

MOTION ON BF'S ANALYSIS OF THE USSR, OTHER COMECON COUNTRIES AND CHINA

This motion on so-called socialist regimes is being put to conference in the belief that sufficient time has gone by since the publication of Century of the Unexpected for debate/discussion to have been possible.

Events over the past year (i.e. Afghanistan and Poland) make clear the need for BF to have a position on the so-called socialist regimes: whatever our differences over state collectivism, we needed to make clear our support for Polish and Afghani people in their struggle against oppression. Also, we need a position on these regimes to make clear to those sympathetic to our politics our conception of socialism and communism - which is very different from the organisation of life to be found in the oppressive regimes of Eastern Europe.

There are at present within BF at least two interpretations of state collectivism - this motion does not come down in favour of one or the other. On the other hand, it is to be understood that the position put forward in this motion is not compatible with either a 'state capitalist' or a 'workers state' position.

MOTION

1. The mode of production of the COMECON countries and China is state collectivist: that is neither capitalist nor socialist: nor in transition from the former to the latter (nor vice versa).

2. State collectivist regimes can be progressive to the limited extent that they get rid of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition etc. But in the wider sense of 'progressive' which must involve the idea of real control by workers and peasants of every facet of their lives - state collectivist regimes are not progressive. Because they do not institutionalise structures of proletarian democracy, they give no purchase to the idea - central to socialism - of worker/peasant power.

3. That the relationship of one state collectivist regime (e.g. the USSR) to another (e.g. Poland) can be one of exploitation and oppression. And that in this case the main enemy of the progressive forces in the latter regime is the ruling class of the former.

4. That the main determinants of Soviet foreign policy are the needs of the USSR state - as it works out its relationship towards the imperialist camp and to China. This is what determines Soviet support (e.g. for the MPLA in Angola, ZAPU in Zimbabwe) or Soviet attack (e.g. on the EPLF in Eritrea) on national liberation movements. Not any commitments of the Soviet state to any progressive and/or socialist values.

Hardy (Leeds), Roberts (N. London)

MOTION ON POLAND AND EASTERN EUROPE

BF sees as of immense importance the victory of the Polish working class on the issue of independent trade unions.

It sees possible threats (i.e. Soviet invasion) to this victory and commits BF groups to make work around Eastern Europe one of the foci of their international work.

Hardy (Leeds), Roberts (N. London), McKenzie (L'pool)