

Day schools on the history of the AWL

Sunday 3 December 2006, 13:15 to 17:30, Sebbon St Community Centre, Sebbon St, London N1.
Saturday 16 December 2006, 12:00 to 17:00, Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds.

Reading (in order of priority)

1. Pages 40ff of "We Stand for Workers' Liberty"
<http://www.workersliberty.org/node/5741>
2. The revolutionary left in the mid-1960s (introduction to a reprint of "What We Are And What We Must Become")
<http://archive.workersliberty.org/publications/readings/trots/militant.html>
3. "What We Are And What We Must Become" (founding document of our tendency, 1966)
<http://archive.workersliberty.org/publications/wwaawwmb/index.htm>
4. "Our traditions: where the AWL comes from" (our 1995 conference document)
<http://www.workersliberty.org/node/5146>
5. "The Trotskyist Tendency and IS" (our experience as a tendency in IS/SWP, 1968-71)
<http://www.workersliberty.org/node/6319>
6. "The Labour Party in perspective"
<http://archive.workersliberty.org/wlmags/wl28/labour.htm>
6. Other material in the "AWL history" section of our website
<http://www.workersliberty.org/taxonomy/term/417>

Discussion points

1. Origins

- a) What did the revolutionary left look like in 1964-6? In Britain? Internationally?
- b) What are the main defining political issues outlined in "What We Are And What We Must Become" and still relevant today?
- c) In 1966 we saw ourselves as "Cannonites". After developing politically; changing our views on some things (e.g. on the class nature of the Stalinist USSR) and learning more about the history, we have said that we now see more to be learned from the rival tradition of US Trotskyism in the 1940s, the Workers' Party. What is still valid in what made us see ourselves as "Cannonites"? In what ways did we have a misunderstanding of what "Cannonism" was? What are the positive things to be learned from the Workers' Party tradition?

2. The IS-SWP experience

- a) In 1966 we still felt ourselves quite distant from the SWP (then called IS), which at that time insisted it was not Trotskyist or Leninist. What changes in the SWP/IS made us want to take up the unity call of 1968? Were we right to do that?
- b) What were the main things we argued about inside IS/SWP? Why, and on what issue, did they eventually throw us out, in 1971?
- c) The SWP of today is very, very different from the SWP/IS of the 1960s. In what ways was 1971 an important turning point along that road?

3. AWL and the British labour movement

From 1978 (when we started the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, geared to the 1979 election) to 1990 (when the Labour Party banned Socialist Organiser) we were heavily involved in the Labour left.

Compare, contrast, and relate to the different circumstances of the different periods:

- a) What we said about the Labour Party in 1966;
- b) What we said about the Labour Party in 1978-90;
- c) What we say about the Labour Party now.