Democrats and Clinton. At the same time they met and discussed with the leadership of the Labor Party. An agreement was reached that the AFL-CIO leadership would not attack the Labor Party and the Labor Party would not criticize the AFL-CIO's support for Clinton and the Democrats nor would the LP run candidates. Instead it would run propaganda campaigns in the form of collecting signatures on petitions, for a guaranteed job on a living wage. This campaign amounted to pressure on the Democrats as a whole as well as indirect support for those liberal Democrats who were willing to give verbal support to these demands. The intent of this approach was to motivate a layer of the union membership to become politically active and to then channel this activity into support for the Democrats. The Majority refused to mention this betrayal, this dirty deal, in any way, shape or form, at the LPA convention.

Not only that, but one of their main attacks on the Minority is because we raised the issue on the convention floor and opposed the position of the leadership where they refused to mention the November elections.

What is illustrated by this deal on the November elections is that the Labor Party leadership see the role of the Labor Party as being a pressure group on the Democrats and at the same time in effect supporting their liberal wing. This is what it is doing at present. It refuses to campaign against the welfare cuts instead it collects petitions for a constitutional amendment for a guaranteed job on a living wage. It intends to present these petitions to the Democrats and Republicans in the state legislatures and ask these capitalist parties to move to amend the constitution. One of the LPA leaders explains that the objective of this campaign is to make the Republicans and Democrats in the state legislatures the "tribunes of the people". The Majority go along uncritically, with this constitutional amendment diversion to organizing against the welfare cuts, of the Labor Party leaders.

The most important strike of the past year has been the Detroit newspaper strike. The union leaders, including Carey the reform leader of the Teamsters, ordered the workers back to work. The day after this order was given the AFL-CIO announced its support for a march in Detroit to "support the workers", in reality to cover up their breaking of the strike. The Labor Party Convention had instructed its leadership to move for a march on Detroit. These leaders did nothing on this until the AFL-CIO had organized its strike breaking maneuver and then it uncritically backed the cover up march. The Majority refused to criticize the Labor Party leaders for their part in this betrayal.

The Majority sees its task as above all to build the Labor Party. Their idea is that if a Labor Party is built then all else will fall into place. So it subordinates the policies of the organization for an unprincipled relationship with the LP leaders and the rightward moving lefts and ex-lefts in the Labor Party. It goes along with the fraudulent guaranteed job petition, it refused to challenge in any way the Labor Party's silence on the November 1996 elections when the main Labor Party leader, Bob Wages, supported Clinton openly. It refuses to challenge the Labor Party leaders refusal to act on the Detroit strike and their cover up of the AFL-CIO's role. It refuses to raise the socialist alternative in the Labor Party. Instead it tries to build a block with the soft lefts on the need for the party to run candidates in elections at some future date and for more democracy. Sean Sweeney, the leader of the Majority in the Labor Party work and who has

been elected onto the national committee of the Labor Party embodies this opportunist approach of the Majority.

The Spontaneous Struggles and the Orientation of the Organization

The Minority believes in working to popularize the idea that no support should be given to the capitalist parties and for the building of a mass workers' party. Concretely at this time we explain what changes have to be wrought in the policies of the Labor Party and trade union leadership if this is to be brought about. There is no doubt in our minds that the development of the Labor Party has increased support for the idea of the working class having its own party and in that sense been a step forward. We believe in working where possible in the Labor Party branches and the Labor Party. This is in spite of the fact that these are dominated in the main by union officials, soft lefts and ex-lefts and old CP elements. There are virtually no fresh workers in the Party branches. In reality it is not a Labor Party. It is a small nucleus of union bureaucrats, lefts and ex-lefts, with a very small scattering of fresh workers which sees itself as campaigning generally for a better life for working people and acting as a pressure group on the Democrats.

It is at best an open question whether or not this organization will develop into a Labor Party with a genuine working class base. This seems very unlikely at the moment and certainly the efforts of our organization cannot determine the outcome. What could make it possible is an intensification in the class struggle which resulted in a major open split in the union leadership with one wing of this being forced by the rank and file and the development of a substantial left movement to take real steps forward into conflict with the employers. This seems very unlikely in the short term. This is not to ignore the fact that the idea of the working class having its own party has gained more currency amongst workers as part of the development of the Labor Party. Nor is it to turn away from any opportunities that exist there. It is simply to have a realistic perspective for the Labor Party and a realistic assessment of our own resources and an accurate analysis of where the spontaneous struggles are taking place.

The Minority believes in being involved in the Labor Party but in doing so to conduct a struggle against the policies of the Labor Party leaders where they support the Democrats, where they see the Party as a

pressure group on the Democrats, where they go along with the betrayal of strikes. And we believe in seeking to unite any good elements around a fighting anti-capitalist program while at the same time carrying on a debate on the need for socialism and recruiting to the revolutionary organization.

However at the same time we recognize that the existing spontaneous struggles of the working class and the youth, and also such struggles as those around the environment, immigrant rights etc., are not going through the Labor Party. The increased struggles of the union workers are expressed in the workplaces and the union locals. The struggles on welfare, jobs, immigrant rights, education, the environment, housing etc. are going through single issue organizations. The Minority believes it is essential that the organization take part in these struggles as part of the organizations that are waging them. And where necessary and possible we should initiate struggles and direct action on these issues. We also believe that there are activists in these various organizations and struggles to whom the organization must direct its ideas, seek to link with and from whom we can recruit.

At first the Majority ridiculed the idea that there were increased struggles taking place. They also initially denied that there were activists involved in these struggles who could be won. When events made these positions no longer credible the Majority took the position, and they continue with this today, that they must keep their feet firmly stuck in the Labor Party and try and pull all these struggles and the activists under the banner of the Labor party. The result has been that the Majority has not been able to intervene effectively in the spontaneous struggles. And they find themselves on many issues on the same side as the Labor Party leaders and the soft lefts and ex-lefts in the Labor Party and at odds with the fresh elements who are taking up these struggles. This difference has been at the center of the debate since it surfaced almost two years ago. And the IS motivated by its desire to change the leadership in the US has been supporting the Majority, which is entirely contrary to the position they have been taking in other countries.

Contrast the position of the organization in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Seattle where it is concentrating all its forces in being the loyal opposition in the Labor Party, with the position of the organization in Oakland where the Minority is the majority in the branch. In Oakland we have run an independent candidate in the local elections winning 6% of the vote and forming the broader based Oakland Working

Peoples Campaign. At present the Comrades are playing a leading role in the negotiations for a new contract in the public sector workers local where we have traditionally been influential, and where in the elections of a few weeks ago, the slate which our Comrades provide the core of won the leadership of the local. A key demand in the negotiations is for 50 new jobs and a two hour cut in the working week. In other words an offensive stance. Comrades can search in vain for another union local in the country taking up offensive demands and building links with local community organizations in its struggle for a new contract. Around this, and with the support of another local in the building trades where we have Comrades, a labor community alliance has been set up. Even though this is at an early stage yet it is of great importance and a sign of what can be achieved in the future. Demonstrations and direct action in support of the struggle for more jobs and against the welfare cuts have been organized. We have also had a Comrade elected to the E.B. of his local in the construction trades and this same Comrade has been invited to speak at a conference in South Central Los Angeles on the death penalty and police repression. In Chicago the Minority Comrades have been active in an activists group fighting the welfare cuts. This group the Working Peoples Action and Education Network has organized demonstrations, including an occupation of the State of Illinois building.

The Majority are against these policies. They insist that all interventions must be made under the Labor Party banner and acceptable to the Labor party leadership. This means acceptable to the union leadership and this means that the relationship between the union leaders and the Democrats must not be openly challenged in the Labor Party work. The result is that the Majority are hamstrung and prevented from making a principled and effective intervention either in the Labor Party or in the spontaneous struggles where the fresh elements are present.

One of the most clear examples of the false policies of the Majority relates to the CADV work. Only in Chicago and California did the organization take up the specific case of a victim of domestic violence and campaign for her release. In the areas where the Majority are in the leadership not only did they refuse to take such initiatives but as the debate developed the Majority sneered at the CADV work. No work as regards the special oppression of women is presently being done by the Majority. The Majority's position is at one with their obsession with only taking up the issues the LP leadership see as important and their refusal to get involved in initiating direct action and struggles on issues such as

domestic violence which are not seen by the traditional union leadership and Labor Party leadership as working class issues.

The Nature of This Period and the Tasks of Marxists

The crisis in the US work is not only a struggle over two different sets of tactics and two different views of the perspectives for the Labor Party, it is also a struggle over the nature of the present period and the tasks of the Marxists. As expressed in their first document which most openly put forward their world view, the majority has shown itself to believe that little can be achieved at the present as far as building the revolutionary organization. As a result no concrete struggle is being waged for the revolutionary program, strategy and tactics. The program is still printed in the paper or in a flyer but no concrete struggle is made for it in the day to day work. The Majority believe that it is their task in this period, which they have described as similar to the 1880's, above all to build the Labor Party, and in pursuit of this objective they have been prepared to step back from the fight for the revolutionary program, strategy and tactics. The reality is they have been retreating from the past policies and positions of the organization and adopting the policies of what we have in the past criticized as the soft left.

These soft left elements have been moving to cover the left flank of the Sweeney's the Mazzocchi's the Wages the Carey's. In the unions and the labor party they want no criticism of these leaders. Many of them are getting jobs in the new regimes but more importantly these soft lefts, these ex lefts, who were on the point of despair before these new leaders emerged have no stomach for putting up a principled fight against these elements. The majority in the US organization have capitulated to these pressures. The Minority have not. In order to maintain their capitulationist policies, to maintain their unprincipled relationship with this soft left strata and the slightly more progressive union and Labor Party leaders the Majority have expelled most of the Minority from the organization.

The Minority do not believe it is correct to compare the present period with the 1880's. This is a much too pessimistic view of the objective situation. We recognize the complexity and the difficulty of the situation. However we entirely oppose the view that the main task facing the Marxists is the rebuilding of the workers' movement. We the Minority point to the struggles that are taking place many of these involving fresh elements, and we believe it is essential that the organization intervene in these and take responsibility for carrying these struggles forward, where

we have the resources. However, we also see that in this period with the enormous ideological offensive of capitalism, that while intervening in the struggles, the Marxists must put up the most intransigent concrete fight in defense of the ideas of Marxism and the policies of the socialist revolution. This approach is spoken off sneeringly by the Majority. These Comrades are sneering at their own past.

It is part of the tradition and theoretical foundation of our organization that at times the organization has to stand against the stream. That if necessary we have to stand out alone in defense of the policies of Marxism. There is a strong element of this in the present situation. But for the IS and the Majority such an approach no longer belongs in the organization. According to the IS and the Majority, at least in the work here in the US, the organization has to see itself as the rebuilders of the workers movement, and this is interpreted to mean that while we should describe ourselves as socialists no concrete struggle for the policies of the socialist revolution is carried on. In other words, the transitional method, linking the day to day struggles with the need for the socialist transformation of society, is abandoned.

In the course of the debate it became known that two to three years ago half the New York leadership had developed the pessimistic analysis of the Ted Grant split. S.O'T. was involved in the work of the international for over three years, J.R. was involved in the West Coast and Mexico and R.R. was working in Canada. This political position of pessimism which was combated and defeated in other sections of the international was hidden from the Minority Comrades and it won over the leadership of the New York, Seattle, Boston and Philadelphia branches. In their first document the Majority set out their position clearly. They explained that it did not matter what the leaders of the Labor Party did that it would come to nothing because of what the Majority explained was the low level of class consciousness and the policies of the AFL-CIO leaders. This pessimistic view was being put forward when Buchanan was getting a very strong response for his attacks on the corporations and this was from the more backward elements in and around the Republican Party. It was only after the Minority insisted on the debate and on producing a document on the LPA work that this view of the Majority came out. Up until that time the leaders of what was to become the Majority refused to put forward their position or to share the information that the New York organization was developing this analysis.

A fierce debate exploded in the organization. The IS and the Majority

said it was over the Minority's refusal to listen to the membership and to the branches, that it was over the Minority's refusal to take a step back and reduce the full time apparatus. There was undoubtedly strong tensions between the areas where the Majority were strong and the Chicago and California branches. But the essence of these was not "premature centralism", or the organization having too high financial targets, or the leadership putting too much pressure on the organization to build, as the IS/Majority faction claimed. The essence of these tensions was the capitulation of the Majority to the pressures of the more complex and difficult situation and the refusal of the Minority to allow this to continue unchallenged. And hand in hand with this capitulation was the demoralization of a section of the membership especially in the New York area and their withdrawing from the struggle under false banners. The essence of the tensions was a difference in analysis, political line and morale.

The Minority were defeated organizationally in this struggle. The main reason for this is not to be found in the organization itself. It is to be found in the changed world situation. In the past the leadership of the organization had to struggle against opportunist tendencies in the Boston leadership of J.B. S.S. the leading Comrade in the LP work in New York had opposed making criticisms of the Sandinistas in the 1980's and had the position that a revolutionary organization could not be built in the US. These tendencies were defeated then by a united leadership of the old EC. These tendencies arose again over the past years but this time they won a majority in the organization as they won over the EC Comrades in New York and Seattle, AA and TW, and the majority of the membership in their areas. The reason why they were triumphant now and were not before is because of the change in the world situation. The processes explained above made the work more difficult and the fresh recruits less available and so the capitulationist and opportunist tendencies won a majority.

Organizational and Personal Factors Were Secondary

There were organizational and personal factors that played a role but these were secondary. The willingness of the leading members of the Minority to take on international work took them out of work in the US organization for long periods. The personal ambitions of the leaders of the Majority especially in New York and Seattle led to these two individuals hiding the emerging backward pressures in their areas from the leaders of the Minority. And their own conservatism and political weakness led

them to capitulate to the pressures of the period. When eventually challenged by the Minority they found that their pessimistic analysis and their demagogic accusations that the Minority would not listen to the branches found a powerful support among their own divided and in many cases demoralized rank and file members.

The case of New York is most instructive. At the time of the conference in May 1996 the Majority and the IS claimed there were 42 members in New York. The real figure was around thirty which was about the membership in 1989. New York Comrades who had been inactive, or who had been active but were arguing that the objective situation was so bad that the organization could not be built all united to attack the Minority for its "refusal to listen to them." What was taking place in essence was that the Majority were screaming their refusal to carry out their revolutionary duties as demanded by the Minority. The Majority won their majority in New York. What has happened to New York in the past year? Has this reorientation and new leadership resulted in gains? The NC on May 24th 1997, where the Minority were expelled was held in New York and was open to all members. Only four members from New York were present for the half day that the Minority were present. At most there are now ten active members in New York and the number of branches has gone from three to one.

The Minority's "refusal to listen", the opposition of the Majority to "premature centralization", the accusation of "top down" against the Minority, the policy of reducing the full time apparatus from six to one as against the reduction of one or two fulltimers which was the position of the Minority, behind these organizational issues the Majority carried on their political struggle against the Minority. And the essence of this political struggle was that the Minority were refusing to go along with the capitulation of the Majority to the more complex objective situation and to the majority's retreat from revolutionary policies as part of the ebb tide which is affecting the majority of the left.

Among the particular organizational factors in the struggle was the development in the New York area of sections of the membership who were beginning to oppose the one sidedly optimistic analysis of A.A. which preceded his overly pessimistic analysis, and also his autocratic maneuverings. As criticism of him developed A.A. kept this from the rest of the leadership and then began a systematic campaign of individual discussions with selected Comrades in the North East and the content of these was that S.O'T. was attacking the New York organization, that

S.O'T. was forcing him to speak and act in the way that these Comrades found unacceptable, that S.O'T. was over optimistic etc., In this way a little secret cabal began to be formed around A.A. Every criticism that these New York members had of the method of A.A. was explained by A.A. as being forced on him by S.O'T. How S.O'T. could have achieved this when he was out of the area for over three years was not explained.

Part of this process was that A.A. objected again and again to S.O'T. visiting the North East and he complained about any conversation any member of the Minority had with North East Comrades. He was keeping the Minority Comrades out while putting together an unprincipled secret cabal. The recent application of the letter of the law of democratic centralism to expel the Minority is in stark contrast to how the leaders of the majority maneuvered when it suited them and to how the IS supported and covered up these maneuverings.

The IS came in and helped A.A. turn the discontent of the New York and increasingly North East membership with A.A.'s method and analysis against S.O'T. and the Minority. This suited the IS for two reasons. One, it helped them in their removal of the Minority Comrades from the leadership, and two, it helped them avoid a serious debate on the LPA work. This latter had to be achieved otherwise the mistakes and differences within the Majority on this issue could not have been contained.

Another element in the outcome of the debate was the effect of the IS/Majority's vicious personal attacks on the Minority on the newer fresher more working class elements who made up the majority of the membership in the Mid West and Canada. Over the course of the debate L.W. representing the IS attacked the Minority members for being "lumpens", "peasants", completely mad", "bullies", "descendants of colonial administrators", etc., etc. Most of these fresher worker Comrades turned away from this spectacle in disgust and disappointment and became inactive.

In relation to Canada which was then part of the one North American section, it was hived off by the IS before the conference of the organization where the Majority won its majority. The members of the organization there were glad to escape from the vicious crisis which they were told by the IS was an issue for the US organization. They were also attracted by the IS's opportunist dangling of the carrot that they would immediately be a separate section. Unfortunately by taking this way out the result for the Canadian Comrades has been what the Minority predicted, that is the collapse of the Canadian group. This outcome was not entirely unexpected by the IS but it was a price they were prepared to pay to change the

leadership in the organization. L.W. in a conversation with the then second fulltimer in New York said that he did not care if all the membership outside the East Coast was lost.

PART II The Internal Regime of the International and the Post Stalinist Era

Destructive Role Played by the I.S. and Why

When the Minority insisted on confronting this retreat and capitulation of the Majority in the form of writing the document on the LPA, it very quickly found itself in conflict with the IS. Initially P.T. and B.L. of the IS supported the LPA document which spelled out what was to become the Minority position on the LPA. But when L.W. returned to London from a trip abroad these two IS Comrades dropped their support for the document and to this day they have not explained why. There are two main reasons why the IS gave its support to the Majority.

Firstly the IS had begun to draw overly pessimistic conclusions about the period. The comparisons with the 1880's began to be drawn at this time. The correct conclusion that the social democratic parties were becoming "bourgeoisified", that is bourgeois parties, was then accompanied with the idea that the unions were also becoming "bourgeoisified". In the context of the discussion on the social democratic parties this could only mean that the unions were becoming company unions. The IS still defended this position against the Comrades of the US Minority at the last IEC. L.W. expressed the view that the workers movement was destroyed and would have to be completely rebuilt. There has not been so much talk of this recently as the big events in France and other countries have unfolded and been discussed. And flowing from this position was the conclusion that the task facing the international was the rebuilding of the workers organizations. Here in the US it was reduced to the task of the revolutionary organization was to build the Labor Party.

This somewhat conservative tendency on the part of the IS has also been reflected organizationally. Thus we have seen, for instance, the failure to sufficiently follow up the opportunity that presented itself when the M.O.P. in Congo/Zaire applied for membership in the International. (For those unfamiliar with this group — they are a rebel group, involved in guerrilla warfare as well as organizing in the cities, who claimed to control one third of the country at the time.) Despite the fact that two IEC

delegates volunteered to make a visit there, nobody was sent there to discuss with them, nor was any reply to their request for affiliation ever reported to the IEC. Comrades must use their imagination to consider where the international could be at this point had we taken full advantage of that opportunity and opened up a real front for the work in that country at the present time. But if the movement was thrown back to the 1880's as the IS argued, and our task was to rebuild the labor movement, then Comrades can see why the International should decide not to get involved in the situation in Zaire.

The general analysis of the IS tended to coincide with the position of the Majority in the US when the debate there broke to the surface. The Majority in the US were explaining at that time that whatever the LPA leaders did it would not matter because of the low level of class consciousness etc. In other words they were blaming the working class for the failure of its leaders and justifying the inaction of the leadership and their own failure to take up the leadership. But they were also blind to the enormous anger seeking a way out amongst the working class. This analysis has been dropped without any explanation since it was criticized by the Minority. This tendency, for the IS position at the time of the debate breaking out to the surface to coincide with the position of the Majority was an important element in the victory for the Majority capitulationist tendency in the organization here.

If the IS had stood against this tendency, some, though not all, of those who were moving in the capitulationist direction could have been convinced otherwise. If the IS had not acted as it had the political issues could have been clarified and even if differences had continued they could have been contained within the organization. And the reduction of the full-time apparatus which had already been proposed by the Minority Comrades could have been brought about with a reduction in one or two fulltimers instead of the collapse of the full-time apparatus from six to one. And the collapse of the organization in Canada and the collapse of the membership in the US could have been avoided.

But this was not possible because the IS itself had begun to draw overly pessimistic conclusions at that time as they came under the pressure of the objective situation. As we the Minority have argued throughout, the crisis in the international and the crisis in the US organization is rooted in the more difficult and more complex world objective situation. The IS/ Majority faction have tried to cover this up by its concentration on organizational issues and by spreading its slanders against the Minority.

But as any experienced Comrade must see, such a deep crisis as exists in the organization in the US has to be rooted in political differences.

The second reason the IS supported the Majority has to do with how it sees its role in the organization, how it sees the internal life of the organization and the type of leadership it seeks in the sections and regions of the international. Under the leadership of T.G. the organization clarified the main elements in the world situation in the years following the second world war. Given the relative stability of world relations in the post war decades this general analysis stood the test of events for close to forty years. One result of this was a relatively stable internal life in the organization. Based on this analysis and with no major turns in the world situation an authoritative leadership also emerged. There was no history of prolonged internal debate and factions. We have explained that the relative stability of the post war decades is over. We have explained that the collapse of Stalinism ushered in a new period. What has not been done by the IS is to draw the necessary conclusions from this as far as the internal life of the organization is concerned. The more difficult and complex objective situation makes it absolutely inevitable that the internal life of the organization will be more turbulent, there will be more disagreements and divisions and there will be factions developing to fight for different positions.

Not only is this inevitable, but it is necessary, if the organization is to face up to the challenges ahead, if it is to clarify the issues. Comrades should consider how the organization has come to view factions as something to be condemned in the organization. The IS itself and the same Comrades who dominate the British EC of course carry on the most organized and cynical factionalism when they feel it is necessary, all the while denying what they are doing. But openly they create an atmosphere of extreme hostility to factions, and to anyone who seriously challenges them, in other words, hostility to the existence of any faction except their own, which they deny exists.

The leadership of the British EC, P.T. and L.W., organized secret meetings of those EC members who supported their position on the name change in Britain and excluded those EC Comrades who did not. They also went behind the back of local branch leaderships where these did not support their position and through individual discussions mobilized members in their support. This is the organizing of a faction and would not be wrong in and of itself, but what is incorrect is that this is done secretly and while at the same time denying that they are a faction and

condemning factions in general and putting extreme pressure on those with alternative views to stop them organizing as a faction.

We ask all Comrades to consider their own attitudes to factions and compare them to these words of Trotsky written in 1935. "During the seventeen years when Bolshevism arose, grew, gained strength and came to power factions were a legitimate part of party life." Trotsky speaks of the fact that there were even factions inside the Bolshevik faction. Engels wrote that internal conflict is the law of development of the revolutionary party. In the US CP in the twenties before it degenerated there were three factions that existed almost independently and controlled different areas of the Party's work.

Compare the internal lives of these organizations with the internal life of our organization over the past five decades. It is clear that just as the post war upswing and the relative stability of the cold war world relations were aberrations from the historical norm, so also was and is the internal life of our organization. Unless this is recognized and the necessary changes not only made but genuinely accepted, then the more turbulent objective situation will create crisis after crisis, expulsion after expulsion, split after split, and if this happens the organization will become stagnant, atrophy and no longer be a genuine functioning revolutionary organization. The attacks against and the expulsion of the Minority in the US is in part the attempt of the IS to stand against this need to open up the organization and instead to maintain the old internal regime behind a phraseology of more openness.

An Elitist View

Another mistaken element in the approach of the IS is their elitist view. By this is meant that they view the development of the ideas of the organization in a one sided manner. They see themselves as the sole source of the correct ideas and their task is to ensure by one means or another that their views are accepted by the membership. They do not see that the ideas of the organization are developed through a dialectical relationship between the membership and the leadership. And while it is the task of the leadership to develop ideas and policies it also has the role of seeing that the membership has equal responsibility and opportunity in the development of the organizations ideas.

The economic material that has been produced recently by the IS is a clear example of the elitist approach. This is drawn by the IS from a reading of the bourgeois publications and regular discussions with at least

one economist in academia who is not a member of the organization. The information thus gained is then presented to the membership, The likely economic developments flowing from this material is likewise presented.

Nowhere in the economic writings of the organization over the past six years is there any explanation of the basic ideas of Marxism and how these relate to the present economic situation. As a result of this omission the membership of the organization is not assisted in obtaining a knowledge of the Marxist economic analysis and of the general laws of capitalist economy, that is the membership of the organization is not being equipped with the necessary analytical tools. And without these the membership itself cannot contribute to the development of the economic analysis of the organization. But from the elitist view of the IS it is the job of the IS to hand down the ideas so naturally the IS does not see the need for the membership to be equipped with the necessary tools to develop the ideas.

When S.O'T. raised this on a number of occasions on the IS the response from P.T. was that he did not understand what S.O'T. was getting at. L.W. responded by saying that such an explanation would demand a whole different way of thinking on his part. A very accurate and illuminating reply. When pressed on this and on the fact that he spent more time discussing the world economy with a non member in academia than he spent discussing this on the IS L.W. said that he did not "have time to give seminars on economics to the IS". If this Comrade has this elitist view of his relationship to the rest of the IS, that is that any discussion on economic perspectives on the IS would amount to him giving the rest of the IS a seminar, imagine what his view of his relationship to the membership as a whole must be.

This elitist view of the IS and the leadership of the British EC results in these Comrades seeing any sustained alternative viewpoint in the organization as a threat to the organization and to their own position. As it is their job to hand down the ideas to the organization any alternative view is seen simply as an obstacle. They therefore feel justified in using any means fair or foul in keeping such views from having an equal hearing. Such different views and those who put them forward are slandered as either irrelevant, disruptive, resulting from the demoralization, tiredness etc., etc. Up until the struggle with the T.G. minority the British EC openly sought to keep other views from being presented to the organization. If any Comrade or branch had the "audacity" to move a resolution to the conference of the organization the British EC would

meet with the Comrade or branch involved and pressure them to take their resolution off the agenda. This pressure was such that it was usually withdrawn. S.O'T. opposed this approach in discussions with L.W. and P.T. as long ago as the mid-1970's and both Comrades defended it. This approach still dominates the thinking of these Comrades only they can no longer say it openly. Any alternative position that is now put forward and which they see as threatening is slandered and any manoeuvre they can think of is used to put the expression of this view at a disadvantage. The letters in this document from N.W. and J.B. make this clear.

Just take the position of the IS as expressed by L.W. in relation to J.R. While continuing to agree with and fight for the fundamental ideas of the organization J.R. raised a number of issues on the IEC over the years. He proposed that the organization should pay more attention to the issue of the environment, the British organization should have been placing demands on Scargill to give leadership and he also questioned the taking of M.S. onto the IS. Because he raised these questions and because of his difference with the IS on the LPA work in the US L.W. on behalf of the IS, stated that he did not know why J.R. was still a member of the International. It could not be clearer. Anyone who thinks independently and who carries out their duty of raising their ideas on the IEC and if some of these ideas do not correspond with the ideas of the IS then this Comrade should no longer be in the organization.

Along with this incorrect approach it is the IS view that anyone who makes a sustained criticism of any aspect of the work of the leading Comrades must be silenced. And not only that but that all members of the leadership must unite and crush those making such a criticism. And any member of the leadership who refuses to do so is deemed as undermining the other members of the leadership and is effectively isolated by the rest of the leadership. Secret meetings are held excluding such Comrades. This results in a culture in the leadership that selects as members of the leadership only those who will unquestionably support all other members of the leadership no matter whether they are right or wrong. This elitist view sees the protecting of the position of the leadership as the same as the protecting of the interests of the organization. This is a method which evolved out of the leadership of the British section and into the IS. It is a method which is not confined to the IS but is shared by the occasional Comrade outside the IS and the leadership of the British EC who was recruited and trained in this false method in Britain.

It is the responsibility of the leadership to exercise self-criticism and

to do so openly and in front of the membership in order that the entire organization can learn from its mistakes. This is totally foreign to the IS and British EC leadership. Its obsessive refusal to ever criticize itself creates an atmosphere in the organization where it is thought to be an essential quality of a member to always claim to have been correct. This "machismo" makes a Comradely re-evaluation of the work of the organization impossible. It severely restricts the ability of the organization to realize the full potential of the membership and to have a free flowing Comradely debate and re-evaluation of the work. The Minority Comrades in the US refused to go along with this method. They, and especially S.O'T., were condemned as trying to undermine the leadership and the IS position was to drive them out of the organization.

In words the leadership explain that they are entirely open to criticism. But whenever criticism is made there is always something about this particular criticism that makes it unacceptable. Not only that but behind the scenes the leadership in individual discussions explain that what is really involved here is that those making the criticisms are seeking to undermine the leadership. This means that any different view from that of the leadership is immediately made an issue of confidence in and support or opposition to the leadership and so the political and general issues are distorted and obscured.

Some Comrades may feel that they have raised differences and they have not been attacked by the IS or the British EC leadership in the way we describe. This can be true. But what is involved is not how a Comrade here or there can be treated, but how a politically determined and organized Minority, especially one that forms itself openly as a faction, and who puts up a sustained struggle, is treated. Or how a leading Comrade with significant influence in the organization is treated. This is different from raising a difference now and then. It is also a question of the treatment that is handed out to Comrades who exercise their right to criticize an area of the work of the leadership.

British Organization Off-Limits to the Rest of the International

Another element fueling the approach of the IS to the Minority is how it sees the British organization's relationship to the International, and the Minority's refusal to accept that the British organization is off limits to the International. The internal struggles and details of the work in the British organization are hidden from the rest of the international leadership and membership. When on the IS S.O'T. raised this on a number of

occasions. This was one of the issues he raised when he resigned from the IS. This exclusion of the rest of the International from the internal developments and struggles in the British organization is directly related to the IS and British EC leadership's determination to defend their position in the British organization at all costs. It also has the advantage for them of keeping the Comrades in the British organization who come to recognize the false methods of the British EC leadership from linking up with the Comrades throughout the International who may have similar views. And more importantly it works to prevent the Comrades of the International taking part in the internal struggles in the British organization where they might agree with those members who have criticisms of the leadership.

The debate on the tone of the leadership's attack on the Minority in the British section in the name change debate is the most recent example of important issues being kept from the IEC and the International. The brazen dishonesty of the IS is seen on this issue. When the Minority raised it first in its material the IS said there was no such problem. Then the Minority produced the Nick Wrack letter. Well he was just worn out, etc. etc. was the reply. Then the Minority raised the attacks on the group of Comrades around J.B. and P.H. Well this was just some "cranks" in London. Then we raised the objections of the Scottish leadership. This was a little more difficult for the IS. They were a little worried about slandering these Comrades as cranks or as being worn out. At the New York NC L.W. decided to pretend he was coming clean. So, L.W. claimed, we had a debate, where is the big secret? What is the problem? The problem is that the only reason these issues are not still secrets from the international is because the Minority insisted in bringing them out and for doing so suffered slanders and a vicious witchunt.

At a recent meeting of the British NC there was the beginning of a debate on the Nick Wrack letter which was reprinted in the paper of one of the Stalinist sects in Britain. The British EC leadership announced their intention of replying publicly to this. One NC member, a regional secretary, rose to say that in his opinion and in the opinion of other members of the NC from whom he had taken soundings, there was truth in the Nick Wrack letter. A leading member of the British EC itself also expressed similar opinions to the meeting. This Comrade was then heckled by P.T. When NC members said that the EC could not write refuting the points in the Nick Wrack letter without a full discussion on the issue, P.T. announced to the NC that it could not stop the EC from

writing its reply and sending it to the paper of the Stalinist sect. P.T.'s position is totally contrary to democratic centralism which holds the NC to be the highest body of the organization between conventions. The NC is a higher body than the EC and can over-rule the EC. P.T.'s outburst and position underlines the correctness of the points we have been raising on the need to change the internal regime of the organization. It shows to the British NC members what the leadership of the British EC thinks behind its diplomatic facade.

This approach of the leadership of the British EC and of the IS must be condemned. Anything is justified in the minds of these Comrades to cover up criticisms of themselves. As each dishonest cover up is exposed it is responded to with yet another untruth or evasion. This is an unacceptable method because it prevents the organization as a whole, and collectively, from dealing with all the issues and developing a collective position. Evasions and dishonesty cannot be a substitute for an open and self critical atmosphere. We circulate with this material the letter from J.Bul., the former London regional secretary, in which he outlines the incorrect and undemocratic methods used by the British leadership in the name change debate. This letter is a decisive reply to the document of the British EC which they were forced to publish because we circulated the Nick Wrack letter, and in which they tried to claim that all was well with the debate on the name change in Britain. We reprint the Nick Wrack letter also in this document.

One of the very damaging effects of this approach of the IS and British EC leadership is how it damages the developing potential future leadership of the organization. A whole layer of talented newer Comrades were brought onto the British EC and NC. But they are being trained in this false method. Loyalty to the leading members of the EC is a condition for their being treated in a Comradely fashion by the EC leadership. This stunts the ideas and talents of these young Comrades. There is a calculation first about what position they take in case they are portrayed as disloyal. Nick Wrack's treatment is an object lesson for these new Comrades. But also these new Comrades are pushed to defend every dot and comma of the EC leadership's position to the rank and file. This puts extreme pressure on these newer Comrades and works against them developing an independent method of thinking. Subservience and help in dealing with any opposition is rewarded with promotions, praise, etc. Meanwhile their own theoretical development, their ability and willingness to think and act independently is suppressed.

What is also going in the British organization at this time is a conscious determined move by the leadership of the British EC, that is P.T. and L.W., to remove from their positions some of the more experienced layer of leadership cadres that has been the backbone of the organization for the past period. The enlargement of the British NC and the new Comrades brought onto the British EC is to give the British EC leadership the chance to build a new base of support in the organization. When this is done they will rest on this and move against some of the older, more experienced cadres, particularly those with the most independent outlook. Many of these older more experienced Comrades recognize the weaknesses and mistakes of the leadership of P.T. and L.W. and some are prepared to speak of these in confidence. However the culture of the organization is that when faced with such a situation Comrades are pressured to not rock the boat and instead to go quietly.

L.W. and P.T. insist on playing the central role both in the British EC and the IS, leaving no room for anyone else to come forward in either area, and leaving the IS and the international department in particular the poor relative of the British EC. Consider the many extremely talented and highly experienced comrades in the British organization, especially in the leadership of many of the regions. It is entirely false to believe that a powerful, capable EC could not be made up from these comrades. Of course, for this to happen and for this body to gel and develop cohesion, the present leadership of the British EC would have to give up their elitist approach and give these comrades room to work and responsibility for the British section. This would strengthen the International in a number of ways: The leadership of the British section would be much more broadly based, drawing in more of the experienced comrades. The elitist approach being abandoned in itself, would be a big step forward as the potential of the membership internationally would be realized to a much greater extent. It would also allow the International leadership to develop as a real International leadership, as there would no longer be the situation where the leadership of the International was also the leadership of one of the sections. S. O'T. has been raising the need for P.T. to move to full time work in the International for well over a decade now.

Part of the false method of the organization is dealing with issues behind the backs of the membership who are deemed "too inexperienced to understand" the complex questions. It is the duty of Comrades to speak up and let the entire membership hear their opinions on the issues. In the workers' movement in general we always insist on putting the issues

before the membership but in this false interpretation of democratic centralism practiced in the organization, difficult issues, especially organizational ones are expected to be kept from the membership, in other words elitism. By refusing to speak out Comrades are going along with this elitist view of the leadership and strengthening the elitist methods. Some Comrades in the British organization say that things will change later of their own accord. This is false. With every day that the old methods are not openly challenged, the leadership of the EC are making gains in training the newer members in these false methods and consolidating a majority in the organization to whom these false methods appear normal.

The truth is that the only way these false methods can be eradicated is by an open challenge and debate, an airing of the issues in front of all members. The longer this is put off the more serious will become the crisis in the organization. We recognize that any leading British Comrade who stands up and makes any open fight on this issue will be met with the most vicious attack by the EC leadership. This leadership will immediately seek to crush them and drive them out of the organization. Every detail in their past will be dragged up and twisted into an attack upon them. But the struggle for the revolutionary organization is not an easy one. And any Comrade who seeks to fulfill their historical responsibility as regards this task must be prepared to risk whatever has to be risked to achieve it. This point is equally relevant to the IEC members. Anyone who lets things such as the expulsion of the US minority go by without seeking out in the most vigorous fashion the view of all sides, even if this means, as it will, being cast in the role of untrustworthy by the IS, is failing in their responsibility to the organization.

We do not underestimate the determination that is necessary for Comrades to raise their voice on this issue. A major factor in our expulsion is that we are raising the problems in the British organization and doing so openly and where possible we are holding discussions where we can with the British membership. But it is the duty of the membership of the organization to raise their voice. We are not impressed by the approach which has been shared with us by a number of Comrades where we are told yes many things you say are correct but they will change in time. The problems we are pointing to in the organization will not change without an open debate and struggle.

The I.S. and its Desire for Compliant Leadership

S.O'T. resigned from the IS in 1994. It is now clear that from that time on the IS decided that he had to be undermined in the organization. They cast about for alternatives in the US organization. The qualification for the job was subservience to the IS and the willingness to defend the IS members whatever criticism was made. This ruled out the Comrades of the Minority. It selected the leading Comrades of the present majority. The difficult objective situation and the capitulation of the majority to the difficult and complex situation, the fact that three of the leading Comrades of the Minority were involved in work outside the US for prolonged periods, all these factors combined to allow the IS to achieve its objective of getting a majority against the "stiff necks" as Cannon called the independent thinkers and those who insisted on speaking out.

However the IS's success is not one that can be built upon. The Minority are politically and organizationally unified, intact and strong. We will pursue our struggle inside the organization as we exercise our right to appeal against our expulsions. Meanwhile the IS will have to deal with the problems of the divisions, confusions and demoralization in the Majority, and also the IS will confront the problem of trying to insist on the continuation of an internal life which was only possible in the post war decades and which the different objective situation now makes impossible. Our Minority faction, our expulsion, will by no means be the last, or for that matter the end of the struggle against the false methods.

There is no doubt but that the IS wanted to change the leadership in the US organization. This is proven by the following facts which are not disputed by the IS. From the beginning of the discussions the IS made it clear that it believed the center of the US organization should be in New York. But at no time did it ever propose that any of the fulltimers and EC members on the Minority, that is S.O'T., J.R., L.H. or R.R., then based in other areas of the US should move to New York. When S.O'T. asked L.W. the IS representative that as the IS was pushing for the center to be in New York, was the IS proposing that any EC members then based outside New York should move to New York with the center. L.W. answered with one word- "no", and he refused to give any explanation of why the IS had this position. The IS wanted the center in New York but no other EC members to move to New York. It wanted a change in the leadership. This is undeniable.

This of itself would not necessarily be wrong, but such an objective would have to be openly stated with the reasons being given and fought for in front of the membership, where the Comrades involved would have

a chance to defend themselves. What is inexcusable, and the proof of a false method is that the IS was pursuing its aims secretly and with lies and slanders against the Minority Comrades. Of course we understand the difficulty facing the IS, it would be very difficult for them to go to the membership in a campaign for a compliant leadership to replace an independent minded leadership. False objectives demand false methods.

Cynical Dishonest Factionalism of the I.S./Majority

We the Minority have made many serious criticisms of the IS and the US majority for their conduct in the political struggle over the past couple of years. We need to spell out what we see is acceptable and what is unacceptable in factional struggles. Firm and even sharp debate over the political and organizational issues is entirely acceptable. Relating the different views to the various class pressures in society is entirely acceptable. Arguing that the ideas of opponents reflect certain pressures is also acceptable. All these contribute to the organization clarifying its view and making a decision. We have no problem with the IS criticizing any of our analysis and doing so in sharp terms.

However the approach of the IS has many unacceptable elements. From the beginning it sought to obscure the political issues. It did this because the majority it sought to base itself on, and through which it sought to put in place a compliant leadership in the US, was divided on a number of issues. In order to keep this majority together it had to keep the debate off the general political issues. L.W. to this day has refused to explain what are the "legitimate criticisms" which he, in an unguarded moment, admitted could be made of the Majority's work in the LPA. P.T. and B.L. have to this day refused to say why they suddenly no longer agreed with the document written by the Minority on the LPA.

The IS has been involved in the building of an unprincipled combination. And as Cannon explained in the "Struggle for a Proletarian Party" unprincipled combinationism "is the worst offense against the party because it cuts across the lines of political principle; it aims at an organizational decision which leaves the political and principled disputes unclarified and undecided. Thus, insofar as the combinationist struggle is successful, it hampers the education of the party and prevents a solution of the dispute on a principled basis. Unprincipled combinationism is in every case the denotation of petit bourgeois politics. It is the anti-thesis to the Marxist method of political struggle."

Undoubtedly the IS will now seek to defeat the most extreme wing of the capitulationist majority around S.S. in New York. And it will probably succeed because the compliant leadership around A.A., T.W. J.B. are in the leadership to a great extent due to the backing of the IS. They have no independent base on which to oppose the IS and so they will be forced to support whatever the IS decrees. But of course what this will show is that the organization is no longer a functioning thinking principled organization with an independent leadership, but has become an organization within which ideas are developed and positions taken based upon calculations about what the IS wants and how to react to this.

The IS has got what it wants, a compliant leadership. But its struggle to do this has left it with an organization which can no longer be described as a healthy functioning revolutionary nucleus. Now the IS will seek to pour into this organization from the top the ideas of the IS or at least that wing of the IS represented by L.W. The accusations that the organization was too "top down" that the leadership had too much say, of micro-management, which were made against the Minority, now sound very hollow indeed, as the IS makes every decision of significance for the US organization. This approach is based of course upon the elitist view that the IS is right because it is the IS.

Whenever the Ted G. minority formed in the organization they claimed that P.T. was organizing a clique around himself. All the members of the US Minority opposed the Ted G. minority. This may seem as a contradiction and perhaps some Comrades may think that the Minority are now saying that Ted G. was correct. This is not so. As was told by leading members of the expelled US Minority to the Ted G minority if there was a clique then they had been part of it for decades. It was not an issue of there being a clique. It was and is an internal life which is dominated by the elitist view of the leadership that any views that are fought for in a sustained fashion which are not shared by — and in fact initiated by — the leadership are a threat and must be crushed. And that any critics of any aspect of the work of the leadership must be crushed and driven out. And that secret factional organization, such as exclusive secret meetings are used as a means of dealing with issues behind the backs of the membership and those with different views. Ted G and the minority around him were unable to correctly pose or answer the issue of the internal life of the organization because they shared with the rest of the present IS the same false conceptions and methods.

Comrades of the Minority saw the defeat of the political analysis of

Ted Grant as the key issue of the time and they took leading roles in this struggle. However they made the point at the time to the rest of the leadership of the then International majority that they had criticisms of the way internal differences were dealt with and the wrong methods could not all be laid at the door of Ted G. It also seemed for a time that progress was being made in changing these false methods but this proved not to be the case. When the Ted G. Minority left the organization and the present IS leadership consolidated itself, the old methods were continued with and in some ways have become even more pronounced.

One result of the false methods of the organization is seen in the functioning of the IS. Every idea, every thought expressed by any member of the IS is immediately carried to P.T. by his two assistants B.L. and T.S. P.T. gives his approval or disapproval. If it is the latter then these Comrades attempt to keep discussion of the idea involved off the IS agenda. If either of these two Comrades have an idea of their own they check it first with P.T. before raising it on the IS. If he disagrees then they never raise it on the IS. S.O'T. had numerous experiences on the IS where these Comrades in individual discussions would express an opinion on some issue which would not have been checked with P.T. If he thought the idea should be discussed he would raise it on the IS only to see these Comrades sit quiet. When working at the International center in London from 1983 to 1985 he and B.L. who worked together in the international department at the time would discuss the work and then go to a full meeting of the IS where B.L. would give the report of their discussions. Time after time this report would have whole issues left out. It took some time for it to become clear what was happening. B.L. would go and check the report with P.T. before giving it to the IS. The result of this is that the IS is not a body where all members put forward their ideas and debate them and in this way through a clash of ideas the IS develops its positions.

Part III. The Slander, Lies and Witch-Hunt Against the Minority — An Attempt to Justify the Expulsions

A. The Slander That The Minority Was Going to Split

One of the most contemptible, nauseating and damaging aspects of the IS approach to the Minority and to debating those who determinedly disagree with them is the campaign of lies and slanders the IS Comrades spread. Such an approach is unacceptable in a revolutionary working class organization. What makes this doubly worrying is the manner in

which the IS will make up any lie that it thinks it can get away with and on those occasions where it is definitively proven that it is lying, then the IS will drop its accusation as if it was never made, without any retraction or apology, and move on to a new accusation equally untrue and equally consciously untrue.

From the beginning of the differentiation becoming clear in the section the IS and the Majority spread the slander that the Minority were going to split. This was to discredit the ideas of the Minority and to prepare the way for our expulsion. It had the important affect of giving an excuse to members throughout the international for not putting serious time and energy into studying the US struggle. After all if the Minority is going to split why bother. The Minority has not split. It has been expelled just as we have been predicting for the past year and more. The IS majority faction claim that we were going to split was a conscious and deliberate lie and a slander. Unfortunately many leading Comrades of the International unquestioningly accepted this slander and spread it in their sections. These Comrades have to face up to the damage they have done.

Consider the enormity of this slander. The five members of the Minority who have been expelled have between them a combined membership of the organization of close to one hundred years. During this time all these Comrades time after time proved their loyalty to the organization and their willingness to make sacrifices. But on the first occasion where these Comrades developed a political difference with the IS, the IS responded by spreading the lie that they were going to split. This is bad enough but what is even worse is that the overwhelming majority of the IEC believed this lie without even contacting the Minority directly to hear their side of the story. They capitulated before the slander machine of the IS.

This was clear at the IEC held in late 1996. This is a sign of the culture in the organization which has an in-built tendency to believe the leadership of the organization especially on matters of internal struggle and to let the leadership get on with dealing with any problems away from the eyes of the membership. It is also partly due to the lack of any significant number of Comrades at the top of the organization with long experience and continuing roots in the shop floor struggles of the working class. Comrades with such experience have a much greater tendency to be able to stand against campaigns of slander. They recognize much more easily what is going on when a leadership begins such campaigns and they hold off on making opinions until they check the alternative views. After all a

slander campaign against their opponents is a part of the method of the leadership of the reformist organizations of the working class. It is not new to union militants.

B. Finances

The IS also conducted from the beginning a conscious campaign of slander around financial accusations. S.O'T. from the Minority and T.W. national treasurer and a leader of the majority made an agreement in New York in May 1996, to draw up and jointly sign a document covering all the financial issues. This was to say that the house belonged to the organization, it was to spell out the responsibility of the organization to pay the mortgage of the house which legally was the responsibility of two members of the Minority and one of the Majority, it was to state what was owed to whom by the organization. The IS intervened and instructed the Majority to break this agreement. It insisted that first of all the Comrades of the Minority in whose name the house is held should sign that the house belonged to the organization but the IS/Majority refused to sign that the organization was responsible for the mortgage. While the Minority stated again and again that the house was the property of the organization and did so also in writing, it insisted that any legal document should include all the points agreed to by T.W. and S.O'T. This then was taken by the IS/Majority and spread around the international that the Minority was refusing to hand over the property, that it was in the words of one of their resolutions using "extortion and blackmail". Members of the Minority bought the organizations interest in the house after it had failed to get a single offer when it was on the market through a realtor. At the IEC L.W. was forced to say that the price was around what they would have got if they had sold it on the market. Yet this lie, about "extortion and blackmail" the words used in the IS/Majority resolution "Proposals for dealing with the Faction", which the IS knew was a lie was spread throughout the international.

The most recent financial slander is over dues. The IS and the Majority claim the Minority Comrades S.O'T. and L.H. stopped paying dues. Since the branch in Chicago, or what is left of it, went underground and these two Comrades were banned from attending, these two Comrades have collected their own dues and taken them to the NC meetings. This was the established practice. It was done at the NC meeting in January of this year and there was no complaint from anyone. But just

over a week before the May NC the two Minority Comrades received a note saying they had paid no dues. These Comrades sent a reply that they had been paying \$20 and \$10 per month and were bringing this to the NC. These monies were brought to New York along with fighting fund that had been collected.

By the way the sending of this letter and the sending of a similar letter about the level of the Oakland dues was coordinated between L.W. of the IS and the Majority in advance. This was made clear when the Majority mistakenly sent this information to the Minority. They mistakenly enclosed a memo which they were sending between themselves. The IS was centrally involved in setting up this lie about the Minority not paying subs. It should also be asked in passing is it now the norm that those Comrades who pay no subs or low subs are going to be expelled. If so this will cut the membership of the international by around 50%. But of course this will not happen. The dues slander is to justify the Minority's expulsion which is for political reasons.

The Oakland dues were denounced as too low to be considered dues. The Oakland branch had been cut out of the organization. They have been barred from participating in the paper, including writing articles about campaigns in which they have been participating. Important work of the organization being carried out by the Oakland branch has been kept out of the paper. When T.W. the national treasurer visited the area to see the new branch in San Francisco he refused to contact the Oakland branch. Nor did he even reply to invitations to visit the branch. This behavior as well as the refusal of the leadership backed by the IS to conduct a comradely discussion on the political differences has had an affect on the confidence of the Comrades in the Oakland branch in the organization, and this is reflected in the dues level. However in spite of repeated requests T.W. the national treasurer had never once contacted the Branch treasurer. Now these dues have been declared to no longer be dues. So the Oakland branch was slandered as having stopped paying dues and its leadership expelled.

Once again we ask the organization to see the rottenness of this slander campaign on finances. During the course of the struggle the IS intervened on financial issues against the Minority. In the way explained above slanders over finances were used to prepare the international for the expulsions and to obscure the political issues. The Comrades of the Minority have conducted a struggle against reformism and capitalism for many decades. Never in any of these did our political enemies accuse any

of us of financial misdeeds. But here in the organization which we have been part of and have built with sacrifices, including financial sacrifices, the first time we have a serious disagreement with the IS these Comrades make use of financial slanders. This is a dirty method which is alien to the Marxist movement.

Look at the totality of the finances. The organization received for the house what it would have got if it was sold on the market. Under pressure LW admitted this at the last IEC. The Minority when they were removed as full-timers were left to pay phone bills and travel bills of many thousands of dollars which the Majority with the backing of the IS refused to pay. The IS/Majority refused to pay for Minority Comrades to come to the last NC and would only pay for one of the two IEC Minority members to come to the last IEC. On top of this the organization refused to pay the medical bill of S.O'T. which amounts to \$3,500. This was incurred when this Comrade, then a fulltimer in the organization, had to be rushed to hospital in a life threatening situation. The IS sent this Comrade a letter saying that he had no right to be paid this as he had not got prior agreement from the organization to run up this bill. This Comrade was not aware that he was expected to stop the speeding vehicle and call L.W. or some other IS member and get approval to go to hospital. After a quarter of a century as a fulltimer for the organization the IS/Majority refuses to pay this Comrades medical bill which is still outstanding. This is a staggering indictment of the IS/Majority and how it understands simple questions of loyalty to Comrades and decent behavior.

C. Discipline: The LPA Work

The slander that the Minority were going to split and the slanders over finances are not the only lies being told to justify the expulsions of the Minority Comrades. We are accused also of breaking the discipline of the organization. This has been made especially in relation to the work in the LPA. At the LPA convention in June 1996 the Minority raised from the floor the need for Labor to have its own candidates in November 1996. We were accused of breaking the discipline of the group by doing so.

The position of the organization has always been that we demand candidates of the working class in bourgeois elections unless the working class is in a position to establish its own organs of power and take power through these. In the issue of the paper covering the last months of 1995 and the first months of 1996 the call for Labor candidates in November was spelled out in an article written by a leading member of the Majority.

. At the conference of the organization held in May 1996 the resolution of the Majority which was passed made no change in this position. Nor was the issue discussed and re-evaluated at that national conference. In the following weeks, the minority continued to raise the issue, yet they were not told that the organization had changed its position. Although indications of their capitulation on this issue started to arise prior to the LPA convention, it was at the convention that they came under the direct pressure of the soft left and as a result refused to raise in the debate in the convention the need for candidates in November. They refused to even mention November.

When was the position changed? During the course of the LPA convention itself, the majority held a secret caucus of its undeclared faction at which a new position was arrived at. The minority was not informed of this meeting at the time, was deprived of the right to participate in discussing the issue, but was then expected to abide by this opportunistic, factional decision. By their silence in the debate on the convention floor the Majority were part of the cover up of the support of the LPA leaders for the AFL-CIO's position of supporting Clinton and the Democrats.

The Majority now try and squirm out of their position by pointing to a flyer they produced. This did raise the November elections. However this came out of a debate within the organization where the Minority made many criticisms of the draft of this flyer which was initially headed "Let the Party Begin". When it came to the debate on the floor of the convention the Majority refused to put forward the position outlined in the flyer. The flyer was also inadequate as it put forward nothing in relation to what the LPA leaders should do concerning November.

The Minority raised the issue at the LPA convention. We did not just call for the LPA to run candidates and leave it at that. We said that if the LPA convention felt that it did not have the resources to do so then the LPA leadership should mobilize the LPA membership in a campaign aimed at the AFL-CIO membership, with demands on the AFL-CIO leadership, that the AFL-CIO should cease its support for Clinton and the Democrats and put up candidates of its own in November. The central issue was that our organization had to intervene in the debate at the convention and pose the need for the working class to have candidates of its own in November and we had to pose this concretely, that is tie it to actions to be taken by the LPA leadership and convention. The Majority refused to even mention the November elections in the debate at the

convention.

The Minority were condemned for breaking the discipline of the organization by raising November. Yet as explained, at the organization's own conference held one month earlier and at which the Majority won their majority, there was no change made to the organization's position on the November elections. That is the position put in the paper before the conference, which was the position of the organization all along that we had to call for Labor candidates in November, was not changed.

The dishonesty and opportunism of the Majority became clear arising out of discussions between Majority and Minority Comrades at the LPA convention. J.B. one of the two National coordinators and a leader of the Majority explained to S.O'T. that the Majority had put nothing in their resolution to the conference of the organization about the November elections because they could not agree among themselves on the issue. So for unprincipled factional reasons the Majority kept their differences from the Minority and the membership on this issue and the position of the organization was not changed. In reality it was the Minority who were upholding the position of the organization at the LPA convention.

At the LPA convention the position of the Majority evolved into open opposition to raising any demands in the debate on the coming November elections. A decision to this effect was made at the secret Majority faction meeting held at the convention as is explained above. L.D. one of the leaders of the Majority explained the reasons for this being made to S.O'T. She complained that the Minority's insistence on raising the November elections had made it impossible for the Majority to get a concrete working agreement with the soft lefts at the convention. So the Majority desperate for a deal with the soft lefts decided to cover up on November and the LPA leadership's deal with the AFL-CIO leadership, the essence of which was that the LPA leadership would not do anything which would in any way be seen as a criticism of the AFL-CIO leadership's support for Clinton and the Democrats. This was a perfect illustration of the capitulation of the Majority to the pressures of the soft left who in turn, were capitulating to the LPA leaders and the deal these people had made not to oppose the AFL-CIO leadership's support for Clinton and the Democrats.

D. Discipline: The AFSCME Activist

Another accusation that is made about discipline is that the Minority broke the organization's discipline in relation to the AFSCME ACTIV-

IST. This was the journal we had been producing in the public sector union AFSCME. It was edited by the Minority supporter R.M. At the AFSCME convention in the summer of 1996 an editorial board was elected for the journal. This included Majority and Minority comrades and also non-Comrades. The idea was to widen the base of the journal by bringing onto the editorial board non-Comrades. It had always been agreed that the journal should be used to build a united front type organization in the union. The Majority's two supporters came to the convention and demanded that no editorial board should be elected and they explained that the journal should be a Militant journal financed by the organization. Such a position was never decided on by the organization. The editorial board was elected.

Immediately after the convention the Majority withdrew what little support they had been giving to AFSCME ACTIVIST and set up regional AFSCME and/or public sector journals. In fact at the end of the meeting at the AFSCME convention which elected the editorial board the leading Majority supporter from New York announced to the meeting that he was resigning from the editorial board and was not going to be involved any further with the ACTIVIST. He made this announcement in front of Comrades and non-Comrades. Money and subscriptions sent to the Majority member and main AFSCME ACTIVIST member in the mid-west were not passed on to the journal's editor and treasurer. The Majority withdrew from and sabotaged the AFSCME ACTIVIST. Without the support of the whole organization the resources to produce the journal did not exist and it has had to be discontinued. This was a case of the Majority for factional reasons destroying an important area of the work and doing so without any decision to do so being made in the organization. Once again it was the Minority who were upholding the positions of the organization.

To cover their tracks the IS/Majority faction, led by L.W., has tried to lie and say that the Minority did not elect the Majority members onto the AFSCME ACTIVIST editorial board. This is what L.W. said in his debate with S.O'T. in Dublin on Sat. 24th of June, 1997. He was answered by S.O'T. along the lines explained above. In Belfast the next day when again he debated with S.O'T. L.W. no longer made the accusation that the Majority were not elected onto the editorial board. The problem with the IS in the Belfast debate was that the Minority

example of the IS method which will tell any lie that suits them and when this is disproved they will drop it as if they never said it and make up another lie. Even if it were the case that there had not been enough discussions, and it was not, this was no justification for the Majority to destroy the AFSCME ACTIVIST. The Minority did not break discipline on this issue no more than it did at the LPA convention. But the Majority for factional reasons and through a decision made in their IS/Majority faction which was not discussed in the organization decided to destroy AFSCME ACTIVIST because it was edited by a Comrade of the Minority. This was a shameful crime against the activists in AFSCME who are looking for a way to move forward, and it was carried out by the IS/Majority for purely factional reasons. It is the type of behavior we have condemned the sectarian organizations for in the past.

D. Discipline: The Mid-West Activist Group

Ah, but what about S.O'T. and L.H. the two Minority Comrades in Chicago and their membership of the mid-west activists group. Surely this is breaking discipline. At the January 1997 National Committee the Majority passed a resolution called "PROPOSALS FOR DEALING WITH THE FACTION" which called on these two Comrades to "publicly withdraw from the political grouping S.O'T. established with a few other sectarians in opposition to the organization's work in the LP (CAREEN, or whatever other name they decide to go by)." Oh, problem about the Minority going along with this decision is that it is nonsense. The group called CAREEN is the Chicago Area Restaurant Employees Network. This is a group of restaurant workers who have been fired for union activity. The two Minority Comrades have been at some of their events. Is it from this that the Minority was to publicly withdraw.

The truth is that the IS/Majority in their haste to set up the Minority for expulsion at the January NC could not even get the correct organization named in their resolution. It would be laughable if it were not such a sign of the degeneration of the internal life of the organization. The organization the Majority had in mind that the Minority withdraw publicly from is called the Working Peoples Action and Education Network. This came about not because S.O'T. formed it with some sectarians as the IS/Majority alleges, but through the coming together of the activist opposition grouping in the LPA and the activist more militant wing of the Staley solidarity committees in Chicago and Decatur, Illinois. This group included the two main leaders of the more combative members of the

Staley lockout struggle and the best known union activist in Chicago. It is involved in a campaign against the attacks on Welfare. It organized a demonstration and an occupation of the office of the Governor of the State of Illinois. The local LP chapter like the LP nationally refuses to organize any activities against the attacks on Welfare.

There was no discussion in the organization on this group and what it stands for. There was no discussion about its campaign against the Welfare cuts. There was only a declaration by the Majority that the Minority had to withdraw from some group called Careen. In other words the IS/Majority knew so little about this group that they couldn't even get its name straight. Yet participation in it was deemed unacceptable. When this group first began to develop the Majority said it was the new organization that S.O'T. was building for when he split from the International. When this lie was so obviously false they changed their story. Now this organization is condemned for being "ultra left and sectarian" and acting against the organizations work in the LP. This is typical of the cynical factional moves of the Majority to drive out the Minority. They are the Majority and so they believe they can do whatever they wish.

We should add one final note on the question of internal discipline: All the complaints by the IS/Majority faction regarding the Minority's alleged violation of internal discipline ring somewhat hollow in the face of the most recent development of the San Francisco comrades, formerly known as the Left Opposition — the group recruited by LW. We recently discovered that these comrades have started publishing a petit bourgeois liberal newspaper called "Frontline", No objective review of this paper could consider it anything but this. Among other articles, in a recent issue there is an extremely friendly three page interview with a local liberal Democratic politician (Tom Ammann) which amounts to three pages of free publicity for him. There is a two page article on astrological charts, fostering illusions in mysticism. And perhaps worst of all are some of the ads, including one for phone sex together with a blatantly exploitative picture of a near-naked woman baring her behind. The publication of this paper was never discussed with the organization, yet when it was brought to the attention of the National Committee there were no protests against this blatant violation of democratic centralism. We should add that it is this paper, rather than that of the organization, that these "comrades" distribute at public events.

Part of the slander campaign against the Minority was the campaign of personal slanders against S.O'T., bringing up events of a decade and

more ago. It involved a leading participant in one these struggles personally discussing with the Majority in the US behind the backs of the Minority. Imagined old scores were being settled by at least one Comrade. All the Comrades who were involved in these slanders, or who passed on these slanders without seeking out the views of the Minority bear a responsibility for the obscuring of the political issues and the damage that has been done to the revolutionary nucleus in the US. This includes passing on the slander that the Minority were going to split.

The Fraudulent Conditions for "Membership" Offered to the Minority

Some Comrades might think that S.O'T. and L.H. should have publicly separated themselves from this activist group and in this way perhaps avoided expulsion. First of all this was only one of many excuses give for our expulsion and one of a number of conditions put to the Minority. The January NC resolution that contained this order also banned these two Minority Comrades from attending the Chicago branch. (Apparently this decision was discussed with the leading Comrades of the Irish section who gave their support to it before it was imposed on Minority Comrades in Chicago. These leading Irish Comrades did not contact the Minority to get their view on being banned from the branch of the organization.) And though no decision was taken to do so at the NC the Majority imposed a ban on these two Minority Comrades selling the paper of the organization. In other words the conditions these two Comrades had to accept to avoid expulsion included not attending the branch, not selling the paper and withdrawing publicly from the only group of activists in the Chicago area who were campaigning against the attacks on Welfare which is the most important issue facing the working class at present. The Minority were being ordered to withdraw from day to day political activity in the organization and publicly cut themselves off from the most active group of activists in the Chicago area.

The IS/Majority act on the basis that they are the majority and so they can do what they like. They declared "an exceptional situation" to exist in the organization and on this basis took away the rights of the Minority. The two Minority Comrades in Chicago were denied their right to attend their local branch or sell the paper. The Oakland branch was denied its right to discuss with the San Francisco branch and more importantly to participate in the internal life of the organization. The Majority has no

right to take such actions. What they mean is that an exceptional situation can be declared by a majority and by this maneuver all the rights of the Minority can be removed. In other words the constitutional rights of the membership, and the constitutional restraints on the leadership, are not worth the paper they might be written on.

What happened with the Chicago branch illustrates the long running policy of the IS/Majority to separate the Minority from the organization and expel it. The two Majority supporters in the Chicago branch which had 11 members in the early summer of 1996 conducted a non stop campaign of personal attacks on S.O'T. at every branch meeting. Their aim was to destroy the branch. The two Minority Comrades moved a resolution for a two month moratorium on the debate in the branch to give the branch a breathing space. This was supported by all active members of the branch except the two Majority Comrades. They insisted on continuing with their weekly personal attacks. The newer Comrades in the branch resigned under this barrage of slander and attacks. At the same time the two Majority Comrades set up their own post office box number. This was then printed in the paper and the Chicago branch post office number removed. The papers were then sent to the Minority Comrades address and none given to the Majority. The two Majority Comrades then announced they were meeting separately in one of their houses. When S.O'T. went to attend what was now being called the Chicago Majority branch he was refused admission. The Majority then passed a resolution banning S.O'T. and L.H. from attending what the Majority then recognized as the only branch in Chicago. The IS/Majority destroyed the Chicago branch in the pursuit of their goal of expelling the Minority.

The January NC resolution of the IS/Majority which set up the Minority for expulsion stated "This NC recognizes that the burden of proof of Comradely relations lies with the faction" that is with the Minority. This is totally alien to any concept of natural justice. It illustrates how the IS/Majority was setting up the Minority for expulsion. Comradely relations is a two way process and if the onus lies on any side more than the other it lies with the Majority. And in this situation the Majority not only took a very hostile tone from the beginning of the debate stirring up regional prejudices and personal animosities. But not only that, and more importantly, the IS/Majority have been following the strategy of driving the Minority out of the organization but without admitting this to the International. It is in this light that the IS/Majority declaration that the onus rests with the Minority has to be understood. This provides the

basis to blame all problems on the Minority.

Between the January NC and the May NC when we were expelled the only remaining fulltimer, A.A. who is a leading member of the Majority, visited Chicago. This visit was kept secret from the two members of the Minority who only learned of it when they got the next issue of the members bulletin. This was despite the fact that according to the majority's own resolution, the only contact that SOT and LH were supposed to have with the organization was through the two national coordinators, one of which is AA. Surely this was not in line with helping "comradely relations" or working to "rebuild trust in the organization", as the NC resolution called for. This action of the Majority in not contacting the Minority Comrades in Chicago proves that the January resolution was a set up for expulsion. The Majority banned these two Comrades from the local branch and from selling the paper yet they offered no other way to these Comrades to participate in the organization. The process of expulsion as we have explained was well under way. Whatever the Minority did we were going to be expelled.

At the January NC, J.B. a leading member of the Majority in speaking in favor of the resolution "Proposals for dealing with the faction", said the following: "The International is not up to speed yet on this discussion. On the need for expulsions. It is just a fact. It is relatively new to some of them. It takes time to percolate throughout the International for Comrades to fully get a grasp that someone who has been in the organization for 25 years has to be expelled. So we cannot jump the gun on that". This is the reality of the situation. The IS/Majority decided to expel the Minority when they got the Majority in the summer of 1996 just as we have been saying. As J.B. explained the January resolution and the conditions within it were to set up the Minority for expulsion and to give time for the IS to work on the International and get the expulsions accepted. And the IS is depending on the IEC and the international membership not to question their lies and slanders too closely and so get away with expelling the Minority.

The Damage Done by the I.S./Majority Faction

Extremely serious damage has been done to the work in North America. The exciting breakthroughs that were being made in Canada have been derailed and the organization as a functioning nucleus no longer exists there. Three or four Comrades occasionally meet in a

discussion group. The leading Comrade of the organization who is also the leader of the anti-poverty movement there does not attend these. There were over twenty members in the Toronto branch and around thirty members in Canada overall when the debate broke out. This collapse is the direct result of the IS/Majority intervening there to undermine the Minority Comrades. There, as in Chicago, a deliberate policy of cultivating any Comrade with a resentment was pursued. (In the areas where the Minority Comrades worked, Canada, the Mid West, California and Mexico, only three Comrades could be found to attack the methods of the Minority Comrades. One in Canada was promoted to fulltimer. He no longer has this position due to the financial and organizational collapse of the group there. The two they found in the Midwest the IS/Majority elevated onto the NC.) In Canada the sentiment that the organization should have its own independent section immediately was unscrupulously whipped up. This also allowed the IS/Majority to get rid of the 30 votes of the Canadian Comrades at the organizations conference where the Majority won their majority. The truth, and this was explained by the Minority, was that the establishment of a separate Canadian section was premature. In order to justify their maneuvers the IS held a founding conference of the Canadian section. This was followed by the collapse of the Canadian organization. The IS represented on the ground by L.W. and the Majority must answer for this destruction of the work in Canada.

In the US there has been a severe political and organizational degeneration as well as a qualitative decline in internal democracy. The political degeneration has been spelled out above. Organizationally there are now at most 30 active members of the organization in the US. This is around one third of the number when the debate broke out. The full-time apparatus has gone from 6 to 1. The fighting fund has gone from a monthly income of \$2,400 per month to between \$700 and \$800. And the false method of the IS in dealing with internal differences has been established in the organization. The IS/Majority have organized and pushed through politically inspired expulsions, thus setting a very damaging precedent in the organization.

Role of IEC

These developments represent a crisis in the International, a serious deterioration in its internal life. This is not a time for the membership of the International to turn its eyes away from the internal struggle with the excuse of pressure of work. Nor is it the time to justify inaction with talk

of tactics and timing. A political and organizational lowering of the standards is taking place, the rights of the Minority and all Minorities have been tramped upon, an extreme injustice is being done to the members of the US Minority, the internal life of the organization is lagging behind the needs of the objective situation. It is the responsibility of the entire membership to act in order to prepare the organization for the tasks ahead. Opposition to the expulsion of the Minority in the US is a vital part of this preparation.

The role of the IEC is supposed to be to give general guidance to the organization internationally, as far as both the political and the organizational issues are concerned. In fulfilling this role, the IEC delegates must listen to and struggle to understand the experiences and views of the rank and file of the organization, their fellow IEC delegates, as well as the I.S. In order to do so successfully, they must bring an independent approach, especially where controversies are involved. Unfortunately, almost none of the IEC delegates carried out this approach when the crisis in the US was discussed at the IEC meeting of December, 1996. Many pointed questions were asked and critical comments made by IEC members in relation to the US minority faction. This was the right and the responsibility of the IEC delegates to do so. However what was most noticeable and what was so damaging was that a similar approach was not carried out in relation to the IS.

All the political points explained in this document were made at that meeting of the IEC, yet not one single delegate either commented or asked a question concerning these points. This despite the fact that it was pointed out that L.W. himself in an unguarded moment had commented that "legitimate criticisms could be made" of how the majority was conducting the Labor Party work — a comment that he was asked by the Minority to explain at the IEC, but he refused to do so. Not a single IEC delegate except for the US Minority Comrades asked for an explanation of this.

Organizational issues which would point to fundamental violations of the principles of democratic centralism were raised. For instance, it was explained how L.W. on behalf of the IS had carried out a correspondence with the Left Opposition for a protracted period of time without informing or discussing this with the minority IEC delegates, the leadership of the U.S. section to which L.W. was opposed, or the cds. who were working in Oakland, directly across the bay from San Francisco. Again not a single IEC delegate asked or commented about this although it is certain that

they would not be happy if this were done in their areas

It was explained how S.O'T. was removed from the work in Brazil. According to L.W. himself, after a visit there by S.O'T., the I.S. received a correspondence critical of him sent by the Moreno group there. How did the I.S. deal with it? Did they discuss it with S.O'T.? Did they even inform him of the existence of the complaint? No, they discussed it in secret, that is, behind his back, and on the basis of this complaint removed him from the work in Brazil. All this according to L.W. himself. This was explained at the IEC, yet again, not a single delegate either asked about it or commented on it.

In the end, all delegates aside from the minority delegates with one honorable exception voted in favor of the I.S.'s position. The one exception abstained, presumably feeling that he lacked sufficient information to come to an independent position. What is shocking is that following that vote, IEC delegates still to this day are saying that they do not fully understand the issues involved in the debate. If that is the case, then how could they have voted for the IS/Majority position at the IEC. How could they have taken any position, before they developed a clear, independent understanding of the issues involved? It is clear from this that their vote was based on their tendency to support the IS, not on their understanding of the facts themselves.

This serious failure of the IEC delegates and their vote supporting the IS played a critical role in emboldening the I.S./Majority faction. It gave them the green light to step up their attacks and carry out the formal expulsion.

Conclusion

The IS/Majority have now expelled the Minority because of its political views. These are political expulsions. The central reason is that the Minority refuses to go along with the capitulation of the Majority to the soft lefts and the slightly more progressive wing of the union bureaucracy. Along with this the IS wants the Minority out because we insist on opposing the IS imposed internal regime and in criticizing areas of work of the IS. The IS prefers a compliant leadership in the sections and the areas. The fact that the Minority are raising the problems in the British section add fuel to the determination of the IS to expel us from the organization.

These realities cannot be admitted by the IS/Majority so they explain our expulsions with a torrent of lies and slanders which amount to a

witchhunt. We have challenged the IS again and again to bring us up on charges in relation to any of their accusations. They refuse to do so. The reason is obvious. If we are brought up on charges then both sides views would have to be heard throughout the organization in an organized structured way. This would expose the IS/Majority's slanders and lies for what they are. From their point of view it is much better to spread these lies and slanders through their control of the organizational apparatus.

We fully intend to exercise our full rights of appeal against our expulsions from the organization. As we do so the IS is preparing to carry out its usual tactic of refusing to debate the issues and criticisms by forcing the organization to vote on another issue, in this case to force the vote to be one of confidence or no confidence in the International. L.W., in alliance with P.H. who has been part of the IS decision making process as regards the struggle in the US, jointly began this dirty work in the debate between L.W. and S.O'T. in Belfast. Dividing up the task between them they asserted that the Minority position was in reality that the International was degenerate and a new organization had to be built.

The IS and its collaborators intend to face the International with a vote on whether the International is degenerate or not. It should not be hard for them to win a majority on this. The vote is likely to be unanimous. No doubt the slander campaign of the IS is already at work through daily phone calls and visits to the sections explaining that no matter what the Minority say this is the issue that has to be decided, and on which the International will in reality be voting when the Minority's appeal comes up. If the IEC members allow the issue to be framed in this way they will be cooperating with the IS in denying the membership the right to an open and clear debate on the issues the Minority are raising.

We the Minority do not believe the International is degenerate. We believe it is the only International worth belonging to and building. But we have some differences on the nature of the period and the tasks of the organization in this period, we have a different view of the kind of internal life that is needed. We wish, and this is our right, to remain in the organization and debate our ideas in front of the membership of the International. We believe if this happens then the organization will be the stronger no matter which position wins a majority in the short term..

However at present we are expelled from the organization. We fully intend to continue to remain active in fighting for the Marxist alternative in the working class. We cannot postpone this until our appeal process either allows us back into the organization or is exhausted. So we are

going to build our nucleus while we continue with our appeals. And if we are accepted back into the organization in the future it will be with greater resources than we have now. No doubt anything we do to build now will be construed by the IS as evidence supporting their decision to expel us. Of course, if we did nothing politically, this also would be used against us. All we can do in this regard is hope that the IEC and the membership of the International are able to see through such a proposition. This basically says the IS can expel the Minority and put them out of the International and anything they do afterwards to keep their forces active in the struggle of the working class and to fight to build a Marxist nucleus is then used as proof that the IS was right to expel them in the first place. If the IEC falls for this maneuver then an even greater crisis will explode in the International in the future. Either in this way, or hopefully through the success of our appeals process we, the expelled Minority in the US, are confident that in the future we will once again be members of the same International with the Comrades we have worked over the past decades.

We repeat here our proposals and ask the membership of the International for their support.

We call on the IS/Majority to withdraw the expulsions and allow us our full rights in the organization, including attending our branches, discussing with all Comrades and selling the paper. We call simultaneously for the IS to bring us up on charges in relation to all the accusations they have made against us.

In the event of the IS/Majority refusing to carry out these proposals we call on the international Control Commission to be activated to investigate the expulsions. This is our right and the IS has no power to prevent it. The argument about insufficient cash is utterly false. The IS has money to send L.W. for months in total to the US, to carry on long phone conversations on close to a daily basis with the Majority in the US, they can send L.W. to Ireland when S.O'T. was there for personal reasons and when there were informal discussions with Comrades. There is always money for the IS/Majority to put its position.

We announce our intention to continue to fight against our expulsions at the coming IEC, US national conference and at the World Congress. The IS has now announced that it has suspended, more accurately, it has expelled S.O'T. and J.R. from the IEC. The IS has no such power. Only the World Congress can remove IEC members. The IS is a subordinate

body to the IEC. We will be at the next IEC meeting demanding our seats as full members of that body.

We call on all members of the organization to call for the activating of the International Control Commission to investigate the expulsions and put its report before the next World Congress.

We ask all Comrades to oppose our expulsions. We ask for resolutions along these lines to be passed throughout the International and sent to the IS and throughout the organization. We call on all sections of the organization to organize a debate within their membership and invite Minority and IS/Majority speakers. We particularly protest the continued refusal of the British NC, under the direction of the British EC despite our repeated requests, to allow us to present our views to this body. The IS has put its view of events to this body on a number of occasions. We also protest the refusal of the IS to print and circulate a similar number of our documents along with the 500 copies of the 80 plus page document of the IS. This is an irrefutable case of the IS acting to prevent an equal hearing of the different positions. It is against the principles of democratic centralism.

The IEC members, the leaders of the national sections, the membership of the International face a serious challenge and responsibility on this issue of the expulsion of the US Minority. If the IS/Majority are allowed to get away with our expulsion this will represent a significant deterioration of the internal life of the organization. It will also mean that the organization will not have been brought into line with the needs of the post Stalinist world situation. It will also mean that the political degeneration of the US Majority will continue with the danger this represents to the International. Failure by the International as a whole to oppose the expulsions and to conduct a most rigorous investigation will also represent a serious weakness in the approach of the membership of the International to its tasks and priorities.

Letter From John C., Former Leader of Canadian Section

(Note: The following letter was written by the former leader of the Canadian organization to Sean, concerning the developments in Canada. We reprint it here with the author's permission.)

Dear Sean,

Since you called me, I have decided to put down on paper a few thoughts about the Minority's removal from the US organization and its implications here. I'm sorry but several major issues around the Ontario Coalition against Poverty have come up today and, unless I delay this until the weekend, I can only write you a short letter.

I should first of all make clear that I am no longer active in the work of the Canadian group and that I was not at all involved in the split in the US Section. I am simply writing as someone who was briefly active in the Canadian work of the CWI who developed great respect for you and RR (as the two comrades in the Minority I had the opportunity to work with closely). On that basis, I feel that it is only right that I should write you this letter.

When it comes to the debate you are engaged in around the political direction of the CWI and the nature of its leadership or the differences over the Labour Party in the US, there are plenty of people on both sides of these issues who have far more knowledge than I do. Frankly, all through the split in the US, the volume of charge and counter charge was dizzying and I wouldn't feel inclined to wade into it. What is obvious to me, however, is that the members of the Minority were serious and dedicated and had made an enormous contribution to the work. Despite very real problems in the organization in the US that existed prior to split, your removal from the scene has proven to be a very costly form of amputation for the Section. If your reports on the loss of US membership is even half true, things are clearly serious.

Moreover, I have to accept your suggestion that, within the IS, a desire to get rid of you was apparent. LW clearly saw you as an obstacle to be removed and, when ML from Toronto took a trip to Sweden, he informed me that he had been told over there that the US Section was led by conservatives who had to be opposed and that the Canadian Comrades must proceed with their own Section so as to undercut the members of the now expelled minority.

This leads me to the matter that I do have some experience around, that of the work in Canada. When RR was still making trips here, the Toronto Branch was developing contacts and recruiting members. I am not uncritical of that Comrade and I could point to several examples where I disagreed with him. Still, he did function effectively and made a key contribution. The result of the removal of the Minority in the US has been the deterioration of things here. A "Founding Conference" of a

"Section" was organized before a local branch had even been consolidated. Looking back, I must conclude that this was not based on any realistic appraisal of the situation on the ground here, but had more to do with concerns over the balance of forces in the US.

The members of the CWI group in Toronto are active in OCAP and I respect all of them as activists engaged in the same struggle but I must say, frankly, that they are simply out of their depths as founders of a national section of a revolutionary organization. Without the help that now appears unavailable, no progress can be made to even begin to build here. I should make clear that I include myself in this appraisal. I have a great deal of experience in trade union and unemployed struggles but would not for a moment regard myself as having the experience needed to launch a revolutionary tendency in a country.

Moreover, the problem now is that Socialist Resistance is beginning, in my opinion, to take some very wrong turns due to its lack of qualified leadership and adequate support. Within OCAP, its members tend to combine a tendency to try and apply Marxist theory in a formalistic and abstract fashion with a growing conservatism over tactics. These differences are only starting to open up but I suspect they're going to become quite serious. Indeed, we have recently agreed that our differences have to now be taken before and decided by the membership of OCAP.

I can only say in conclusion that the removal of the Minority has, without a doubt, led to a collapse in Toronto that can only flow from a serious weakening of the North American work in general.

In Solidarity,
John C.

Open Letter to the Irish Organization From S.O'T.

Dear Comrades,

I wish to thank the Comrades of the organization who attended the recent debates in Dublin and Belfast between L.W. and

myself. I and all members of the Minority appreciate the opportunity we were given to have our opinions heard. I am writing this letter to the Irish Comrades because of my long association with the organization there and because of the role of leading Irish Comrades in the struggle we have had with the IS/Majority faction. One element I will deal with here is how a dispute that I had with Comrade P.H. over a decade ago has been used in the present struggle.

One of the dirtiest aspects of the IS/Majority approach to the debate with us has been to spread the slander that we intended to split. This was used to undermine our credibility and to prepare the way for our expulsions. This tactic is undemocratic. It hurts the organization as well as those against whom it is directed. It does so by putting in front of the organization the issue of the loyalty of those with different opinions rather than what these opinions are. This weakens the ability of the organization to weigh up the issues and to come to a decision, and it does not allow the organization to benefit fully in terms of theoretical level from an open honest debate on the issues. It also is a method of intimidation against all those with a different point of view. If by raising a different view they are going to be smeared with preparing for a split then Comrades will find themselves pressured to keep quiet.

It is the duty of all Comrades to oppose this dirty method of the IS and eradicate it from the organization. Unfortunately Comrade D.C. accepted this slander of the IS. This Comrade explained to myself while I was recently in Dublin that he accepted the position spread by the IS that we were going to split and had done so for the past year. At least one other leading Irish Comrade, K. McL., indicated in a conversation with another leading Comrade in Dublin that his understanding was that the Minority would split. These harmful positions were taken by these Comrades without at any time contacting myself or any member of the Minority to hear our point of view. In other words they accepted without question the slander of the IS/Majority.

We have been expelled from the US organization and the International. The IS has recently expelled myself and J.R. from the IEC even though they have no power to do so. Part of this process of expulsion was the destruction of the Chicago branch, the setting up of the "Majority Chicago Branch" by the IS/Majority, the recognition of this branch as the only branch in Chicago and the banning of myself and L.H. the other Minority Comrade in Chicago from that branch. While only formally expelled from the organization in May of this year in reality myself and

L.H. have been expelled from the day to day work of the organization since this decision was taken in January of this year.

The particular relevance of this to the Irish organization is that Comrade D.C. explained to me during my recent visit to Dublin that he had been involved in the discussion with the IS on how to deal with the Minority in Chicago and he had been involved in the making of this decision with the IS to ban us from the branch. And he was part of this decision to ban us before we were ever informed that such a decision was even being considered. At no time did this Comrade seek our opinion in Chicago on this crucial issue. This was a serious mistake.

Of course the main responsibility lies with the IS who in a maneuver, involved D.C. in the decision making process as to what to do with the Minority. The idea was to spread around the responsibility for the measures they would take against us. With DC involved in making the decision then he would be put in the position of defending it and its logical extension, the formal expulsion, to the membership of the Irish organization. This is what is now happening. Undoubtedly the IS made major efforts to convince D.C. that every word they said was true. But this does not absolve this Comrade from the responsibility to check with us the Minority and to discuss with us the Minority what our views were of the proposals.

Why did this Comrade accept the position of the IS/Majority without discussing with the Minority? This is not a personal question. It is a question of how this Comrade sees the internal life of the organization and the approach of leadership. He shares with the IS the view that an organized faction in the organization is something that is unacceptable and should be driven out. He has the tendency to accept the position of the IS leadership because it is the leadership, rather than seeing that his responsibility as a member, includes taking a strong independent stand initially in any debate between the IS and a section of the membership, until, that is, he has had a chance to fully investigate the views of all sides. And this Comrade's support for our being banned from the Chicago branch indicates that he also agrees with the IS position that an "exceptional situation" can be declared by the leadership and members rights, such as their right to attend their local branch and their right to sell the paper, and their right to discuss with all other members of the organization, can be taken away.

During the course of the debate in the US a young Comrade was discussing with a leading member of the Majority here and was told that

the Irish organization had put S.O'T. out of the work in Ireland because of his so-called wrong methods. The spreading of this lie indicates how the dispute that S.O'T. had with P.H. over a decade ago has been used to attack S.O'T. and the Minority. It also raises the particular question of who has been spreading this lie. For an answer to this Comrades should ask the IS and Comrade P.H. to give the details of their discussions with the US Majority.

A Comrade in the debate in Belfast said that Comrades must not approach the expulsion of S.O'T. under the influence of any personal friendships that may exist between themselves and S.O'T. We could not agree more. However we would add one other point. Nor should this debate between the Minority and the IS/Majority be approached from the point of view of settling imagined old scores.

At the IEC in London, in late 1996 Bob Labi brought up the dispute involving P.H., S.O'T. and the IS in the mid 1980's. His contribution made it clear that this was being used against S.O'T. and the US Minority. After the dispute in the mid 1980's, A. Woods went around the International slandering S.O'T. with his version of this dispute. During the struggle with the Ted G. Minority P.T. said how opposed he was to this action of A.W. However, now that S.O'T. is in debate with the IS including P.T. what was condemned in the past by P.T. is now being used by him and the rest of the IS.

P.H. was mobilized by the IS to discuss with the US Majority behind the backs of the Minority, without ever letting the Minority Comrades know he was doing so and giving us the chance to respond. This is typical of the dirty campaign orchestrated by the IS to slander the Minority in individual discussions. P.H. has involved himself actively in this campaign. In the debate in Belfast it was obvious that he and L.W. had discussed the debate in advance and had divided the points to be made in the attack against S.O'T. and the Minority between them. Along with D.C. he has been involved in the decision making process with the IS in what action should be taken against the Minority. He has therefore put himself in the position, without a single individual discussion with members of the Minority to more thoroughly hear their view, of supporting and having to defend, the IS actions including the expulsion of the Minority. His role in the Irish organization at present is to defend the actions of the IS and himself in the attacks against and the expulsion of the Minority. Irish Comrades should be aware that in this debate both

expulsions and that these Comrades have been part of the decision making process of the IS in the course of the struggle. They should also be aware that this involvement has occurred without their ever seriously discussing with the Minority Faction.

Comrades should ask why these two Comrades, D.C. and P.H., felt they should involve themselves in the attacks of the IS against the Minority without discussing their role openly in front of the Irish membership. Did they consider that they were acting on behalf of the Irish membership when they were holding their secret discussions with the IS which led to the expulsion of the US Minority. Comrades should also consider that here again is an example of the IS establishing a secret faction involving IS and non-IS Comrades to carry out their factional struggles. P.H. and D.C. are not members of the IS. What was the nature of the body that they were involved in with the IS/Majority faction? The answer is not hard to find. These two Comrades were involved in the undeclared faction of the IS/Majority.

Because the dispute of the early 1980's has been used in this debate I have no choice but to go into what happened in some detail. First of all it is necessary to answer the lie that I was put out of the work in Ireland by the Irish organization. It was on my proposal and against the wishes of the IS initially that I moved on from the work in Ireland. The IS were not convinced that the leadership that was left behind was up to the task. It was my proposal to leave Ireland and take up the work in the country from where I am now writing. P.T. approached me and proposed that I come instead onto the IS, work in the International, base myself in London and he also raised that I should become the International Secretary. So much for my being put out of the work in Ireland.

In the couple of years before I left Ireland I had been approached by five Comrades in leading positions in the work in Northern Ireland with complaints about P.H. These centered around his manner of dealing with them, his arrogant, or what P.T. called his "imperious", manner and his general lack of encouragement and praise for the work of developing Comrades. I raised these points with P.H. In doing I also raised my own observations. That in my opinion P.H. did not select, praise and encourage less experienced Comrades, and he showed no sign of understanding the need to develop Comrades to where they could play joint leadership roles along with himself. Hopefully this situation at present has improved from what it was at the time these issues were discussed.

P.H. would never under any condition make any self criticism, instead

as with the IS and leadership of the British EC, he would always make the most determined and not always credible efforts to "prove" the correctness of his every decision and action. This determination never to make any criticism of himself was matched at that time by his determination never to give any praise to the young developing Comrades who appeared to have the potential to develop into co-leaders of the organization with himself. It was also clear to me at that time that P.H. saw himself as the only person capable of writing the main theoretical and the main open documents and pamphlets of the organization on Northern Ireland. This seems to have continued up until this day given the authorship of the main publications.

This is not a personal question. It is a question of method. It is a question of the leadership deliberately and consciously going out of its way to help Comrades move into full leadership roles as opposed to assistant to the leadership roles. It is a question of creating an atmosphere of self criticism where all Comrades can share in the experiences of the more experienced leading Comrades, their incorrect as well as their correct decisions and actions, and in this way develop more confidence in their own ability and potential. It is a question of realizing the full potential of the membership. It is a question of accepting and making the organization conscious of the fact that Comrades cannot develop into leading Comrades without making mistakes. And that these mistakes should be shared with the membership. It is a question of making an open and honest evaluation of the decisions of the organization possible. Such essential actions of the organization is impossible if the starting point of the leadership is never to admit any mistakes.

When I raised the complaints I had received and my own observations with P.H. he responded by making a complete 100% defense of his method. He accompanied this with an attack on the credibility of the Comrades making the complaints. No progress was made. Before I left Ireland the EC decided that I should make a visit to the areas and discuss the organization and how I saw it. In a number of discussions in the North I tried to prepare for the coming tensions that I anticipated between P.H. and some of the Comrades who had made complaints. I did this in a number of ways. In one case I attempted to encourage one Comrade to play the role I had been playing in the sense of while listening to the criticisms that some Comrades had of P.H., trying to balance these by pointing out the qualities that he had and the enormous contribution he was making. In another case I listened to the worries of one Comrade and

went through these with this Comrade and attempted to explain that I thought the worries were exaggerated and explained why I thought so. In other cases I explained that I would still be available to discuss with any Comrades any problems they had, even though I was out of the country.

On moving to London I was responsible for a number of areas of the work including the Greek and German sections. I expressed my hesitancy about taking the position of International Secretary. One reason was that I did not know what this job actually was particularly because of the relationship between the British section and the International. The leading Comrades of the International, P.T. and T.G. were also the leaders of the British section and the International secretariat seemed to be an adjunct to the British EC. I raised with P.T. that he should be the International Secretary and move from the British section and leave room for other Comrades to come through. I was also hesitant about taking the position because on arriving at the IS two Comrades, A.W. and P.T. on separate occasions took me aside and made very critical evaluations of other IS Comrades to me. It was clear that the idea was that I should be the International Secretary based on these evaluations. I did not accept these Comrades evaluations and instead decided to evaluate my own experiences with all the Comrades. It was not long before there was no more talk of me being the International Secretary.

After I had been in London some time I received a personal letter from Comrade D.T. who was then I believe editor of the Irish paper, that is a leading Comrade. He expressed worries about the situation in Belfast. I mentioned this to other IS members and I then made a trip abroad. When I returned I found that B.L. had gone into my personal files and removed this letter and sent a copy of it to P.H. Incidentally this is one of Bob Labi's roles in the international. He gathers what information he can from what material is on other Comrades desks, files and offices and passes this on to P.T. Out of this the conflict developed with P.H. which involved him making the accusation against myself that I was trying to undermine him.

The issues were not fully clear to me then and no doubt the issue could have been handled in a different and better way. Looking back on the situation now the whole issue should have been openly debated in front of the Irish membership. None of us, including myself, were fully conscious at that time of how far we had to travel in terms of dealing with issues more openly amongst the membership. A related feature in how the issue should have been dealt with at the time was that any Comrade who would have dared to stand up and make criticisms of P.H. would have

been the subject of severe treatment from this Comrade. How to avoid this was a consideration in my approach to dealing with this issue.

In the course of discussions in London between the IS and leading Irish Comrades, an agreement was reached that my future relations with the Irish organization would be through the leading bodies of the organization, that is the EC and CC. We all agreed to this. This was the decision made by the working of the democratic centralist process as we understood it. But things did not work out that way. P.H. then blackmailed the organization. When I made clear that I wished to attend the commissions on Ireland that were held at IEC meetings he said that if I attended he would not attend. When I hear P.H. and the IS pontificate about the democratic decisions of the US organization and how the Minority have been expelled for not accepting these, something which is utterly false, I compare this in my mind to P.H.'s blackmail of the organization to get his way and the refusal of the IS to stand against this.

What was the essence of the dispute with P.H.? It was not fully clear to me then. But it is now. What was involved is this idea that if anyone criticizes the leadership then all other members of the leadership are expected to gather round and club such criticism into the ground. And any member of the leadership who does not jump to this task is treated as untrustworthy and is accused of "undermining" the other members of the leadership. P.H. accused me of encouraging criticisms of himself because I "listened" to these criticisms. This is what he actually said. It was clear that he expected me to cut these off without even giving them an ear. The IS had the same view.

What was also involved was the idea that no self criticism should ever be made by the leadership. Anyone who made such self-criticism was disloyal. P.H. actually criticized me for making open self-criticism of myself. I believe that all leading Comrades must listen seriously to any criticism that is made of them and if it is correct they must accept it and explain their mistake or mistakes openly. This is what I try to do in relation to myself. If I do this in relation to myself I am certainly not going to give in to the pressure of Comrades such as those on the IS and P.H. who demand that I refuse to ever countenance any criticism whatsoever of them or any other leading Comrade.

When I left Ireland the organization had a surprise event in Dublin where I was given a going-away present. P.H. gave a speech which explained how all-rounded I was as a revolutionary etc. etc. Two years later his tune was very different. He involved himself with secret

discussions to try and get me removed from the international work. What had changed in the meantime? I had refused to unquestioningly reject all the criticisms of him.

A short time after the conflict with P.H. an attack was launched on me led by A. Woods supported by the rest of the IS in relation to my work in Greece. My two years work in Greece and Germany had helped these organizations to make dramatic steps forward in membership. They registered three and four times increases. This of course was not all or even necessarily mainly due to my doing but my work there had been accompanied by success. The IS accused me of trying to keep the work in Greece to myself. I was accused by the rest of the IS of not being a Bolshevik. It was clear to me that it was impossible to continue to work with the IS out of London. I proposed that I move to the country where I now live and this was agreed to.

What was the essence of this dispute with the IS. They shared the premise of P.H. All leading Comrades must support each other against criticisms by the membership. No leading Comrade must openly criticize either directly or indirectly other leading Comrades. My strong criticisms of the organization that existed in Greece when I first went there were seen, I later realized, as criticisms of the IS Comrades most of whom had spent significant amounts of time in Greece. This never even occurred to me at the time. What was significant was that similar strong criticisms were made by me of the situation of the group in Germany and I had the same approach of making regular visits there but this was not raised by the IS. The difference was that the IS Comrades then in London had not invested significant time in Germany so they did not feel criticized.

A whole series of secret meetings of the IS members excluding myself were held at this time to discuss how to "deal" with me. P.H. was also involved in these secret maneuvers. Here again is an example of how the IS/Majority and P.H. have a completely unprincipled approach to democratic centralism. When it suits them elected members of the IS can be excluded from meetings of the rest of the IS and non IS members can be included. Of course this laxity in relation to the democratic centralist structures and process is totally absent when they want to use these to expel a cohesive organized Minority with which they disagree. When challenged on this a number of Comrades, including P.T. have responded: "Look whatever I did I did with the best interests of the organization in mind". This is very interesting. What it reduces the democratic centralist process to in the last analysis is the subjective

motivations of the Comrade concerned as interpreted by himself or herself. As long as these Comrades feel they are acting in the interests of the organization they can do whatever they like. And of course the motives of the IS Comrades and their collaborators are always pure while the motives of their opponents are always base, at least according to the IS.

This accusation of undermining has recently been raised by the IS/Majority against all the members of the Minority concerning A.A. in New York. The second fulltimer in New York, B.U. made serious criticisms of A.A. When he raised these with myself I said he had to raise these with A.A. and when he did then the three of us could have a discussion. I immediately told A.A. of this discussion and the points raised. When the discussion was held A.A. rejected all criticism out of hand and very soon B.U. was being called a "megalomaniac" a "rewriter of history" and being pushed aside in the work in New York. This Comrade has since been driven out of the organization. According to A.A. and the leaders of the IS/Majority faction I should have helped club B.U. into silence without even considering his point of view.

Look at the context of the accusations that I tried to undermine P.H. when I was leaving Ireland. For what purpose? I left the work in Ireland with the view that P.H. and D.C. would play the leading roles. Any undermining of either of these Comrades would undermine the work in Ireland to which I had made a significant contribution including playing the main role in recruiting both D.C. and J.H. to the organization. Not only that but some time before I left Ireland P.H. proposed that he come off the EC and he stated that he was thinking about dropping out of the organization altogether. It was myself who was played the central role struggling against his proposal to come off the EC and it was myself who discussed with him, and argued against his dropping out of the organization. If I had wanted to undermine him I would have acted differently at this time.

I was the first fulltimer in Ireland and the first Comrade in the South. On my own proposal I left the work in Ireland and gave room for other Comrades to play the central role in the South, in particular proposing, and convincing, D.C. that he could play this role. In the course of the debate with the Ted G. Minority, FI was no longer involved centrally on the ground with the work in the country from where this is being written and I proposed that AA play that role. It seems that the leading Comrades in other sections, the British and the Irish are only two examples, are not

prepared to move into different areas of work and leave room for others to play the role they have been playing in their sections. They become convinced that they are the only Comrades who can do the job.

L.W. and P.T. insist on playing the central roles both in the British EC and the IS leaving no room for anyone else to come forward in either area, and leaving the IS and the international department in particular the poor relative of the British EC. Consider the many extremely talented and highly experienced Comrades in the leadership of the regions of the British section. It is entirely false to believe that a powerful, capable EC could not be made up of these Comrades. Of course for this to happen and for this body to gel and develop cohesion, the present leadership of the British EC would have to give up their elitist approach and give these Comrades room to work and the responsibility for the British section. This would in turn strengthen the work of the International as the elitist approach being abandoned would be accompanied by an end to the situation where the leadership of the IS is also the leadership of one of the sections of the International. S.O'T. has been raising the need for P.T. to move to full time work in the IS and the International for over a decade now. We have a similar attitude with P.H. where he refuses to move out of Northern Ireland to work in the International in spite of many requests to do so. This leaves no space for other Comrades to develop into the key roles in the North.

The International is poorer in terms of Cadres and in every sense because of this approach, this conviction by these leading Comrades that only they can carry out the central task in their area. What this reflects is the pressure of petit bourgeois egotism inside the organization. Look at the situation in the South of Ireland for example. The Comrades who are playing the leading role in the organization there would have had much less room to develop and to carry out this role if I had not been prepared to move on to work in other areas where we needed to build. It is clear which method best contributes to the realization of the full potential of the membership and which undermines the struggle to allow all Comrades to develop to their full potential.

At the moment I have been expelled from the organization of which many friends and Comrades in Ireland are still part. I ask in the interests of the organization and the working class movement that Comrades oppose my expulsion and take up the various appeals that are contained in the accompanying document. I believe that the different objective situation in which we now live has many surprises in store for us all. I,

along with the Comrades of the Minority here in the US will continue with the work we have been carrying out for the past decades. I believe that in the future the objective processes, and their effect inside the organization, will work to ensure that once again I will share membership of the same organization with my Comrades and friends in Ireland, just as we continue to share the same principles and objectives.

Comradely,
S.O'T.

Letter From NW, Former Member of British E.C.

(We reprint below a letter from NW, former British EC member to the British NC. This letter was kept in secret from the IEC at the time of its last meeting.)

Dear Comrades:

I have felt it necessary to send this statement to the NC to try to explain my reasons for resigning. This is particularly so given the EC majority has attempted to put its own gloss on my departure and is presenting the whole affair in a way I do not accept.

My resignation has been explained as an act of desertion, that I was tired and worn out by work, that I was under severe pressure from the task of bringing out the paper, that I had been in the job too long, that I was under financial pressures...

It is possible that all of this sounds plausible to many comrades. But nothing could be further from the truth. If it were I could have gone at any time over the last two years when the pressures of bringing the paper out were far greater. Only recently had we finally got the department up to its full complement of seven editors.

I have been full-time for thirteen years and on the EC for six. S. has been full-time for eleven years and worked for the International for nine. Neither of us has ever done anything knowingly or deliberately to hurt the organisation. Why should either of us want to do anything to harm the party we have worked so hard to build?

So why have I resigned?... I came to the conclusion that my position on the EC and as editor had become intolerable and untenable. This was due to the attitude adopted towards me by the general mistrust

that developed on the EC, and the general tone of the debate which I believe started badly and has deteriorated throughout.

I have not resigned because I have a difference over the name we should adopt. I have stated my position on this and on perspectives at the EC on a number of occasions. I will work to build the party whatever name is finally agreed for it by the conference. For me, the name never was and is not a fundamental issue.

While faults of tone or behaviour may be attributed to various comrades, I believe that the primary responsibility for the unnecessarily bitter and personal tone that has been manifested at times lies with the EC majority and with the leading comrades on the EC in particular.

It is clear that from the start of this debate the leading comrades on the EC saw any differences over the name as cause to wage a *de facto* factional struggle in support of the majority position. I, naively as it transpired, entered into the debate on the name to raise what I considered to be valid points for discussion. It should have been possible to have had a comradely debate on the name and, as the discussion developed, on the perspective as well. Why have these discussions been so soured?

I do not believe that my behaviour in this debate is open to criticism. Until my resignation I had continued to perform my EC duties as editor of the paper and carried out my branch activities (as I am still doing). But from the very beginning I was treated as having acted in a disloyal way. I made my differences on the name proposal clear from the first time it was raised on the EC. I spoke in support of Militant Socialist Party at the Reg Secretaries meeting at which Lynn proposed the name socialist Party. At that date the EC had not yet adopted a position on a name change. I raised at the EC that I would be writing material in support of Militant socialist Party. Despite all this I was subsequently criticised behind my back for having written the document, for its tone and for the way it was circulated to the National Committee...

Peter's attitude changed immediately upon my document being distributed since when he has refused to talk to me except when absolutely necessary. Some months later he justified this to me on the grounds that by not having given him and Lynn the opportunity to read the document before it went out I had in effect acted disloyally, was responsible for all the confusion that had arisen over the name and had opened the door for other criticisms of the majority position...

Every member of the EC knew that I was writing a document. It was minuted on three occasions that it was 'not yet ready'. I presented

it to the EC on the Tuesday ten days before the National Committee and the EC took the decision to send it out at the EC meeting on the following Friday. Unfortunately, Peter was on holiday at the time and was not present at the meeting. However, MW was in touch with Peter and told him that my document had been received, presumably also informing him of the content.

Not one member of the EC at that meeting objected to the content, tone or procedure. When Mike W proposed sending it out no-one objected or proposed waiting until Peter returned from holiday. Although Lynn was not at the meeting (his apologies were given for illness) he had been given a copy and, according to Mike W, had read it and commented on it.

What was so wrong of me to write a document with a different point of view? Was it wrong that the document went out to the NC? Shouldn't the organisation thrive on a comradely exchange of views?

What explains the change in attitude more fully was summed up by Lynn and Peter on the day I resigned. Lynn said that my document had implied that the EC majority was in effect abandoning Marxism and Peter said that it was a fundamental attack on the position put by the both. Both believe the tone to have been unacceptable. This is not the attitude of other NC comrades who later told me that they found nothing wrong with the tone and welcomed the fact that I had presented my ideas in writing even though they did not agree with them.

The change in attitude on the EC was also motivated by the fact that initially another member of the EC, Margaret C., expressed support for my document. The majority saw this as something that could not be tolerated and in the week, following the distribution of my document, the week before the NC, organized a secret factional caucus of the EC majority to which neither Margaret nor myself was invited. This was before the formal debate had even commenced at the National Committee. One EC member went so far as to lie to me about the meeting taking place. This attitude from the EC majority explains the break-down of trust that inevitably followed.

Combined with this atmosphere of mistrust and my ostracism by the general secretary, copied by some other comrades, was my increasing unease and unhappiness with the tone of the debate adopted by Peter and reflected to one degree or another by other members of the EC.

This breadth of personal relations was mirrored in the International Centre by a change of attitude towards Soraya. I believe the response of Tony S. to her resignation is sufficient to demonstrate the

prevailing attitude. After telling T that she was resigning because of the way she was treated, his first comment was "What's Nick going to do?" Not a single word of regret or thanks. It doesn't suggest he was sorry to see her leave. His second comment was "When are you going?" But in justifying the tone of the debate T revealed the attitude of the EC majority. "This is in essence a factional struggle," he said "and personal relations are inevitably going to be broken." So, despite no factions having been declared there has in effect been an undeclared faction operating in the course of this dispute.

Clare D. told Soraya that: "There's been no problem of tone in the International but if there are differences you can't expect to go round to the pub for chit-chat." Comrades should imagine what the effects of this would be if applied to the branches. Any differences between comrades would lead to a breach of normal comradely socialising after branches and paper sales and the work would inevitably suffer. It is surely incumbent upon the leadership and the majority in a debate to ensure that no comrade feels isolated or ostracised because they have, or are assumed to have, a different position.

Whatever the relative merits of the different political positions involved in this or any other debate, it is necessary for an atmosphere to be created in our organisation in which comrades feel they can raise any ideas. These ideas have to be taken up on their own merits, not on the basis of who is putting them forward or by attributing ulterior motives to their proponents.

This is not the attitude adopted by Peter. From the beginning it was clear that he and others believed that there was a conservative layer in the organisation who had to be brushed aside. Opponents of the EC name proposal were "conservative", "tired", "worn-out", or they "had an axe to grind", they were "anti-EC". Their mental faculties were questioned, they'd only just come on the NC, they weren't the "best" comrades who, by definition, were those who supported the EC position. Opponents of the EC majority have all been lumped together and generally characterised as disloyal. The EC majority have gone along with the tone and some have zealously echoed it. The aim of this approach is to try to stifle any criticism or questioning, to create an atmosphere in which some comrades are reluctant to make the points they would like.

Many comrades may dispute it, but there was a number of comrades at the last NC who wanted to speak, but didn't because of the tone set by Peter. This includes some comrades who are longer in the

tooth. Why did some comrades feel like that?

As the debate has proceeded and widened with the production of the PH, JB, JW document, the atmosphere has worsened. I believe this is due primarily to the attitude of the EC majority which is that the ideas represented are alien to the organisation and must be ruthlessly defeated. Even if this were the case, instead of restricting the debate to the political ideas, this approach has involved the personal vilification and rubbishing of comrades.

I believe that the tone of the EC Reply to "Ourselves Alone" was completely out of place. It struck a sharp note with many comrades. I raised objection to the tone at the EC as did Margaret. When the Scottish executive recently wrote a letter criticising the tone of the EC Reply a letter we sent out, written by Peter and signed on behalf of the EC, which defended the tone in it entirety. This reply was never discussed at an EC meeting and I had specifically expressed my opposition to it to Mike W. It should at the very least have been brought to an EC meeting for vote. It became clear that my position as an EC member was considered to be irrelevant.

The EC's position is that the only reason for moderating the tone of the Reply for circulation in the members' bulletin is that it was a "tactical concession."

There have been various incidents which have simply reinforced my feeling of revulsion for the conduct of the EC majority and together with my own growing feeling of isolation within the EC. I found my position more and more impossible. I could not see any prospect of things changing for the better on the EC. In the end I felt I had no alternative but to leave.

I understand that comrades will feel angry and let down by my resignation. I appreciate that many comrades will be shocked by what I have written. But I trust that comrades will at least give some thought to how debates and disagreements can be pursued inside the party without acrimony and abuse.

In the next period there will be many occasions on which differences will arise. The situation is so fluid that perspectives, strategy and tactics will give rise to many differences. No doubt there will be sharp exchanges. No-one objects to that. But we should remember that whatever the differences we have within the party we are bound together in a common struggle against a common enemy. So long as comrades do not act disloyally against the party, those differences have to be argued out

with that in mind. Comrades raise differences because they believe it is for the good of the party. They may change their minds, they may not. In the future I have no doubts that there will be the formal organisation of tendencies and factions on different issues. Is the organisation capable of accommodating that prospect without a repetition of what I believe has happened on this occasion? Only the answer is positive will the organisation have the ability to grow and be attractive to the young layer of fighters drawn to the revolutionary struggle.

Yours comradely,
Nick W.

30 May, 1997

To:

John Bulaitis
Flat B, 77 Marcia Rd.
London SE1 5XF
0171 232 0348

To:

British NC Members
IEC Members
US NC Members

Dear Comrades,

As one of the comrades involved in the opposition to the EC majority's position in last year's name-change debate, I am responding to a document that has been passed to me entitled "Reply to the US Minority Faction" from the British Executive Committee Majority and dated 30 March.

This document claims to "put the record straight" about last year's debate. But, in my view, the statement is, in reality, a very one-

sided, partial view of what happened. Moreover, despite the special conference resolution which said that "all members should now unite", the document contains allegations, without a shred of evidence, against a section of the British membership. These have been circulated by the EC majority throughout Britain and internationally.

It has not been my intention to engage in a discussion on the conduct of the name-debate since its conclusion. However the production of this letter, and in particular its attacks on comrades who supported the views of the document (*Ourselves Alone?*), forces me to respond

I want to address myself to two questions: the tone adopted in the debate by the core leadership group and the democratic functioning of the debate itself I start with the tone. The EC majority's latest letter argues two points. Firstly, that only "a tiny minority of comrades" had criticisms of the atmosphere generated by the EC majority or of the tone adopted in their reply to *Ourselves Alone?*. And secondly, that there was nothing at all wrong with the tone they adopted, either in the written material or within the organisation generally.

That only a "tiny" number of comrades had criticisms is simply not true. The EC majority's own letter admits that NC members were critical of the EC reply to *Ourselves Alone?* The Scottish National Committee wrote in protest, and as Nick Wrack's resignation letter makes clear there was also concern expressed on the EC. Moreover it is a fact that large numbers of rank-and-file comrades felt the same way.

Our document, *Ourselves Alone?*, was a sharp critique of the leadership's position. But it was a *political* critique. What shocked comrades was that the reply personalised the debate, dragging in all sorts of completely irrelevant material. For example, Phil Hearse was attacked as a "left-republican" who wanted to "convert the public organs of our organisation in to the playthings of a few individuals"! After much apolitical mud slinging and statements designed to denigrate the character of the authors, the reply concluded that our document was, "wholly foreign in its method and approach to the traditions of our organisation."

The EC majority received representations from National Committee members, including regional secretaries and a letter from the Scottish National Committee, objecting to this method of debate. Under pressure they withdrew some of the worst excesses and personal attacks from the document, including the phrase quoted above. However, the comrades

subsequently argued - and this is repeated in the EC majority's recent letter - that this was done not because they agreed with the criticisms but *purely* for 'tactical reasons'. In other words **to this day the leading core of the EC majority refuse to admit that there was anything wrong with the tone of their original reply to *Ourselves Alone?***

The comrades are ignoring the widespread feeling that there was - and still is - in the organisation on this question. Comrades made their criticisms not because they agreed with *Ourselves Alone?*. The vast majority did not. In my view they did so because they understood that, particularly in this period, it is absolutely essential that there is an internal atmosphere conducive to free and forthright expression of political opinion within the party. There can be no hint that in this post-Stalinist period that comrades who express political differences will be subjected to personal attack and abuse, or attacked as "wholly foreign", "undemocratic", "irresponsible", etc. etc. for expressing a political opinion. Such an approach can only deter other comrades, perhaps less experienced than the authors of our document, from expressing their views and in an open and confident fashion.

It is regrettable that the EC majority do not take these genuine and correct criticisms on board. Despite a wave of protest, despite making the concessions to that protest and withdrawing some of the offending passages, the EC majority cannot bring themselves to admit that they were wrong on what is, after all, a secondary issue of the tone of one particular document.

Instead, in their letter the EC majority attempt to justify the approach they adopted last year. The logic of this section of the letter is, to say the least, extremely peculiar. For example they ask: "who has been referred to as 'alien', and by whom?" Yet two paragraphs later they *actually admit that they themselves* in their reply described *Ourselves Alone?* as "wholly foreign" etc. etc. According to the Oxford dictionary the definition of the word 'alien' is 'foreign'.

In the next paragraph comes the following passage: "*Ourselves Alone?* supporters were perfectly entitled to argue their case. At the same time, however, there was a campaign being waged by a small handful of comrades, who mostly aligned themselves with *Ourselves Alone* and their criticism of the leadership. Again, comrades have every right to

criticise the leadership. This particular campaign, however, was not based on openly stated, clearly formulated criticisms to which the EC could respond. It was based on distortion of the EC's positions and a false picture of recent developments in the organization. In our camp (5-9 August) there was a vitriolic attack by a number of comrades on the positions of the EC, directed against several EC members who were present. In our view, the EC was entirely justified in responding to this criticism and answering the points raised.

The method of argument used in this passage is, of course, immensely ironic. Throughout their letter the EC majority accuse the US minority of deploying "unsubstantiated allegations, innuendoes and smears - in other words, slanders" (page 6). Yet is this not exactly the method employed in the passage quoted above?

There is reference to a "campaign". What "campaign"? There is mention of a "vitriolic attack" on EC members, What is this referring to? Who conducted it? Who are the supposed injured parties? These allegations are then associated - without a single shred of evidence - with comrades "mostly aligned... with the *ourselves Alone?* position." So what we have here is the EC majority making allegations, which are serious, against an identified section of comrades and then circulating them throughout the British section and International **without a single shred of substantiation or evidence**. To use a phrase from the EC majority's letter: "Is this not a smear tactic?... Is this method not "disreputable"?"

Despite the EC majority's assertions, our arguments throughout the debate were "openly stated and clearly formulated." They were presented in three documents, none of which - unlike the EC majority's documents - resorted to mudslinging or personal attacks. Our arguments were political from the beginning. Whether they were based "on a distortion of the EC's position and a false picture of developments" is a matter of political opinion. Such questions can only be clarified by a free and open exchange of views, which is why we submitted our documents in the first place.

The comrades raise, quite incredibly, events at last year's summer camp. At the camp, there was a healthy political debate on the name change question. There was also plenty of informal discussion. It is quite natural and inevitable that comrades should want to discuss a matter of such importance at a national gathering such as summer camp. There were indeed criticisms of the EC's political position at the camp. These were not just from supporters of *Ourselves Alone?* - which incidentally was not written until after the camp - but from a wide cross section of the

comrades present. It is an insult to the comrades who participated in that debate to suggest that what took place were "vitriolic attacks" on EC members. There was, as far as I am aware, one heated exchange after a meeting when a number of comrades objected to one particular EC member's assertion that there "has already been too much discussion about the name change debate." In the light of a very open, democratic and highly successful and comradely camp the accusation that there was "a vitriolic attack on EC members" is, to use more of the EC majority's own language, "absurd... the claim is incredible."

In his resignation letter, the former EC member and editor, NW, describes "his feeling of revulsion for the conduct of the EC majority." He tells how opponents of the EC majority were constantly denounced as "tired, worn out, disloyal", or as people with "an axe to grind" and how their "mental faculties" were questioned. He speaks of the "responsibility for the unnecessarily bitter and personal tone" lying with the "EC majority and with the leading members of the EC in particular".

His claims are, of course, dismissed by the EC majority. but are they incredible given the public method and tone of the EC majority shown in the reply to *Ourselves Alone?* Does not the fact that the EC majority now repeats - nine months later - unsubstantiated smears in their letter lend credibility to NW's claim that during the debate, behind the scenes, they conducted a whispering campaign of "personal vilification and rubbishing of comrades"? Can such claims be so easily dismissed as mere "fiction"?

Turning to the democratic functioning of the debate, which the comrades document at some length. It is, of course, true that all the documents were produced in the Members' Bulletin and that after the October National Committee and at the November National Conference supporters of minority view-points were given time to put their case. What is not true, however, is the claim that "during the summer period and autumn period there were debates throughout the organisation, in branches and at district and regional aggregates, with speakers from different trends in the debate."

The fact is that supporters of *Ourselves Alone?* were **not** allowed to put our case to meetings until after the NC meeting on October 12/14. This is despite the fact that we submitted our document as the comrades accept on August 21, not, incidentally, "a few days" before the NC, but 10 full days before the NC that was due to make a proposal on the name change.

The EC responded by postponing the NC meeting for six weeks. The

EC majority then put the organisation into a virtual state of emergency. They toured the country speaking at meetings, trade union caucuses, aggregates, etc. Special meetings were organised for the "name change" debate. Except it was *not* a debate. Only one view was put. When we asked to debate, for example, at a national youth meeting where Phil Hearse and Jared Wood had both been invited to speak on other topics, we were told we could not do so "unless you form a faction". It was not until after the Oct. 12/14 National Committee **almost two months after submitting our document** that we were able to take our views directly to the membership.

By this time many comrades regarded that they had had the debate, even though only one point of view had been put. **It is a fact that there were no name change 'debate' in Birmingham, Coventry, or any where else in the West Midlands, Scotland, the Eastern Region, or the Hampshire and Thames Valley region.** These facts in themselves are enough to seriously question the EC majority's assertion that the debate was "open and democratic... with every opportunity for the representatives of different viewpoints to put their positions..." (p.5)

Democratic functioning of an organisation is, certainly, about formal norms of debate - which is why the party needs a written constitution where the rights and responsibilities of members are clearly outlined. But it is also linked fundamentally to the way the leadership deals with internal criticism and manages internal debate.

Even though the debate is over and the organisation has moved on, it is vital that lessons are drawn from the debate for the future functioning of the organisation. Regrettably by defending their every action, by rejecting the widespread criticisms of their tone, and now, 9 months later, by circulating unsubstantiated allegations against comrades, it would seem that is something the EC majority is refusing to do.

Debates, even sharp ones, are inevitable in the process of constructing a revolutionary party. More than that, they are absolutely essential. Differences are raised not because comrades are "disloyal" but, on the contrary, because they believe that their position is the best one for the interests of the party. They are the sign of a critically aware and conscious membership and should not be seen as an "attack" on the "authority of the leadership". If our party is to build into a mass organisation then a prerequisite is an internal atmosphere conducive to the open expression of political opinion. The most important factor for ensuring that such a situation exists is the approach of the leadership to opposition and

differences.

Yours comradely,

John Bulaitis

Introduction to letter from B.U.

We print below a letter written by B.U. who was the full-timer along with A.A. in New York for four years prior to his being removed from that position in 1996. In doing so we would like to comment on the points he makes about the organization being "top down" etc. But first we want to point out the devastating testimony which this Comrade, who is not a supporter of the Minority, gives concerning the methods of the IS/Majority faction.

He says, "Before, during and after the debate the IS/Majority leadership spread the slander that S.O'T. was "a renegade" who "like the snakes in Ireland had been driven out by the Irish section years prior". He explains how L.W. made it clear to him that "S.O'T. and anyone who supported his views was a gangrene on the organization that had to be expunged". And "L.W. "By using the full weight of the international, he gave validity to everything (facts as well as slanders) that was being said against the Minority." And as regards P. the Swedish Comrade who was sent to New York, according to the IS as a neutral observer because of our complaints that L.W. was not only a part of, but the main organizer of, the Majority, B.U. says he "was not a neutral observer. The first phrase he spoke to me was on the need to

put the scalpel to the gangrene".

B.U. also answers the lie that the Minority tried through him to undermine anyone. And he explains that he was slandered as a "backstabber" for having the "audacity" to have a different position initially from the Majority who were in the leadership of the New York organization. This letter of B.U. confirms in the most powerful way what we the Minority have said, that is that the IS and the Majority conducted the most vicious slander campaign against the Minority from before the debate even began. It also confirms that from the moment the debate began the IS wanted not only to undermine S.O'T. and the Minority but to "expunge" them, that is to drive them out of the organization.

This letter of B.U. shows just what a tissue of lies the IS/Majority's "explanation" about why they had to expel the Minority actually is. Many months before the so-called breaking of discipline by the Minority, which the IS said was the reason for the expulsion of the leadership of the Minority, the IS was explaining that we had to be "expunged." For those Comrades whose first language is not English the dictionary explains that "expunge" means "To blot out, as with a pen, to erase, to obliterate".

This letter of B.U. makes the case for the setting up of a control commission investigation unanswerable. It also makes an unanswerable case for the withdrawing of our expulsions and for our reinstatement in the organization. It also demonstrates that the IS and L.W. in particular lied to the IEC and to the International. We could make a powerful case for the IEC to take action against L.W. However this would be to personalize the issue and to ignore the fact that the IS as a whole were all involved in these activities. We indict all the IS as responsible. What is at stake here is the struggle to end the dirty slanderous dishonest method of the IS as a whole, in dealing with cohesive and strong opposition views in the organization.

This letter also underlines the fact that all those Comrades who participated in whatever way with the IS, or took the word of the IS for what was happening here, have contributed to the collapse

of the work in the US and Canada, but also have been used by the IS in their so far successful struggle to expel the Minority from the organization and to maintain their false methods.

Now to return to the points Comrade B.U. makes about the internal life of the organization. Comrade B.U. says: "It (the method of S.O'T. in relation to the internal life of the organization) was a top down method which members of the organization were rejecting. The Editorial Board (EB) discussed issues and came to conclusions on those issues; it brought those conclusions to the National Committee (NC) which, in a sequence of hierarchy, took it to the members. The leadership, i.e. the EB followed by the NC, was always correct. Their authority was exempt from fault."

In late 1994 early 1995 S.O'T. who is referred to as S.O. in the letter of B.U. put forward his view that there was insufficient involvement of the membership in the internal life of the organization. Supported by what was to become the Minority in the organization he put forward the following proposals: There should be the production of an Internal Bulletin to allow for an increased discussion amongst all the members of the organization. A Comrade should be given the task of soliciting from the membership throughout the country reports of their work, resolutions and documents on whatever topic they felt they wished to raise and that these be presented to the NC and EB and the membership as a whole for discussion. This same Comrade should be given the responsibility to liaise with the membership of the organization after each EC and NC ensuring that the discussions held on these bodies were known to all.

This proposal to strengthen the internal life of the organization, to increase the involvement of the membership in the decision making of the organization and to strengthen the cohesion of the organization was opposed by the IS and the leaders of the Majority. Their alternative was to go to a monthly paper. Contrary to what B.U. suggests in his letter it was the Minority Comrades who were pushing for more involvement of the membership.

Comrade BU's comment that the EB and NC was "always correct" is not accurate. One glaring example alone shows this. On the Jesse Jackson campaign for the nomination of the Democratic Party in 1988 for President the organization's position on a secondary issue was not correct. After discussions with the IS this was accepted. On behalf of the EB S.O'T. led off at the NC and explained that this mistake had been made, explained that he himself was mainly responsible for this mistake and tried to explain the reasons the mistake was made.

Far from the EB always being correct, when a mistake was made this was openly explained. B.U.'s explanation of "a sequence of hierarchy" does not accurately reflect the internal life of the organization. The EB and NC met every three or four months and the membership of both bodies was spread out over an area of three thousand miles. No other section of the organization was as decentralized or had so much autonomy in its local branches. Whenever there was a discussion on the EB that resulted in different positions these different positions were put before the NC and the membership. This happened when there was different positions on such issues as the monthly paper, the demands around the shorter work week and flexible work hours, the issue of how and when we raise the question of socialism in the Labor "Party", and certain aspects of the paper. In addition, when Richard M. (formerly on the NC and presently expelled from the organization) heard rumors of a former full timer allegedly being mistreated by SOT and other leaders of the present minority, he felt disturbed and made sure this was raised on the NC. This was raised there and SOT's explanation completely dispelled any doubts Richard had had. SOT also asked for anybody who had a different position to speak and nobody put forward any different position out in the open for all to hear and consider. (We should add that this is typical of the methods of the present Majority leadership, as these rumors of the mistreatment of the comrade originated from some of those in the present Majority leadership)

The objection that the Minority had about the way the recent

debate was taken immediately to the membership by the Majority in the areas they controlled was not that it was taken to the membership, but that the Majority refused to raise their different political positions, that is their analysis of the mood and their position on the LPA, at any time either on the EB or the NC. They hid these differences from the Minority Comrades on these bodies. When they could no longer do so they went straight to the membership in their own areas and mobilized these members many of whom had been individually discussed with in advance, not honestly on their political positions, but on the demagoguery that the Minority would not listen to the membership. They whipped up a wave of outrage on this issue, linked this to lies and slanders against the Minority and with the full backing of the IS they won their Majority.

A Comrade in the New York area who was an outspoken partisan of the Majority in the debate has since moved to oppose the Majority. He now says that he was whipped up into such an emotional state by the leaders of the IS/majority faction on the basis that the Minority would not listen to him that he could not see straight. He has since dropped out of the organization and is very critical of the Majority. The Majority were able to whip up this mood not only because the IS helped them, but also because the EB and NC had no chance to debate the issues. If this had happened then the Minority could have been more successful in keeping the real political issues at the heart of the dispute in the forefront of the debate.

The truth is that the membership of the organization was treated in the most undemocratic and shameful manner by the IS/Majority faction. They hid their real political agenda behind a torrent of lies and slanders. They whipped up regionalism and personalized the issues. They convinced the membership in their areas that the leaders of the Minority would not listen to them when the real situation was that the leaders of the Minority did not agree with the political positions of the majority on the mood and the LPA. And the membership in these areas was unscrupulously used

by the IS to further its agenda of removing S.O'T. and J.R. and any Comrade who would not condemn these Comrades from positions in the organization and from the organization itself.

Comrade B.U. is wrong on the issue of the internal life of the organization. Ask the simple question, is the internal life of the organization more democratic now than before, more open now than before? Under the leadership of the IS/Majority there has been the first expulsions in the organization in the US and the effect of this is to intimidate anyone who has a difference from fighting for this difference. And behind a phraseology of more democracy the EB, that is the two National Coordinators and the National Treasurer, of the organization works with the IS behind the backs of the membership to push through these expulsions. In fact, BU himself has admitted in a discussion with a member of the expelled minority that since the IS/Majority faction took over the leadership it became more difficult, not less, to raise differences within the New York organization. And, of course, if the organization has now been opened up and made more democratic as is the logic of the position of B.U. then why is it that the New York membership which was the main base of the Majority has collapsed? If a new better organization had resulted this would not be happening. The truth is that along with the political mistakes and demoralization that had existed before and during the debate the most honest of the membership in New York were left as B.U. says with "a bad taste" in their mouths. They realized that they were used by the IS/Majority and they have walked away.

Why does Comrade B.U. make the mistake of accepting the arguments of the Majority that they stood for a more open organization when he at the same time outlines their vicious witch-hunting ways. The reason for this is that this Comrade underestimates the importance of the political issues in the life of the organization. And part of the responsibility for this lies with A.A. the leader of the Majority in New York and under whose leadership the organization there and along with it B.U. became somewhat de-politicized.

When the debate began Comrade B.U. wrote an excellent document explaining the mood and rejecting the pessimism and one sided analysis of the Majority. On this issue at that time he was on the same side of the debate as the Minority. But the IS/Majority faction launched their tidal wave of lies and slanders, and their demagoguery about the Minority not listening to the membership. Comrade B.U. was not able to withstand this assault and he ceased to fight on the political issue of the mood and for his correct analysis. In fairness to this Comrade he was particularly targeted by the IS/Majority at this early stage in the debate because of his leading role on New York. Also, because we did not initially understand the scale of the crisis in the organization in New York, we were not able to help Cd. BU as much as was necessary. The assault on him by the IS/Majority faction was ferocious. This is something that he seems to leave out of the equation when he speaks of the internal life of the organization and the role of the Majority.

On the issue of the LPA, Comrade B.U. gradually moved to the position of the Majority. And as the debate unfolded his position in general became more and more that of the Majority. However as this letter shows he did not participate in the dirty slanderous methods of the IS/Majority. Because he underestimated the importance of the political issues in the debate Comrade B.U. was unable to keep his eyes focused on the essence of the struggle. And this essence was the capitulation of the majority to complexity of the period and to the slightly more progressive wing of the union bureaucracy including the LP leadership, and to the lefts and ex-lefts who have moved to cover the left flank of these elements.

Without this understanding B.U. was not able to see that the demagogic claim of the Majority faction that the Minority would not listen to the membership was the screen behind which the Majority were fighting their political battle. And this political battle was to defend their political capitulation from the criticism of the Minority.

We thank Comrade B.U. for his letter. The International owes this Comrade a debt of gratitude for bringing out more clearly

the wrong methods of the IS. It is now up to the IEC and the membership as a whole to conduct a determined and fearless investigation into the events that have culminated in the expulsion of the Minority in the US. This is necessary in order that confidence can be restored in the organization and in particular that Comrades can be certain all Comrades have the right to put forward their views and fight for their views without facing slanders and witch-hunts and expulsions.

Letter From B.U.

Dear Comrade:

In a discussion I had a month or two ago with Sean O. (SO), I mentioned that I would have no objection to stating my views of how the debate that took place in the U.S. in 1996 unfolded. A week or two later he told me that you and another person were interested in hearing my side of the story. Therefore, I am writing this letter.

For four years I was a full-timer. During the debate, because of a financial crisis in the organization, I was removed from that position. Soon afterwards, because of personal issues I had been neglecting, I took a leave of absence. I have thought about the debate only in conversation with friends; therefore, this letter will be very general.

As the debate unfolded, two issues stood out in my mind: On the one hand, the accusation, by what came to be known as the majority, that SO embodied a method which was poisonous to the organization. On the other hand, the method used by the majority in setting forth their points of view.

In the relation to the method of SO I agree with the majority that it needed to change. It was a top down method which members of the organization were rejecting. The Editorial Board (EB) discussed issues and came to conclusions on those issues; it brought those conclusions to the National Committee (NC) which, in a

sequence of hierarchy, took it to the members.. The leadership, I.E. the EB followed by the NC, was always correct. Their authority and decisions were exempt from fault. During the debate, what came to be known as the minority supported (whether consciously or not) this method, and the more doggedly they held to this method, the more anger they elicited from the majority against them.

Nevertheless, having a different view on method is not reason enough for expulsions. What transpired between the period of the debate and now to warrant expulsions, I do not know. During my leave of absence, I have not kept up with the ongoing of the organization. However, given the methods used by the majority during the debate, I would presume that the expulsions were not warranted.

SO was painted as a renegade who, because of his method, like the snakes in Ireland had been driven out by the Irish section years prior. This may have been the case. I do not know. Every time I have asked about it I have gotten different stories: one from SO, another from Lynn W.(LW) and another from Alan A (AA). The point being that this was slander. The story was circulated before, during and after the debate. Also, before the debate formerly began, supporters of the minority were being called derogatory names. In an honest debate one does not take out dirty linen (that may or may not be true) or slander the opposition with derogatory names in order to pave the way for one's own ideas.

In relation to myself, I was painted as one of SO's flunkies. A lie was circulated that on a regular basis I was on the phone reporting to him the actions, movements, and views of individuals in New York City (NYC). This was not true; rarely did I speak to SO: I only spoke to him at NCs. Unfoundedly, this fabrication was used to slander me as someone who had no views of his own and was somehow in collusion with SO against the NYC section. I was told by someone who was in the majority that before and during the debate I was portrayed as a backstabber.

A few days prior to the formal opening of the debate, I met with LW. I came out of that meeting feeling that SO and anyone

who supported his views was a gangrene on the organization which needed to be expunged. This was not a neutral position that LW took. He was already biased. By using the full weight of the International, he gave validity to everything (facts as well as slanders and lies) that was being said against the minority.

Likewise, the observer, (I forget his name) who came from Europe was not a neutral observer. The first phrase he spoke to me was on the need to put a scalpel to the gangrene. We were told, or at least I was told, that he was to be a neutral observer. He was far from this. I felt as if there was a campaign to discredit every word (right or wrong) the minority uttered.

Once again, I agree with the majority that the methods of the minority were top down and needed to change. The dogged resistance of the minority to acknowledge this (whether they were conscious of it or not) inflamed the sentiments of the majority. However the methods used by the majority left a bad taste in my mouth.

ADDENDUM

Since this document was put together, we have obtained the latest issue of "Labor Militant". In it is a new step taken which must be commented on:

The most recent and most glaring example of the opportunist direction of the present leadership of the organization in the U.S. comes in an article which "explains" the necessity of a Labor Party. It states: "*From PATCO to the Detroit News (two major strikes which were defeated), it would seem our old weapon, the strike, has failed.... We need a new way of fighting back. A new way of defending the gains we have won.... We need a Labor Party.*"

In other words, the Labor Party is a new alternative to the strike.

In the first place, this is a total change in the perspectives for how a mass workers' party would be built in the U.S., as we always saw it as flowing from a mass upheaval, of which strikes would play a (if not *the*) fundamental role.

This basic change in perspectives was never discussed throughout the organization, and for good reason: It flows from the opportunistic adaptation to the soft lefts and the union bureaucracy they (the soft lefts) have attached themselves to. These forces are wedded to a policy of refusing to mobilize the class in general to overcome the increased resistance of the capitalists in strikes and other struggles. They have concluded, therefore, that strikes especially cannot be won -- which is often the case, given their cowardly approach.

Up until the present, the answer of the organization has always been that it is necessary to return to the methods of the 1930's: Generalize the issues, build mass pickets, defy court injunctions, etc. Now, the organization has made a U-turn and adopted this disastrous position of the union bureaucracy.

Not only is this a disaster as far as understanding the issue of strikes in the U.S., it also demonstrates a fundamentally incorrect position even as far as the Labor Party (or mass workers' party) in the U.S. As with ~~the right wing of the old Socialist Party~~, this is the position which sees politics as being outside the domain of a mobilized working class, but rather as a matter to be settled purely through the ballot box and debates and votes in congress, etc. Revolutionary Marxism, correctly, has scorned this position and labeled it as "parliamentarism."

The best test of any theory, of course, is how that theory prepares its supporters to intervene in the movement of the class. A short time ago, what was probably the most important strike in the U.S. since PATCO occurred: The Teamsters strike against UPS. And how did the comrades of what is left of the organization intervene? In Chicago, they attended several strike related meetings and rallies -- without even trying to sell their paper. While the expelled comrades helped organize a successful meeting on the strike, the present leadership of the organization have taken absolutely no initiative of this sort. And small wonder. After all, how can they when they start with the position that means in essence that strikes today cannot be won, that this method "has failed"?

For this disastrous position, both the leadership of the U.S. organization as well as L.W. and the IS can bear the blame.