

# A reply to Peter Taaffe

*Greek Executive Committee*

*Athens*

*18.01.2019*

We can only express our sadness after reading the recent statement by PT and the IS majority, of 14.01.2019. The Greek EC produced a resolution (04.01.2019) aiming at clarifying and raising a number of political issues: First, in relation to an attack we faced and the distortion of many of our positions by the faction; second, on a number of political points that had come up in the discussion.

This resolution by the Greek EC was discussed and written by the Greek EC as a whole, not just by comrade Andros P, as the IS majority state. Other comrades wrote substantial sections of it and it was adopted unanimously. Referring to the EC document as the document of AP underestimates and insults the EC of the Greek section.

In this document we will not attempt to take up all the points raised in PT's statement, nor to reply to all of its' unfounded accusations – it would be impossible. Many of the things we want to say have already been taken up in our resolution of January 4<sup>th</sup>.

## On the accusations of the “abandonment of the working” class and “Mandelism”

PT and the IS majority accuse the Greek section of Mandelism, because of the supposed abandonment of systematic organized trade union work.

*“It is echoed in the arguments of the Irish leadership and others, like the Greek leadership, and is used to justify their abandonment of systematic organised trade union work both in Ireland and in Greece. Read what the Irish leadership has argued – now reinforced by the false arguments of the Greek leadership – that the trade unions are empty, in the unchallengeable grip of right-wing leaders, etc. and therefore it is necessary to seek a point of reference and work outside of these ‘moribund’ organisations.”*

However, nowhere in the statement an example or any sort of proof can be found to back this accusation. In the Greek EC Resolution of January 4 we described some of the main difficulties with trade union work and we explained why

*“...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!”*

We added that:

*“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.**”*

We also clarified that

*“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.**”*

To put it in PT's words, the Greek EC Resolution explains the way we continue “to work assiduously and patiently in the unions”, “while building our influence amongst the youth”.

One of the most important campaigns of the Greek section in the past couple of years was the public bus cleaners strike which we lead, helping the cleaners form a union and organising more than 40 days strike action, demonstrations, garage pickets, a 12 hour occupation of the office of the minister of transport ect. This campaign, which the whole of the International supported, sending many solidarity letters, went on for about a year and a half, often featuring in the national news.

Another important struggle with international dimensions was the campaign against layoffs in *Vodafone*. Our comrades lead the strike (both as leaders in the executive of the *Vodafone* workers' union and as rank and file activists) and our Xekinima branches organised pickets outside *Vodafone* shops. Once again the solidarity of comrades from the whole of the International played a very important role in this struggle.

Other examples of our work in the past few years include leading the occupation of the ministry of public health by mental health workers (workers we were the first to unionise) and social welfare workers. Also, our comrades played a leading role in the occupation, for nearly three weeks, of the Mayorality of Athens, by Council contract workers who were fighting for permanent contracts and against layoffs. The same comrades played a leading role in the permanent Council workers strike that followed a couple of years later. Our comrades in Athens public buses played a decisive role in the fight against the trade union bureaucracy which resulted in a general assembly of the workers voting in favour of an all-out strike and garage occupations (it lasted about a week). We also actively helped the strike and garage occupation of the metro workers, who the government forced back to work using marshal law. In CYTA (telecommunications) our comrades are among the founders of the union playing a leading role, despite the objective difficulties.

We also intervened in numerous struggles and strikes: garbage collectors strike, who also occupied the Athens landfill, the steel factory of Chalivourgia, NGO workers strikes, etc. We have also organised campaigns in solidarity with workers who are trying to fight cuts, lay-offs, etc outside the formal union structures (for example workers in H&M, "Plaisio", "Public", "Diamant", "Elia-Lemoni", delivery workers, to name only a few).

We have made numerous interventions in the heavy industrial zone around the city of Volos, where our organisation is well known and respected amongst the workers. Through our local Councillor, through intervention at the factory gates and through left wing shop stewards, as allies, even in the difficult period of defeat after 2015, we intervened in: the IMAS Continental strike, the Leventeris strike, the BIS strike and in disputes in Volos metal industry. Through this work we managed to elect a comrade to the Local Trades Centre (Greater Volos' federations of all Unions).

The above is not the whole picture but only part of our work among the working class and the unions over the past few years.

**Having said these however, we should stress that the huge majority of struggles have been defeated and in quite a few of the cases mentioned above not only was the struggle defeated, but the unions themselves were smashed and workplaces closed down.**

In the past two weeks we have been intervening in the teachers' struggle, which is an important struggle, although the numbers of teachers striking and demonstrating are far below the ones of the years before SYRIZA's capitulation. In addition our comrades in one of the unions in the Council of Athens are involved in a new conflict with management and comrades in NGOs that work with refugees are trying to organise new strikes against layoffs.

This work is done in a very difficult objective situation. Since SYRIZA's capitulation in the summer of 2015 the mood in Greek society changed radically with the feeling of defeat and demoralisation prevailing. This defeat led many working class activists to abandon the struggle. It also led all of the left wing organisations in Greece to face severe crises and numerous splits. "Xekinima" was the only organisation on the left to have kept its forces united, despite some losses, due to its generally correct approach and democratic procedures.

In 2018 we were able, at last, to recruit sufficient numbers to reverse the process of decline – this is something of crucial importance to the section.

## Youth work

Although we continue patient trade union work at the moment it is extremely difficult to recruit from this work. At the same time there are important openings in the youth, where we see some layers beginning to radicalize. Putting a particular emphasis on the youth, today, is not an abandonment of the working class, it is necessary in order to keep the organisation “alive” and to prepare for the future. This is something that ought to have been welcomed. Unfortunately it is used against us.

Referring to the past, after the split with the Mandelites, PT says:

*“We turned our backs on them and faced up to the task of winning the working class, above all the youth, to our banner, despite being a very small organisation at the time”.* (pg. 1)

This is precisely what we do. But if we had written, today, that we aim at “winning the working class, above all the youth” that would be another argument for the IS majority to accuse us of Mandelism.

This is also what we did on a number of occasions in the past, but PT refers to it by saying that he and the IS disagreed with the way we turned to the youth. What do they mean? The statement says that we had expectations in youth petit-bourgeois movements of the '90s.

The truth of the matter is that in the '90s there were no petit bourgeois youth movements to intervene to – we don't understand what the statement is referring to. There was an important school student movement in 1998 (a wave of school occupations) in which we intervened, with the small forces we had then. We were able to recruit some numbers in conjunction with our YRE work. We had few recruits, but more importantly, some of the leading comrades of the section today come from those school students of the late '90s.

What we intervened in, quite intensely, later, was the anti-war and anti-global movements of the first part of the 2000s. We had no illusions in these movements. We intervened because they provided a fertile ground for us to build. We grew from about 100 to over 400 in a few years – we were thus back on the map of the Greek left, after our collapse to less than 50 members in the '90s. The central role of the working class was never questioned. We built a sizeable section, and then turned *more decisively* to the working class and the Unions. We intervened in the youth and the movements, always, with a clear strategy to strengthen our position in the working class. This was true in the past, and it is equally true today.

However PT's statement goes on to say that

*“AP advanced the novel theory that so impoverished were students today, and particularly in Greece, that in effect they were ‘now like workers’.”*

**This is not true! Never did AP or any member of the Greek EC, develop any such ridiculous theory about the students replacing the role of workers!** It is one thing to understand that students live in poor conditions, have to work to finish their studies and end up in jobs of 700 € per month (this was before the 2007-8 crisis, now it is even worse) and it is another to see them as a substitute for the working class. This is so basic to Marxism that we do request the IS majority not underestimate our understanding to such a degree. At the same time we would like to stress that once again the IS majority gives no proof (no document, no transcript, no flyer, no article etc) to back this accusation

## On the IEC meeting

The IS-majority statement (page 6) claims that,

*“AP, in endless pages and interminable words” tries “to refute what all of us clearly heard in his contribution on the last day of the IEC. In his usual manner he also viciously attacked the IS.”*

The fact is that the IS majority and the E&W EC majority presented AP's contribution in a way that distorted his, and the Greek EC's, real position. The faction could have done something simple to prove their case: present the transcribed recordings to prove their case. They never did. The transcriptions were made by DB and GG and the transcript of AP's speech was made available to the IEC members by the Greek EC, as an addendum to our Resolution of January 4.

The transcript provides clear evidence. Anybody who reads it knows that AP did not advocate a defense of a federal CWI. However it seems that the IS majority have tied themselves in many contradictions over this issue. In page 6 of PT's statement, under "Record of intervention – the IS and Ireland" they write:

*"AP attempts in an extremely tortuous manner to separate himself from what he actually said... He first of all denies that he actually said what he said and then admits that:*

*'When the IS meet such an opposition from the NEC 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 position and opinion, including with other leading bodies of the International such as the IEC.'*"

**AP never denied what he actually said, he only demanded that the IS and the E&W EC do present what he actually did say. In PT's statement, the IS majority have, at last, quoted (from DB and GG's transcription presented in the Greek Resolution of Jan 4) a part of his speech that correctly reflects AP's and our position.**

But then, PT's statement goes on to say:

*"This is exactly how we behaved on many occasions – first of all trying to persuade the Irish leadership – but on this occasion, having met a brick wall from them, only then deciding to take the issue to the IEC, particularly because the 'cover-up' had created a new situation."*

**So, if "this is exactly how" the IS "behaved on many occasions" why was AP and the Greek EC accused, on the basis of this very speech, to advocate for a federal international and against democratic centralism?**

The contradictions continue (same page):

*"Ultimately, the Irish leadership admitted 'mistakes' even though this was exactly the wording that we used when we originally discussed this issue in London which they rejected and continued to reject right up to the time of the IEC. **If they had admitted their 'mistake' over the 'cover-up' at the beginning then this whole issue would not have taken on the sharpened form that it has.** (Our emphasis)."*

**But then of course the question comes up, for the faction to reply: if the crisis could have been avoided if the Irish comrades had admitted their mistake over the "cover up", then where are the differences of a fundamental and crucial character on principles and method which are threatening the CWI with a split?**

### Majority and minority

PT's says that the non-faction comrades should not pretend to represent the majority. We do not. We don't claim that we represent the majority in general. What we say is that at the IEC there was a majority and a minority on the vote for the final resolution: in this vote the IS was in the minority and we, together with the comrades from 13 other sections, were in the majority.

The fact that the IS found itself in a minority was of historical significance because it was the first time it ever happened in the history of the CWI. PT says this was accidental, because the Greek section had 4 IEC members, as many as the E&W (4 – Lynn Walsh not being present) that the Israel Palestine section had 2 etc... But he chooses not to mention that the Spanish section had 5 and the US section with between 850 and 900 members had only 1...

This statement claims, as all the material and argumentation of the faction does, that the Greek section together with other sections represent a “non-faction faction”. At the same time they write in their Platform:

*“The differences were then taken to the IEC meeting. It became clear at the beginning of the IEC that a group of leaders from a number of sections –initially, Belgium, Sweden and Ireland, then Greece and the USA– had been co-ordinating to oppose the IS’s handling of this question, **which is their right.**”* (para 29, Platform of Faction).

**If it is our right why do they raise it all the time? Why don’t they simply accept it and respect it?**

### Again on the liaison committee

The IS majority statement says that there was never an agreement on a “liaison committee” between AP and the 3 (not 5!) IS representatives: PT, TS and NM. All that was agreed, they state, was to investigate having a commission.

We do not understand the difference between a committee and a commission. The main thing is the substance of the proposal: the idea was for a group of comrades made up of IS and IEC members, approved/elected by the IEC, to visit Ireland for an extensive period of time to study the problems, and come up with proposals which could then be discussed and decided upon at the IEC. This was afterwards rejected by the three IS comrades. The IS majority say it was never agreed, it was only considered. Even if this is the case, the question remains: why was it rejected? TS in his email to AP (see resolution of January 4) explained that what had been discussed the day before was not possible because “*the Spanish do not agree*”. As we explained in the above mentioned resolution, TS did not write “*the rest of the IS comrades have disagreed*”, he wrote “*the Spanish do not agree*” and this is how he justified the change in the IS’s stance.

**Irrespective of the above, however, the proposal for a “liaison committee” was taken to the IEC through the Greek and Cypriot IEC members, in a letter to the IEC, on the Saturday before the IEC began. Many IEC members supported this proposal in the course of the meeting. The IS fought against it.**

Then the IS majority statement goes on to “explain” that our (the Greek comrades’) response was angry because we felt... betrayed by the IS. Thus they try to provide a psychological explanation for the opposition of the Greek section. No, the explanation is not psychological, it’s political: the liaison committee (or commission) provided an opportunity to find a way out of the crisis with the Irish section. It could allow and give time to the IEC to investigate, to look for proof to the accusations made and have a political discussion on the debated issues without “heat”. Yet the IS chose to ditch it. In other words it was going ahead with its initial plan to “crush” the Irish majority leadership. We had no choice but to react.

### The Threat of a split

Yet the main point PT wants to make and which underlines his whole statement is clear from the very beginning:

*“It is necessary to call things by their right name. Barely a month has passed since the IEC and yet it is already quite clear that **the CWI faces an opposition to the policies and programme of the CWI with tendencies towards petty bourgeois Mandelism.** This opposition **originated with the leadership of the Irish section**, but it is also present in the leadership of a number of sections of the CWI who support them. This is most prominently displayed in the recent lengthy Greek Executive Committee’s resolution written by Andros P, which **represents an open political retreat from the policies and analysis of the CWI.**”*

*“...We have characterized this as representing substantial **concessions to ‘Mandelite’ political positions on identity politics, the abandonment of the need for a revolutionary organisation based upon the movement of the working class and the internal regime and democracy of the revolutionary**”*

*party, and the revolutionary programme and perspectives that flow from such an approach.” (Our emphasis).*

And again in page 10, to site another example,

*“I explained to AP in one of the infamous ‘phone calls’ prior to the IEC that we and others have attempted, not over months but for years to try and persuade the Irish comrades of the incorrectness of their ideas on identity politics, on the programme in elections, including the transitional programme, on the party profile, etc... We met with a brick wall as we had done earlier in Scotland, Liverpool and many other examples of former comrades who were breaking from the revolutionary project and particularly the CWI.” (Our emphasis).*

These formulations, in our opinion, clearly push for a split in the CWI. If the Irish and “*the leadership of a number of other sections who support them*” have abandoned the need for a revolutionary organisation, the working class, the internal regime and democracy of the revolutionary party, the revolutionary programme and perspectives, etc, then obviously the basis of unity has (in PT’s opinion) been erased. And in order to clarify even further where this crisis is heading he adds the reference to “*Scotland, Liverpool and many other examples of former comrades who were breaking with the revolutionary project and the CWI*”.

**PT had the same approach, tone and line of arguments in the telephone calls he had with AP that are sited in the Greek EC resolution of Jan 4.** The conviction he and the faction-IS express in his statement, about the Irish section (plus the Greek and other sections this time) is the same he had expressed over the telephone to AP in Athens before the IEC: that the differences with the Irish majority were such that a split was inevitable and that the Greek comrades should support it. After every telephone call AP informed the EC about what was being said. That is how the EC is aware of what actually happened. PT’s precise words on both telephone calls were “*these people are on their way out*” referring to the Irish comrades. In these discussions AP went as far as explaining to the three IS members (PT, TS, NM) that if the IS “crushed” the Irish majority in order to build on the minority around Paul M., the end result would be a complete disaster, with nothing left for the CWI in Ireland. The reply of PT was that he was not convinced that they could not build around Paul M.

**Thus the Greek EC knew with absolute certainty that the IS was pushing for a split in Ireland and decided to fight against it with all our power. So, at the IEC, it was not the Greek section that put the issue of the split on the table. This had been put already by the IS in discussions with the Greek EC (and with other sections as we discovered in the process). The only thing the Greek IEC members did was to say the truth about what was at stake.**

At no stage did we attempt to cover up mistakes made by the Irish comrades, as the statement claims. Initially we agreed to the IS’s proposal to discuss the issue as is made clear in our resolution of January 4. At the IEC we had to choose to focus on what was primary and what secondary. What we did, once it was clear that the IS was preparing a split, was to defend not the deficiencies/mistakes of the Irish organisation, but the right of the Irish section to remain in the ranks of the CWI, despite weaknesses, deficiencies and mistakes.

### **The differences with Lynn Walsh in 2012**

We cannot take up everything the IS majority claim about the past. But some issues must be taken up. Like the “clash with Lynn Walsh” that the statement refers to, in the Summer School of 2012. The IS-majority chose not to present the full picture in its statement.

**Actually the clash was not only and not so much with LW. The clash was with Stephan Kimmerle and Lynn Walsh, both of whom were defending the position of the IS. It was not only about the issue of a “double currency” (in the process of leaving the euro to go to a national currency in the context of a socialist programme for a left government) it was on two issues: SYRIZA on the one hand and the double currency on the other. And, actually, the really important point of difference was SYRIZA!**

The statement tries to present AP as a wild person. There is a bit of a difference in opinions about this: The Greek comrades who were present at the School of 2012 think that SK, essentially, was so provocative, that AP's response was entirely justified.

Stephan K. had been in Greece a few weeks earlier. In an absolutely scandalous and bluntly bureaucratic intervention, he landed in the middle of a huge electoral battle (June 2012, working class and social battles still at their height – SYRIZA, in the end, lost the general elections to ND by only 2%) to question everything that the Greek section was doing: programme, tactics, organizational structures, etc! To the stunned leadership of the section he presented a completely new “construction” and he even went out of the EC to campaign for his “ideas”. The EC reacted and expressed its disagreements both about the substance of his proposals and about the timing. SK would not listen. SK did not even know the situation on the ground. His “edifice” was constructed in his mind before he had travelled to Greece and talked to any comrade. He demanded, among other things, that the Greek EC set a date for the re-entry of the Greek section into SYRIZA. The Greek EC strongly protested to the IS and SK was forced to stop his intervention. After this kind of intervention the Greek delegation went to the summer school to hear from SK the same narrative...

**Stephan Kimmerle was in Greece as a representative of the IS, not as an individual.** After SK's intervention the IS continued to defend SK for some time. The Greek delegation at the 2012 school had no idea about the differences of the IS with the Greek EC – the Greek EC had thought that the matter would not be raised openly. The IS never warned us that its members intended to raise these differences in the school... Today we all know where SK is. And we all know that the IS, after similar experiences to that of SYRIZA in other countries, accepted that our tactics were correct.

### On the poll tax, Terry Fields, Tommy Sheridan, CADV, Panther etc.

PT is annoyed by our reference to the fact that the Irish section is creating new traditions for the new generation, like workers' MP going to jail in defense of their class. He reminds us of Terry Fields, Tommy Sheridan and 34 other comrades who were jailed because of their role in the poll tax.

**We have never questioned the role that these comrades have played. We never questioned the tremendous historical importance of the poll tax movement and the role that the Militant has played in this. And we will never do. But we need to accept, at the same time, that these events are unknown to the new generations – we are not referring to our ranks, but to society. The most known public representatives of the CWI internationally today are comrades in the US and Ireland – they represent the thread that links the old traditions of working class representatives to the new generations.**

In a similar way, the attempt of PT (and the IS majority) to provide a counter weight to the successes of our intervention in the women's movement and other similar movements, by referring to the CADV, Panther etc, is unsuccessful. For one simple reason: you cannot answer today's issues solely by reference to what we did 20 or 30 years ago, irrespective of how important those steps might have been. Historical examples are useful but we need to discuss the character and the perspectives of the movements of *today* and our current intervention and approach to them.

### On the Euro and China

PT attacks us for remembering the differences over the Euro and China. We of course do not want to reopen debates from the long past. The only reason we referred to these and some other past differences was to remind the international organisation that there have been, in the past, and there are today, political differences in the ranks of the international leadership. That it is natural to have differences of this kind. And that such differences should not lead to splits. Splits should take place only when sections of our International cross over to the enemy camp, i.e. abandon fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism. Differences over perspectives of the Euro or China or tactical issues, etc, can be allowed to exist for quite a

while –until there is concrete evidence tested in practice, in order for the whole International to come to the same conclusions and strengthen our work– without putting the unity of the International into question.

On the issue of the Euro and China we do believe that the IS was slow to accept the reality of the situation. I.e. that the forces pushing for the implementation of the euro were stronger than the IS could foresee and that there had been a qualitative change in the character of the Chinese state that the IS was slow to admit. This is our opinion. The IS does not accept our opinion. We don't expect it to do so. We can live with that difference. But are we “allowed” to have a different opinion?

We never said that the Greek section was right on everything and we never defended the Swedish comrades on everything they said. **The point we wanted to stress is that we all make mistakes! The Greek leadership has made mistakes, the IS has made mistakes and all of us together in the IEC have made mistakes.** Yet, the issue of a split was never posed because of such mistakes. In the same way it should not be posed today. Mistakes will inevitably be made, but ought to be corrected in a collective effort.

However in relation to the euro we cannot but note two new points raised by the statement. The first is that, according to the IS majority.

*“It is true that one IS member, Lynn Walsh, raised questions about whether or not the euro would actually be implemented” (pg 10).*

The debate over the perspectives of the Euro went on for years. It was a heated debate. It even took theoretical dimensions with some comrades arguing that the euro was an impossibility because –as we all know– it was impossible for the bourgeois to overcome the nation state. Now, it is presented as... *“one IS member, comrade Lynn Walsh had certain questions”*... whereas, the reality is, the IS was backing the same positions as LW. But again, the main point is: despite the differences over a serious issue, like the perspectives of the euro, the unity of the CWI was never put into question. So why is it now?

Then, we have another accusation thrown at us:

*The cheap attempt at point scoring made by AP... may indicate that he and the Greek EC think that the capitalists will be able to unify the productive forces in Europe and overcome the insuperable barriers of the nation state. Such a perspective is utopian on the basis of capitalism, as we have consistently pointed out in our material particularly in opposition to the **Mandelites** and now, it seems, to some in our own ranks. (pg 11)*

**What can one say? Where did this come from? When did we ever write or say or even imply anything of the sort? No this is not our position, it has never been and it cannot be!**

Even in the present conditions, in which the euro was able to survive the 2007-8 crisis, we continue to stress (in our written material in Greek but also in IEC discussions) that the crisis of the euro is not over, it will return, and probably very soon, after the new inevitable recession in the global economy, around the Italian sovereign debt crisis, etc.

Comrades should note this method of argumentation however, which starts with *“may indicate that he and the Greek EC think...”* (not said, not wrote, but “may... think”) and ends with the accusation of Mandelism. In addition, as we mentioned above, the aim of reminding these debates is not to reopen them. The aim is to show that mistakes can be made by all of us, including the IS.

**The real question that is raised by PT's statement is: has the IS ever made any mistakes in its opinion?**

**On democracy in the Greek section**

PT writes, on page 8 of his statement:



*“We have had many differences in the British organisation, including the formation of tendencies and factions, and intense discussions over issues of perspectives, programme and orientation. We cannot remember any such discussions and similar differences within the Greek organisation. Perhaps this says something about the internal regime in Greece under AP’s leadership.”*

The IS majority ought to have known better. We will remind them of some instances that they choose to forget. In the elections of May 2012 the EC of the section was in favor of standing candidates with SYRIZA. This was raised at the national aggregate of December 2011. Niall M. was there, and the matter was discussed later on an international leadership level. In the end we did not stand in the elections. Why? Because there were differences raised in the NC and the rank and file of the organisation. Does this give the impression of an authoritarian regime in the Greek section? We had differences in the Greek organisation when we decided to enter SYRIZA in 2008. We had differences, or doubts in leading comrades in 2011 when we “left” SYRIZA. On many of the necessary tactical turns we made we had certain losses. But it is true that we did not have splits or major clashes. Is this something that can be held against us, or does the opposite perhaps hold, i.e. that it is an achievement that we ought to be proud of?

**Actually in the Greek section we believe that one of the reasons that we did not have splits in the organisation is precisely because we have a deeply rooted democratic tradition.** Differences are easily aired, there is a free atmosphere of raising doubts or differences in the branches and the leading bodies, of criticizing the leadership, etc. And there is no rush to “clarify” things if and when differences arise. It is well known that tactical turns lead to losses or splits. In the Greek section we faced so many turns in the past years that we could easily have had a number of crises in our ranks, as happened with most of the organisations of the Left. We did not. For two reasons. One is that we did not make serious mistakes – we made mistakes, but not serious ones. Second, we allowed time for the discussion so as not to pressurize the organisation. For example the discussion to enter SYRIZA lasted for some months. The same happened with the discussion to “leave” SYRIZA. Does anybody in the faction-IS think that in the present epoch it is possible to keep an organisation united especially under circumstances of a serious defeat of the workers’ movement by the use of authoritarian measures and by an undemocratic regime? Certainly not! Only by extensive democracy can this unity be maintained.

In the Greek section we also have a particular reason for having such extensive democracy: Stalinism is too strong in Greece and one of the most decisive elements for new people to join is to test the democratic “atmosphere” in the branches and at all levels of the Greek organisation.

As regards “independent thinking”, yes we admit guilt over this “crime”. Perhaps in Britain the petit bourgeois academics use the same term... We value it in its real sense. We do encourage independent thinking in our ranks. When new people join and very frequently ask the question “*how do I know that there will be no bureaucracy in your organisation, like in the KKE (CP) when you become bigger*” etc, our answer is:

*“there are no guarantees, the only guarantee is a high political level of the rank and file and a continuous check on the leadership; you should give no blank cheques to any leading body or any person, have confidence only in the structures of democratic control in the party, believe in no messiahs, the only guarantee is a high political level of the rank and file”.*

This is our answer to the IS-majority’s allegations about lack of democracy in the Greek section.

### **The role of PT and Ted Grant**

Both at the IEC meeting and in his recent statement, PT makes mention to his role and the role of Ted Grant. He writes

*“In the 1960s Ted Grant and I walked out of their world congress and subsequently broke with these opportunists. We turned our backs on them and faced up to the task of winning the working class, above all the youth, to our banner, despite being a very small organisation at the time. All of our present ‘critics’*

*would never have been able to discover the revolutionary perspectives and programme of the CWI if we had not resorted at that time to this bold move.”*

We welcome this reference to TG, because we believe that the contribution he made in his earlier days ought to be valued and respected – in the same way that Lenin respected Plekhanov’s earlier writings despite the fact that he ended in the enemy’s camp in his late days. And of course we do recognize and respect the role that PT has played in the building of the CWI – and we’ll continue to do so, irrespective of the outcome of this crisis.

But there is something we will not agree. And this is that if TG and PT had not turned their backs on the Mandelites in the ‘60s, as he states in the above quotation, nobody would have been able to discover the revolutionary perspectives and programme of the CWI. It is not only wrong, it is actually un-Marxist, to believe that the line of thought of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky would have been lost if PT and TG had not come into being. That is a very pessimistic approach in relation to the ability of the working class to arrive at revolutionary conclusions. Whether some of his critics today, would have played a role in this development, is of course a very secondary question – and nobody can claim to have the answer to this. PT was very correct in the past when he was explaining that the contribution of TG in the post war period was not just an individual contribution; that TG was part of a collective team that together developed ideas and that similar ideas were being developed even outside the ranks of the CWI by other revolutionaries in that epoch. In the same way, the CWI has come to where it is today as a result of a collective effort. If he or TG had not come into being, history would have followed a different course, but at the end of the day the working class would have still found its way to the revolutionary ideas of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

### **Way out of the crisis**

The character of the debate has not allowed us so far to have an in depth discussion on the issues, where differences have arisen. On the women’s movement, the differences are real but not fundamental and not deeper or more significant than the ones we have had in the past. On the question of the centrality of the working class and trade union work the faction has not produced in our opinion any document to testify any real and significant differences. It has produced documents with unfounded accusation against sections. On the national question and the united front the faction has not yet stated what the differences are. PT in his statement did not choose to clarify these issues. He chose to continue to accuse sections without bringing any proof to back his accusations, other than his personal authority, and dedicated a large part of his document to heavily attack and slander AP. AP is suddenly presented as a dictator, with rage outbursts, who distorts positions of comrades who disagree with him etc. Needless to say that not only do we strongly and utterly reject these accusations but we feel that they insult the whole of the Greek section. Because only a section with a very low political level would accept such a leadership.

We urge the IS majority to abandon this method and to produce documents that clarify the political differences that are in their opinion fundamental and to allow these differences to be discussed in a sober political manner. We would welcome a review by the IS majority of the tactics they have adopted in this crisis and a change in their current trajectory. For the Greek section the most important task in this crisis is to keep the CWI united on a clear Marxist program, methods, tactics and line. Differences can be solved as have been solved in the past.