

On POLITICAL INCOMPATIBILITY

Introduction

The faction fight we are now in raises many issues. The dispute, however, has a political core. Given the economic and political situation facing us in the US today, and given the strength and composition of the ISUS as it now exists, should we set as our central and immediate goal recruiting workers and building a workers combat organization? Should the IS place heavy emphasis on working class agitation and mass work as a necessary part of our struggle to achieve that goal-- as a necessary task if we wish to develop the IS as an actual leadership group inside the working class?

Until the "left faction" surfaced, the IS as a whole answered yes to these questions. Until then, debate in our organization revolved around how to recruit, hold and develop worker members, how to move toward becoming a workers combat organization, how to do effective agitation and mass work, how to build a political periphery and carry out socialist propaganda in the context of building the IS as an agitational ~~and~~ working class organization.

The organization, as a whole, for several years has shared common goals and objectives. Our internal debates, however sharp or heated they became, were part of a struggle that the whole organization was going through to work out how to actually accomplish these shared objectives. And because of this common commitment to shared objectives, these debates never crystallized into hard factional divisions.

From the very beginning, however, the "left faction" organized itself for the specific and intended goal of opposing our fundamental perspectives and strategy that the ISUS has evolved over a period of at least seven years of struggle. Until only recently, the leaders of the "lefts", not only shared these perspectives and strategy with the rest of the organization, but in fact had themselves fully participated in the struggle to develop them. To organize this faction, therefore the leaders of the "left faction" had to make a fundamental political break, not only with the political perspectives of the majority of the IS, but had to break fundamentally with their own political pasts as well. It was because the political differences raised by the leaders of the "left faction" were so basic and so sudden that they felt the need to spend months of secret, conspiratorial, underground, factional activity before they were willing to present and defend their new program to the organization as a whole.

The present faction fight can have at least one healthy by-product. It can serve to reestablish and reaffirm the fundamental strategy and perspectives of the IS for building a workers combat organization on a more solid and self-conscious basis. It can serve to help win a solid majority of the organization to a fuller understanding of our basic goals and perspectives. Some of the comrades who originally joined the "left faction" are still for building a workers combat organization and can be won back. But it would be a dangerous illusion for anyone to believe that the differences that exist between the "left faction" and the IS majority can co-exist unresolved in the organization for any extended period of time without thoroughly crippling and paralyzing the IS. For this reason we believe that after full pre-convention discussion and convention debate, the 1977 IS convention should prohibit continued organizing and propagandizing formally or informally for the core program of the "left faction". In particular, we should declare continued opposition to mass work and immediate goal of building a workers combat organization to be incompatible with membership in the IS.

To do this, the burden of proof rests firmly with the majority. Such declaration can not be made without good and compelling cause, and without full debate. Nor, however, can an organization establish its historic right to survive and succeed if it refuses to take such action when it is necessary and justified. The purpose of this document is to prove that the prohibition and the declaration of incompatibility are justified and necessary in order to defend the survival and growth of our political tendency in this country. If we fail to take this act, the ISUS will suffer a severe and possibly fatal defeat.

The Program of the "Left Faction"

On the surface the faction fight inside the IS is about "industrialization", "priorities", "second class citizenship", "mass work", Sadlowski, "militant minorities," "EC commandism", etc. But in this, like in any other faction fight, the program of the opposition has a political cover-- a coherent set of ideas that tie together the various and diverse issues in dispute.

The "left faction" constitutes a self-conscious middle class opposition. It must be characterized this way, not because of the class origins of its leaders and supporters-- a majority today of IS members of all tendencies are middle class in origin-- but because the program of the "left faction" calls for a shift in our political orientation away from the working class and toward middle class elements.

Leaders of the "left faction" defend the need for an IS shift to a middle class orientation by arguing that efforts in the coming period, to recruit, hold, and integrate worker members, and to start building a workers combat organization, are doomed to failure. They argue that American capitalism is healthy enough to dampen any substantial outbreaks of working class struggle for the foreseeable future. From this assertion, they reach the conclusion that the level of working class militancy will be too low to sustain IS efforts to recruit and hold workers and to begin to build a workers combat organization. If the IS continues on this "impossible" course, they argue we will only burn out our present cadre and set the stage for political degeneration and adaptation.

This explains why the "left faction" rejects industrialization, priorities, mass work, an agitational focus, etc. These are the specific means that the IS has adopted to progress toward our goal of building a workers combat organization. When the leaders of the "left faction" decided that our efforts to achieve this goal were futile, it made perfect sense for them to then conclude that the means adopted by the organization toward achieving that goal were wrong and burdensome.

When the "left faction" raises the slogan of "second class citizenship", they liquidate with a stroke of the pen, all the real problems of turning an organization like the IS toward doing systematic industrial and trade union work. It is the responsibility of the organization to help each comrade, no matter what their occupation, no matter what their class origin-- find a useful role in helping build a workers combat organization. Our record in fulfilling this responsibility is less than perfect. But, under the slogan of second class citizenship, the "left faction" appeals to those sections of the IS most alienated from our industrial work. This appeal is then used in an effort to mobilize them in a struggle against the IS orientation toward building a workers combat organization. It is because of this programmatic orientation that the "left faction" must be characterized as a middle class revolt against the admittedly

very difficult and very exhausting task of building a workers combat organization in this country at this time.

Leaders of the "left faction" tell us that in the coming period, what's most important is not who we recruit, but how many people we recruit. They believe that the greatest potentiality for recruitment in the next period will be among students, intellectuals, and white collar workers. They believe that so long as the IS ~~concentrate~~ concentrates on industrial agitation and the recruitment and integration of industrial workers, it will not attract those who they think can be most easily recruited. They view a policy of industrialization and the concentration on our industrial priorities as something particularly obnoxious to those they wish to recruit in the coming period.. They are for a propagandistic orientation and changes in the nature of the newspaper for the specific purpose of an orientation toward recruitment in the more highly educated and privileged sectors. For the, IS industrial work would become, primarily a showcase for middleclass recruitment. Therefore, effectiveness and concrete results count for very little-- abstract purity would count for much more.. The "lefts" accuse the majority of adaption to the backward consciousness of the working class. Their program, however, represents a crystal pure and intentional adaption to the consciousness of the radical petty-bourgeois and his/her preconceptions of the working class and the working class struggle.

Starting in 1969 and 1970, when the IS first started making our turn to the working class, there still existed in this country, substantial amounts of petty-bourgeois radicalism. It took an enormous struggle to turn the organization away from the illusion that we could make substantial gains by an orientation to these elements and their movements. Instead, where we successfully recruited out of petty bourgeois ~~radical~~ radical milieus, it was primarily on the basis of an IS reputation of excellent and serious trade union ~~work~~ and industrial work. And a large proportion of those who joined were willing and anxious to industrialize. Now, in 1977, petty-bourgeois radicalism in the U.S. has largely evaporated. To seek recruitment in this milieu would require the IS to establish its own niche in competition with the more experienced and established petty-bourgeois tendencies: the SWP, the Sparts, and the OL.

If the IS were to shift towards a middle class orientation, it would be a profound error, even if it opened up the opportunity for substantial numerical recruitment and growth. But the notion that the IS could grow rapidly by shifting to a middle class orientation, is in fact, the most ludicrous illusion the "lefts" are trying to peddle. To many of their adherents, the most attractive thing about the "left faction" is their promise that it is possible to remain in revolutionary politics in the US at this time, and find ~~an~~ an easy and comfortable berth. Unfortunately, this is not true.

INCOMPATIBILITY

There is little doubt that a large majority of the 1977 IS convention will reject the middle class orientation and program of the "left faction". But in our opinion, it must do more. The convention must prohibit continuing organizing and propagandizing either formally or informally to the core program of the "left faction" and must declare that continued opposition to mass work and the immediate goal of building a workers combat organization to be incompatible with membership in the IS. In taking this step, we are not challenging the right of comrades to organize factions. We are merely making two assertions: 1) To allow permanent discussion and permanent organizing for the core program of the "left faction" creates permanent destabilization of the organization and disruption of its ongoing work. 2) Comrades who continue opposing mass work and the goal of building a workers combat organization can not function as loyal, constructive, disciplined comrades. And besides, their very presence in the

organization can only demoralize those comrades who are putting their lives and jobs on the line for goals that the opposers declare are foolhardy and doomed to failure.

We are asserting that the incompatibility between the programs of the majority and that of the "left faction" is something we did not create, but that we can not deny. One indication of this is the clear fact that most industrial comrades of the majority would leave the IS if the "left faction" program triumphed. We believe the convention, if it is to fulfill its obligation for moving the organization forward, must come to grips with this fact, must take responsibility for it, and must have the courage to act on it. The alternative to that will be a permanently paralyzed and floundering organization.

The situation in Gary is ample proof of the analysis that the entire IS will find itself in, if the "left faction" remains in the IS past the convention. The Sadlowski campaign provides our front an excellent opportunity to advance our work. But those comrades in steel who are the hard and consistent adherents of the "left program" carry out a charade. They profess to be disciplined comrades and go through the motion of carrying out the majority perspective. But, in fact, they work to rule, seek factional points, and demoralize those actually striving to advance the work. Who but a Pollyanna or a professional mush-head would expect any other kind of behavior from politically hard "left faction" adherents? AND who but a liberal could demand that it is the comrades involved in steel, whose work is being demoralized and undermined who have sole responsibility for taking action against this kind of disruption? What gives the rest of the organization the right to sit back like impartial judges ~~wait~~ waiting to see the "definitive proof".

We allow this to go on today because the IS is in the midst of a faction fight. To seek disciplinary action against the hard "left" comrades in steel would ~~be~~ serve only as a provocation. In fact, most of the steel comrades who now adhere to the "left" faction do not do so in a full and consistent way. As long as the current debate and faction fight is in progress, our steel comrades must, not only attempt to advance our steel work, but at the same time, they must patiently try to win back "left" comrades to the basic majority views of the organization. But steps must be taken to prevent this fight becoming the permanent state of affairs inside the IS. When the convention resolves the issues in dispute, we must bring this faction fight to a final end.

It is the desire of leading members of the "left" faction to stay inside the IS following the convention, and to continue, informally if not formally, to organize and propagandize for the view that: 1) it will be impossible to recruit and hold any substantial number of workers in the next period; 2) that no progress can be made on the task of building a workers combat organization; 3) that the IS mass work perspective and agitational thrust can only lead to failure, demoralization, exhaustion of the cadre, and adaptation to working class conservatism and chauvinism; and 4) that unless the IS abandons its current perspective, rejects its agitational thrust and concentrates on propaganda and on middle class and white collar recruitment, the IS is doomed to failure.

We believe that at the time of the March Convention, the hard leadership of the "Left Faction" should be expelled. This should be a political expulsion based on the political incompatibility of their program with that of the majority, on their continued opposition to mass work and the goal of building a workers combat organization, and on the disloyalty and indiscipline that necessarily follow..

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Given the specific character of this faction, there is no way that hard adherents to its program could stay in the organization for the purpose of sincerely striving to help implement the majority perspective. The only reason they could possibly want to stay in would be to do entry work -- to ~~it~~ hope for and to take advantage of setbacks, to recruit and harden a cadre in preparation for a future split. These leaders have already demonstrated their ability to organize and carry out underground factional warfare in the IS. We would be criminally stupid to give them a chance to do it again.

Many members of the "left faction" joined on the basis of agreement with specific points in its program and are not fully committed to its core program. Many still engage in mass work, and still work for the goal of building a workers combat organization. We welcome these comrades to remain in the IS as loyal and constructive members.

We propose that after resolution of the political issues being disputed in this faction fight, the 1977 ISUS convention adopt the following motion:

1. Industrialization and industrial priorities are established policies of the ISUS. Organizing against these policies, formally or informally is prohibited until the 1978 pre-convention discussion period.
2. Recruiting and integrating workers~~xxx~~ members and building a workers combat organization are immediate and central goals of the ISUS. To accomplish these goals, the ISUS must put major emphasis on agitation and mass work among workers. Opposition to these immediate and central goals or opposition to major emphasis on mass work and agitation inside the working class are incompatible with membership in the ISUS.
3. Based on their continued opposition to mass work, a focus on working class recruitment, and the immediate goal of building a workers combat organization; and on ~~t~~ their consequent indiscipline and disloyalty to the ISUS; the following comrades are hereby expelled:

4. Others who have been members of the "left faction" are welcome to remain members of the ISUS and are encouraged to stay and to advance our goal of building a workers combat organization. We recognize that many members of the "left faction" are not firmly committed to the faction's full program and they could, with no subterfuge, remain members of the ISUS within the framework of points one and two of this resolution. In our view, the leadership of the "left faction" has neither the program nor the cadre to establish a new revolutionary socialist organization in the US at this time. We predict that most IS comrades who decide to leave the IS together with the leaders of the "left faction" will end up leaving not only the IS, but ~~the~~ revolutionary politics as well. We want you to stay. If you need some time after this convention to think it over calmly and rationally, you ~~can~~ have a period of 30 days to make up your minds. If you wish to discuss your continuing membership during this period, we will be available for such discussion.

An addition to this document is now being prepared and will be ready in a few days. It gives more evidence on the incompatibility of the two politics and the ~~ent~~ism of the "left faction".

We are fully this stand now ^{with} full understanding
that the left hand will see this as a provocation. But
the alternative is worse - to be blackballed by a ind.
unwilling to allow a situation to persist, in which a
seriously troubled committee in other times, would have remained on
leave and not burdened the org. with her own problems.
We have now imposed a moralistic discipline on the branch, since in
action has always been the criterion for jobs, work, & awards.
Whatever allowances for degrees of competence, we cannot be flexible on
security and work assignments -

or - if you do not work consistently if any, no gossip is ruled/
you will be suspended - immediately

Your capacity to mean literally anything got of which both -

~~[You played a leadership role, in this branch, and often was handled
tasks you were assigned. You were not considered a
and this was explained to you - any time - (insert 3)]~~