

June 25, 2012

Dear Comrades of CWG and RWG,

We are writing you to clarify our affiliation to the Liaison Committee (LC) and to initiate a serious discussion about where the LC is going.

As you know, there has been a factional struggle inside HWRS. The minority in this struggle, comrades CR and DC (formerly the EC of HWRS), deserted HWRS without first engaging in any discussions on the differences with the majority. Unfortunately, the two other members of the Liaison Committee, CWG and RWG, have remained basically silent about this struggle. The only response we got was from Dave of the CWG, who has taken a partisan position in favor of the defunct EC. This is understandable, to a certain degree, since the CWG agrees with the defunct EC's position on Syriza. Yet Dave appears to have lost overall objectivity. In his letter, he went beyond merely supporting the minority's position on Syriza, and abdicated his responsibility, as an international leader, to try to bring CR and DC back into HWRS's pre-congress discussions, which they refused to attend or participate in unless the majority accepted their draconian, Stalinist-type constraints and procedural maneuvers.

Dave has taken the position that "*abstaining from [the recent Greek] election would be a sectarian crime.*" For a long time we (as well as the CWG) have understood that we have significant programmatic and methodological agreement on key questions, while our differences on critical support for reformists are merely tactical. Even former HWRS EC member DC, in an email written during the drafting of the EC's Syriza document, acknowledged that critical support for Syriza was a *tactical* question on which HWRS and the other LC members did not need to have the same position. But by elevating our position on Syriza to a "crime," Dave implied that these are differences of principle, not just tactics. Unfortunately, this position only gave CR and DC more excuses for not engaging in **ANY** substantive political discussions with the members of HWRS.

On the one hand, Dave wrote that "*Of course the rewriting of the document [on the Greek election] should have been subjected to debate among all the membership,*" thus correctly indicating that the position on Syriza which comrades CR and DC contributed to the RWG's paper in HWRS's name was arrived in an undemocratic fashion. On the other hand, we think that Dave contradicts this correct perception by also stating that "*. . .the process[by which the EC arrived at its position on Syriza] that followed was highly productive, even if it meant that HWRS with its stretched resources had to come up to speed rapidly.*" We ask: how was the process productive if the EC **did not** discuss the Greek elections in a democratic fashion before they published it (in RWG paper)? As importantly, it is an undisputable fact that even after they had circulated their position on Syriza as the public position of HWRS, comrades CR and DC refused to discuss the Greek elections as well as other differences that they have with HWRS. Instead, they deserted the group and refused to attend any HWRS meetings.

Instead of taking a biased position on the factional struggle, we think the CWG should have shown **objectivity and maturity**. These are critical international traits for revolutionary internationalists. When there is a intense factional fight, the first obligation of internationalists is to calm down the atmosphere and **insist** on the need to discuss the differences before any premature split. We think that such internationalism is even more important when the CWG supports the political position of one of the factions (in this case, critical support for Syriza). In such a case, true internationalism requires more objectivity. Yet the Liaison Committee and the CWG have failed to provide this critical component of internationalism.

Dave also said that the fight within HWRS over critical support for Syriza was very healthy. Yet he failed to urge his factional partners to discuss this issue, and the rest of the differences, with the majority. How can a fight over critical support to Syriza be healthy if the faction whose position Dave supports refused to participate in any substantive discussion of the issue, resorting instead to bureaucratic and infantile maneuvering? The Liaison Committee has so far failed to criticize the draconian, Stalinist-type (and honestly completely ridiculous and stupid) organizational measures taken by the defunct EC **to prevent any discussion**. In our letter to CR and DC about their desertion from HWRS, which was posted on HWRS's Facebook page on June 17, we explained in a completely clear fashion why the EC's conduct was so undemocratic, and why it caused such a premature split, undertaken without any substantive discussion. Yet we have heard nothing from the CWG or RWG in response to our critique of CR and DC's unconscionable behavior.

This silence only exacerbates the present situation. CR now is claiming that he and DC are HWRS. They are calling themselves HWRS(EC), and CR is already trying to create confusion inside the workers' movement by claiming to be a member of HWRS while we have made it clear that he is not, because he deserted our organization as a coward who refused to participate in any discussion of the differences.

Meanwhile, in our work with a coalition to "Shut Down S.F. MUNI for Kenneth Harding Jr." (a black youth murdered by the S.F. police for riding public transit without a ticket), the "HWRS(EC)" is sowing confusion, and misusing the "Shut Down" organizing meetings as their forum for the factional discussion they ran from inside the HWRS. We will fight for and speak for communist clarity whenever and wherever. But CR's rightist confusionism will not be of any aid to our attempts to explain and fight for an indefinite general strike movement. LBB and HWRS have fought for and earned a reputation as the serious black, brown, red, yellow and white revolutionaries in the Bay Area workers' movement. In the US workers' movement, where black and brown radicals and militants are suspicious of "white" communists, CR's antics and trajectory will not help any version of HWRS. CR does not only creates confusion between himself and HWRS by claiming to be in HWRS, but he also claims to speak in the name of LBB. We told you that he and CD decided, bureaucratically without discussions with the membership of HWRS, to circulate publically that HWRS supported SRIZA in the Greek elections. He conducts himself in a similar fashion toward LBB. CR decided to circulate material that he wrote

himself in the name of LBB. He circulated the LBB's material that he wrote undemocratically without discussion or consultation with LBB. This is a caning factionalist behavior that only creates confusion

To date, CR's interventions regarding "Shut Down MUNI" are being carried out in a manner that will only confuse and aid the centrists and reformists in derailing these grass roots and pioneering attempts at militant workers' self-organization. This will not enhance the tradition and reputation of Revolutionary Trotskyism, especially when advocating to the workers in the transit unions that they organize class struggle caucuses. Does the LC think that Comrade CR's CAPS "caucus" – a typical centrist union electoral slate lash-up, as discussed below – should or can be held up as an example to illustrate concrete class struggle caucus work? If CR had his way, the only thing the militant workers we seek to educate would come away with is that the only difference between supposed Revolutionary Trotskyists and the reformist-centrist-opportunist left is that we are smaller – and less capable.

The LC also has not said anything about the other issues in dispute. The differences in other areas are even more about principles than the issue regarding the Greek elections; indeed, the other differences, not the Syriza question, were really the primary reason for CR and DC's desertion of the organization.

Take the trade union question, for example. CWG and RWG have received all the EC's documents. In CR's documents on CAPS (CR's union) and Contact Work, CR practically bragged about his method and position on work in the trade unions. He spells out clearly that in his view, it is acceptable, and practically imperative, that we participate jointly with open supporters of the Democratic Party in slates and caucuses in the unions. This right-wing position was never the position of HWRS or our organization in the 1990s. It is a basic ABC principle that one *never* runs union slates or creates union caucuses with open supporters of the Democratic Party, which is openly bourgeois, and one of the two dominant imperialist parties in the US. What will the advanced workers think of us if we run candidates in the unions with people who openly support the Democratic Party, after we have told the workers for years that the unions must *break* with the Democratic Party? The advanced workers that we try to win over would think – and rightly so – that we are not revolutionaries but a bunch of opportunists. It is difficult for us to understand why the CWG and RWG have remained silent about this after receiving the EC documents on the matter, and the sharp denunciation of this rotten position by the rank-and-file of HWRS. True revolutionary internationalism requires political intervention when one side crosses the line and defies a basic principle of revolutionary Marxism.

CR ran for office in his union, CAPS, as part of a three-person slate in which one of the other two members (GC) openly stated in his candidate statement that he supported a Democratic Party politician's position *opposing* a law to make it easier for unions to organize. GC stated: "***I do place the rights of the individual above those of the union, thus my support of [Democratic California] Governor Brown's decision to veto the recent 'card check' bill, a decision***

protest[ed] by many unions and [Democratic Congresswoman] Nancy Pelosi.” (Bold added.) GC was clearly taking a position against union organizing rights and in support of union-busting measures by Governor Brown.

After the election, it became clear that GC not only supports union-busting by Democratic Party politicians, but also harbors anti-communist views, and is totally confused about the difference between communism and Stalinism. In an email entitled “*Suspended CAPS member wants answers*”(May 4, 2012) Cosentino wrote: “*During my disciplinary hearing, [union] President Miller said I was a ‘threat to the security of the organization.’ Wow! [W]hen I heard that, I could only be reminded of the Communist rulers who crushed any hint of democracy for the ‘security’ of their country.*”

If anyone committed a crime, it is comrade CR, who **hid** his alliance with an anti-communist, anti-union, pro-Democratic Party slate member from HWRS. CR either never put GC’s candidate statement on his CAPS caucus website, or removed it after finding out that we had discovered what he did. In joining a union slate with GC, CR compromised HWRS’s principles, and hid from us that he had done so. For this, we could have expelled him, though we would not have done so if he honestly admitted that this was a very bad mistake on his part. But by deserting the organization, he avoided being confronted with the implications of his unprincipled union work.

Now CR and his political partner, DC, have declared themselves to be open political enemies of HWRS. As we wrote above, they are trying to claim the right to represent themselves as HWRS by calling themselves HWRS(EC), and by refusing even to admit that at best they are an external faction that we do not recognize. So far, the CWG has committed mistakes by either siding with CR’s faction or remaining silent. We request that you change your attitude. Not only are we the majority of HWRS, but more importantly, only we have maintained the historical continuity of the theory and principles of our organization, which can be traced back to the 1990s. CR was always the right wing of the organization. Now he is running away from discussions on the differences, claiming to be “HWRS,” and adopting political positions that contradict and are hostile to the historic method of HWRS, and to a great extent the Liaison Committee’s own principles. This should not be tolerated by a principled international, even if it is not democratic centralist. **We therefore request that you recognize us, in writing and publicly, as the only organization with a legitimate claim to be HWRS, even though you support the defunct EC’s position in regard to the Greek election.** This will help greatly to eliminate confusion in the workers’ movement, and it will give credibility to the LC as a principled grouping.

The LC is composed of small groups. Unfortunately, in groups of our size, it is a critical issue whether the most developed comrades, those with vast theoretical and international experience, are healthy and active. Dave wrote that HWRS is “ostensibly the strongest group in the LC.” Unfortunately, this is not the case. The most developed comrade in HWRS is sick and, to a great extent, has not been able to function during most of HWRS’s existence. The CWG is much

stronger, which is reflected in the ability of CWG to produce a bimonthly paper, as well as to produce almost weekly proclamations on major international events.

It is true that the majority in HWRS is not thrilled about regular joint declarations with RCIT/RKOB. The reasons for this are simple and straight forward. We don't see a serious move foreword by RCIT on the fundamental reason for our separation from RCIT: the counter-revolutions in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and the RKOB's support for the reactionary forces that engineered these counter-revolutions. The HWRS and CWG both consider that a group's position in regard to these counterrevolutions is the major acid test, in the 20th century, that separates revolutionary Trotskyists from fake Trotskyists. For many months prior to the split, only one member of HWRS, comrade CR, was in favor of a major orientation toward RCIT/RKOB.

Yet these differences should not cause a major rift within the LC. These are normal differences in a healthy international. Only the evolution of RCIT will decide who is wrong or right in regard to the approach toward RCIT. Our real concern in regard to the LC is that it has remained weak, and more or less stagnated, since the split with the FLTI. There are good reasons why it is called a Liaison Committee: We are very far from the development of a revolutionary international with a clear method and program. When we split from the FLTI, we decided to rewrite its 23 points, because they were not well written. We need a clear program that shows the revolutionary method behind the programmatic slogans. We need a program that reflects our advances in the course of the split from the FLTI, and clearly and totally breaks from the FLTI's dogmatic centrism. Having our own program that reflects the real evolution of true Marxists is a critical building block for the regroupment of revolutionary forces. DW was the person who was suggested to write this, even though it should have been clear that that he was too sick to undertake this task. Yet no one else has stepped forward to complete it in his place, including Dave, who would be the best person to draft such a revolutionary program.

Over time, as DW's illness persisted after the split from the FLTI, the CWG understandably developed the impression the HWRS was not serious about international work, and thus that CWG was forced to carry the lion's share of the international work. The truth is that comrades CR and DC are not equipped to formulate a revolutionary international program. They lack the Marxist clarity and talent to write such a program, or to develop revolutionary positions for major world upsurges in the class struggle, such as the Arab Spring. Even though the international situation was a regular point on the HWRS weekly meeting agenda, comrades CR and DC put their energy primarily into local and national events in the class struggle (with the exception of their recent letter to CoRep on regroupment and on the proposal for a common bulletin).

For the LC to survive and become a real revolutionary alternative to left centrism, it must change its functioning. We suggest a weekly or at least bi-weekly phone or Skype meeting in which we examine, via productive discussions, the differences within the LC. In these meetings, we should

try to clarify the best tactics to win over left-moving centrists. We must find a way to create an energetic motor for the LC. Occasional electronic correspondence will never accomplish this. We must also find a comrade capable of international travel. No international can ever be built by agreements on documents or joint declarations with others. To understand the real contradictions in left moving groups, we must get to know the players in person, so as to assess their contradictions as reflected in the dynamic of these groups.

Comrades of CWG and RWG: Today, the LC is a very loose committee based on programmatic agreements which were arrived at four years ago. These programmatic agreements are based on the emergence of Chinese imperialism and the meaning of the latest international crisis of capitalism. We agree that the growing international recession/depression has not occurred because of the financial crisis, but rather because the financial crisis is a reflection of the crisis of the productive forces, which have nowhere to go now that Chinese imperialism is challenging the domination of the US-led Western imperialist bloc. These understandings are an important positive development for revolutionary regroupment. We need to go forward and deepen our agreements and understandings on the current crisis and the possibility for global revolution, which of course includes China, where the workers and peasants are revolting against the grip of the new Chinese capitalists with their Stalinist-type brutality.

We need to advance our agreement and understanding on how to approach left centrists and on many other critical questions. The LC must go forward, first and foremost by improving the internal life and communications within the LC. Regular meeting by Skype or phone is the first step to avoid misunderstanding, and to honestly assess our method and positions.

Comradely,

DW and CD

For HWRS