



OCRFI, LTT and Bolshevik Faction. OCI leader Stephane Just even spoke of "enormous differences" (quoted in the OCI magazine *La Verite* no.589). As well as many historical differences associated with 16 years of having been in bitterly opposed organisations, there were live, current differences.

The OCI held Cuba was capitalist. The BF comrades had never been known to dissociate themselves from the USFI line that Cuba was a more-or-less healthy workers' state. The OCI is notorious for barnstorming denunciations of Stalinism, sometimes implying that social democracy is a progressive alternative to Stalinism. BF leader Nahuel Moreno had, in contrast, been noted inside the USFI for a semi-friendly attitude to Maoism, and in a recent polemic he had insisted that there was more democracy in the Stalinist states than in any capitalist country.

There were sharp differences on the Middle East. There were even differences on Nicaragua itself (to use, or not to use, the slogan of the Constituent Assembly).

These differences, surely, called for a full and honest discussion. Instead there was a bureaucratic stitch-up. There is no other way to describe it.

By late November, Stephane Just was declaring that the Parity Committee had a common political platform "of perfect (??) clarity... a clear and solid basis, which... should permit common political actions as from now" (*Informations Ouvrieres* 925, 24.11.79).

Pierre Lambert of the OCI quickly discovered that he had been wrong for nearly 20 years on Cuba. "For some comrades, this was a workers' state. I posed the problem a little differently. Of course, for me, Cuba was a workers' and peasants' government. But I considered that in the situation of collapse that had taken place in Cuba, the nature of the state could not be determined. In that sense I made a parallel with the Committee of Public Safety of 1793-4 [*in France*], which was an error since there cannot be a state which is neither workers' nor bourgeois" (*IO* 926, 1.12.79).

And Moreno announced, surprisingly to say the least, that "Since 1961, we have denounced the Castroite leadership as a petty-bourgeois leadership alien to the workers' movement, as alien as its strategy of guerilla war..." (*IO* 951, 31.5.80).

Even historical differences were stitched up. After insisting that the 1963 reunification was "positive" (Andreas Delgado, *IO* 926, 1.12.80), the BF finally consented to say that the reunification was "the product of confusion [and] speeded up confusion" (Parity Committee declaration, February 1980: *International Correspondence* no.2). And the whole Parity Committee was committed to the peculiar OCI theory that the productive forces have declined since World War 2, and to the views, or at least the rhetoric, of the OCI on Stalinism.

A common position was also taken on the invasion of Afghanistan... but a remarkably incoherent position. The Parity Committee argued that the opposition to the Taraki/Amin regime (in fact mostly tribal-based and backward-looking) was a deformed expression of the world proletarian revolution, and the



Founding conference of the new 'F.I.'

USSR's invasion, suppressing that revolution, actually served the interests of imperialism.

"The Kremlin bureaucracy thus made use of its presence to maintain the bourgeois semi-colonial state upright and, thereby, to maintain the link of subordination to imperialism..."

"The revolutionary wave which started in Iran could not fail to have destabilising effects in Afghanistan. While religion can be understood to serve as a means by which people express their feeling of nationhood, the movement which permits the rebellion against the central power is not a 'religious' movement any more than it is in Iran. It forms part of the general mobilisation of the masses in the region. It is directed against a state which remains a semi-colonial state..." (*International Correspondence* no.1).

"The rising of the worker and peasant masses of Afghanistan took place in the framework of the development of the proletarian revolution in the whole area, and is part of it" (*International Correspondence* no.2)

So the Parity Committee correctly assessed the invasion as reactionary — but it evaded, by constructing a mythical picture of events, all the real issues behind that assessment. It also evaded the logical conclusions from that assessment. It did not call for the withdrawal of the Russian troops! Stated reason: defence of the nationalised property relations in the USSR. But the Parity Committee itself noted: "a military attack against the USSR seems highly improbable" (*IC* 2). So how are the nationalised property relations threatened? — unless every setback to the USSR in world diplomacy and power-politics is to be considered a potential threat to the property relations, in which case 'defence of the USSR' would mean near-total subordination to the Kremlin's diplomacy.

The cracks in such reasoning have been stuffed with a sort of rhetorical ideological putty: "we are in the epoch of the impending world revolution... [a continuous] revolutionary rise [since 1943]... the process which is irresistibly driving the masses to oppose the exploitation of man by man... the process which is driving the masses towards the world socialist revolution... the inter-penetration of

the struggle of the masses tends to unify the revolution which is going forward... The revolution is going forward and will triumph" (*International Correspondence* no.2).

And so joint 'theses' were put together for the founding conference of the Fourth International (International Committee) — without the slightest real open discussion ever taking place. (These theses are not available to us at the time of writing).

1953, FOR ALL the confusion involved, was a split produced by a genuine, living effort to grapple with the political issues, on both sides. This 1979-80 realignment is more like a bureaucratic swapping of alliances between some of the powerful nationally-based groupings which have dominated all would-be 'Internationals' since the breakdown of the early '50s. The politics and the theory have been squared after the event. The impulse which the Nicaraguan revolution could have given to clarifying the revolutionary movement has been stifled. An opportunity has been missed.

But there are lessons to be drawn, and there will be people to draw them. Now there are two would-be 'Fourth Internationals' of comparable weight, no-one can stake a claim to be the authoritative centre of world Trotskyism purely on the basis of organisational inclusiveness. Any such claims must be argued out politically. And the argument can hardly fail to make it clear to many comrades that there is no Fourth International today, no authoritative centre of world Trotskyism. Much of the theoretical, political and organisational work necessary to build a real revolutionary International remains to be done. It must be tackled seriously — with theoretical and political dialogue which confronts the real problems, with work to establish a real intervention in the workers' movement where we have the chance to do that, and with collaboration where feasible. Neither of the two now-dominant blocs in world Trotskyism, neither the USFI nor the FI(IC), is stable. New workers' struggles, new political issues, will break up the patchwork alliances. And when they do, the experience of the Parity Committee will stand as witness that the Trotskyist movement needs, not 'reconstruction' in the form of organisational jugglery, but thoroughgoing political and organisational regeneration.