

Declaration of a Faction Smith

Matters arising... Elvis

Article on the witch-hunt from Merseyside Labour Briefing,
by Chris Erswell (inserted for information)

Documents from the TILC meeting
April 21-24

Report on the TILC meeting OC

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No. 52
No. 51
No. 50
No. 49

Correction to IB no.49:
on page 7, under the heading
Britain 1881-1890, it should
be "Europe 8", not
"Europe 42".

Articles for the next IB should be sent to the centre, if possible
typed A4 on Roneo stencils.

To the E.C.

Dear Comrades,

I am declaring a faction for the following reasons:

- 1) A process of political discussion has been completed up to the second conference which revealed sharp differences on all major aspects of orientation in Britain including the L.P., trade unions, women and youth. The September special conference established equally sharp differences on imperialism, which clearly imply differences on international questions not yet discussed by conference, such as Ireland and the Middle East.
- 2) Now the discussion has been completed, the internal situation of the movement, which has been wholly factional for some time, should be recognised as such.
- 3) Comrades Carolan, Hill and Kinnell, who now control the majority leadership of the organisation, have a hardened factional approach to those now in the minority. This is exemplified in IB 35, IB 58, their voting in relation to the Glasgow resolution which called for the leaders of the I.T. at the conference to be expelled, and the far-reaching Party Building document which they attempted to get on the agenda without prior discussion. Amongst other things, this document appears designed to outline the way the new majority leadership will take control of the organisation over coming months. This situation cannot be countered other than in an organised way.
- 4) The political basis of the Faction is IB 48, IB 34, Hunt's youth document and the documents we presented for voting in the September special conference.
- 5) The Faction rejects any idea of splitting from the WSL. We will work to build the WSL and at the same time fight for our political positions. From this point of view we condemn the actions of the RWL and LOR in the TILC conference, particularly their declared aim of splitting the WSL and their resolution on the internal situation in the WSL.

Comrades are invited to join the faction. Some have already done so and I will submit a list shortly.

Smith
27-4-83.

"MATTERS ARISING...."

Comrades _ Three points arising from the conference have come to mind which i feel need to be raised in order to (hopefully) clarify certain issues which for me at least seemed problematic and troublesome. I claim no certain or finished solutions to these but intend in this short contribution to perhaps go a little way in beginning a discussion.

Point 1 _ Firstly, the issue of positive discrimination raised vocally and so frequently by certain comrades preceding debates. Well, what do we mean by this notion? What does it entail, and what for us are the logical consequences of such an interpretation?

Briefly, for me positive discrimination is a structural device to aid specifically oppressed groups within society enabling them to have access to rights, not reflected directly by their changing numerical size in an organisation, but proportional to their size within society as a whole. However, there is more to it than just simply that. Implicit in and essential to this concept is the recognition of differing forms of material and ideological oppression that these groups face, and so thus is also a device to help them build confidence in combatting their oppression, and in making an organisation more habitable for them - i.e. making all members aware of this specific oppression in order to help them in realising the nature and importance of it and so consequently the need to challenge it.

Now before applying this definition we have to recognise firstly the distinction between minority groups and specifically oppressed groups; secondly, the differences between various forms of oppression; and thirdly, whether where we agree with the usefulness of positive discrimination should it be applied universally i.e. to all organisations?

My view is that positive discrimination is not fundamentally a device for minority groups (if this were so logically this would lead to the ridiculous notion of any arbitrary nominative term being used to classify such minorities and thus the receipt of positive discrimination) but for socially specifically oppressed groups - whether these be minorities or not.

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Now groups that suffer specific oppression are many, for example women, lesbians, gays, blacks, youth, disabled, etc. yet the oppression faced - as I am sure all comrades would agree - is different in each case. This being so, do we then apply positive discrimination for all of these, and within a revolutionary organisation?

I would argue that whilst we do support positive discrimination generally for the above, we do not for all the above within our own organisation. Positive discrimination within our own organisation - a revolutionary marxist Leninist group - should be applied only for women. Now before some comrades possibly start accusing me of racism etc. let me explain further.

I believe that sexism flowing from women's oppression is the oldest and most deeply ingrained specific ideological oppression, and that all men - whether revolutionary or not - oppress women. Revolutionary men are, or should be, more aware of and thus more able to combat their sexism, yet until the material base of this ideology is completely destroyed i.e. the family and private property, on a world scale by socialist revolution then I think that the influence of our patriarchal-capitalist social relations and thus our own experience of socialisation cannot entirely be overcome, since there still exists for male comrades (despite strenuous personal struggle) the material and ideological benefits of the oppression of women in society at large.

On the other hand, black people bear an entirely different oppression, arising from very different material premises. Racism as an ideology can be more effectively combatted and overcome by comrades since there is no benefit from the material basis of this which can sustain oppression for us as class conscious revolutionaries. I feel that in our own organisation black comrades are not racially oppressed by other comrades, since racism is a fundamentally different problem to sexism. Likewise for other specifically oppressed groups.

However this does not mean to say that we do not apply preferential speaking rights at particular times when for instance for black comrades when discussing anti-racist work, or for youth comrades when discussing youth work, or industrial worker comrades when discussing industrial perspectives etc. The difference here being that the occasion dictates this, and not a group that we perceive to be oppressed in and by society always automatically having such a right at all times within our organisation.

In other words i believe that the use of positive discrimination by and for revolutionaries is only meaningful when applied scientifically where necessity requires i.e. in the case of women, but should not be misapplied so as to become the norm for all other groups of specifically oppressed comrades - such a use would in effect be the renunciation of the strict application of marxist theory for bourgeois notions of apparent fairness and liberalism.

Point 2 _ During the debate on the M.P. reasons were given by some comrades to justify or account for our tactic/strategy of entryism - reasons seemingly accepted by the conference whichever M.P. document supported. . . . Namely to be in a milieu where there is a noticeably developed, or developing, or potentially developing left-wing current which we can work with or alongside, organise, and recruit individually or in small numbers i.e. the conception of party building (in the numerical sense) being our prime motive force.

Well comrades, for me the above is important but it is not all, or in fact for that matter the main reason why we are in the M.P. What is missing from the above is what the major task of revolutionaries is - to change consciousness i.e. to transform present working class consciousness to revolutionary consciousness. How do we go about that in Britain in the 1980's?

Today we are faced with a labour movement and working class historically besotted by the twin obstacles of reformism and Stalinism. We have to combat this. Certainly i think we do not, in fact cannot, change the consciousness of the working class purely by propaganda measures i.e. simply preaching to them (an often repeated act of Young Hegelian idealism). Some comrades will say the answer lies in Lenin's "What is to be done" - revolutionaries being involved in worker's struggles at the point of production trying to politically develop, strengthen, and generalise such struggles on a class wide basis via the use of transitional demands. Well yes, but i do not think unfortunately that this alone is sufficient, although obviously necessary.

This century has seen the development and consolidation of a strong bourgeois political party orientated towards the working class with its notions on the one hand of national interest and solidarity (instead of class), gradual betterment of living standards and of production carried out under more "humane" control (instead of the abolition of the wage-labour system), and of a professional bureaucratically run welfare and education system (instead of one based upon working class self-activity and organisation); and on the other hand its practises of compromise and class collaboration. In other words reformism on a society wide scale. This we see expressed in the material embodiment of the social democracy of the M.P.

In order to best challenge this reformism we have to attack its material base. We best do that by being in the M.P. not to transform it into something different - into a revolutionary party - because i do not believe that is possible, but to undermine it and eventually destroy its hold on the working class. In that way, and that way alone, can we best hope to change working class consciousness on a mass scale. More concretely we go about this by sharpening and exploiting the inherent contradictions of the M.P. in such ways for instance of fighting for party democracy and accountability, by challenging and exposing the careerists and leadership, and showing up the bankruptcy of its politics by taking the M.P. out to community and industrial struggles etc. And of course since there is a close inter-relationship (organic link) and similar bureaucratic procedures and methodology to the trade unions this can but only aid our struggle in the rest of the labour movement. In other words as has been stressed in previous debates we do labour movement work in our task of raising working class consciousness

So lets move away from the notion of temporary entry into a social-democratic party simply to recruit members to our organisation - as advocated by Trotsky in the 1930's - to a more all round and sophisticated view of tackling a generalised and entrenched reformism.

Point 3 - Finally i want to take up the comments of some comrades concerning working class youth, in particular black youth, having no illusions in the M.P. - comrades, have we ? We wouldn't be in the League if we had.

What we do in relating to youth, as revolutionaries and as members of the M.P., is to use the resources it provides but to give them our solutions, our politics, in answering their crisis(not those of the M.P.'s) - and through contact with them we can patiently show and explain our method of work and our aims i.e. why we as revolutionaries are in the M.P. and the reasons why they as working class youth at the sharp end of rightward moving capitalist anti-working class measures to overcome their slump, should be in there as well.

We do not say join the M.P.(or its youth section) and your problems are solved, but we consistently through our involvement with them begin that process of bringing them closer to us, and thus to our method of work in and out of the M.P.

To conclude i would like to make clear the implicit intention of this contribution which is more than just simply being the above mentioned 3 points. I feel that it is vitally important and necessary for internal bulletins to promote and reflect a healthy and active internal party life. Since fusion we have had lengthy periods of no party wide discussion, then a sudden flood of pre-conference I.B.'s containing material produced by a small number of comrades of a generally theoretical(and not so theoretical) polemical nature.

Perhaps now is a good time to introduce a change, and i would invite comrades especially those who had no opportunity to speak at conference to begin this developement.

ELVIS (Coventry 17/04/83)

*** I've noticed a number of inadequacies in the points above whilst typing this out - but what is here is ^the contribution i would probably made if i had spoken i.e. first responses.

Why has the witch hunt begun?

The purge has begun. The expulsion of the five "Militant" editorial board members on the eve of the Bermondsey by-election demonstrates the contempt of the NEC both for the democratic right of "Militant" and for the electoral success of the party. The NEC have played a consciously cynical role in ensuring the defeat of Tatchell. It amounted to sabotage of the election campaign, resulting in a Liberal victory.

Tatchell faced a full scale Dr. Goebbels-style smear campaign from the media and the political opposition centred on anti-gay bigotry. The Labour candidate fought a courageous and uncompromising campaign only to be stabbed in the back by his "own" party leadership on the eve of poll. A more criminal note could not have been played by the leadership if the NEC had consisted of a set of cloned Ramsey MacDonalds, Phillip Snowden and J. H. Thomas's.

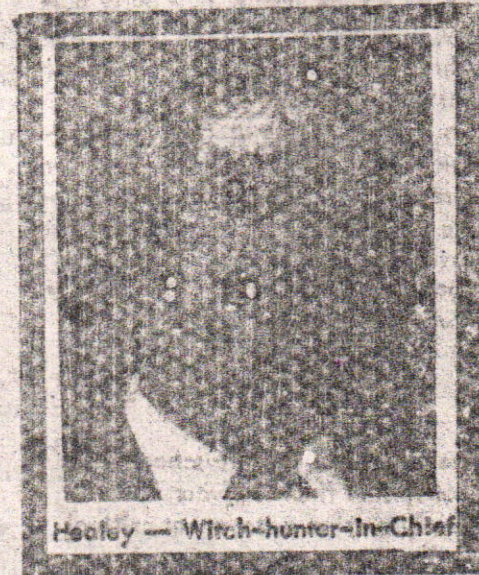
Tatchell is not a revolutionary by any stretch of the imagination. He is very much a left reformist radical. By "extra-parliamentary activity" he meant little more than CND type peaceful demos and liberal protest actions. And neither are "Militant" a "revolutionary" organisation, despite the fairy-tale media articles accusing them of wanting to overthrow capitalism by force. A quick glance at their pamphlet "What We Stand For" reveals a peaceful reformist strategy in which the transformation of capitalism would be "carried through in Parliament by means of an Enabling Bill" (p. 23).

But, however much serious socialists might be sceptical about the ability of either "Militant" or Peter Tatchell to provide the necessary political answers in the struggle against the bosses and their agents in the leadership of the Party; it is just as true that their muddled opposition to the right wing acts to destabilise the Party and make it an unreliable instrument in government for controlling the working class, should the bosses need it as an alternative to Thatcher. In the present crisis this is doubly problematical for the bosses.

In order to resolve the declining position of British capitalism with respect to Japan, West Germany and the USA, a new redistribution of the semi colonial world between the imperialist powers is necessary. This must go hand in hand with the overturn of the nationalised property relations and the reintroduction of capitalism in the Eastern block - hence the cold war offensive, the nuclear arms race, and the drift towards a third, and final nuclear world war. The growth of the CND - influenced left within the party, again makes the ruling class uneasy about the usefulness of Labour in office as a stable instrument of capitalism.

The witch hunt is designed to curb the left in order to re-impose "stability" in the party so that it can carry out its function as an instrument of imposing wage control and war on the working class. The danger in the witch hunt is that the left organisations will choose to abandon the policies needed for the defence of the working class in order to avoid expulsion, instead of stepping up the attack on the pro-imperialist, pro-NATO witch hunters in the Party Leadership and their "left cover" (e.g. Benn's loyalty speech at the conference).

However, the danger of nuclear war can only be combatted internationally. More than ever before, the international working class needs an international party with a common international democratic program and a common international discipline, that it is necessary to effectively combat and disarm world imperialism and Stalinism, before they destroy us. The size of this task must not prevent us from doing the maximum to achieve this goal now.



Healey - Witch-hunter-in-Chief

It is not without significance that one of the items on the witch hunters' register was a question about whether groups were prepared to renounce all international links in favour of the pro-imperialist Socialist "international". This sham "international" that has collapsed at every serious test since the First World War, is merely a front for organized chauvinism. Trotsky's fight for the construction of a genuine international party - the Fourth International - should be the fight of all Labour activists, if they are to have any chance of defeating world imperialism's cold war drive, and to avoid the treacherous duplicity that Peter Tatchell has experienced at the hands of Her Majesty's loyal opposition of pro-imperialist flunkies. If we are forced to vote such a gang of reactionaries into government, it is merely because we consider it the best method of giving them sufficient political rope to hang themselves in the eyes of those workers who still have illusions in them; nothing more, nothing less.

Chris Ewell

DOCUMENTS FROM TILC 21-24.4.83

1. Morrow resolution at EC 23.4.83

The Executive recognises that the position of the majority leadership of the WSL is for a split in the TILC and the WSL as demonstrated by IB35 and their voting at the WSL Conference on the question of the expulsion of the I.F.

This position is entirely consistent with their view of the LOR, RWL, TAF and the I.F. and others as hopeless sectarians.

We recognise that the position of the LOR is equally consistent with their characterisation of the WSL majority as centrist.

Faced with this irreconcilable division the WSL recognises that the logic of both positions is a split in TILC and WSL.

Rejected by 1 vote (Morrow) to 9

2. WSL Declaration to TILC 24.4.83

The WSL Executive Committee registers before this meeting of TILC the strongest possible condemnation of the statements by both the LOR and RWL delegations of their organisation's avowed intention to split our organisation - substituting organisational measures for political debate.

We cite in this regard Cde. Franco's statement on Friday that

"We are here today in order to accelerate if possible the split in the WSL".

This was followed by Cde. Leland's statement that

"I appreciate the frank statement from Franco, which we support".

Later in the same discussion Franco pointed out that

"We have not wanted to split the WSL since July. The position was adopted at a CC of our organisation in January and a national assembly in February, where it was approved unanimously".

Leland in turn amplified the RWL stance, declaring

"After assessing the positions of the Carolan wing as right centrist, revisionist and national Trotskyist, and seen the positions of that wing prevail decisively in 2 conferences and elections to the leadership, how light-minded would it be not to be thinking of splitting the WSL and TILC from these positions politically.

"We do not propose administrative measures to eliminate individual comrades: but to the extent that these views prevail it would be ridiculous not to see that the positions we object to and the comrades who hold them are inseparable".

Such statements of intent to split a fraternal organisation in a common international grouping, made in the course of debate - albeit in calculated and deliberate fashion, might seem simply as a provocation. But the fact that they reflect - at least in the case of the LOR - the considered view of whole organisations shows that what is involved here is rather a symptom of the profound sectarian degeneration of forces within TILC.

We would point out that the split perspective outlined here takes place without the comrades making any attempt to prove that normal political discussion on a national and international level is impossible with the WSL. There have been no barriers to such discussion. The attitude of the LOR and RWL to the healthy democratic centralist WSL stands in stark contrast to the struggle some of us waged against Healyite sectarianism in the WRP. Then - against a party apparatus and regime ruthlessly crushing the slightest sign of political debate, we insisted upon exhausting every possibility to argue our positions - and for the reorientation of the party as a whole: our factional struggle was halted only by our bureaucratic expulsion. Now, with no restrictions at all upon the free flow of debate within the WSL and within TILC, it is the LOR and RWL who make the bureaucratic call - for an organisational split. And there is a double standard involved for while the LOR seeks tactically to fuse into a common Trotskyist organisation in Italy with the Mandelites - within which they will be a minority proportionately smaller than the British IF - they advise any co-thinkers they may have in Britain to split an existing Trotskyist organisation and become a splinter group.

3. RWL/LOR/TAF resolution to TILC 24.4.83

1. We urge the current minority in the WSL which, at the April 1983 WSL National Conference, put forward the positions of FP MP policy in Internal Bulletin 48, and the positions on work among women in IB 34 to form a faction to fight against the right-centrist and revisionist tendency led by comrade Carolan.
 2. We urge this new faction to work together with the Internationalist Faction already formed in the WSL to wage a united theoretical and political struggle against the right-wing centrism and revisionism in the WSL.
 3. The RWL/US, LOR/Italy and TAF/Denmark promise to provide their full support to such a factional struggle in the WSL.
 4. Before the democratic-centralist transformation of TILC in autumn 1983, the RWL, LOR and TAF will systematically raise for discussion within TILC a series of issues, related to this theoretical and political struggle and urge the factions in the WSL to take part in the necessary debate around these issues, including:
 1. the economic crisis
 2. Turkey.
- * The continuation of this resolution was omitted by error in the typing and will be found on page 4 of these documents

4. WSL declaration to TILC 24.4.83

The TILC meeting has voted:

- a) to give a vote to two Chilean comrades who do not represent a functioning group;
- b) to deny a proxy vote to the Australian section, which is an established and functioning group.

Over and above the technicalities, what is involved here is an organisational continuation of the political intention expressed by the LOR and RWL to carry out a sectarian hi-jacking of TILC and to try to promote a split in the WSL.

The WSL declares that it recognises no validity to the subsequent votes of this meeting.

5. "Internationalist Faction" statement to TILC, 24.4.83

Comrades,

At the December TILC Conference an International Tendency was established in TILC which included in its aims a clear commitment to 'fight the revisionsim in the WSL'.

The Internationalist Tendency (now Faction) was established on precisely that basis. During the past three months, despite a campaign of slander and intimidation against us culminating in a series of concocted disciplinary charges against us individually and collectively, we have fought to combat the revisionist trend in WSL and to re-orientate the League to a clear, consistent revolutionary class perspective.

At the time of the December TILC Conference the revisionsim and political crisis of the WSL was apparent (not least in the positions of the Matgamma leadership on Imperialism, Permanent Revolution, Ireland, Stalinism and Social Democracy) but this had not been codified into a set of openly revisionist perspectives for the organisation.

At our National Conference last weekend, however, the political degeneration of the WSL reached a new qualitative level in the adoption of a series of political perspectives for the organisation based on the revisionist, liquidationist politics of the Matgamma leadership.

The WSL has now definitely abandoned its revolutionary orientation to the working class on the basis of a struggle for leadership in the class around the fight for transitional demands. In its place is substituted a centrist,

liquidationist course of adaptation to left reformism and petty bourgeois feminism. The bankrupt majority leadership of the WSL has, therefore, politically forfeited its right to speak for Trotskyism in Britain. To allow the open, explicit revisionism of the WSL to continue to disrupt and ultimately drown TILC in its political crisis would be an act of folly. The WSL leadership has already given notice of its factional, disruptive intentions by its attempt to cobble up its own pseudo 'international' faction on the politics of the Matgamna WSL leadership.

When TILC was formed in 1979 it was committed to the struggle to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of a conscious fight against the revisionism which had fragmented and programmatically disarmed the World Trotskyist Movement. That fight against revisionism is now a life or death struggle for the TILC itself, since its majority section has capitulated to the revisionism of Matgamna, who now infects the very heart of TILC in the WSL based TILC Secretariat.

We urge the delegations present at this TILC Conference to repudiate the openly revisionist politics of the WSL leadership, systematically prosecute the fight against this revisionism, and drive all trace of revisionism from the TILC Secretariat by replacing those who have abandoned Trotskyism or are incapable of defending it with comrades who are committed to the building and development of TILC on the basis of consistent Trotskyism.

Only on this basis can the TILC survive the political crisis and degeneration of its British section. Only on the basis of a clear, ruthless principled fight against the revisionism in our midst can the TILC emerge, politically strengthened to continue and develop its struggle for the reconstruction of the F.I.

6. WSL declaration to TILC after vote on RWL/LOR/TAF resolution (above) 24.4.83

The resolution just voted on is one that is clearly outside the terms of reference of TILC as a framework of fraternal and serious discussion between Trotskyist organisations. The WSL therefore no longer recognises the present assembly as a meeting of TILC. We will continue to organise TILC on the basis of fraternal and serious discussion as it was originally established.

RWL-LOR-TAF resolution (document 3) continued

3. The Malvinas war
 4. Ireland
 5. Palestine
 6. Poland
 7. Work among women
 8. The Labour Party
5. It is the view of the RWL, LOR and TAF that such a theoretical and political struggle can end only with a victory for orthodox Trotskyism by winning the majority or with a split in TILC.
6. We urge the leadership of the current minority in the WSL, basing itself on IBs 34 and 48, to form a bloc with the Internationalist Faction to stand united to defend themselves against any disciplinary measures taken against members of either group by the current majority, in particular expulsions. If any comrade from either group is expelled by the majority, both factions should respond with united action.

REPORT ON THE TILC MEETING APRIL 21-24 Carolan

TILC -- in its old form -- ceased to exist last Sunday afternoon, 24th. In line with a decision taken by the EC (everyone bar Morrow) the previous evening, the WSL delegation declared the TILC meeting ended and left the meeting room, after a resolution had been passed calling in effect for an immediate split in the WSL.

The delegation read out the following declaration:

"The resolution just voted on is one that is clearly outside the terms of reference of TILC as a framework of fraternal and serious discussion between Trotskyist organisations. The WSL therefore no longer recognises the present assembly as a meeting of TILC. We will continue to organise TILC on the basis of fraternal and serious discussion as it was originally established".

Carolan explained what the WSL's attitude meant and did not mean:

"We are not abstaining. We are not voting on the grounds that it is outside the competence of TILC.

We do not recognise these procedures. You have hi-jacked the meeting, and thus rendered its proceedings null and void".

The delegation then left, taking the minutes with them despite protests and demands that the minutes were the property of those who remained. We said:

"These are our minutes, TILC minutes. We will send you a copy".

These events were the culmination of four days of wrangling and manoeuvring which demonstrated beyond doubt that TILC was irrevocably split. They brought to an end the chapter in the history of TILC which opened with the admission of the RWL-USA in mid-1981.

The leading committees of the WSL will be considering exactly what to do now, as will our co-thinkers in the USA and Australia. They will be deciding whether to endorse what the EC and the delegation decided, and what steps we will take to salvage and develop our international work.

The situation now is that we have not walked out of TILC. We refused to tolerate the hi-jacking of TILC by an unprincipled bloc of sectarians who are -- *avowedly* -- bound together for now only by their opposition to the WSL and by the common goal of splitting it. As Leland put it:

"Kinell says it is unprincipled to factionalise without political agreement. The statement does not do that. It mandates discussion of eight points. Some of these are particularly divisive in the WSL now in ways which reflect the principled political division between the 'Carolan tendency' and both the undeclared tendency of the old-WSL leadership and the IF. It is also necessary to gain clarity on what differences exist among all the different sections of TILC prior to democratic centralism.

"These differences are beside the point. The resolution specifies that unless the process is completed there should not be such a fusion conference.

"It is the other points of the statement that refer to the call for formation of a faction. In urging a joint fight together with the IF we imply political agreement for it. The resolution says that a group of organisations and tendencies which share a common critique of Carolan can unite on that basis alone to wage war".

We refused to accept the transformation of TILC into something radically different to what it has been. The March NC decided to declare an international faction in preparation for these developments. A body such as TILC has been will therefore probably be continued, resuming the work which the sectarian intervention of the RWL threatened to short of working by way of political discussion towards the development of an international tendency bound together by a common discipline.

The main relevant events of the weekend were as follows.

The conference began at 6pm on Thursday 21st. Present were the WSL, RWL, LOR, and a representative of the FTT, the group formed by the former SLDC comrades ^{now} out of the RWL with which they fused in 1981. (The December conference had decided that these comrades were individual members of TILC, against the bitter opposition of the RWL-LOR bloc). The Danish representative did not arrive until Saturday; the sole TILC member in France, who has one vote, also arrived on Saturday.

The tone was set by a bitter wrangle about whether comrade Rosemary H, whose husband Jim H was present according to the December 1982 ruling, should remain in the room. The RWL called for her to be asked to leave because she had not been in the RWL. She had been in the Workers' League (IC-Wohlfarth) and the SLDC, and is now working with the FTT. We won the vote to allow her to stay (LOR and RWL versus WSL, i.e. 5 to 6). The Hackney group, being split, did not vote, although people from both sides were present.

The next incident followed immediately. A number of WSL IF members had arrived, including Morrow. In the course of the afternoon, before the TILC meeting began, Morrow had taken part in a caucus meeting involving the RWL, LOR, Hackney group comrades, and a Chilean comrade.

Morrow requested the right of the IF to participate:

"I want to ask for speaking rights on behalf of the IF as a distinct political tendency".

He claimed that the IF were the only people at the WSL conference to defend TILC against 'blanders'.

Jones objected that Morrow should not have raised this in the TILC meeting, but should have approached the committees of the WSL. Carolan asked Morrow to explain the request in the light of the WSL conference decision to forbid the IF to affiliate to the RWL-LOR international tendency, or to engage in any collaboration with them except under the direct supervision of the WSL NC and EC. Morrow replied that they were not asking for rights to join the international tendency, but to express their views as a WSL faction.

Morrow was supported by Leland of the RWL in a long speech.

Jones pointed out that delegations did not normally include minority representation.

The meeting recessed to allow the WSL delegation to discuss the matter. When it reassembled Jones announced that the delegation had decided to reject the request for the Faction to have independent representation and to forbid the Faction to speak as a Faction. However, the regular practice of sympathetically considering any request for speaking rights from minority views on specific questions would be adhered to by the WSL delegation. (Morrow had accepted this as an interim arrangement).

He announced that the WSL EC would meet to discuss the matter the next day.

The LOR then proposed, and it was agreed, that the conference would recess until the WSL EC had met. The LOR argued that the issue was so important that conference could not continue until a decision had been reached. The RWL and LOR announced that they would wage a major fight on the issue: the RWL said it would move a motion that the Faction be allowed to speak regardless of the WSL EC decision.

The issue here in principle was whether or not the WSL was to be allowed to exist as a democratic centralist body with jurisdiction over the political functioning of all its members, and whether its decision that it would not agree that TILC is democratic centralist was authoritative for all its members. The implication of the request and the backing given to it by the LOR and RWL was, and was plainly meant to be, that TILC was a higher body whose decisions superseded the leading bodies, including the conference, of the WSL. It is probable that Morrow's request had been discussed and planned in the private caucus meeting in the afternoon. Morrow's participation in this meeting was already a repudiation of the decisions of the WSL conference.

The WSL EC met on Friday morning and decided on a 'compromise' formula. Morrow would be co-opted onto the delegation. He would be allowed on each political issue (in the narrow sense, as opposed to procedural issues) to make an objective statement of the Faction's position, and to request further speaking rights

at the discretion of the other members of the delegation. He would not be allowed to take part in the organisational wranglings and manoeuvrings. (In fact he was to ignore this limitation and on the Sunday played a leading part in the meeting in opposition to the rest of the WSL delegation).

This was accepted by the TILC meeting when it reconvened at 2.30 on the Friday.

The next clash followed immediately. A request was made that two Chilean comrades who had been recognised as sympathisers in December should immediately be given the status of 'a section' of TILC, with one vote. They are in no sense even a group. In fairness to Ricardo, who was present, he did not really claim that they were, or that they functioned: he motivated their request for the status of a voting section by the desire to 'intervene' politically in TILC.

This dispute took up the afternoon, and the motion finally fell on a tied vote of 6-6. (The French TILC member had arrived).

Towards the end of this discussion, Franco of the LOR made the statement that:

"We are here today in order to accelerate if possible the split in the WSL".

Leland then said:

"I appreciate the frank statement from Franco, which we support."

These were considered statements, not wild outbursts or slips of the tongue. Later in the discussion Franco added precise details about when his organisation decided it would work to split the WSL.

"We have not wanted to split the WSL since July. The position was adopted at a Central Committee meeting of our organisation in January and at a national assembly in February, where it was approved unanimously".

Leland did not offer similarly precise details.

The meeting recessed to allow the WSL delegation to discuss the new situation created by the avowals of the LOR and RWL.

Morrow was asked if he would separate himself from the LOR-RWL goal to split the WSL. He refused. In the first place, because he would not take a position until he had consulted the Faction. In the second place, he said that the WSL was out to split TILC, and that Carolan's attitude to the Faction leaders was no different in its implications for WSL unity from the LOR's and RWL's attitude. In the third place he considered Carolan and others to be centrists, and that did imply for himself the perspective of a split -- but in the longer term, not immediately. He would not comment on the fact that the perspective of a split held by the international tendency was short-term and immediate.

Throughout the conference the WSL, apart from the IF, was described as 'centrist' and 'revisionist', with learned distinctions being made between right and left centrists. Morrow repeatedly used these terms to describe the organisation.

The caucus majority then discussed the situation without Morrow. Some comrades wanted to suspend the TILC conference until the WSL EC could meet; others argued for focusing on "the political questions". The final decision was to give the conference the option: agree immediately to proceed to political discussion, or recess until the WSL EC could meet. (In fact it was unable to meet until Saturday evening).

In response the conference decided to discuss the crisis in the USFI as the next item, beginning at 7pm. This session was the only 'normal' political discussion during the four days: it continued well into Saturday afternoon and shaded over into a discussion of the LOR's plans to fuse with the Italian USFI section.

On Saturday Jette of the TAF arrived. On being told of the attempt to give the two Chileans a vote she said it was "a manoeuvre" and to be condemned. But she later changed her mind, and at the end of the session on Saturday it was announced with Jette's support that the position of the "Chilean group" would again be raised the following morning. This meant that the proposal to 'seat' the 'Chilean group' was assured of 7 votes out of 13, and would pass.

The EC met on Saturday evening, part of the time in majority caucus without Morrow. It was decided that

a strong statement from the WSL, condemning the LOR and RWL statements, should be drafted by Cunliffe and read out the following morning. It was also decided to press for a proxy vote for the Australian section, which had requested this by phone and had even appointed its representative (Fraser). Contingency plans were made to refuse to accept the validity of any vote taken if the LOR-RWL bloc gained a majority by way of seating the Chileans and rejecting the request of the Australians to have a proxy vote.

Before the TILC session started on Sunday, a discussion of those WSL delegation members present (Cunliffe, Smith, Jones, Kinnell) agreed to support a move by the PTT to secure a vote.

At the start of the Sunday session a statement was read out by the WSL condemning the sectarianism of the LOR and RWL and their goal of splitting the WSL. At this point a resolution in the name of the LOR, RWL, and TAF was produced.

"1. We urge the current minority in the WSL which, at the April 1983 WSL national conference, put forward the positions on Labour Party policy in IB 48, and the positions on work among women in IB 34, to form a faction to fight the right-centrist and revisionist tendency led by comrade Carolan.

2. We urge this new faction to work together with the IF already formed in the WSL, to wage a united theoretical and political struggle against this right-wing centrism and revisionism in the WSL.

3. The RWL/US, LOR/Italy, and TAF/Denmark promise to provide their full support to such a factional struggle in the WSL.

4. Before the democratic-centralist transformation of TILC in autumn 1983, the RWL, LOR and TAF will systematically raise for discussion within TILC a series of issues related to this theoretical and political struggle and urge the factions in the WSL to take part in the necessary debate around these issues, including:

1. the economic crisis,
2. Turkey,
3. the Malvinas war,
4. Ireland,
5. Palestine,
6. Poland,
7. Work among women,
8. Labour Party.

5. It is the view of the RWL, LOR and TAF that such a theoretical and political struggle can only end with a victory for orthodox Trotskyism by winning the majority or with a split in TILC.

6. We urge the leadership of the current minority in the WSL, basing itself on IBs 34 and 48, to form a bloc with the IF to stand united to defend themselves against any disciplinary measures taken against members of either group by the current majority, in particular expulsions. If any comrade from either group is expelled by the majority, both factions should respond with united action".

Jones and Smith immediately announced that they were no longer prepared to take part in the meeting. They were leaving "because they did not wish to be associated with the authors" of the resolution. "If you want to be Sparts - go ahead" (Smith).

By 7 votes to 6 the two Chileans were given a vote. Then by 8 votes to 6 the proposal to give the Australians a proxy vote was defeated. The PTT, representing with nine comrades over four times the size of the Chilean group, was equally refused a vote. Morrow, who had been elected chair when Jones left, played a prominent role in this discussion against the WSL.

The meeting recessed, and the WSL delegation (now Kinnell, Carolan, Morrow) caucused. Then Carolan and Kinnell caucused. When the meeting resumed, Kinnell read out a statement from the delegation, in line with the contingency plans made by the EC the previous night.

"The TILC meeting has voted (a) to give a vote to two Chilean comrades who do not represent a functioning group, (b) to deny a proxy vote to the Australian section, which is an established and functioning group. Over and above the technicalities, what is involved here is an organisational continuation of the political intention expressed by the LOR and RWL to carry out a sectarian hijacking of TILC and to try to promote a split in the WSL. The WSL declares that it recognises no validity to the subsequent votes of this meeting."

The WSL delegation also discussed what to do when the LOR-RWL-TAF resolution was passed. Unable to reach any common position with Morrow, Carolan and Kinnell made the following decision as the delegation majority and in agreement with the decision of the EC the previous evening. The WSL would declare that we were not walking out of TILC, but that for the WSL the conference was now closed, and the decision invalid. All WSL members, delegates and others, would then leave the room. This way of handling it would slam no doors and would leave the final decision about what to do in the hands of the NC and EC.

Morrow refused to accept the decision. He insisted on holding a closed meeting of the Faction members present to decide whether they would carry out the decision. He was told that the Faction had no right to discuss whether to carry out the decision, and no choice but to comply.

In fact a number of Faction members were present. They had been gathering throughout the four days. On Sunday, apart from Morrow also present were Dale A., Nick D., Mike J., Chris E., Aly M., and Kemal. Carolan and Kinnell called a caucus of all WSL members at which they were informed of the decision and told they had no option but to carry it out. They nevertheless held their private meeting afterwards.

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During the recess Morrow also told Carolan and Kinnell that he intended to speak on the LOR-RWL-TAF resolution. Carolan and Kinnell told him that their ruling, as the delegation majority, was that to speak would be in breach of the terms of the EC resolution, and would lead to disciplinary action.

After the TILC meeting reconvened, there followed a long discussion on the LOR-RWL-TAF resolution. Towards the end of the meeting Morrow made a speech, which we quote in full from the minutes:

"Comrades should remember Carolan's lecture on democratic centralism at Christmas and draw their own conclusions. Last night at the EC I moved a motion that the WSL majority was itself committed to a split in TILC. All the comrades here today are under discipline to walk out of TILC if this resolution is carried. I will take that as showing I made an accurate prediction.

"The reality of the situation is that the majority of the WSL are not prepared to accept any decision that goes against the majority. The result is bureaucratic measures which include breaking up the TILC meeting and using disciplinary measures against the minority in the WSL. This is not a principled position. The comrades are in a minority because they cannot sustain their position within TILC. Regardless of the debates on the Chilean and Australian votes they were in a minority. A decision to walk out constitutes a split. Comrades from the faction are presented with a situation where they either split from TILC, with the WSL, or face disciplinary measures for refusing to leave the meeting. I will now circulate a statement from the Faction.

"Jim [of the PTT] says that the tragedy is that members of TILC are criticising Smith. That's not the real tragedy. That tragedy is that Smith does not defend his political positions in this meeting, and that thus he converts himself from being a subjective element into a passive object used by the WSL. That is the real tragedy, and I hope that Jim is not going to collaborate in that".

(The reply to this statement from Carolan will be in the full minutes). The leaflet mentioned by Morrow in his speech was duplicated (whereas by contrast the LOR-RWL-TAF resolution was handwritten) — it had clearly been prepared in advance and kept in reserve. It called for the removal of the TILC Secretariat (Cunliffe, Smith, Carolan), which was "infected" by "revisionism".

The vote on the LOR-RWL-TAF resolution was 7 for (the 'French section' had now left), none against, and no abstentions. The WSL did not vote.

Carolan explained why we had not voted (see above), and Kinnell read out the statement cited at the beginning of this report. Kinnell and Carolan announced they were leaving the room. Morrow and the Faction members remained. After making a statement, the two PTT comrades also left.

This report was endorsed by the OC
on 28.4.83