

## *Greetings from the Bureaucratic Robertson Regime*

The fusion between the New Zealand Permanent Revolution Group and the North American Bolshevik Tendency (BT) was first announced publicly on 2 June 1990 at the Lutte Ouvriere fete outside Paris. Ten days later James Robertson, the Spartacist lider maximo, felt moved to write to Wolfgang H., a long-time Trotskyist militant, who had been both a leader of Robertson's German affiliate, and later, the Gruppe IV. Internationale. Ostensibly the occasion of the letter was Gruppe IV. Internationale's break with the majority of a grouping based in the former German Democratic Republic. This group had earlier split from the German Spartacists.

The real intent of the letter is clear from the abrupt reversal it contains on the characterization of the Gruppe IV. Internationale. Previously, the Spartacists had called this group "the German ET" (ET was the short form for the "External Tendency of the iSt," precursor of the Bolshevik Tendency). Comrade Wolfgang himself was referred to as "the ET's Wolfgang" the first time the Spartacists mentioned the existence of the Gruppe IV. Internationale (*Workers Vanguard*, 2 March 1984). As recently as February 1990 the Robertsonites were lumping the two groups together in their ongoing smear campaign against the BT:

"Of the state agencies in the world only the Mossad, the Israeli secret police, has similar appetites. Although they claim to be a separate organization the West German GIVIs have operated as the knowing cohorts of the BT, keeping whatever political differences they have an internal secret."

Now suddenly Robertson finds himself taking time out from his busy schedule to invite a founder of the "German ET" out for a drink, noting that the Gruppe IV.

Internationale is not really so bad after all, merely an "ordinary, sometimes left, centrist formation." While it is easy to see the motivation behind this crude attempt to put a wedge between the two organizations, it is hard to imagine why Robertson thought that after seven years of slandering both the BT and Gruppe IV. Internationale, any of the latter's supporters would be favorably impressed by his sudden solicitousness.

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12 June 1990

Dear Wolfgang,

After I started this note I was told that you're not the GIVI leader anymore, but it's still worth saying. Greetings from the "bureaucratic Robertson regime". I just read your "Afterword: ONE STEP FORWARD—TWO STEPS BACK". You shouldn't whine and snivel in public. If you'd paid attention to what we wrote, you would have known that the Ladaists had unsavory proclivities. We found out and now you have. At least, as an apologetic on our part, we didn't know anything about them at the time; you did or could have.

Yours is an ordinary, sometimes left, centrist formation. You personally I always thought to be an old-time left-Pabloist who never otherwise jelled; remember how we argued across Germany and France debating reconstruct vs. rebirth (of the FI)? Your pals in the BT are something else and you have kept your mouth shut.

Maybe we could have a drink sometime over this and other matters.

As Bush says, keep out of deep doo-doo.

Best,  
Jim Robertson