

Letter to CR and DJC, June 4, 2012  
From EB, CdB, SH, and DW

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to express our political difference with certain portions of the document that was recently published in HWRS's name in the newspaper being published by the RWG of Zimbabwe. First, let's review the history of how this document came into being.

On Friday May 18, SH gave a presentation at the meeting regarding the current situation in Greece. During the ensuing discussion, no one expressed the view that our program should include advocating that workers vote for Syriza, or giving Syriza critical support. On the contrary, EB expressed the view – with which no one present disagreed – that such support would be a misapplication of the concept of a united front, which properly should involve joint action, not an electoral bloc. EB's statement reflected (though it did not explicitly refer to) our longstanding difference of opinion with Dave B. and the CWG-NZ regarding the issue of critical support for bourgeois workers' parties. This difference of opinion is one of the reasons we are in a liaison committee, rather than a democratic centralist international, with the CWG-NZ and the RWG-Zim.

On May 22, CR sent to NewWoVo an email soliciting a volunteer to write a contribution to the RWG paper, per their request, and suggesting that it could be a statement on Greece. On May 23, DJC sent a rough draft of a statement on Greece to NewWoVo, under the title "Re: Help Working on it". DJC's May 23 draft said nothing about voting for or supporting Syriza. Here is what it did say on the subject of Syriza – which was consistent with the discussion at the branch meeting, and with which we agree:

Consider how SYRIZA is modeling for a new role as a Social Democracy, already forgetting their pose of a month ago as opponents of the Eurozone troika. Encouraged by the victory of Hollande in France and his "pro-growth" Eurobond ideas, and likewise cheered by some hollow pro-growth quotes from Obama at the NATO summit in Chicago, SYRIZA is now looking to win votes at PASOK's expense. It is turning rightward and suggesting that Greece can pay what it owes the French and German banks, if only it could have better terms. Therefore tendencies who prescribe this united front government formula now are deluding the workers, in our view, and that's what we'll repeat until or unless they organize workers councils and workers militias and make dual power a fact right away, preparing to sweep away the bourgeois state once and for all.

On May 24, responding to some comments on his draft by CR, DJC sent an email to NewWoVo suggesting some changes he was prepared to make. Nothing was said about Syriza in this email. However, on the subject of a potential popular front government that could include PASOK and/or the KKE, DJC opined that "There will be no shortage

of ‘Trotskyists’ who will support such a government,” and concluded that “So we everywhere want to look as different from these currents as possible in Greece right now, and really show the workers that if they were to elect such a bloc their work to replace it with their own power would still be just beginning.” Again, these statements are consistent with the discussion at the meeting, and we agree with them. In the same email, DJC indicated that after he revised the draft, “We can then send it to Dave. He might not like this draft, judging by the facebook exchanges we have had. I get the idea that he is ADVOCATING a left united front of the workers parties and unions for the June 17th elections, and I don't know whether he means including PASOK.”

On May 25, in response to an email from CR that was not sent to NewWoVo, DJC again sent an email to NewWoVo indicating that he was going to work on the draft again that night. In that email, DJC said: “Dave is saying we should adopt the RCIL statement, which I will have to find and read again. He is calling for a critical support vote, for exactly whom I'm not sure, and presumably that's what RCIL says.”

Later on May 25, CR sent DJC a revised draft (which CR did not send to NewWoVo), and DJC responded (in an email titled “Re: hope i didn't butcher it”), “Outstanding! You fixed this up much faster than I could have. Probably better, too. I still think Dave won't like it, but let's see what he says. And let's keep in mind that it isn't imperative that we agree on an electoral tactic.” This version of the draft contained the following statement regarding the June 17th elections: “We oppose these elections. They are an exercise in preserving the bourgeois power under and behind a 'democratic' subterfuge. Only on condition of the formation of a genuine workers parties' united front for the expressed project of forming a ‘Workers Government,’ and excluding of the PASOK, which is a bourgeois-workers party, would we have anything to do with the national election or offer candidates support of any kind.” It also retained the passage criticizing Syriza, as quoted above. Again, we are basically in agreement with this version of the draft.

The version of the draft statement on Greece that was included in DJC’s second email to NewWoVo on May 25 was the last version that was distributed to the membership before the final statement went out. No member expressed any objection to this draft, and in the absence of any such objection, members were entitled to assume that no significant changes would be made in it before it was finalized for publication. At no time did DJC or CR send any email to NewWoVo in which they indicated that the final document would not be consistent with the earlier drafts in its political analysis or program.

Then, on the morning of Monday May 28 (the Memorial Day holiday), either CR or DJC (using the public HWRS email account) sent to NewWoVo an email containing the final version of the document. This version included the headline “**WORKERS GIVE SYRIZA A CRITICAL SUPPORT VOTE, BUT DON'T TRUST THEM AT ALL!!**” It urged workers to vote for Syriza, with the rationale that “Electing SYRIZA will confirm their limitations for all the workers to see.” On June 1, CR sent NewWoVo an email

attaching the final version of the text of the RWG-Zim's newspaper, which includes this version of the document.

Not until June 3 did the HWRS membership learn what had transpired between the last version we saw of the draft (on May 25), and May 28, when a very different final version of the document was sent to the RWG-Zim for publication. On June 3, CR forwarded to NewWoVo an email regarding the logistical and financial aspects of the RWG-Zim's publication process. Attached to this email was a thread of email correspondence which was not shared with the membership via NewWoVo at the time it was exchange. This thread reveals that on May 27, Dave in NZ sent an email to CR and DJC, which they did NOT forward to NewWoVo, in which he advocated the view that the correct program for Greece would include critical support for Syriza, on the ground that putting Syriza in power would expose it to workers who retain illusions in social democracy.

The thread is obviously not a complete record of what transpired. The next item in the thread is from Dave in NZ, dated May 29, in which he states: "OK, Dan and I agreed on his second draft which reluctantly agrees to the critical support tactic." If there was any email correspondence between DJC, CR, and Dave between May 27 and May 29, it is missing from the thread.

The upshot of all of this is clear. From the history of our relations with Dave, CR and DJC must have been aware that the question of when it is appropriate to give critical electoral support to bourgeois workers' parties is one on which HWRS and Dave have significant political differences. Moreover, DJC himself took the position (correctly) that it was not necessary that HWRS and Dave agree on an electoral tactic. Nonetheless, **without any notice to the members until after the fact that this discussion was occurring, or that there was a possibility that material political changes in DJC's last-distributed draft were being considered**, DJC and CR allowed Dave to persuade them to make dramatic political changes in the content of a document published in the name of HWRS.

This course of action was undemocratic. Worse, the resulting document is politically unacceptable. Our understanding is that HWRS's position is that workers should not give any support, including critical support, to Syriza in the upcoming election.

We propose the following course of action for discussion at the next meeting:

- (1) Formulation of a statement retracting the objectionable portions of the final statement on Greece.
- (2) Publication of this statement through distribution to all known recipients of the document sent to the RWG-Zim and/or of its newspaper, and through posting on our Facebook page.

(3) Issuance by the membership of a reprimand to the members of the EC for their undemocratic conduct in changing the political content of a document to be published in HWRS's name, in a manner they knew or should have known would be highly controversial, without revealing to the membership in any way that any such change was even under discussion.