

Letter to the International Socialist Convention from the Left Faction

Dear Comrades,

A resolution is before today's Convention to expel the Left Faction, nearly one third of the members of the IS. This does not surprise us. From the beginning we argued that the EC's regime had degenerated to the point where it was forced to lie, resort to personal abuse, and to rigging procedures, delegates and votes in order to answer our arguments. What would be a tragedy, however, would be if a majority of the members of our organization allowed this expulsion to take place.

Look at the facts.

1. We Are Against A Split

We have publicly indicated that if we were in a minority at the Convention we would accept the following resolution to the factional struggle:

1. We would disband as a faction after the convention.
2. We would carry out the majority line.
3. we would not necessarily demand representation on the EC, despite the fact that we represent nearly a third of IS.
4. We would carry out the majority line in the Red Tide.
5. We would accept full time positions if asked by the organization.
6. We would accept any organizers decided upon by the organization in those branches where we have a majority.
7. We would not raise our politics in an organized or factional way, while maintaining the right of individuals to discuss all questions in the Internal Bulletin.

These points all flow, in the opinion, from our position as a loyal opposition within the IS. As such, we would expect that the campaign of harrasment aimed at driving individuals out of the IS would end.

We remain convinced that if a majority of the members of IS assert their real wishes against the manipulations of the present EC, then a split can be avoided. The 7 points above constitute a democratic basis for the solution to the fight, provided there is the will to end it.

2. We Are Loyal Comrades

Contrary to the EC lies, we were never "underground for months" inside IS, pretending we were mainliners but secretly plotting the sabotage of the organization. We formed on November 22nd. It was then that several of the different groups discussing things amongst themselves came together and decided to form a faction and submit a document to the whole IS. We were "underground" for less than three weeks while we drafted, discussed and then circulated our "new Course" document. HOW MANY WEEKS GO BY EACH MONTH WITHOUT THE MEMBERSHIP AT LARGE KNOWING WHAT THE EC IS DOING?

We decided to form a faction rather than simply circulate discussion documents through the IB because part of our analysis was that the EC was developing such a bureaucratic, undemocratic character that it would move INSTANTLY against individuals. Forming a faction would create some protection and give some time to the whole organization to see what the arguments were and how the EC would respond.

From our first National Faction meeting on January 2nd, ALL our faction meetings were open to all members of IS. Why? Because we had nothing to hide.

We did not say WE would not remain in IS if we lost - like EC members, and numerous EC faction supporters have said. We have not threatened to take the money and equipment. We have not refused to call branch or branch exec meetings as has happened in Cleveland for the six weeks. We have not suspended any dissenting comrades from branches where we have the majority.

What we have done is to issue a statement to the whole organization pledging our loyalty, and Left faction branches have remained active during the entire course of the fight, selling the paper, holding meetings and even recruiting.

We formed a faction precisely because we are loyal. Because we are concerned about the crisis of decline, demoralization and political drift that now everyone (or almost everyone) recognizes has been present for some time.

We are not 'entrists'. Not only do our members have long records of loyal service in the organization, but we also stand squarely in the IS political tradition. We have developed as a faction and have grown in size over the course of the fight because we are within the tradition of IS and because a majority of the present membership actually believe that the EC has gone off course. The support we have received from the (GB) and the IS Canada is not support won because either they believe we will be their dupes or they have some fiendish desire to smash up the incredibly successful ISUS. They support us because they recognize that we ARE within the IS tradition.

Another lie put out by the EC is that groups within the IS tradition have been nonetheless expelled from the SWP (GB), formerly ISGB, on the grounds of their "incompatibility". THIS IS COMPLETELY UNTRUE. The "IS Opposition" faction in Britain in 1975 LEFT ISGB 7 MONTHS AFTER the 1975 Conference which passed a resolution calling on factions not to maintain themselves permanently between conventions. They were not expelled. As a result, naturally, there was not even one single appeal from members of the "IS Opposition" to the Control Commission which exists, elected directly by Conference, to hear appeals on discipline and organizational questions. Check it out!

Our politics are compatible. WE ARE COMPATIBLE. However, things don't always work out like that. It is the very strength of our arguments and the existence of a majority of members in IS who are disenchanted with the leadership of the present EC that has brought our expulsions closer.

3. This Is A Rigged Convention

Yes, comrades, Rigged. The only way the EC could muster the number of delegates needed for an expulsion was by rigging the convention. The rigging has been orchestrated in two ways. Firstly, by the deliberate falsification of the issues under debate. The establishment of a phoney "majority" or "loyal" faction turned the argument from the politics to "loyal" versus "disloyal". This is why the EC refused to debate the left faction in the branches; why it refused to publicly debate last night with Steve Jefferys, Central Committee member of the SWP GB; and why it has suddenly announced that the SWP (GB) and IS(C) are "disloyal" and therefore "non fraternal" organizations not "loyal" enough to attend Convention. From the start of the fight the EC stated that its intention was to "drive these people out". It had no wish to see politics and its own record openly and positively discussed.

Secondly, the rigging has taken place administratively. The number of delegates that the Left Faction and the Political Solution Caucus are entitled to has been cut, and additional votes have been given to reliable EC faction supporters.

The end result is very much to the EC's liking. A rigged Convention with a potential majority for our expulsion that does not reflect the true balance of political opinion within the IS. Once we are expelled the EC know they will then have a safe majority over the PSC and whoever else is still inside IS who is ready to disagree. This is the meaning of the "Platform for New EC" put forward, March, March 1, by all five members of the present EC. This document talks of "comrades unwilling or unable to do systematic political work" being "made sympathizer". Once victory over the Left Faction is achieved, the EC intend to develop "the power to impose its will" even further. Our expulsions will not be the last. More will inevitably follow.

What To Do?

THIS MORNING WE WILL FIGHT AGAINST OUR EXPULSION. We urge all comrades who seriously wish to maintain the IS as an organization that can tolerate disagreement and de-

bate to join with us in this fight. If we are successful together we will have won a major victory in the struggle to build a healthy, united organization.

IF WE FAIL, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT DESPONDENT. The tragedy will be for the present IS and the members it still keeps hold of. We are not going to allow your expulsion of us to hinder us from building a revolutionary organization in the United States within the tradition of the International Socialists.

A third of the IS is the majority of members in steel, whole branches - Bloomington, Springfield, Seattle, Cincinnati, Indianapolis; important groups in seven other cities nearly half the women members of IS . . . we are unquestionably viable.

If we are expelled, we therefore urge all of you who are appalled by the proceedings today to come and join us.

We are prepared for the possibility of expulsion and will reconvene to discuss the building of a genuine International Socialist tendency in the Veterans Memorial Building, only a few blocks from here.

We call upon all comrades who are opposed to our expulsion to recognize that if it goes through then the ISUS as presently controlled will be beyond reform. We urge you accept the logic of this process and to join us NOW in re-building. No other political demands will be put upon you in joining with us to establish a new organization other than (1) Opposition to the expulsions; and (2) Agreement with the IS 'Where we Stand' set of principles.

Fraternally Yours,

ATLANTA

Belinda H.
Byron G.
Carla L.
Todd J.

BLOOMINGTON

Bruce B.
David N.
Dean M.
Joann U.
Milt F.
Rhoda S.
Terry H.

BOSTON

Marianne H.

CHICAGO

Ron W.

CINCINNATI

Anna P.
Bill R.
Debra R.
Ed W.
Ellen D.
Judy N.
Michael L.
Tom H.

CLEVELAND

Anne M.
Betsy L.
Celle D.
Dan P.
Doug P.
Tom M.

DAYTON

Ellis J.

DETROIT

Barbara W.
Cal W.
Jenny V.
John A.
Johnny S.
Pat G.

GARY

Ben B.
Kadi S.
Maggie M.
Pat M.
Sharon P.
Sandy G.
Tom S.

HOUSTON

Linda S.

INDIANAPOLIS

Cathy C.
Clem W.
John T.
Jim N.
Kathy W.
Tony C.

LOUISVILLE

Boni B.
Christina B.
Fred H.
John E.
Sue D.

LOS ANGELES

Craig Z.
David L.
Duncan W.
Mary D.
Melody L.
Sue D.

MADISON

Bon G.

NEW HAVEN

Amy T.
Robbin L.

NEW PALTZ

Charlie L.
Jean G.

NEW YORK

Pam A.

PROVIDENCE

Ahmed S.

PORTLAND

Gloria P.
Jackie S.
Roger P.
Will M.

SEATTLE

Diane E.
Donna B.
Gretchen E.
John M.
Judy F.
Lindsay G.
Mike G.
Scott W.
Sheila M.
Shelly C.
Steve L.

SPRINGFIELD

Denny P.
Jane E.
Mike E.
Randy H.
Sue H.
Wayne S.

TOLEDO

Tim K.

A meeting open to all members of IS and the Red Tide on "REVOLUTIONARY PROSPECTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST TENDENCY"

Addressed by: Steve Jefferys, Central Committee SWP (GB) and Abbie Brooks, Executive Committee, IS (Canada) chaired by Barbara Winslow.

will take place at 7:30 p.m. TONIGHT at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 151 West Jefferson Avenue.

ALL VISITORS AND DELEGATES TO THE IS CONVENTION ARE WELCOME.