

POLITICAL BUREAU July 7, 1979

JUL 13 1979

pp 1, 5-8: x; <sup>Yus</sup> IC, BK (1)

ATTENDANCE: Clynes, Dennis, Harlowe, Cannon, Ellis, Manzano, Jones (late).  
Hector (seated), Apologies: Savage (Cardiff), Banner (preparation for PC)

1. IRELAND: Cannon introduced  
Contributions: Clynes, Jones, Manzano  
Summary: Cannon  
m/c general line of the report UNANIMOUS
2. PD CONFERENCE REPORT: Cannon
3. BEZANT'S MOVEMENT: Clynes introduced  
Contributions: Jones, Biggs, Harlow, Hector, Cannon, Manzano  
Summary: Clynes

Clynes resolution: a. Bezant should go to B'rum b. PB agrees to send team of cdes to New castle CARRIED 5-3-0

Biggs resolution: a. Bezant to go to Newcastle as team of cdes going there b. PB investigates sending woman cdes to B'rum DEFEATED 3-5-0

#### 4. WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE/ SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

- Introduction: Clynes  
Contributions: Cannon and Jones  
Motion: Clynes a. Clynes assigned to draw up reply b. Sent Usec resolution to WSL c. That we agree to following procedure re: World Congress discussion with the SWP (proposed by Cannon, accepted by Clynes)  
i. That the SWP write a critique of the positions going forward to the WC from the USec (length 10,000 words, deadline, 20 August)  
ii. That a member of the USec (probably IMG member) replies. Length under 10,000 words. Deadline, 20 August  
iii. That the SWP will run off prints of this exchange which will be published in the autumn issue of ISJ. We will be responsible for making these copies available to English speaking sections.  
iv. That the IMG translates and prints do copies of the exchange in French and makes them available to French speaking sections  
v. That we investigate jointly with the SWP the possibilities of translation into Spanish.

#### 5. Corrie Bill

Harlow introduced.

Contributions: Jones, Cannon, Dennis

Summary: Harlow

- Motion: a. Convene caucus of cdes attending the planning meeting  
b. In addition to cde Harlow, cde Jones be allocated to preparing the caucus.  
c. The PB puts the position that a date for the calling of the national demo from the 13 July rally UNANIMOUS

#### 6. IMG CONFERENCE: Cannon introduced

Clynes: That Cannon, Jones and Ellis to prepare proposals on the drafting commission for the PC CARRIED, 1 abstention

Jones: That we extend the item to discuss the drafting commission now DEFEATED

Cannon resolution (attached) Parts 1,3, 4 & 5. Carried with 1 abstention

#### 7. FINANCE Introduced by Biggs

- a. that we ratify extra funds for the International Commission UNANIMOUS
- b. that we note the finances school, in Manchester, 22/6/79

#### 8. SYMPOSIUM: Jones introduced

Contributions: Biggs, Clynes, Manzano, Banner, Brown

- a. Theme to be 'Marxism in 1980s'
- b. Deal with European Marxism, Strategy for Socialism, Building the revolutionary party, balance sheet of the far left since 1968
- c. Speakers to include: Perry Anderson, Dave Bailey, John Ross, M Loewy, Weber, Farrell, Blackbrun.
- d. Rally on the centenary of Trotsky with Pierre Frank on Friday evening
- e. That adverts and mobilising material go out immediately. unanimous

DMG

(5)

CORRESPONDENCE TO THE POLITICAL BUREAU

Text of letter from cde Jones dated 9 July 1977

Dear comrades,

I wish to clarify some matters in your letter (undated) signed by cde Ellis.

1. I wish to apologise for, as your letter puts it, 'storming out of the meeting'. This type of behavior is in reality objectively an attempt to intimidate a meeting or people -- even if, as in this case, it was not subjectively intended as such. Such behavior is therefore unacceptable.

2. I contest the statement that I was 'unwilling to discuss any amendment with cde Harlow over lunch'. On the contrary, I was only too willing to work out an amendment, and to discuss it, and believe that this would have readily brought about a resolution along the lines of the final PB resolution passed at the next meeting (although the eventual PC confused it again). I consider that this was objectively blocked by the way the meeting was handled, and I maintain I did attempt to discuss this with cde Harlow.

3. Despite this, it is evident that resigning from the Political Bureau over this matter was an exaggerated response not conducive to sorting the matter out. It in reality reflected displaced tension from very great concern about other matters taking place in the International and the IMG. However, the correct way to proceed was to attempt to clarify these other political issues and not respond by exaggerating this other issue, out of its true proportion as a significant issue, which it was necessary to get right, but not the type of matter over which resignation from a body is correct and when discussion on the matter had not been exhausted.

I think this should be given the same circulation as the original exchange.

Alan Jones

Text of letter from cde John Strawson telephoned through on 29 June

As you know, I have been quite ill since just before the May general election. Although I have made a very quick recovery, I am still somewhat lacking in energy and tend to get pain in stressful situations. After much thought and consultation with my doctor I have decided to ask the PB to grant me a leave of absence from the organisation for a lengthy period: July/ August. This would give me an opportunity to relax and have a holiday (I didn't have one last year).

As all comrades must be aware, this request does not only stem from personal causes. There is a certain autonomy - political questions exist everywhere so in considering this request I think you should take into account some other considerations, because we should all be conscious of them.

i. At present I am politically out of step with the IMG.: the new turn, the hero worship for the SWP eg. support for the Rank and File conference, the lack of serious opposition to Stalinism as the most counter-revolutionary force in the labour movement (eg. People's Festival ad in Socialist Challenge)

In addition, it is obvious that I am very isolated on the leadership with what I regard as a capitulation of the comrades of the majority to the ex-minority. In a difficult situation there is always a tendency for cdes to run away. I think normally I would fight this right down the line, but seriously feel that physically I am unable to do so.

ii. At the level of the FI, I am scandalised by the lack of serious preparation for the 11th World Congress: I think it is a formal event.

iii. I have been taken aback by the lack of effort of the PB to contact me during my illness - with the notable exception of cde Ellis. It appears that the PB has so little interest in its cadre that it neither enquires as to their state of health or inform them of decisions or discussions. Not only this, I have been publicly abused for being lazy by another member of the PC., despite attending the PC in great pain and semi-drugged.

iv. There are in addition a number of personal factors particularly the situation at work where I have done no research reading or preparation of classes for about 4 years (putting politics first). In order to keep my job I have to attend more seriously to these questions. I think you should take these factors into account along with the health question. I propose that I have a leave of absence from now until the Sept CC and that I should be removed from the PC/PC, that I maintain a financial commitment.

Yours fraternally, J Strawson

⑨  
10 July, 1979

Dear Comrade Strawson,

In reply to your request for an extended leave of absence, the National Secretariat would like you to re-consider, in light of the following considerations.

First of all, if your request was for health reasons alone, there can be no differences and you should consider yourself relieved from leadership responsibilities until September.

However, you have also outlined political reasons for this request. These we cannot accept and, furthermore, feel that any problems on this front will only be exacerbated if you absent yourself from the PB and PC for an extended period of time.

It is true that you are in a minority in the IMG leadership. Your perspectives document received only two votes at the Central Committee. This situation will in no way be resolved with a leave of absence.

Furthermore, you have only recently declared your adherence to the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. After supporting a number of political positions in recent years, this development can allow you to firmly anchor yourself in the debates of the Fourth International. This gives you an ADDED responsibility however, especially in the lead-up to the World Congress.

We cannot accept that the trivial off-hand comments you make concerning the political orientation of the IMG gives you an adequate basis for withdrawing from the leadership for an extended period of time. Differences expressed by the LTT with the majority of the United Secretariat are considerable, yet these have never been given by you as a reason for taking a leave of absence. Nor have they been given by cde Nemo et.al. for withdrawing from the USec.

We would therefore ask you to re-consider. We know that you will agree the above arguments are correct ones - in normal circumstances, you would be making them yourself. Given your illness, we would like to discuss with you a limited project for the leadership during the summer period. (Possibly helping out a few days a week in the National Office now that our forces are somewhat depleted)

By all means take a holiday this summer. Everyone needs one!

Perhaps you could telephone me so we can arrange an informal chat to draw up some proposals for the National Secretariat, or, at least you can take the opportunity to explain in more detail why you reject the above if you do.

Revolutionary greetings,

Ellis for the National Secretariat

PS My apologies for the lateness in the reply. I have tried to telephone you since I returned from Brussels, but we have had three days solid of meeting since then and this is the first (relatively) free day.

P R E P A R A T I O N \_ F O R \_ T H E \_ I M G \_ C O N F E R E N C E .

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F o r \_ t h e \_ P o l i t i c a l \_ C o m m i t t e e \_ 7 / 8 \_ J u l y \_ 1 9 7 9 .

Introduction. The objective of the next IMG Conference in December must be to get political clarity on the way forward for the organisation. In my view the debate at the Central Committee in June signally failed to achieve this aim. In particular a strategic turn for the IMG towards the industrial and manual unions was confused with the immediate tactics to be pursued under the Tory government. This document proposes that we conceptually separate the two debates in order that their relation to one another can be seen clearly.

1. Two Debates at the next IMG Conference. The debate both at and before the IMG Conference should be organised along two broad themes; a) What sort of party we want to build in Britain. b) Tactics and slogans under the new Tory government. Accordingly two central texts should be commissioned by the leadership.

The first document should start from a consideration of the international situation since 1968 and its modification by the world recession of 1974-76. It should particularly highlight the shift in the relation of forces against imperialism and the entry of the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries into the field of mass struggle, including its subsequent organisational strengthening. The development of the Fourth International and its sections should be evaluated against this background. The same train of argument should be applied to Britain and the development of the IMG. The case for a decisive turn towards the industrial and manual unions should be evaluated alongside a consideration of other options for building a revolutionary party in Britain (orientations which reject the leading role of the working class etc.) The turn towards the industrial and manual unions has to be integrated into the more general questions of how we see the development of a mass revolutionary party in Britain; our programme, our attitude towards the Labour Party and the trade unions, building amongst youth, the relationship between the party and autonomous movements, our relationship to the Fourth International, splits, fusions and regroupment. The document should put forward some general considerations on the internal life of the party, the sort of leadership we want to develop and the apparatus, including our long term projections for a system of press and the role of the revolutionary newspaper. The document should propose a new name for the IMG on the basis that we have now definitely made the transition from a propoganda group to a revolutionary socialist league for action.

The second document should outline the essentials of the Tory strategy against the background of the problems that they seek to resolve for the bourgeoisie. The debates inside the Labour Party and in the bureaucracy of the trade union movement should be evaluated along with the current relation of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie. The main axis of slogans should be developed in the same way as in the Jones document for the CC. The extent and nature of our work inside the Labour Party should be defined, and our trade union tactics should be precisied in relation to the alliances we wish to construct. The national political campaigns of the organisation should be prioritised. Our attitude to elections under the Tories should be decided. The orientation of our newspaper should be explained. Finally the document should prioritise the areas in industry we wish to colonise, and what sort of apparatus is needed.

2. The Agenda of the conference. The agenda of the conference can be decided much nearer the date as we evaluate the progress of the pre-conference discussion. But the following subjects can be roughly assigned to different days.

Friday. Registration. Reports on 'What sort of Party do we want to build.'

Saturday. Continuation of 'What sort of Party', youth organisation, attitude to black nationalism, constitution and new name of organisation.

Sunday. 'Tactics under the Tories.'

Monday. Organisation and election of leadership.

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P R E P A R A T I O N / 2

3. Other Documents for voting. The other documents which should go to the September CC for voting should include; programme and founding texts of youth organisation, the black liberation text, the organisation report.

4. Other document to be commissioned. The Central Committee should commission other documents for essential background texts for the conference and to contribute to the discussion on the main texts. This should be essentially review documents, with tactics resolutions appended. These should be requested from the Irish Commission, the International Department, the Women's Commission, the anti-racist commission and others deemed necessary.

5. Nominations Commission. While the nominations commission can only be elected at the conference itself, the leadership should prepare a thorough brief for submission to it well before the conference takes place.

6. Timetables. Two dates have to be fixed at the Political Committee. Firstly the date of the CC opening the pre-conference discussion. This should be on the weekend ~~of the 8/9 September~~. Secondly the date of the conference itself; this should be on the 7/8/9/10 December.

In order to have a thorough discussion on the September CC, drafts of the central texts should be submitted to the National Office by 12 August. (This also applies to other documents to be voted on at that CC). Other documents from commissions should be submitted to the National Office by October 11.

The date of the final CC should be in late November and if possible determined now.

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Cannon 4.7.79.