

Resolution by Greek EC in relation to the crisis of the International

Athens

4 January 2019

The Greek section has been one of the sections that, apart from the Irish section, has found themselves in the epicenter of the crisis in the International.

It is a fact that the leadership of the Greek section, its EC and its IEC members, fought with determination against what we saw as a disproportionate attack by the IS majority on the leadership of the Irish section and the threat of a split in the International, based on weaknesses or mistakes of the Irish section which the IS unjustifiably characterized as “fundamental differences of principle” and as a breach with the working class orientation and Marxist analysis of the CWI.

This is what caused the breakdown in relations between the IS and the Greek leadership but also and much more importantly, a generalized threat of a split in the International!

One month after the IEC, we still have not seen the fundamental differences between the two divergent trends in the CWI that the faction speaks and writes about (including in its Platform). This lack of fundamental political differences was also characteristic of the discussion on world perspectives, on the first day of the IEC, reflected in the World Perspectives document, which was voted unanimously (with one abstention).

Many serious allegations have been made against the Greek leadership by the faction and we have no option but to reply. This will be done in the first part of this document. In the second part we will take up, briefly, some of the political issues in this debate. Finally, at the end there is an addendum with the transcribed lead off of comrade Andros P., which has been used by minority supporters to claim that he spoke against the intervention of the IS in the sections and in favor of a federal CWI.

Part A

On democratic centralism and the right of the IS to intervene in sections

Perhaps the most staggering of all allegations against the Greek leadership, is the one that claims that we are against democratic centralism, against the IS intervening in the sections where mistakes are being made and in favor of a “federal” CWI!

The allegation is based on a fabrication: supposedly, comrade Andros, in his lead off in support of the resolution which was voted for by the majority and thus became the official position of the IEC on the last day of the IEC, Saturday December 1, said that if the IS meets opposition by the National Committee of a section it should accept it and retreat – full stop.

This is not true! This is not our position and this is not what was said!

Once the Greek EC realized that this story was being spread internationally by the faction, cde Andros sent a refutation to comrade Phillip Stott and then to the IS. In this he explained his (and our) real position,

reminding the comrades of what he actually said at the IEC and proposing that the IS transcribes the recordings so that any kind of misunderstanding would be clarified. [1]

The mail to the IS was sent on Friday 14/12, at 9:39 am (Greek time) with the request it be circulated to all comrades who had received PS's report. There was no reply whatsoever from the IS for two days (about 48 hours and not 36 as the E&W EC majority MB of 17.12.18, states) so comrade AP had no other choice than to send it out himself to IEC members for whom he had e-mail addresses.

Despite his emphatic refutation of what was attributed to him and the absolutely clear clarification of his actual position in the above mentioned letter, the E&W EC majority and the faction, continued to distort his position! In the MB of 17 December (i.e on the fourth day after AP's refutation was received by the IS and the E&W EC) the E&W EC majority write:

*"AP has complained about the use of 'isolated phrases and quotes' from contributions he made at the IEC and says that in Philip's report the 'positions attributed to me are not my positions'. **For that reason we checked the transcript of his contribution from which we are quoting in this reply.** Of course we recognize that points made in verbal contributions can have a different intent than that understood by some of those listening and **we would welcome clarification from AP on these issues although, as we will go onto explain, we do not think the reply published in this MB constitutes such a clarification**". (Our emphasis in bold).*

If AP's reply to PS's report does not constitute a clarification, then one can only wonder what could constitute a clarification!

We quote five excerpts from AP's reply to PS.

"The above positions attributed to me are not my positions! In fact I would be entirely opposed to anybody who expressed such positions!

"I did not ask the IS to abandon its position and views! What I did was to disagree with the heavy handed way in which the IS attempted to intervene in Ireland!

"The position I essentially expressed (not necessarily in this wording as it was not a written speech) was that when the IS meets such an opposition from the NC of a section, like it did in Ireland, it must retreat, it must take a step back, without however abandoning its views and criticisms, and look for alternative ways to argue for its positions and opinion, including within other leading bodies of the international such as the IEC.

"I believe that any transcription of the IEC recordings of the above mentioned contribution will prove what I am saying.

"Finally, democratic centralism is a pillar of the CWI. The whole Greek section and all its leading bodies and individuals abide by democratic centralism and we will not accept this commitment to be so light-mindedly questioned".

The additional point we want to stress, here, is the following: **if the E&W EC majority did indeed check the transcript of AP's speech, why didn't they reproduce it?**

Since the transcript of the recordings was never produced by the IS or the EC majority of the E&W section, comrades Danny Byrne and Cedric Gerome, undertook to transcribe the recordings.

This is what was actually said by comrade AP in the above mentioned speech (the whole speech is presented at the end as an addendum):

"When you go to a section and you send a big delegation of 4 or 5 comrades from the IS, you go to an NC and the NC votes against you with such a massive majority, you have to accept it. It cannot

¹ "A reply to a comment by comrade Phillip Stott", December 13, 2018

be allowed that the IS, in its relations with the sections, whenever they come to a minority, whenever they are defeated, then they start a procedure to overthrow the national leadership and try to find points of support for a new leadership. Because this what happened in Ireland – and everybody knows this.

“This is a wrong method and this should not be the method of the CWI! When the IS goes to a national section and loses the vote, they have to accept the vote of the NC – it doesn’t mean that they will not continue to disagree with it, but it does not mean that they start a process of overthrowing the leadership, i.e. crush the majority in order to build on the basis of a certain minority, whoever they may be, even if they are very talented comrades!”.

And further on:

“Once the IS lost the vote in the Irish section, instead of taking a step back, to reconsider, and retain its views, I am not saying that they should change their opinions, or not insist in relation to the political criticisms or on differences in relation to the methods in Ireland and building of the Irish section. Of course they should say those opinions and of course they should raise it in the IEC. But they chose the center of the debate to be the ... [“breach of protocol”] and the whole idea was, having lost the majority in the Irish section, we will get a majority in the IEC and use it to attack the Irish section; and we cannot accept that!”

The faction comrades “heard” only one phrase from the whole of this excerpt, i.e. that if the IS meets opposition from an NC, it has to accept it and retreat.

In addition, on the issue of democratic centralism and on the right of the IS to intervene in sections when it thinks mistakes etc, are being made, we would like to remind comrades that the proposal made by the Greek IEC members before and during the IEC meeting for the election of a *liaison committee* to handle the crisis between the IS and the Irish leadership, proves that not only did we *not* advocate for a federal international but, on the contrary, we made concrete proposals that would help the IS, and the IEC which elected the IS, to continue to intervene in the Irish section, defending its views, despite the break in relations with the leadership of the Irish section.

Finally, we would like to make a general remark on a debate that for a big part of this international is taking place in foreign language. Comrades whose native language is English, should always think and appreciate the effort of comrades for whom English is foreign language to speak and write in a foreign language. Comrades need a lot more time to prepare a document or a speech in foreign language but most importantly native speakers should always have in mind that comrades can never express themselves in a foreign language the same way and as accurately as in their native tongue.

On the democratic procedures followed by the E&W EC

The comrades in the EC majority of E&W reject what we say concerning the democratic rights of the majority of the IEC i.e that they were not properly respected by the minority of the IEC in the sections where the faction is in a majority. We gave the following example from E&W:

Phillip Stott’s report of the IEC, which was a factional report, was circulated on Monday December 10 [2] without the reply to this report which had already been written and presented by Danny B. and Claire L.M. Although DB and CLM asked for their reply to be circulated at the same time as Phillips Stott’s report, it was not included in the #1 Members’ Bulletin which went out on the same date (10/12). **This was a decision taken by a majority of 8 to 2 in the E&W EC.** The reply to PS’s report was finally sent out on Friday 14/12.

² “Formation of a faction in the CWI - an explanation for Scottish NC members”, Phillip Stott

These are the facts. In the understanding of the Greek Section, equal, fair and democratic treatment of the views of the minority in the E&W EC and IS would require that the two documents be sent out at the same time.

The reply of the E&W EC-majority states:

“CLM attended the IEC as a visitor from the England and Wales EC. In our view it is entirely correct democratic procedure that she discusses her views with us, as part of a collective leadership, before they are circulated to the entire membership”.

In our view this approach is correct under *normal* circumstances. In the exceptional conditions of a factional situation an *“entirely correct democratic procedure”* is to simply circulate opposing views at one and the same time.

This again does not mean that the majority of the E&W EC does not have the right to discuss with minority EC members about their position – but the material should be distributed without delay *once this is requested*. In this concrete situation even if the necessity of an EC discussion prior to circulation is accepted, it does not explain why the production of a one-sided members’ bulletin was necessary as the initial circular to members. It would have, of course, been possible to bring forward an EC discussion, or alternatively to delay the circulation of the first bulletin for a day or so.

As regards Andros’ reply to P. Stott’s report, it was sent by Andros to the IS on Friday Dec 14, at 9:39 and it was sent out to IEC members by Hannah Sell on Monday 17 Dec, at 18:29, *together with many pages of faction material attacking it!* Fair and democratic procedure in our view would be to simply have forwarded AP’s letter to the IEC members on the same day.

Since this exchange, of course, there have been many protests about the lack of a really fair procedure in this debate: Brian K (US) Rob J (Russia) Danny B and GG (Int. Secretariat) have very strongly protested to the IS majority, demanding that material produced by comrades from the majority of the IEC (who are not part of the faction) should be sent to the sections on the same email lists as those used to send out factional material, without delays and without factional introductory comments(!) by the IS majority.

IS members, DB and GG, for example, have protested to the IS majority in the following words:

“In our opinion, it is simply not democratic that the faction-dominated IS unilaterally decides how and to who such material is circulated, in complete disregard to the spirit of the resolution voted at the IEC”... [3]

BK (US) emailed Tony Saunois, the following:

“Your role as Secretary of the International should not be used to skew the debate and give a factional slant to various aspects of our democratic discussion. I demand that you send this message to the comrades who received our statement accompanied by your ‘initial comments’”. [4]

Democracy in the Greek section

The E&W EC goes on to point out “deficiencies” in the Greek organisation on the question of democracy. Their arguments are based on the fact that at the national aggregate, which took place on December 15 and 16, we refused to change the agenda of the meeting to include the crisis in the International and the “Irish question”, as demanded by the IS majority.

What did actually happen?

³ Email of 23/12/2018

⁴ Email of 21/12/2018

About one week after the IEC and one week before the aggregate cde Niall M., responsible for the Greek section in the IS, sent an email proposing to come. We replied that comrade Niall is of course welcome to come to the aggregate, as always, but also explained that we would not be discussing the crisis in the International. As we explained we did not want to just “throw” the issue of the crisis onto the rank and file, without any preceding preparation. “Preparation” means going through the EC and the NC and sending the debate documents to the section (internal bulletins, etc). This is no different to the procedure which was followed elsewhere – as far as we are aware, no section has yet discussed this crisis at an all members aggregate meeting.

Yet there is *one important difference compared to what is taking place in E&W: the documents have to be translated*. The debate will be conducted in Greek, not in English. Translation of the material would not be possible before the New Year.

There was another reason we insisted on not changing the agenda, as was explained to the email exchanges between Niall and Andros: *this aggregate was planned weeks in advance entirely aimed to meet the needs of the whole layer of new young people (school students in their majority) entering the organisation, beginning a process of transformation of the whole organisation*. For the first time in quite a number of years, we had a net growth in the overall membership figures of about 15, compared to last year. As AP wrote to NM:

“...In the last 6 weeks we recruited 19 youth. It is a real breakthrough in our work after years’ of stagnation, major difficulties and falling morale. If these youth come to their first aggregate meeting after being in the branches not more than a few times (and some of them only once or twice) only to hear about a crisis in the International, it is as if we kick them out before they have really entered”.

Unfortunately, none of these arguments had any effect on NM.

The above mentioned decision of the section was taken unanimously at an EC meeting and an extraordinary NC meeting, on December 9, two days after NM’s initial email (Dec 7).

On the afternoon of Friday Dec 14, *only hours (!) before the National Aggregate was due to begin* Niall sent an email letter to AP mentioning the following:

“...This is to confirm, in case there was any misunderstanding or confusion, at this late stage, that I will not be attending your national aggregate meeting...”

“...the decision of the Greek leadership to not discuss, at all, the IEC meeting at the aggregate puts me in an impossible position. How could I attend the meeting and not mention such a serious dispute...”

“...The reality is that the IEC meeting will, of course, feature at the national aggregate but in an unstructured and informal manner.

“...While I appreciate some of your concerns about new youth comrades being exposed to the debate, I do not think this is reason enough not to table an IEC report at what is, after all, a national aggregate meeting of all members. Moreover, I believe that we should not underestimate the capacity of the best new youth to engage in and learn from open, democratic debate...”

“...Given all this, is the Greek leadership not concerned about the possibility that Greek comrades may raise concerns about democratic procedure and debate in the section?”

We appreciate the above concerns of cde Niall but we don’t agree. It has taken us many years to make a breakthrough in the youth and this for us it is simply crucial! It is the only way the section can raise itself out of the general mood of depression that prevails in the Greek working class, social movements and

society. It would be entirely irresponsible to sacrifice it by throwing this youth, unprepared and uninformed, into the middle of a faction fight!

The aggregate was very successful and the mood and the morale of all the comrades was great. Nobody mentioned anything about the crisis in the International.

We don't believe that the E&W section, or any section, would have ever accepted dragging, under pressure, its rank and file into a debate over a crisis in the International, without any preparation, and without any written material provided.

The crisis will be discussed in a structured way in the section in the coming period (an NC has been set for January 19 and 20) with all views presented, with speakers from the faction being present and material from both sides translated on an equal basis.

On the liaison committee

In the "covering note" (on the document written by Bryan K, Vincent K. and Andros P.) sent out by Tony S. on December 19, he speaks in a derogatory tone of AP's "approach" concerning the issue of a *liaison committee* (compounded by IS and IEC members) that would investigate the problems in the Irish section and help heal the relationship between the majority of the IS and the majority of the Irish leadership. TS accuses AP of distorting reality when he (AP) writes in the above mentioned document that the agreement between AP and three IS representatives to propose a "liaison committee" did not hold for 24 hours because of the disagreement of the leadership of the Spanish section.

Let us, again, look at the facts (which are *not* denied by the IS majority members) and at TS's own words.

During a very long phone call on Thursday Nov 22, between AP and three IS representatives (PT, TS and NM) an understanding was reached that the IS would move ahead on the basis of a commonly agreed proposal for the lowering of belligerent tones and for the creation of a liaison committee made up of IS and IEC comrades to visit the Irish section for an extensive period of time and come up with proposals.

However on the next day (Friday Nov. 23) a new IEC agenda was circulated according to which Ireland would *not* be discussed in a short session towards the end of the week but would be the first and main issue of the IEC discussion and for as long as needed! This showed that the agreement between the IS representatives and the Greek leadership, no longer held and that things were escalating.

The IS comrades did not contact AP to inform the Greek leadership of their change of stance. So cde Andros sent the following email to Tony and Niall (Friday Nov. 23).

Tony, Niall,

I follow the developments and the various exchanges with extreme worry. I need a clear answer from you. Are you scaling up or are scaling down? In the discussion we had yesterday I thought that common attempts would be made to contain the situation. That is what I passed on to the comrades here [meaning the Greek EC] and there was a feeling of relief. Does what we discussed and agreed yesterday hold?

Tony replied a few hours later. This is how he himself describes this, in his "covering letter" on the document sent out by Bryan K, Vincent K. and Andros P. of December 19:

"...it was not in the power of these IS comrades or AP to make any such agreement! We agreed it should be explored and discussed as a possibility. Later, following discussions with the Spanish comrades and others TS wrote to AP explaining the situation:

'Hi Andros,

*I have just seen your e mail. Obviously as we explained the situation is one of a crisis. **We discussed the question of a commission as a possibility. Since then we discussed it with the Spanish who are opposed to it because of their past experiences. This will clearly need to be discussed at the IEC itself'...*** (Our emphasis in bold).

What TS writes both in the “covering letter” and in the e-mail he sent to AP, actually vindicates what AP wrote in the document of AP, BK and VK. Namely, that the initial agreement reached between AP on behalf of the Greek leadership and PT, TS and NM on behalf of the IS, broke down essentially because the Spanish leadership did not agree.

Tony did not write that the IS discussed the agreement between the 4 comrades and rejected it, he wrote “we discussed it with the Spanish who are opposed to it”!

As regard’s TS’s reference “*this will clearly need to be discussed at the IEC itself...*”, as matter of fact many comrades from different sections spoke in support of the idea of a liaison committee, as raised in the Greek resolution of Saturday Nov 24! But the IS spoke against it! In the end it was devoid of meaning as the crisis reached unprecedented levels and led to the formation of the faction.

On selected quotes and the central issues of this debate

The “debate on Ireland” took the character of a generalized crisis because the IS, in discussions with a whole number of sections in the two weeks preceding the IEC but also during the IEC itself, made a conscious and determined attempt to convince section leaderships that a split with the Irish section was inevitable because the differences with them were “crucial” and “differences of principle”. This is sufficiently developed in the document of BK, AP and VK (“A crisis in the international - why we disagree with the IS faction”).

Having failed to convince the IEC, the IS now deny that there was ever such an intention and claim they only gave a sincere opinion/estimation about how the debate could evolve and end.

In addition, in TS’s “covering letter” to BK, AP and VK’s document, TS accuses Andros, Vincent and Bryan of using isolated quotes against the faction, at the same time as they (BK, AP and VC) accuse the faction of using isolated quotes against them. This is another attempt to score points and to blur the issues.

The (mis)use of “isolated quotes” means, essentially, that phrases are taken out of context to distort the central meaning! A characteristic example of this is the isolation of a sentence of AP’s speech at the IEC, mentioned above, to create the exact opposite impression of what he actually said.

The defense of the idea of a split by the IS, however, was not a matter of “isolated quotes”. It was the central theme in the IS’s position!

The references (in the document of BK, AP and VC) to what PT and other IS and E&W EC members said on this issue are not “isolated quotes” as TS argues, they are only a few examples used to illuminate the general theme that characterized the approach of the IS in relation to the crisis.

Other examples that clearly demonstrate the IS’s approach to the crisis are comrade PT’s lead off on world perspectives at the IEC and his contribution in the discussion on Ireland. Towards the end of his lead off on World Perspectives (Monday 26 Nov) PT referred emphatically, to the **split with the Mandelites in 1965**, where, as he explained, Ted Grant and himself had turned their back on the Mandelites who were abandoning the working class. This reference, made on the first day of the IEC, was directly related to what the IS sees as happening in Ireland and a number of sections that have, since the IEC, being labeled as an unprincipled “non-faction faction”.

And again, in his contribution in the discussion on Ireland (Thursday Nov 29) PT referred to the split with the **Mensheviks in 1903, not once but twice** – which of course raises the (rhetorical) question: who are the Mensheviks in the CWI?

These are not “isolated phrases” selected out of context to distort the general picture, they represent the core of the arguments of the IS and, equally important, are not denied by these comrades! This picture is in complete accordance with the approach adopted by the IS in its attempt, in the week preceding the IEC, to convince the IEC members of the need to support the IS in its confrontation with the Irish NC majority.

Our experience in Greece is telling.

The Greek example

In the preceding two weeks to the IEC, the IS approached the Greek leadership not once but many times, with the above mentioned aim.

In the first discussions, the Greek leadership was positive towards the proposal of the IS to discuss the work of the Irish section and any criticisms on the work of the Irish comrades in the upcoming IEC meeting – but of course in a balanced way. This seemed entirely normal for a meeting of the International. In the initial reports of AP to the Greek EC, he explained that it seems that the Irish comrades have made certain mistakes and there will be a session at the IEC to discuss them. At the same time, AP did remind the IS that the Irish comrades had already accepted openly certain mistakes in the past in IEC meetings (such as the mistake with the political programme in the election campaign of 2016). AP also stressed to the IS the need to avoid unnecessary polarization and have a comradely discussion.

When the IS however began to talk about a split with the Irish section, then the Greek leadership began to react. This could not be accepted. There were differences, weaknesses and mistakes, but none of these was serious enough to justify a split!

To use historical analogies, these differences were much smaller than the differences between Lenin and Rosa Luxembourgh, to cite just one example, on a whole number of issues. They were insignificant compared to the open betrayal of Zinoviev and Kamenev prior to the revolution of 1917, yet they were not even expelled from the party.

The more comrade AP, on behalf of the Greek leadership, reacted to the idea of a split the more pressure was applied by the IS. The last two phone calls (Wednesday 21 Nov. and Thursday 22 November) were made with AP on one end of the line and Peter T, Tony S and Niall M on the other.

The IS in a minority - The declaration of a faction

The crisis is a result of the IS's mistake of escalating the attack whenever it met resistance, instead of taking a step back to reconsider its tactics and approach.

Refusing to accept the result of the vote in the Irish NC, they tried to use the international leadership against the Irish leadership. When a number of IEC members independently came to similar conclusions about the threat of a split and stood up to resist the IS, they were branded “a secret and unprincipled faction” and the attack became more generalized. When in the course of the IEC one section's leadership after another stood up in protest, the IS discovered “crucial differences of principle”, on nearly every political and organizational issue and, also, two diverging trends in the CWI...

How can such serious allegations be “thrown” at an unspecified number of sections of the CWI, in the course of a meeting, without anything being suspected or mentioned in all the past years?

Finally, in an unprecedented step, the majority of the IS declared a faction!!

The name of the faction, *“In defence of a working class and a Trotskyist CWI”* is in itself revealing: in the minds of the leaders of the faction, in the CWI there are forces (not clearly mentioned apart from the Irish section) which have abandoned the working class and Trotskyism. This, inevitably, works in the direction of a split and prepares the way for it, because, as it is obvious, non-working class and non-Trotskyist elements cannot coexist in the same revolutionary international.

The “Declaration of the faction” starts with the following:

*“Following a week of intense discussion and debate it is clear that there are now **two trends emerging within the CWI...** There are **differences on programme, tactics, united front methods, the national question, orientation to the working class, how we intervene in the women’s movement and orientate in particular to working class women and youth**”.*(Our emphasis).

And ends (last before final paragraph):

“We appeal to all IEC comrades and members of the CWI to discuss all these questions. Should comrades agree with the main issues and methods being defended by this faction, then we invite them to support and join us to defend the methods and traditions of the CWI”.

It is the first time in the history of the CWI that the IS meets the opposition of the majority of comrades in the IEC and is voted down. As a result of the opposition they met, they reacted in a panicked manner, feeling that the authority of the IS was being put into question. The authority of the IS, however, should not be based on pretensions that the IS makes no mistakes. It is natural to make mistakes and mistakes should simply be corrected through collective efforts.

This is the real cause of the crisis and the threat to the unity of the CWI.

Part B

The Greek section has never in the past questioned the authority of the IS despite differences that we openly discussed – and even clashed on a number of occasions. We have recognized the contribution of the IS and continue to do so despite the fact that we were quite critical when we thought it was necessary, in a similar way that they have been critical of us. We know that the IS has made mistakes in the past and we believe that there are, in general, shortcomings in the overall contribution of the IS. In the same way that we too, and many sections, have made mistakes and have shortcomings – this holds for everybody in the International. But also Lenin and Trotsky, let us not forget, have made mistakes, not to mention Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, James Connolly and other revolutionaries of the previous century.

In the previous years and decades we had differences with the IS on a number of occasions. In the ‘90s, when we had been reduced to a handful after the split with Grant and Woods (ended in a downward spiral with 45 comrades left, first half of 1997) we turned to the youth as a matter of life and death to us – then we met the persistent opposition of the IS as regards the methods of our youth work. In the beginning of the 2000s we turned to the anti-war and anti-globalization movement and were able to recruit from the youth and rebuild a sizeable section, but faced the opposition of IS members (we cannot say for certain if this reflected the views of the whole of the IS) who criticized us of abandoning the working class in favor of the youth. These allegations stopped after we were able to rebuild the section and turn more emphatically to the working class and engage in successful TU work. We had sharp differences with the IS (together with the Swedish and other comrades) over the perspectives for the Euro. We had differences over the character of the Chinese regime for quite a number of years. We had differences over tactics in relation to SYRIZA (as is well known) including the heavy handed, bureaucratic approach of IS member St. Kimmerle with whom we had a head on clash. Also, in our opinion, and this is something we noted over the past years

and is part of our criticisms of the IS, the IS has been slow in recognizing the importance of issues like the environment and women, both as regards analysis and demands and as regards initiatives.

All these, however, have never been issues that we thought of using to attack or challenge the IS, we did not see the IS in any kind of an antagonistic manner, because we see the IEC and the IS as working together in a collective and equal manner to overcome weaknesses and deficiencies and provide the best possible leadership to the international.

We too, in the Greek section have made mistakes – as is inevitable. We came to the conclusion, to site just one example, that it was a mistake to have entered SYRIZA in 2008 as an official constituent part, it would have been more correct to have send limited forces into it and continue with an independent profile and a united front approach to SYRIZA. We openly recognized we were mistaken.

All, together, as members of the IEC, we have made mistakes also. For example, we had over-optimistic perspectives in relation to the political revolution in the ex-Stalinist countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. We had wrong perspectives in relation to Kazakhstan, about the potential of the working class to take power there in the short term and push our weak forces to power. We had over-optimistic perspectives in relation to the development of a socialist consciousness globally after the crisis of 2007-8 globally, etc, etc.

These mistakes do not negate the tremendous contribution and historic achievements of the CWI! It is not disastrous, nor is it a problem to make mistakes of this sort, it is inevitable! The point is to be able to recognize them, collectively, correct them in time and retain a sense of proportion.

Actually many of the differences that emerged in the previous years and decades in the CWI were of a more serious character than the ones today, but they never lead to such a crisis. *The differences over tactics in relation to SYRIZA, for example, were a serious issue.* The IS initially supported Stephan K. in arguing for the full entry of the Greek section into SYRIZA in 2012. But they never went to the extent of raising the allegation of us abandoning the mass organisations and therefore the working class masses.

The IEC can assist the IS in an essential way. There has to be a collective working relationship between the IS and the rest of the IEC. The IEC is the highest organ in the International, between the congresses. The IS has to accept the control and the check of the IEC, not in words but in deeds.

Accepting control and check does not diminish the IS's authority and does not question democratic centralism. On the contrary it increases the IS authority and strengthens democratic centralism. This is an important part of fighting for a democratic centralist, as opposed to a "federal" CWI.

The Platform

The Platform produced by the faction has not added much to what had already been known. The *"fundamental differences of principle"* between the *"two trends"* of opinion developing in the CWI did not become clearer after reading the platform.

The platform essentially repeats the criticisms towards the Irish leadership made in the previous documents and during the IEC discussions. In addition, it attacks all the comrades and sections who opposed the IS on this issue and the resolution voted for by the majority of the IEC, without however bringing any concrete examples on the differences on *"programme, tactics, united front methods, the national question, orientation to the working class...."*

The differences that arose in this debate, which need to be discussed in the immediate period ahead, and are reflected in the Platform, are not of a crucial or fundamental character and they should not threaten the unity of the International! A proper, collective effort by the IS and the IEC can help the International overcome political weaknesses and weaknesses in its intervention. In this way the crisis can be overcome.

Defending the mistakes made by the Irish comrades?

Before we go into the specific political differences as we see them, there is one point that needs to be answered again. The faction declaration repeats an “argument” frequently raised by its supporters: that a number of sections reacted to the IS, supposedly, in order to shield the Irish leadership from criticism.

This is not true. The Greek section, as other sections, reacted and defended not the Irish section’s mistakes, but its right to remain in the ranks of the CWI where its possible mistakes and deficiencies could be discussed and corrected!

We defended the right of the Irish section to make mistakes and try to correct them, as they clearly are. Every section makes mistakes and the issues in Ireland are similar to ones that have been made by other sections in the past, that are possibly being made by other sections at present, and which will continue to be made by sections in the future.

Mistakes by the Irish comrades

Mistakes were made by the Irish section in relation to the programme of the 2016 elections. This is clear and is accepted by the Irish comrades. They themselves explain that at that time the main parties proposed a further lowering of corporate tax, which is at the heart of the “Celtic Tiger”. The SWP and PBP were arguing to maintain it at 12.5%, while our comrades argued for 25%, i.e. a doubling of the rate. This would have brought them immediately in direct confrontation with the whole Irish establishment. The comrades should have prepared the membership, the periphery and the voters and the broader workers movement for the counter reaction such measure would provoke. They should have included in the election material warnings of capital flight and link this demand to socialist measures, such as the non-payment of debt, except on the basis of proven needs, and the need to nationalize the finance and building sectors under workers’ control, **as they had done in their minority report for the parliamentary commission on the financial crisis only four weeks before election date under enormous press attention.**

This was a mistake but the Irish comrades have accepted that mistake, and in an open and honest way: at the Irish NC, the CWI School and again in the IEC that followed that election campaign.

There is indeed a gap between the public position of the party in Ireland and its actual membership. The party taps very well into a mood, but that mood has not yet been transformed into a permanent active participation, let alone massive recruitment to the party. Without denying the existence of subjective shortcomings, this phenomena is part of the objective complications many sections are faced with. But the party in Ireland, more than any other section, is fighting at a level well above its weight. This explains the issue with the number of comrades who work full time in political work compared to the membership of the party. There is no question about that, but the Irish comrades also see this as an issue. However the figure mentioned, gives a vastly exaggerated picture: less than half of those comrades actually work as party full timers. The question however is what does the IS actually propose concretely. If you have MP’s then it is absolutely inevitable that you will have a big number of comrades paid by the state and dedicated to MP work. Up until now we have not seen a concrete proposal by the IS on this issue.

In relation to the actions of C. there were a number of issues and certain mistakes have been accepted by the Irish comrades as is made clear in the resolution of the IEC which they assisted in drafting and voted for.

These “deficiencies” however are miles away from any idea of abandonment of the working class and a capitulation to petit bourgeois feminism and reformist pressures.

As of the criticism on the profile of the party in the election campaign, the comrades have shown that they are aware of the problem and are discussing, as they explained at the IEC, to stand in the name of the Socialist Party and not Solidarity in the next European election.

The period

Politically we live, indeed, in a complex period, in the post-Stalinist era and the post 2007-8 crisis period. The working class has not been able to face the offensive of the bourgeoisie globally and socialist consciousness has not developed on a major scale as a result of the crisis and the attacks. At the same time very important movements are developing and new layers are being radicalized, eg in the US, Ireland, Spain, in France in the past couple of months, etc. As a general rule, however, class and socialist consciousness is developing at a slower pace than desired and expected. This, inevitably, creates contradictions and problems with our work.

Also, as was expected, the new left formations have all capitulated to one degree or another to the pressures of the ruling class and the same is the case with the Trade Union leaders on a global scale. We should also remember that as a result of the lack of mass revolutionary leadership the mighty revolutions in Northern Africa and the Middle East of 2011 were completely derailed.

Partly as a result of these factors, mass radicalization takes new forms and finds expression in different ways and movements. Such movements took the form of the “occupy movement” and the “Indignados” of the previous period, of the anti-global movement before that, of important struggles against environmental disasters, of the “Umbrella movement” in Hong Kong, of youth movements of different character in different countries, of movements of the sort of the “yellow jackets” in France and, more importantly, in the recent years, of the movement in defense of women’s rights which is a global phenomenon.

The importance of new formations and new phenomena

The above mentioned movements (“occupy”, women’s, environmental or on specific issues) represent very important developments, characteristic of our epoch and in stark contradiction to previous decades when all these movements were as a general rule reflected inside and through the mass organisations of the working class (SD and Communist parties and trade unions). The turn/orientation to these movements is not only desirable but absolutely necessary for the sections of the International in order that they are able to retain their correct orientation to mass movements and have a serious impact in the working class.

The intervention in such movements can be of crucial importance for the building of our forces particularly in conditions where the working class finds itself in a lull, or is faced with a number defeats. This is particularly the case, from a subjective point of view, if we have a weak presence in the unions (because of our limited forces) and the working class and TU movement is in retreat.

Mandelism

Any parallel drawn between the turn to the women’s issues and the youth by sections of our international and the abandonment of the working class by the Mandelites in the ’50s and ’60s is unacceptable!

The Mandelites developed a “theoretical” scheme according to which the working class had been “aristocratized” or “bourgeoisified” and they turned to the students and guerilla movements as the new revolutionary subjective factors. Nothing of the sort, regarding petit bourgeois feminism or environmental movements, is taking place in any of the sections of the CWI. No evidence whatsoever was presented that anything like this is taking place in the Irish section.

Women's movements and the working class

No evidence has been provided that the Irish section is in a process of abandoning a working class orientation, as is claimed by the minority faction. On the contrary, the Irish section has shown a great ability to link itself to the working class and to play the role of a catalyst to mobilize big masses, create new

traditions and score victories of historic dimensions, both for the working class and for the CWI. The Irish section has reestablished traditions about what it means to be a public representative of the working class, long forgotten and unknown to the new generations, like for example MPs going to jail in order to serve the class which they represent.

The attempt of the faction to counter pose the movement for Repeal in Ireland to the working class, is completely wrong. While all movements against oppression are objectively “cross-class” movements, the movement for Repeal was predominately a working class movement, as has been successfully demonstrated by the voting patterns in the working class areas and other arguments and the material that the Irish comrades presented at the IEC. The fact that the trade unions didn’t organize a campaign on this issue and didn’t want to take a stance (with the exception of some of them at a very late stage) does not take away from the main class basis and the class character of the movement and the class orientation of the Irish comrades to it. Overall there is no important movement in history which is a “clear” working class movement, much less a clear “revolutionary movement”, as Lenin himself explained. Working class and petit bourgeois elements are bound to coexist, even in cases of general strikes, the traditional powerful weapon of the working class (for example in the years of the Memoranda in Southern Europe).

The document of the IS on “Identity Politics”, which essentially is not a document on identity politics but a critique of the work of ROSA, is unconvincing. The reply of the Irish comrades actually clarifies the issues quite well. The reality is that the work of the Irish comrades around ROSA is pioneering work. ROSA’s 15 point programme is a clear class-oriented programme. The pamphlets written by the Irish comrades on socialist feminism and on Repeal give clear answers on Identity Politics and have a very skillfully developed transitional programme that links the fight against women oppression with the struggle for a socialist society. This is also clearly manifested in the public speeches and videos of comrades like Ruth C.

Perhaps there are mistakes on individual leaflets, or elsewhere, yet mistakes are always inevitable, particularly when mass initiatives of such scale are undertaken by any section. These should be discussed concretely and corrected and they should not be used as an opportunity to describe a general “Mandelite” trend/method in the Irish section that clearly is not there.

The Trade Unions

The role of the trade unions today is quite different from the times when the system was able to show growth and concessions/reforms were possible. Also there are major differences in relation to trade union traditions, from country to country. A strategic orientation to the TUs is necessary under all conditions, but the application and character of this orientation can differ significantly from country to country, depending on the country’s historic traditions and the state in which the TU movement finds itself. There are countries, like Britain where the TUs have a very special weight in society and in mass consciousness, due to historical reasons: in Britain the Unions came into existence before anywhere else, it was the Unions that formed the Labor Party and there is only one TUC. In most other countries the SD or Communist parties (with few exceptions) formed the biggest Unions and in many countries each major political party has its own trade union Federations and Confederation (TUC).

Before we elaborate a bit on this, we want to stress that in relation to the Trade Union work of the Irish section, the minority stress the “weakness” of this work in Southern Ireland, recognizing that TU work in the North is much more developed. The Irish section, however, is one – there are no two Irish sections. The trade union work of the section must be taken as a whole.

A real and successful orientation to the working class demands a flexible approach to the way demands are raised in relation to the Unions, particularly in the sense of “appealing” to the national leaderships of trade unions. In the case of major movements of the working class which do not pass through the structures of the Unions, particular care is needed before raising criticisms of comrades for not making sufficient appeals

to the Unions. Greece is one such example and it can perhaps help to illuminate the different processes taking place in different countries.

Trade Unions and the case of Greece

As is well known, in the case of Greece the “official” trade union movement not only failed to provide leadership in the years of the Memoranda but supported the “Yes” in the referendum of 2015 and, more recently, formed a “Social Pact” with “professional unions” (small entrepreneurs, lawyers, farmers, etc) which bases itself on the political programme of big Greek capital (the “Confederation of Greek Industry”). As we reported to international meetings at the time of the mass struggles against the Memoranda, the union leaders would call general strikes and rallies under the general pressure of the mass movement, but they would “plan” them in a way that they would be sure to fail. In times when not only the advanced layers of the working class but also workers on a rank and file level would speak of the need of an all-out general strike in order to overthrow the government and the austerity policies, the Union leaders would call isolated general strikes that could have no real effect. As a result of their policies, the Greek TUC leaders could not appear on the rallies they called because they would be shouted down or even physically attacked.

Especially after the defeat of the Greek working class under SYRIZA it is not possible to “put demands” on the GSEE (Greek TUC) to lead the fight against austerity! This would be incomprehensible to the mass of the working class, who will think that we live on a different planet. The words “trade unionist” and “trade unionism” have entered the daily vocabulary of the mass of the population to mean, metaphorically, someone who cheats, who lies and who is corrupt.

What is necessary in such conditions is to strongly attack and expose the TU leadership, explain what they should have done if they really represented the working class, and also explain that what is required is the need to rebuild the trade union movement starting from rank and file level. However, *although this is necessary propaganda, its effect is minimal at the present phase of the movement in Greece!* For example, despite our attempts to establish the healthy aspects of TU work, and show that not all trade unionists are corrupt bureaucrats, we are losing ground as regards our TU positions, as we expected, essentially due to the objective situation.

In conditions like the ones in Greece our attempts should mainly be directed towards appealing or putting demands on local and rank and file unions on the level of specific workplaces. But even then things are not straight forward. When there is a major clash with the capitalists, there are quite a number of cases where local unions take the side of the bosses.

In Greece, we have the experience of the mass movements in defense of the environment, the most important of which have been that of the gold mines in Chalkidiki, Northern Greece, and the one in Volos about air pollution (produced by industry burning garbage for fuel) in the last few years. In both these cases we had unprecedented mass movements, in the case of Volos even surpassing the mass mobilizations at the time of the height of the anti-Troika movements. In both these cases the official unions, both locally and on an area basis, were on the side of the bosses (defending government policies) and against these movements.

Once again, in these cases a correct orientation to the working class cannot be pursued through an orientation to the official union structures. On the contrary the union leaders have to be severely criticized for the positions they take, anything else would sound incomprehensible to the average worker. This again does not mean that the workers and trade unionists in particular workplaces should not be approached. But of course it is always a matter of priorities and a sense of correct balance, given our limited resources. In the case of Volos, the attempt to approach the workers of the major factory causing pollution was consciously made, by our comrades and the local city committee, but without success.

Faced with the bureaucratisation of the trade union leaderships we should orientate to the rank and file of the unions and try to build opposition. This is what the sections of the CWI do and this is the basis of our trade union work. Yet this does not always prove possible or meaningful in the short term. What matters here is not only the number of workers who are formally members of the Unions. The question is if there are structures which allow any kind of intervention and if workers do take part in any union structures or activity.

In Greece at the moment the majority of the main unions will only call a meeting/general assembly every 2 – 3 (or even 4) years, and this only because it is legally required in order to hold the union elections. In the union meetings, in general, the number of workers that take part is incredibly low. As a general rule, only a few dozen will gather in workplaces of thousands of workers (eg in a big hospital, or in the new technologies) and this will usually develop into a “dog fight” between different trade union factions, controlled by different political parties. For our TU comrades of course this is by necessity a field of intervention. In such conditions correct tactics and orientation would mean to orientate to the working class outside the union structures, with different campaigns (without of course abandoning existing trade union work or any possible openings for new ones) but also turning to other layers which are in a process of radicalization (women, youth, etc) recruit, train them and then turn them to the Unions, at a later stage, under better conditions.

Dangers

We agree with the minority faction in stressing the dangers of adaptation to reformist pressures. These pressures are always present – in the past, in the present and will be so in the future. But these dangers threaten every section. They certainly exist in relation to the Irish section which is the section with the highest degree of exposure to mass pressures – it has the biggest membership compared to the size of the population, the biggest involvement in mass working class movements and, of course, parliamentary representation. But the idea that there is an imminent danger of the abandonment of a revolutionary strategy/party taking place in the Irish section has not been backed up with real evidence.

The National Question and the United Front

Finally, differences have been mentioned in relation to the United Front and the National Question. Nothing substantial was shown to exist at the IEC discussions, where it was recognized that concerning Ireland there were differences of emphasis or some formulations in some articles which were later corrected as so often happens in all our sections. We waited for the faction’s *Platform* to clarify or substantiate the claims of fundamental differences over these issues, as was initially proclaimed by the faction *Declaration*. We saw nothing of the sort both concerning Ireland and the rest of sections who supposedly constitute the trend abandoning the working class and Marxism.

Conclusion

If there are indeed fundamental divergences from the ideas of Marxism then a split in the International is not only inevitable but necessary! But if the differences are of a secondary character, differences of emphasis or mistakes and weaknesses that can be corrected, a split is criminal

Even more so in a period where, despite important opportunities and revolutionary potential, the working class movement faces retreat in many countries, there is a lot of confusion in its ranks and the subjective factor, the revolutionary party, is weak.

Despite the difficulties of this period the CWI has managed to emerge as the biggest revolutionary international globally. Though our forces are still small, this is a tremendous achievement of historical significance. This historic achievement should be guarded with extreme care!

The differences which have now emerged, through the “Irish crisis” are in no way more significant than differences that existed in the past in the CWI. A lively international will inevitably have differences in its ranks in all times and under all periods. Differences are always, inevitably, related to objective factors – this is not a sufficient factor to justify splits. In a lively International different sections will open new inroads and others will follow; mistakes will be made and will be corrected.

The higher leading body in the International between congresses is the IEC. It elects the IS and has not only the right but the duty to check, control and correct the IS. The IS should look at the positive sides of this, it should not have a defensive attitude when IEC members think it is mistaken and want to correct it. Time, as a general rule, shows who is right and who is wrong. Patience in any such debate is absolutely necessary. Impatience will lead to a new escalation and the danger of a split.

It is still possible for the CWI to come out of this situation united and strengthened, to intervene successfully in present days’ struggles and the even bigger ones that loom ahead, built the forces of the revolution and prepare humanity for the future, which is what we have dedicated our lives to.

ADDENDUM

AP's lead off in support of the final Resolution approved by IEC

This is the lead off given by Andros P. in defence of the Resolution adopted by the majority at the end of the IEC, by 24 full members' votes in favor and 21 against and 6 alternate members in favor and 4 against. It has been transcribed from the official recordings of the meeting by comrades Danny B. and Gedric G.

I had not sufficient time to prepare, but will manage to raise the main points.

This is an unprecedented development, could never have imagined to be in this position and nobody wanted to be in this position.

The formation of a faction by the IS, which is in charge of the whole International, is an astonishing development and I don't know if there is a precedent! The question in the mind of every comrade here is where do we go from here? Is it possible to avoid a split as we have been talking about all week?

What we are talking about, here, is the work and building and sacrifices of numerous, innumerable comrades for 6 decades. In the recent period we were raising and speaking triumphantly, and justifiably so, about the fact that the CWI now is the biggest international in the Trotskyist left! But once we arrive at this point we see internal processes developing which are characteristic of certain sectarian groups which lead to splits! And this is going to be an extremely damaging split if it's allowed to develop.

Comrade Clive said in previous discussion, and another comrade (can't remember the name) that the creation of a faction doesn't necessarily mean a crisis or a negative development and is not necessarily a bad thing. Then I would invite the comrades to mention another example in the history of the CWI where a faction did not find itself outside the ranks of a CWI or where a faction didn't lead to a split. Therefore the tradition we have, despite abstract/theoretical considerations, is that when a faction develops it has devastating effects on the sections and leads to a split.

Is it possible to avoid it now at this last minute? We make an appeal to the members of the IEC who are not part of the faction to make an attempt. Although we are not at all sure that, even if everybody else tries to put a brake, we are not sure it will be put.

The issue started from an important but not fundamental issue, what is now being described as ... ["breach of protocol"] in the Irish section. When this issue was raised in all the sections that I have in mind, (all the sections!) the Greek section responded "ok there are mistakes, let's discuss them". But then the speed with which things developed is actually astonishing. The "breach" became the central issue of a clash with the Irish leadership and then became a central issue of a debate at the IEC and directly linked to the threat of a split and the IS put the threat of a split on the table!

I am in the CWI for quite a few decades I am a member since 1982, never, never before has any difference of opinion been accompanied by the threat of a split! And the threat was very clear, let us be in no doubt about it!

I am not only talking about the discussions with... I don't know how many sections, at least with the Greek section, in which as I reported at the IEC huge pressure was put on us to accept that a split with the Irish is inevitable! We were not willing to accept it and that's where our lines with the IS diverged!

We felt we had an obligation to send a very clear message to the IS that if they were determined to crush the Irish leadership –because this was the plan and I will come to it– if they are determined to crush the Irish leadership then they will have to crush the Greek leadership, then they will have to crush the Belgian and Swedish leadership and then they will have to crush the US section's leadership. This, was a clearly defensive move and an attempt to make the IS realize that it's not an issue to allow for the crushing the Irish majority – and the only way we could do it was to raise a wall of resistance to stop the IS in this process!

Because, you see comrades, the IS had their position and they brought it to the Irish section and they lost the majority! Whatever the circumstances and whatever everybody thinks subjectively (that they are right, because everybody can think they are right) but then you have some objective criteria! And what are the objective criteria?

When you go to a section and you send a big delegation of 4 or 5 comrades from the IS, you go to an NC and the NC votes against you with such a massive majority, you have to accept it. It cannot be allowed that the IS, in its relations with the sections, whenever they come to a minority, whenever they are defeated, then they start a procedure to overthrow the national leadership and try to find points of support for a new leadership! Because this what happened in Ireland – and everybody knows this.

This is a wrong method and this should not be the method of the CWI. When the CWI goes to a national section and loses the vote, they have to accept the vote of the NC – it doesn't mean that they will not continue to disagree with it, but it does not mean that they start a process of overthrowing the leadership, i.e. crush the majority in order to build on the basis of a certain minority, whoever they may be, even if they are very talented comrades. This is a fundamental mistake by the IS and this is the cause of the crisis!

And many comrades can speak in this discussion and say that those who defend the Irish do not criticize them...

I think that our intervention into this discussion and other comrades', have recognized that there are weaknesses, problems, deficiencies, mistakes (I don't know which word to use) in the way the Irish comrades treated the issue. The Irish comrades themselves recognize that such mistakes were made in the resolution you have in your hands.

But the question is that, in this IEC, what is the dominant issue? What is the dominant issue? The "breach" or the attempt of the IS to split the Irish section?

Of course, it's the splitting with the Irish section!

When we raised from the beginning that the aim of the IS it to crush the majority which would mean a split the section –and in our opinion would mean destroying everything which we have built in Ireland in the last years– then many comrades thought that the Greeks are exaggerating again... But look at the result of this IEC. The IEC has come to the conclusion that we raised in the beginning that this is the way that the IS is approaching the whole issue – and we said it was going to lead to a split and this is the way it is leading now. This is why we put our emphasis on criticizing the IS because we thought that the "breach", while it is important, was a secondary issue.

Once the IS lost the vote in the Irish section, instead of taking a step back, to reconsider – and retain its views, I am not saying that they should change their opinions, or not insist in relation to the political criticisms or on differences in relation to the methods in Ireland and building of the Irish section... Of course they should say those opinions and of course they should raise it in the IEC. But they chose the center of the debate to be the "breach" and their whole idea was, having lost the majority in the Irish section, we will get a majority in the IEC and use it to attack the Irish section! And we cannot accept that!

The comrades have drawn up a resolution and we say clearly and we say it again that there is no anti-IS faction. We disagree with the IS on a specific approach to a crisis developing in Ireland. There is no aim of overthrowing of changing the IS or getting a majority here to change the IS. We respect the work of every comrade on the IS and the work they have made to build this international until now.

But we are allowed to disagree! We are allowed to say "No" to the IS! We are the IEC, a higher body than the IS, we check the IS, that's our role! This is the first time in the history of the international that the IEC is checking the IS. Many comrades (I cannot speak about a minority or majority yet it must be put to a vote later on) many comrades have said "we do not agree with the IS".

The IEC should be proud of this stand – this is the first time it has happened and it has happened even from very young comrades with little experience, members of the IS. This means that in the CWI there is a powerful cadre being developed with an independent thinking that can stand on their own in the struggle to build a revolutionary party of the working class, stand on their own because independent thinking is the A-Z, is the decisive and most important factor in the attempt to build the CWI.

The IS cannot accept this, the fact that for the first time many comrades come out and say that they are mistaken. So how do they react? The declaration of a faction is the organizational form that their reaction is taking! But what of the political form?

From the first day comrade Peter, for whom every one of us has the maximum respect, in his contribution referred to the split with the Mandelites! Who was he referring to? I'm not sure about the words, English not being my first language, but you cannot start a debate by mentioning the split with the Mandelites in 1965. You cannot start a debate with a comrade saying that there are points of disagreements, we don't want a split but [... recording not clear

for 2/3 words – DB, GG] the split is always there on the table. Comrade Hannah again, with all respect again for her contribution, she refused to remove the possibility of a split from the table!

You cannot have a discussion, comrades, on political issues when you have the threat of a split over your head!

And that is why the discussions in the last days were so polarized, because everybody was thinking in whatever they said, that the contribution I make, I may contribute or not towards the prospect of a split on the table.

Again referring to comrade Peter, in his latest contribution on Ireland (he spoke for something like 20 minutes) he mentioned twice the split of 1903, twice in one contribution – the implication is simple: in this room there are Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. This was what the split of 1903 was about! Who are the Bolsheviks and who are the Mensheviks?

How can we start a discussion by establishing we are in a 1903 situation and a split! I think Peter was preparing the forces and comrades here to tell them to support the IS or that they need to join forces to fight against the rest of us who don't agree and in this way things will be pulled to a split.

But look also at the title of the faction of the IS resolution. Creation of a faction "In defense of a working class and Trotskyist CWI"! So the issue of the working class and orientation to the working class is on the table. Because what those of us, initially the Irish and then it became many, are accused of, is that we follow tactics and an orientation which is pushing us away from the working class and the need of a proletarian character of the CWI. On this basis the comrades of the IS and the other comrades who belong to the faction say that there are fundamental differences of principle on all these issues – perspectives, orientation etc. I'm not elaborating... what you have heard...

We are not seeing that yet. We are not blind, we know there are differences but we have not seen differences which are differences of principle and should therefore lead to a mass war inside the CWI for who will get the majority.

When I read and listened to the differences here which are real on many levels... perspectives, the national question, united front, etc I thought that our differences for example compared to the differences between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg were minor. Their differences were much more important but their unity was never put into question. The differences between Lenin and Trotsky for many years and even when they were both in the Bolshevik party and after they took power, they were more important in many ways than the differences we have today which are suspicions of the possibility of serious differences – and I say suspicions because this was the original terminology used by the comrades themselves.

For example if we look at Hannah's document it doesn't speak about decisive political differences etc. She speaks about...

(Dispute about time from PT and others...)

Let me speak... You will have time to speak later... What's your problem?

In the initial document of HS she writes about possibilities, tendencies, and implications, implying that things may be developing in a dangerous direction. This is the theme. When did these "dangers" become "differences of principle"?

Anyway, because I don't have time, we are proposing a congress in January 2020 which is also proposed by the faction, there is agreement on that. We agree with the idea of the IEC in the meantime I think the faction also proposes that, there is agreement on that. But we also propose a pre congress organizing committee.

The pre congress period is starting from tomorrow that's the reality of the situation. The IS, which is now a factional IS in the service of a faction in a revolutionary party, cannot have an objective approach to the way the pre congress discussion debate period is taking place therefore we are proposing a congress org committee and we propose parity we don't want to enter a debate about who is a majority, minority etc. We propose parity 3 from the faction and 3 from the rest of the meeting, 3 individual comrades.

If you want to discuss the numbers we can, but we propose parity, 3 members of the IS who belong to the faction and 3 from the IEC. In discussions with comrades, Danny is willing to be a part of it, comrade Tom Crean and Eric from Belgium are being proposed by the rest of us. This is a proposal in order to guarantee that there is a fair discussion in the international. The role of the committee will not be to replace the IS in its day to day work with the sections etc but it is to organize the pre congress discussion which means that they decide when documents are presented and distributed and they decide when visits to the sections to discuss this particular issue.

We urge the comrades... I am summing up... to realize that what happened in this IEC was a serious mistake of the IS, which the IS was not willing to correct and as we all know if you don't correct a mistake then you go to a 2nd and 3rd and then you go down the cliff. This is what happened with the IS: it refused to listen to our voices from the sections, when we said "stop". The refusal from the IS to put a brake on this led from one mistake to another and now to this tragic situation – because whatever the comrades say we know that the creation of a faction, in this case by the IS, opens the way for a split.

We ask the comrades to vote for our resolution and also to vote against the IS resolution because the IS resolution apart from the title of the faction resolution which is very provocative...

(Sascha complains about distinction between faction statement and resolution)

If the comrades... Sascha, wants us to distinguish between the faction which includes the IS and the IS proposal to the IEC, on formal grounds, we can do it and make this concession. The reality of the situation is that it's proposed by the same forces... Therefore we say vote against the resolution of the IS because it's an attempt to cover up the issues and give the arm to the faction to start its campaign inside the CWI which means starting a war in the CWI. Because what we had in this IEC was not a comradely debate but a war started by the IS – of course they will disagree...

And vote for our resolution which shows that the IEC checks the IS, which lists the issues that have to be debated in the next period starting with perspectives, the method and building the profile, and includes the political issues, whether that is the national question or ID politics or women's issues. And also vote for our resolution because we are proposing the COC which is the only way to show that in the next 12 months there will be friendly comradely debate and lower tones.