

RESOLUTIONS TABLED FOR CONFERENCE: AUGUST 27-28

IRELAND: FEDERALISM

Jones Amendment to December 1981 NC resolution

IRELAND: BOMBINGS

Jones Amendment to December 1981 NC resolution

BUILDING THE WSL

Carolan/Kinnell ... Resolution

Cunliffe Amendment

WIGANISATION

Oliver Document

CND

Oliver Resolution

Rowena J. Resolution

Oliver Second resolution

Cunliffe Section from IB 25 document, with amendment from Kinnell

UNEMPLOYED

Midstone document is in IB 43, of which spare copies are available

Cunliffe Section from IB 25 document

Kinnell Amendment to above

(Note: a proposal has also been made by Kinnell that we start afresh with drafting a new resolution on unemployed work.)

BLACK WORK

James Document

Cunliffe Section from IB 25 document

OTHERS

McInnes Resolution: 'Using our programme'

McInnes/Abbott Resolutions on the paper, the journal, fares, personal experience

Ireland

Both issues are to be discussed around amendments to the following resolution from the December 1981 National Committee.

1. We give unconditional support to the fight of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland against British imperialism (and its Irish representatives) and for a united Ireland.
2. We fight for British troops to get out - unconditionally and immediately.
3. We support the right of the IRA to strike against British military and state targets - even if we may question the tactical wisdom - but we condemn attacks on civilians. These criteria apply to events in Britain and Ireland equally.
4. We criticise the nationalist and militarist limitations of the IRA leadership, and counterpose a fight to link the struggle against partition with an all-Ireland class movement, under revolutionary socialist leadership, coupled with a campaign of solidarity within the British labour movement. We do not use the socialist programme on nationalism to avoid taking concrete positions on struggles led by petty bourgeois nationalists.
5. Debate should continue on the immediate prospects and possibilities of the struggle in the North, etc.

Federalism

Jones amendment to above resolution: add a new point 6,

"We are for the guarantee of democratic rights, including religious rights, for the Protestant community within a united Ireland; but we are against 'Federalism'".

Bombings

Jones amendment to above resolution.

- a) In point 1, after "Catholic minority", add, "and those organisations which fight in its defence".
- b) Redraft point 4 to read, "We support the struggle of the republican movement to drive out British imperialism, while we criticise the nationalist and militarist limitations of the IRA leadership. Within this struggle we counterpose a fight to link the struggle against partition with an all-Ireland class movement. This is the struggle to develop a revolutionary socialist leadership. We couple this with a campaign of solidarity within the British labour movement. We do not use the socialist programme on nationalism to avoid taking concrete positions on struggles led by petty bourgeois nationalists".
- c) Add to point 3, "This criticism is secondary, and presented in such a manner".

Building the WSL

RESOLUTION FROM I.B.50 (Carolán and Kinnell)

We need to do the following:

A. Make contact work a major routine activity of all branches. Each branch organiser must compile and maintain a branch contact file. Each comrade should have a list of contacts - maybe only one or two - whom s/he sees at least weekly to get them the paper and discuss. Each branch meeting should monitor programs on contacts.

The leading committees should discuss preparations - circulars, notes for guidance, internal meetings - for this turn.

B. Draw up a basic reading list for all comrades. Start classes for members and contacts on the basis of this list.

C. Initiate a series of discussions, beginning on the NC, on the party norms of our movement and key texts of Trotsky and Cannon.

D. Rationalise our organisational structures, starting from the top. We need to establish a proper central office, an organisational machine, over which the leading committees should function as a political leadership. In the branches and fractions, we need 'one person management' - in each situation, one person able to take decisions, give instructions, and be held to account.

E. Formally reaffirm the document adopted at our fusion conference on 'Obligations of Membership'.

F. Enforce it. Branches should review their membership, call to account all comrades not fulfilling their obligations, and lapse members who fail to respond adequately. New recruits should be required to work with us (selling the paper etc.) for a period before being admitted to candidate membership. No candidate member should be admitted to full membership unless s/he has fulfilled all the basic obligations of membership.

OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. As James P. Cannon argued;

"For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practises party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realised without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility towards the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organisation without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again". *

Slow-moving, bureaucratic, social-democratic organisations require - and depend on - only a token level of activity from their members. A revolutionary organisation must be the opposite. To have the strength for the hard struggles it must wage, and to have the political sharpness and clarity it needs, it must have a high minimum level of activity and commitment from its members.

2. At the same time, our perspective is not an all-out six-month dash from now

- - - - -

* Where it reads 'he', 'his', etc., 'she', 'her', etc would equally apply.

to the revolution. And if we are to build a workers' organisation, our pace of activity must not be such as to pull comrades away from all normal social contacts.

Thus activity is organised so that its normal pace can be kept up without exhaustion and overstrain, and (so far as it is possible) to accommodate comrades' difficulties, special interests, etc. We do not demand superhuman energy, from comrades, still less superhuman abilities, but only a basic commitment and sense of responsibility to revolutionary politics.

3. The basic minimum activity expected of all members is:

* Regular attendance at and participation in:

- your League branch and any League committees you belong to,
- your local broad group (if one exists);
- your union branch and workplace union activity;
- your O. and/or its youth section.

You should not miss any meetings or activities of these unless the branch or branch organiser has agreed to it. Where there is a clash of meetings, League meetings have priority unless your branch or committee decides otherwise.

* Regular sales of the paper at work, to individual contacts, and at your labour movement meetings. Every comrade is required to sell a minimum of ten papers a week.

* Basic financial commitments (dues and contributions).

* Conscientious fulfilment of all obligations in the labour movement. If you take on a delegacy or an officership in your union branch, or if you promise your League branch you will do a particular task, you must do it conscientiously.

4. You are also expected to abide by majority decisions, and decisions of elected leading committees, in the League, even if you think they are unreasonable or wrong. (You also have the right to argue to change the decisions).

You must be willing to discuss all your political activity in the League branch and committees, and accept the majority decisions. No freelancing!

5. Comrades from middle-class backgrounds have a special responsibility in our fight to build a revolutionary workers' organisation. They must adapt themselves to a working class orientation. Our branch meetings should be meetings that workers feel comfortable in, and comrades from middle class backgrounds should contribute to that by disciplined behaviour and by being willing to learn from workers rather than lecture them.

6. All revolutionary activity depends on convincing people. In every area of work, comrades should seek out people who are interested in the paper or willing to discuss with us - and try to develop discussions, cooperation in practical work, etc. Without this, routine labour movement activity can become an empty formality.

7. A revolutionary must try to educate those around him or her; s/he must also educate himself/herself and regard attendance at party educationals as central to this.

Much of revolutionary politics cannot be learnt from books, but only by activity in the class struggle. Book-learning it, however, important too. Studying Marxism should be as important a regular activity as attending your union branch.

8. For the League to do what it needs to do, many activities are necessary over and above the bedrock work laid down in points 3 to 7. But such activities (taking on elected offices within the League or within the labour movement, extra paper sales, special campaigns, etc.) are discussed and allocated by the branches on the basis of who is available, willing and able to do them. It is unusual for such extra activities to be made a matter of discipline, rather than done voluntarily out of commitment.

However:

a) It is a basic matter of revolutionary responsibility that once you have volunteered to do a job, you do it.

b) Full national mobilisations of all members may be required as a matter of discipline for certain demonstrations, etc.

c) It is an essential part of being a revolutionary that you are willing to make an extra effort when a major struggle is one, e.g. a big strike in your area.

9. Members are obliged to consult the organisation about any changes of job or place of residence, or about taking on a job when leaving school or college.

AMENDMENT BY CUNLIFFE

Amend point D of resolution to read as follows:

D. Rationalise our organisational structures, starting from the top. We need to establish a proper central office, and an organisational machine, implementing the decisions of the leading committees. It is essential that NC members too accept their responsibility for the implementation of NC decisions in their areas and the development of branch work. In this respect the larger areas should reconstruct and re-establish the area committees which facilitate a productive coordination of branch activity and a development of additional leadership comrades. While branch organisers and fraction convenors will of course continue to be the individual comrades responsible for the functioning of the work, that functioning should be seen in terms of regular meetings and collective discussion and collaboration rather than individual or unilateral decision-making.

NOTE ON THE ABOVE

In EC discussion some comrades expressed sharp differences with Sections I-IX of the Carolan/Kinnell document in IB 50. The bit for voting of that document is Section X, as reproduced above. But to clarify the EC passed the following resolution:

1. The resolution for conference is section X as previously stated.

2. We explicitly state that the vote on this does not imply acceptance or rejection of Sections I-III and Sections IV-IX.

3. We continue discussion on Sections IV-IX in the post-conference period. (EC. 3.8.83).

(Sections I-III are a personal view of the internal development of the organisation. Sections IV-IX are an attempt to state ideas about the nature of a Leninist organisation in relation to our current situation).

Wiganisation

OLIVER DOCUMENT FROM I.B. 25 pt. 2

1. The policy of 'Wiganisation' was first discussed in the old I-CL about 3 years ago and was passed by the I-CL National Conference. It has never been implemented.
2. Basically the idea stems from the policy change of the SLL in 1961, to move out of small discussion circles in the party rooms into the council estates to organise and recruit working class youth on a mass scale. This was particularly successful in Wigan where Liz Thompson recruited 300 YS by running regular discos. This policy was also consciously adopted by the International Socialists in the early 1970s - this time out of the party rooms or Universities to the factories with Tony Cliff's book 'The Employers' Offensive', with factory bulletins and rank and file papers.
3. There is plenty to be learnt from both of these experiences. The fact that both the SLL and IS were built into probably the largest left groups ever seen in this country and then became ossified sects is interesting in itself. My view is that it was through Wiganisation that they built, it was through sectarian politics and bureaucratic centralism that they failed. Both groups patronised and pandered to their target population - the SLL to working class youth, the IS to shop stewards. They failed to develop the new recruits politically, they also failed to learn from the practice and experience of those new recruits.
4. Both the SLL and IS caught hold of new moods in the working class and built alongside them - the SLL, the Teddy Boys, the Mods and Rockers among the youth; the IS, the self-confident shop stewards' movement.

Both the SLL and IS also drew cadre from mass protest movements - the SLL from the CND in the early '60s, the IS from the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in the late '60s.

In the early '80s, there are a number of developments taking place in the labour movement which we are failing entirely to build alongside. We have the policies which should make us relate to these, but we seem to be paralysed organisationally. The particular developments I have in mind are: a) the CND, b) the Women's Movement, c) anti-racism among black youth, and d) the left wing in the O.

5. When we are talking of Wiganisation, we are talking of taking initiatives on a national scale and on a mass scale. It means a whole transformation of our methods of work. This is what it meant in the SLL and in IS and in both cases it was done quite consciously and quite deliberately. We talk a lot about campaigns and building a mass J. and mass O. particularly in relation to M., but we've never in practice made any serious attempt to carry these ideas through, as far as I can see.

An obvious example is the J., where the SLL in 3 years took complete control of the NC by building mass J. branches. In 10 years in the J., we have more or less the same number of delegates each year. We have mounted no serious challenge to any of the NC places held by M. We have built no mass J. branches, indeed some of our delegates represent 'paper branches' in the same way as M. do. This at a time of mass youth unemployment, riots in the inner cities, and 7,000 members of YCND!

In my view there should be no problem to building mass J. branches if a national decision was so made.

6. There are many different forms Wiganisation can take, it need not relate first to youth. Women's Sections, TU branches, LP branches, YCND and so on - they can all be turned outwards. The point is, "of attending many meetings there is no end, and much discussion is a weariness of the flesh". We need to turn outwards into the council estates, into the inner cities, to talk to, to listen to, and to organise new layers of workers.

7. Some examples of how Wiganisation might be applied. In Coventry, the Upper Stoke LP branch ran a campaign on housing. They went from door to door in a council estate with a questionnaire on repairs and maintenance. They compiled a report on their findings which they published in the local press. The most obvious cases were taken up by local Labour councillors, the branch demanded that the rest be done and quickly, they involved local UCATT members and the Trades Council. The result was that the whole branch was threatened by the right wing council leaders with expulsion from the LP for "bringing the Labour Party into disrepute". The ward then appealed to tenants to join the Party to fight the right wing. The repairs are now being done and have brought the local Party some new members. Other campaigns run by this ward have been around education and school meals, using problems in local schools - in other words, community issues.

The Radford Branch in Coventry turn up every Saturday morning in their local shopping precinct with their banner and megaphone and hold political meetings. They have made 40 new members in the last 2 months.

Leamington LP have bought an old minibus for transporting comrades to demos and to do door-to-door canvassing in council estates and also to drive round covered in posters with loudspeaker equipment to give impromptu meetings outside factory gates or at shopping centres.

Single issue campaigns like CND or Anti-Apartheid can very often gain mass support. Local bands will sometimes play and give inexpensive gigs to raise funds. There is no need to always organise meetings - films, theatre groups or social events are just as useful.

8. The main thing to remember about Wiganisation is that activity has to be regular to gain support of new layers - no here today, and gone tomorrow, no quick raids. The mass J. branches run by the SLL had discos and meetings every week, month in, month out. The R&F groups run by IS had factory bulletins every fortnight with paper sales in between.

Another point to remember was that regular activity in the SLL and in IS was helped by nationally and centrally organised events and campaigns - so that the new supporters did not feel isolated and met people like themselves from all over the country. Also cadres were developed in organising for these events.

9. Some proposals on Wiganisation.

- a) Each branch in consultation with the OC discusses one area of the work of the local broad group where a pilot scheme of Wiganisation can take place.
- b) This work should involve all members to one degree or another and should utilise an existing base, e.g. J, Women's Section, O. branch, TU branch, YCND.
- c) The OC to maintain coordination and control over this work with regular reports via a page every week in the paper.

CND

OLIVER RESOLUTION FROM BROAD GROUPS DISCUSSION BULLETIN

* Copies of the discussion bulletin, with Oliver's article motivating this resolution, are available from the centre.

- a) We have a policy of turning CND to the labour movement but we do not counter-
pose this policy inevitably to non-violent action, to direct action or any other form of action. We take each circumstance on its merits insofar as it takes the class struggle forward. The only way we can turn CND towards the labour movement is to be in or with CND in the various struggles it determines.
- b) We have well-organised national mobilisations for all important CND demonstrations.
- c) We consider the international possibilities of the Peace Movement. In particular we find various ways of involvement with END.
- d) We educate ourselves on CND issues. We have a series of articles in the paper. At local level, we invite CND speakers to O., TU and broad group meetings.
- e) We utilise the fact that most Labour Councils support the Nuclear Free Zone concept - to form Peace Forums, to start campaigns in Council Estates, in schools, and so on.
- f) We consider the possibility of 'Wiganisation' using YCND and then moving into the J.
- g) We set up a CND Commission to co-ordinate activities.

RESOLUTION: ROWENA J. (IB 53)

1. Our main participation in CND should be labour movement affiliations locally, invitations to speakers, etc. rather than mass individual membership.
2. For each major CND demonstration we produce either a special issue of the paper or a special leaflet or handout.
3. We must work to expose the links between the aims of CND and other anti-imperialist work, in particular the Irish struggle. The specially-produced literature mentioned in 2) above should reflect this policy in a carefully-written way.

Women in particular in CND will respond very positively to discussion of the plastic bullets issue, army/police harassment of black/Irish women and their families, the situation of Palestinian women, etc. We must work, through WF in particular, for public discussion between anti-imperialist militants and anti-war women, as outlined by Wheeler (IB 47).

4. In view of the early arrival of the first batch of missiles, effective labour movement action over and above the May 24 women's strike must be an urgent priority in NC discussion. There is a strong case for continuation of May 24 action. All branches and areas must be kept regularly informed of the latest situation regarding the missiles.

5. Opposition by us to the Thatcher build-up of war hysteria, colonialism, racism and the growing army/police 'interface' should take the form of labour movement opposition to Services recruitment and Services propaganda, stepping-up of anti-imperialist work within the labour movement, especially the TUs, and the 'anti-imperialist' connection should be made in all leaflets we participate in producing, especially out campaigns leaflets. Special broad group material should be produced for distribution on the estates during local and general election periods.

6. The potential of END should be very carefully looked into by the NC and EC and discussions with TILC partners in Europe should be undertaken regarding their attitudes to END, also with the Solidarity TU Working Group, as END is an European movement. We must be careful not to commit ourselves to any campaigning which compromises our policy of Soviet defencism, while at the same time seeking to extend links with independent trade unionists, socialists and feminists in Eastern Europe.

OLIVER RESOLUTION (IB 55)

This Conference severely censures the EC for their failure to organise an intervention into CND: in particular a failure to lead an organised presence on any CND demonstration or to provide special newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets, badges, etc for the mass CND demonstrations in June 1982, in December 1982 at Greenham Common, and on April 1 1983.

CND SECTION FROM CUNLIFFE DOCUMENT (IB 25 part 1)

The moves by both Thatcher and Reagan to step up the British, US and NATO stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and to site US Cruise missiles in Britain, has alerted millions of British workers and middle class people to the danger of nuclear annihilation. The mushrooming support for the CND movement - a movement in many ways bereft of any strategy offering more than a pious hope of halting the weapons build-up, but at least enabling people to declare their general sentiments - is an indication of the scale of this fear and horror in the population. Recent Gallup Polls commissioned by CND show an overall majority opposed to Cruise, Trident and even the existing Polaris weapons, with opposition predictably highest among women and youth.

But while CND has grown, like many similar peace campaigns elsewhere in Europe, it has deliberately refrained from developing as a political campaign - though its most resounding success has been in winning sidespread support in the Labour and trade union movement.

The feminist campaigns at Greenham Common take this a step further with opposition to all politics and reliance on pacifist opposition of the individual, in this case women, to nuclear war.

AMENDMENT (KINNELL, IB 25 pt.2, ACCEPTED BY CUNLIFFE) READ INSTEAD
The Greenham Common peace camp and the women's movement mobilisation around it has also been a resounding success, doing a great deal to build the campaign. Our orientation to this should be based on full support and building on its strengths. Criticism on the basis that the camp will not stop Cruise etc. is fundamentally meaningless - nor will any other short of revolutionary action stop nuclear weapons; and, among the actions immediately possible, those around the Peace Camp are by no means the least valuable, nor are they counterposed to trade union and LP activity.

In particular the CND leadership clearly opposes any move to link opposition to the imperialist arms drive to a more consistent and developed opposition to imperialism itself. Among thousands who demonstrate against nuclear weapons there are many who would also protest at use of plastic bullets by British troops in Ireland or against the use of cluster bombs by British planes in the Falklands war; but there would be fewer who would develop beyond such humanitarian objections to recognise in British imperialism and the fight on a world scale for imperialist authority the main source of the violence and brutality to which they object.

The potential for a political struggle within the peace movement to raise such issues and to win the most militant forces to a consistent struggle against imperialism and its system of exploitation and oppression has yet to be assessed in practice; but the sheer scale of the forces involved must mean that a struggle flexibly and sensibly conducted could win substantial support.

Unemployed

DOCUMENT FROM MAIDSTONE, IB 43

* Spare copies of IB 43 are available from the centre.

UNEMPLOYED SECTION FROM CUNLIFFE DOCUMENT, IB 25 part 1

Were the unemployed to be organised into a single union, it would be at least twice the size of the TGWU - and one of the biggest unions in the world. Yet in reality the number of unemployed organised in unions can at best be numbered in thousands and in many areas scarcely even in hundreds. That is the scale of the problem to be confronted in mobilising serious class-wide action against the Thatcher government.

Why don't the trade union leaders take action to organise this vast pool of potential recruits? Because they would pose political questions which the reformists cannot answer. There is no compromise possible for the unemployed. They are at the end of the road, the direct victims of the economic realities of capitalism and there is no reformist solution. They are completely compromised in front of the unemployed. They have negotiated closures and redundancy pay. In many instances the TUC has been in the forefront of job-cutting productivity deals. The same can be said of the LP leadership, whilst at the same time talking about the 'evils of unemployment'. Having helped create unemployment they then blackmail workers in struggle by saying that strikes for wages will endanger jobs or will threaten the industry.

The latest example of the government using unemployment is the Youth Training Scheme. This scheme is to replace the YOPs as cheap labour. They are even talking about whole factories entirely staffed by YTS labour. The TUC describe the scheme as "a good opportunity for youth" and urges the trade union movement to become involved in it.

Employed workers constantly feel the pressure of unemployment breaking down their working conditions. The high feeling in the trade union movement against unemployment has forced the TUC to reverse its original opposition to the unemployed march from Scotland to London; even the right LP NEC has had to support it. The WSL should make a major turn to the march in order, since it will be an official TUC march, to bring the fight to mobilise resistance to unemployment into the fight for new leadership. Struggles such as Laurence Scott should be brought into the centre of it.

The TUC ignores the vast number of women workers, driven out of part and full-time jobs in industry and the public sector, who remain excluded from the trade unions, with their experience likewise often restricted to a handful of fleeting glimpses of a (male) full-time official negotiating the loss of their jobs or a sell-out of their pay demands. On the estates and working-class areas, hundreds of thousands of women denied jobs are thus also alienated from the trade union movement though during periods of struggle they, like other sections of the working class, can of course identify to a degree with those in the front line.

To build the kind of vast social and industrial movement that is necessary to overthrow the Tories and their system it is vital that the unemployed section of the working class is mobilised to fight for change.

Yet our level of coordinated WSL activity on this front has remained weak. Work among the unemployed, for their organisation in UWM, has been denied any central resources and largely 'hived off' to a few individual comrades whose successful if restricted work has been largely ignored by the remainder of the WSL. Our press fails to convey and address the daily problems and reality faced by the unemployed - three times as many workers as took part in the NHS pay battle. And the result, as with the industrial working class, is little or not recruitment of unemployed workers (other than through our youth work).

Without the fight for a broader level of basic organisation of the unemployed, for activity designed to draw them into the life of the local and national labour movement, and develop them in political struggle, we can expect this problem to remain unresolved. The WSL must take urgent steps to provide the necessary central resources for the running of this work, ensuring that where we have an existing foothold in the trade union or labour movement it is utilised for the building of the widest possible campaign on the estates and around the dole offices for the recruitment of the unemployed into the UWM and into trade unions, fighting to defeat bureaucratic attempts to shunt the unemployed into*branches and to reach employed members of the general unions to enlist their support in this fight. The launch of Tebbit's new 'training' initiative, together with existing job creation schemes, raises once again the urgent need for Trades Councils or other local bodies to seek out these youth and recruit them to NUPE or other appropriate unions.

Such work conveniently - or perhaps unfortunately! - overlaps with the almost equally neglected sphere of youth work, which will be dealt with elsewhere. But it is plain that unless efforts are made to mobilise adult workers in the struggle to unionise the youth on Tebbit's scheme, they will either not be recruited or fall rapid victims to the union bureaucracy. While drawing out the revolutionary potential of the youth and attempting to develop them as a force capable of combating the manoeuvres and platitudes of the officials, we must formally establish the links between their struggle and those of adult workers who can both learn from the youth and offer them on occasion valuable advice and experience.

We should campaign for Trades Councils to form unemployment committees and set up centres for the unemployed. These should campaign for the right* as part of the overall fight against unemployment.

In all our work amongst the unemployed we must put our own programme in the forefront: open the books; nationalisation under workers' control; a workers' plan of production. We must show them that the only way out for them is a socialist planned economy.

AMENDMENT FROM KINNELL: IB 25 part 2

On previous page, last para, delete from "Work among the unemployed, for their" to "... workers (other than through our youth work)".

Read instead:

The paper has started a regular unemployed column, but coverage is still weak. The incoming EC should allocate a member to work with the comrades active in this work, with a view to extending it.

Mobilising the official youth movement for recruitment and organisation of unemployed youth is central.

NOTE: A proposal is being put by Kinnell that we should sweep the slate clean and start with a fresh resolution on unemployed work.

BROADERING OUT THE STRUGGLES OF BLACK WORKERS AND YOUTH INTO
THE MASS ORGANISATIONS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT. JAMES, 1853

Revolutionary Marxism has a long history of work and struggle inside the specially oppressed sections of the working class. In pre-revolutionary Russia and Eastern Europe the nationalities question was always a primary issue in the labour movement. Likewise in the United States, the programme for black workers was one of the major issues around the formation of the Fourth International section.

In the British labour movement the question of national/ethnic oppression was largely ignored until the late fifties when the growth of racism began to be seen as a threat to the organisations of the labour movement themselves. As the ruling class increasingly used racism as a stick with which to hit and divide the labour movement, militants in the unions and the left in the Labour Party were forced to make a stand.

However the political nature of that stand based on fear of the right wing/fascist threat and a form of liberal moralism has largely limited it to ANL style mass demonstration and propaganda campaigns. Through all the subsequent debates around the ANL, police accountability, workers self-defense, positive discrimination, only lip service appears to have been made to the problem of developing black workers as an organised force inside the labour movement.

Black workers are the first target of the capitalist state, but like all workers they are members of the revolutionary class. Their best defense against racist attack and oppression, is the organised strength of the whole working class under a revolutionary leadership. Black workers should be in a vanguard role in achieving this, and we in the WSL must develop ourselves so that we lead in this struggle. It is not enough to support black stm struggles, we must know enough about black workers, their organisations, and immediate problems so that we can struggle with them.

In Coventry in 1981 black workers organisations, entirely separately from the Labour Party, ANL, Trades Council etc, mobilised ten thousand of their members onto the streets in protest at the murder of Satnam Gill. (this in London would be the equivalent of a million people). What occurred in Coventry at this time pivoted around the role of the Stalinist and reformist leaders of these organisations. They did everything in their power to demobilise the campaign, they appealed for calm, they blamed black youth in the press, they collaborated with the police, and used every delaying tactic in the book, and did all they could to take pressure of their right-wing friends in the Labour Council. It was only through the determined pressure of the militant workers in their organisations that they were forced to act. But it was also through the political weakness of these layers, that these leaders were able to regain control.

This was precisely the area in which our black comrades and the WSL should be able to intervene and lead and build upon. But you cant do that if your perspective is to support black struggles, you cant do that sitting in a Labour party ward waiting for a black workers to join. Neither can you do it, like an ex-comrade of ours, by drawing black youth away from black workers to join him in his fight against the Militant in his ward. On discovering that there were people with even worse politics than the Militant they denounced everyone, formed a vigilante group of five boys and their dog, and then all dropped out of politics.