

INTERNAL BULLETIN No. 85

March 1984.

Reply to IB 83.....Smith
A serious problem of democracy
in the group.....Faction
Censorship.....Smith
A reply to IB 83.....Cook

A REPLY TO IB 83

In his destructive document "Enough is Enough" (IB 83) Carolan argues that the present chronic internal problems of the WSL essentially date from last April's conference. After that he says the minority was faced with a choice between two options - either split, or act as a disciplined minority. He says that in reality we did neither and "launched instead on a course of escalating disruption".

He goes on to argue that the "them and us" polarisation was "posed initially (and essentially) entirely from their side and not all from the majority".

In other words there was on the one hand these honest people constructively trying to build up the organisation in an unbiased non-factional way and on the other, a bunch of factional wreckers trying to stop them from doing it. That is not an exaggerated reading of IB 83.

It is an interpretation of the internal problems which is designed to line up ex I-CLers for the organisational moves Carolan is currently planning against the minority. His challenge however on how the factional heat developed in the organisation cannot go unanswered.

The basic problem was the emergence, after the fusion, of a series of deep going differences between the two old traditions and the absence of the necessary democratic structures and tolerant attitudes necessary to contain and discuss them.

This problem, it can be seen in hindsight, was contained in the attitude of Carolan/Kinnell/Hill to the fusion. It is very clear now -whatever they said to the I-CL at the time- was not to "draw on the strengths of both traditions" (where did that go?) but to absorb the old WSL into their own culture. It was not a fusion, but a takeover bid. The old WSL was to be digested into the I-CL tradition and the undigestable bits spat out.

This attitude led to fusion negotiations which were mainly characterised by diplomacy. Differences came out in as much as they were dragged out. The attitude of C/K/H was to play them down at that time and to gradually bring them out after fusion and systematically establish their line on every significant issue. Anything less than this would be completely unacceptable to them since they are self-evidently incapable of co-existing with any significant differences at all.

The problem with that approach was that the absorption of the old WSL was never a serious possibility. The fusion would either exist on the basis of "drawing on the strengths of both organisations" and having a regime which could contain the differences arising from the different traditions or it would become impossible. The situation would increasingly polarise around the old traditions.

So what happened? When did the differences emerge and who was responsible for the factional heat? Certainly to date it from the April conference is not serious. In fact the disputes and problems arose very soon after the fusion and in fact have been a part of the same political thread throughout.

CAROLAN'S ROLE IN THE FUSED GROUP

The first sharp clash came a few months after the fusion, in the autumn of 1981 over the role of Carolan in the group. At that time (and for a long time afterwards) he effectively was a full-timer without a job. Nominally he was joint editor of the WSR, but it never came out. Therefore, all he did in reality was write articles for the paper - in most cases the articles he decided to write. It did of course give him a very big influence in the paper indeed.

Booth came to the EC and raised the matter of Carolan's duties as a full-timer. He argued that it was unhealthy that someone so little involved in the implementation of policy should be so dominant in forming it. The reaction of Carolan to this was to absent himself from EC and OC meetings, and all party work for a period of five weeks. He said he wanted to "think things over". All attempts to bring him under the discipline of the group were frustrated by the ex I-CL side of the EC. Carolan (who then as now had an answer for everything) argued that it was a "mature" thing to do. Eventually he came back and argued that we must have a "tolerant regime". It was a very sharp clash and eventually resolved by a decision to keep the whole episode inside the EC - not even report it to the EC. It had very serious long-term effects because what it really meant was that the EC was not competent to criticise Carolan or control what he was doing. From then on the full-timers based in G Street were really not under the control of the leading bodies in any fundamental way. The EC for example was not in the position to take controversial decisions in relationship to their jobs, or to propose controversial changes or replacements. Booth never mentioned the matter again after that meeting and everything settled down into a very unsatisfactory situation.

ORIENTATION OF THE PAPER

Soon after that there was a clash over the orientation of the paper (early January 1982). I argued that it was essentially speaking to the left in the MP and not to the industrial working class. It was quite a constructive clash in the sense that I felt someone was listening and the paper improved afterwards to some extent.

CONTROL OVER THE PAPER

A much worse clash came over the coverage of martial law in Poland in the paper - which came about at that time. Carolan wanted to write two lengthy articles for the paper before it had been discussed by the EC. We argued that it was a major world event, probably very contentious within the group, and our first response should be discussed. Carolan denounced this as "censorship" and we had a sharp clash. This eventually resulted in Carolan moving a resolution to the EC (on February 2nd) on the "press and the regime".

Looked at in the light of recent positions of Carolan "the norm in Trotskyist groups is that the positions of the majority are the only ones which appear in publications of the group" it is a bizarre resolution - but of course it came at a time when Carolan thought he might be in a minority on some things.

The resolution argues how sterile a paper would be which was confined to majority views on everything and presses for open access to the paper. We opposed sections of it at the time because of the context in which it came forward. It was designed not only to give open access on non-voted position -with which we agreed- but to allow Carolan to continue to have the kind of latitude he wanted over Poland which goes beyond that. (Viewed in today's conditions of the WSL however, it is very good, and if it still on offer we will have it) :-

"1) The paper should be so edited as to promote and defend the agreed positions of the League. It will maintain a sharp and clear line on the immediate issues of the class struggle.

2) Agreed policy covers positions adopted by conference, leading committees, etc. It does not and cannot cover shades of analysis, assessment, etc; moreover, such officially adopted positions can be solidly and scientifically grounded only to the extent that they are based on substantial work done by competent and interested comrades to develop those 'shades' as clearly as possible in line with objective reality. The Leninist method strives for a

homogeneous understanding - but not on the basis of averaging out. Leninism therefore demands a range of shades of analysis in the press - the alternative being to edit the press on the basis of the lowest common denominator or a consensus i.e. to sterilise the paper and the organisation politically.

3) Given the different cultures and traditions in the League, and given that the lowest common denominator politics is alien to Trotskyism and unprincipled, we do not have any alternative in the organisation but the approach above.

4) Where there is a majority position, minority views should generally be allowed space in the press for discussion. The exceptions should be where such public discussion compromises the integrity of the organisation, would bring us into discredit, or uses the weight of bourgeois public opinion against the League etc.

On major defined differences the right of decision would, of course, lie with the leading bodies of the League."

How could you find a more dramatic change of position? As soon as Carolan becomes a majority he wants a complete clamp down! Kinnell put some amendments to the resolution which had the same thrust:

"Political discussion should be pursued in internal bulletins and internal meetings. Certainly articles having the character of sharp internal polemic should go in the IB. But, given that committees can't write articles, the week-to-week work of political agitation and propaganda cannot fail to express shades of controversy - unless all articles are reduced to shallow, minimal agitation. The appearance of articles reflecting shades of analysis (within agreed positions) should be regulated by the class struggle around us - i.e. by the need for keeping facts in review and responding to developments."

The resolution in the context of the day effectively meant that Carolan could continue as freelance writer for the paper with very little control over what he did, and he carried on that for a further year and a half.

WORK AMONGST WOMEN

Before moving on to later events, there was another factor which seriously shaped the early part of the fusion - the question of work amongst women. This presented itself at the time of fusion as the least resolved problem. Certainly it quickly became a very contentious issue. Again for us the central problem was that the whole area of work around FB was firmly outside of the control of the WSL and its leading committees, RL was out of control, strongly objected to any control from the WSL, and was taking FB down a clearly feminist road. Every attempt by members of the old WSL to change that situation was blocked by Carolan and Kinnell. RL was constantly protected by them.

One attempt to take up the situation was made by Cunliffe in January 1982. He tried to identify the problems of the work and propose a number of practical steps which could be taken to try to redirect the work around upcoming conferences and struggles involving workers.

Since it argues a pretty full case and shows what we were trying to do at the time, it is worth quoting in full:

" 1) This EC recognises that the differences that have remained in the work amongst women are political differences which cannot be dismissed as mere personal antagonisms between the comrades assigned to lead the work. They reflect (a) the initial failure of the fused WSL EC/NC to establish a common political focus for the work around which the very different experiences and strengths of the pre-fusion organisations could be brought together; and (b) a failure of the existing leadership of FB to make any significant attempt to incorporate forces from the old WSL, or make any significant turn towards working class women in struggle (St Mary's !)

As a result there is now a danger that the two forthcoming conferences -which might have provided the needed focus- could prove instead to be further missed opportunities unless the EC recognises its responsibility to give political leadership in this work and mobilise the movement as a whole along agreed lines.

At present however, the EC remains completely unaware of the political structure of either conference, or the orientation of the work for them; within the WSL itself the committees (Steering Cttee, editorial sub-cttee) set up by the EC/NC to direct the work have not functioned; political decisions of the Women's Commission and even the FB Summer Conference have been ignored or overturned (publication of Action Programme); and no reports of this area of the movement's work have been given to the EC.

2) Accordingly, the EC agrees to work as seriously and systematically on our political campaign and preparation for the WF TU conference as we intend to work on the SO TU conference. We therefore instruct cde R as the full-timer responsible for this work:

(a) To present a full report on the work done and plans laid for the WF TU conference, along with an account of our involvement, our level of control (if any) and possible input into the Action Committee Women's Right To Work conference, to the next meeting of the Organising Committee. And then to report each week to the EC/OC on progress in these two campaigns - either in person or in writing.

(b) To convene a full meeting of the Steering Committee, to be attended by other EC members, which will discuss in detail the preparations for these two campaigns - including leaflets and other propaganda. This will mean fixing a time and place which is convenient for SC comrades who live outside London and who have until now been largely excluded from its work.

(c) To submit for prior discussion and agreement by either the EC or OC, resolutions and substantial proposals which she or other leading WSL members wish to table on broader committees organising either conference. Where necessary, special meetings of WSL leading bodies should be called. But in any case such provision should apply to the final proposals which we make for the agenda and structure of either conference.

(d) To take steps, in conjunction with cdes P & J, to ensure that all branches take up campaign work for these two conferences, not leaving it simply to women cdes or the minority of women cdes active in FB. It should include lobbies and approaches to CLP's, union branches, Trades Councils etc, and, in particular, energetic approaches to women workers from current or recent struggles, as well as those forces disorientated by the winding up of Women's Voice.

(e) To ensure that each WSL Branch/area organises through FB, a local public meeting on the fight for a Women's right to work. Such meetings must combine general propaganda on the ideological questions ("a women's place"..etc) with agitation for the WF Action Programme of demands to defend jobs.

(f) To ensure that these campaigns are run in such a way as to establish and broaden the membership of FB, with the formation of genuine and functioning branches in all areas as part of a national organisation. At the same time we must draw the most developed and militant women into the WSL itself - which means that our campaign material and the conduct of our meetings must maintain sufficient marxist profile to attract the best elements. Any political difficulties in getting branches to work in this way should be taken up by the EC.

(g) To ensure that the content of each issue of WF is fully discussed wherever possible by the Women's Commission, or on other occasions by a properly convened full meeting of the Steering Committee at a time and venue accessible for comrades outside London. To present material in such a way as to offer a lead rather than simply reportage for women in struggle and for the broader women's movement. To carry in the next issue of WF the Action Programme adopted last summer, and to ensure that all future issues find ways of propagandising and popularising its demands. And to ensure that any political changes in the content of articles or substantial rewriting of articles submitted by WSL members is carried out only by prior

4

agreement with the comrades concerned.

(h) To ensure that in the campaign, branches recognise the need to fight for the organisation of unemployed women contacts into the Unemployed Workers Movement and LP women's sections - building those bodies on the main council estates. All such work is essential to provide a firm basis for our future campaigning - in particular our fight for the June 5 demo."

That resolution was rejected by the majority and no notice was taken of any of the points made. RL continued outside of the control of the WSL and eventually followed the logic of that position.

SOUTH ATLANTIC WAR

The main political difference, however, emerged over the South Atlantic War which began at the beginning of May 1982. It quickly became clear that we had a major difference over how the world divides up, and the role of world imperialism. This resulted in a difference over defeatism for Argentina or victory over British imperialism.

At first the discussion was reasonably political. The debating methods were not too good. More heat was generated trying to show that we had changed our position than whether we were right or wrong. We formed a Tendency in order to get Tendency rights and ensure an adequate input into the discussion. It was obvious by then that it was necessary for that, but it had no other purpose. For this reason it had no members - apart from the few of us who formed it. We didn't ask for members, it had no structure at all throughout its existence. At that time a tendency was enough to get in the argument since there was still a level of political dialogue going on. The July NC had a very good discussion on the Lebanon for example.

MEETING OF THE OLD I-CL NC

Everything changed however, at the summer school. It was there that the major breakdown took place.

The first three days of the summer school was used by a lot of comrades to debate the South Atlantic War. There were not many ex I-CL comrades there, but a lot of old WSL and a lot of TILC people. This was bound to be the main focus of discussion since it was the main political issue under discussion and people were there to discuss politics. There was also no doubt that the TILC comrades wanted to take the ex I-CL up on this and a number of issues.

Carolyn began objecting strongly that the TILC comrades were intervening in the school. There was a regular meeting of the WSL NC fixed for Wednesday evening. During the afternoon we were surprised to find a number of ex I-CL NC members arriving at the school. It was not likely that they had made the journey for a short routine meeting. In the early evening we found out what it was all about. Carolyn had called a meeting of the old I-CL NC with ourselves excluded. In fact we did not know about it until it was already in session. It was exactly one year after fusion, and could not have been more destructive.

When the old I-CL broke up we went straight into a meeting of the WSL NC. At that meeting we came as close as it is possible, to come to a split and survive. It was close to physical violence as Parsons points out in IB 84.

CLOSE TO A SPLIT

Carolyn, Kinnell and Hill with two other comrades moved a resolution accusing us of a factional campaign and saying that even if they lost the vote on it they intended to circulate it to the membership. Circulation at that stage would probably have ended the fusion there and then. The meeting was only kept in order by the chairing of ode Oliver, and went on to reject the resolution overwhelmingly and to urge the comrades not to circulate it.

THE SPLIT IN THE TILC

The school was a disaster for TILC. All the TILC sections had come from a sectarian background and had certainly not broken from it. The struggle inside TILC had always been a struggle to push them in a healthy direction. The developments inside the fusion were therefore very difficult to contain within TILC, in fact all the old sectarian positions and methods were rapidly re-emerging.

The clash with the TILC sections over the Malvinas debate on the Saturday (or rather with the LOR and the RWL) was the beginning of the end of TILC. They opposed the perfectly reasonable decision of the WSL to make it a WSL and not an international debate. It was impossible for us to reconcile the situation with the LOR and the RWL on one side and Carolan heating it up as much as he could on the other. Carolan and Kinnell could hardly cover their pleasure at the prospect of getting rid of TILC.

After that, the situation deteriorated rapidly. The LOR and the RWL took a decision to split the WSL, and Carolan and Kinnell began to heat up the situation inside the WSL. IB 14 which came out in August, poisoned the debate by accusing some of us of factional intent in the Malvinas debate. We were accused of calling for a special conference in order to "reform the old WSL".

Yet the South Atlantic war was in reality the material basis of the worsening situation in the WSL. It represented a sharpening of the role of imperialism and of Britain as a major imperialist power, and conflicted with the view of imperialism which had been developed by the I-CL. There was therefore no way the discussion of these differences could be avoided. Our request for a conference was politically principled, politically necessary and the only democratic way to tackle the problem in the group. The WSL NC had committed the group to a dual defeatist position under conditions where the membership had not been involved, and it was not clear where the majority of the members stood. This was shown clearly enough by the result of the conference which reversed the NC position but only by a small majority.

Unfortunately, the decision of the conference did not resolve the situation but prompted a fightback by the ex I-CL leaders who, it was becoming increasingly obvious are simply not prepared to be a minority on any political question of any consequence.

TILC was effectively split at the Christmas conference, and out of that split came the Internationalist faction, a product of both the internal situation in the WSL and the RWL/LOR intervention. Carolan and Kinnell denounced the IF, but were more than pleased to see it emerge. They had put pressure on Leicester for several months before to make sure that they were pushed in that direction.

At the TILC conference we were again caught in the middle. We were just about the only people there (with the exception of the PTF) who didn't want a split. Nor can it be said that the ex WSL leadership didn't fight the RWL - e.g. the Cunliffe/Smith letter in IB 35.

SOME WOMEN COMRADES 'ON TRIAL'

The same period had seen another very damaging development in the field of work amongst women.

The FB AGM was held on October 23, 1982. RL had left the WSL and was setting out to take FB further down her road of reformist feminism. The agreed line for the AGM was not to challenge RL as the secretary, but to ensure an adequate WSL presence in order to politically fight her - but not to have WSL majorities on the leading committees.

After the AGM there was an outcry from Parkinson and Fraser about the way Todd and AC had conducted themselves at the meeting. They were accused of having "a negative approach", of having been "insensitive"; of raising "the matter of the editing of articles"; of "raising the action programme"; and - most vehemently- of abstaining in the vote for RL for the SC under conditions where there was no possibility that she would be defeated.

The real issue however was the extent to which there could be any political opposition to RL, and the extent to which she would be allowed to witch-hunt and drive out those who had a political orientation most sharply opposed to her own - like the orientation to the trade unions being pressed by Todd and AC. It emerged that the abstentions on the vote for RL, for example, came straight after RL had witch-hunted the WSL from the platform of the AGM. ("This meeting is dominated by people mandated by a male-dominated organisation".)

Parkinson and Fraser were strongly backed by Carolan and Kinnell, and the issue was quickly whipped up into a factional confrontation. Formal charges (on the lines above) were laid by Fraser and a special meeting of the NC was called to hear them.

It could not have been a more destructive meeting. After several hours it emerged that none of the charges could be substantiated. They were based on misinformation, half truths, and in some cases, it was just a matter of political assessment. Who decides if someone is "positive" or "sensitive" in a particular situation? Consequently all the charges were dropped and Parkinson and Fraser pulled back.

At EC level, Carolan and Kinnell then proposed that the old WSL side of the EC should try to persuade Todd and AC to resign from the FB SC. This would not be any political reflection on them, but it would create the best conditions to fight RL. We agreed to do this for two rather different reasons - a) because we wanted to conciliate the situation, and b) because we felt that if the cdes stayed on the SC they would be blamed for the failure if the fight to win FB from RL was unsuccessful. On this basis, they reluctantly agreed to resign. It made not the slightest bit of difference of course, and on top of that, after the trial and the bitterness which came out of it, the women's commission stopped meeting and any organised work among women ceased. In hindsight, the proposal to remove Todd and AC was a cynical move to remove them from the work.

FIRST CONFERENCE DISCUSSION POISONED

Soon after these incidents, we went into the pre-conference discussion for what was to be the first 'annual' conference of the WSL. This, like the Special Conference was preceded by a serious poisoning of the atmosphere. IB 35 was produced just before the conference, and was another landmark in the deterioration of the internal situation. It contained the first really poisonous article to appear in an IB - under the names of Carolan, Kinnell and Hill. Entitled "The Sectarian Offensive", it was a potted history of the fusion designed to rally the ex I-CL membership to the flag.

It was the first written intervention from the I-CL side designed to denigrate and undermine the history and record of the old WSL. No longer had we made a contribution to the struggle in the trade unions, nor was our C..... (BL) work even mentioned. The only thing we were given credit for was a "courageous fight against Healyism". It was predictable I suppose, that if the ex I-CLers were to be rallied against us, that our record would have to be discredited. Certainly it became an increasing feature of the internal situation.

The article also raised the question of a split. This was done by putting the word 'split' in the mouth of ed Jones. There had been a discussion on the EC as to how we could achieve a balanced NC at the conference, since it would be dangerous for an NC to emerge which was dominated by one side or the other. During this discussion, it had been suggested initially by Hill, and then by Jones. Both of them had made the suggestion as tentative remarks exploring the various possibilities. The suggestion was never pursued and had faded out by the end of the meeting. It was not a new suggestion. In October a new parity NC was seen by both sides as a possible necessity. In fact the main reason for postponing the conference from October - the original date- to February was in order to avoid another year of parity NC which would have been a setback for the fusion. At an OC at the beginning of February, Kinnell and Carolan proposed an agreed joint leadership slate for the NC elections - which was only parity by another name.

I have gone into this because this proposal became the centrepiece of IB 35. Suddenly Jones was accused of proposing another year of parity, as a move to split the organisation. Yet when the IB was written, Carolan and Kinnell knew very well that Jones was not pursuing the proposal and they knew very well the context in which it had been raised. But the whole of the first page of the article was on it. It was described as "Jones' astounding proposal". It was presented as if Jones were fighting tooth and nail for it, and the rest of the old WSL leadership were supporting him - "Our understanding is that Jones' proposal was also supported by many of the old WSL leadership"... "The proposal is not practically possible, and we trust it will soon be withdrawn (?)". But the fact of it even being proposed has grave political implications."

The issue was returned to again at the end of the document where it was described as "a giant step towards a split".

The other thing in the document was a proposal by Carolan to discipline the Internationalist Tendency. This was another destructive move designed to put pressure on the Tendency and push them towards a split. Disciplinary action never raised on any of the committees, thrown in the most destructive way possible into the IB. This is what he proposed: "But the proper course of action now, I think, would be to suspend the leaders of the Tendency from the WSL, and instruct the others to disband by the end of the conference or face discipline".

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the proposal - and in my view it was absolutely wrong - to throw that into an IB could not be more destructive. That is not the action of someone who is genuinely trying to "knit the two sides of the organisation together" but is being obstructed by the other side.

None of this can be put down to any kind of misunderstanding. It was a document carefully considered and constructed to undermine the old WSL, line up the old I-CL and 'prove' that we were all a part of a "sectarian regression" which ran from Cunliffe right back to the RWL.

BUILDING THE WSL

The February conference decided to leave the discussion on the MP - by far the most contentious issue facing the conference - over to the second leg of the conference in April. Although this was argued for on the basis of more discussion in the branches, the discussion prior to the April conference was still very partial.

Just before the conference, however, there was another major intervention by Carolan and Kinnell, which was not concerned with the subject matter of the conference, but with establishing their grip on the apparatus of the group and establishing the kind of regime they wanted. This was the resolution "On Building The WSL" in IB 50. The document was presented simply as a contribution on the current internal problems of the group. In reality, however, it was very much more. It raised - even if in an obscure and inaccessible way - a number of strategic questions which had not been raised before, even in the fusion discussion. It came out just before the conference and was not a part of the preconference discussion. Jones made an initial reply to it in IB 57.

The document was designed to give theoretical justification to the kind of regime they wanted in the group, and to make an organisational step towards it. It was the next logical step after the denigration of the old WSL tradition and its orientation to the working class. It set out essentially to downplay the importance of having industrial workers in a group like ours, and to justify its domination by a couple of intellectuals. They do this by stressing that the proletarian political character of a party "depends in the first place on its programme and its historical relation to the proletariat. A proletarian character in the crude sociological sense is not sufficient and in some epochs may not be possible." It does not say if the epoch we are in, is one in which workers cannot be recruited, or when such an epoch was, but it strongly implies that it is now. It goes on to give the basis of selection for the party as "political education and knowledge and commitment". A party built on this basis it says will connect up with a "spontaneous socialist consciousness" which will develop in the working class at a time of mass struggle.

The practical step it proposes on party structure for a regime based on these conceptions is "one person management". They put it this way :- "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". It was this kind of conception we had argued against with only limited success in the fusion process, particularly in the discussions around the constitution. Now this conception was to be bulldozed in, unannounced and non-discussed, at the April conference.

Many of the old WSL argued very strongly that it should not be on the agenda of the April conference and should never be on the agenda of any conference without an adequate preconference discussion. This was argued out at the opening session of the conference on the agenda, and the conference voted not to put it on the agenda. Carolan, however, pushed it until the end and voted that it should be on the agenda and a decision taken on it. The episode convinced us that the Carolan/Kinnell/Hill leadership of the ex I-CL were determined in the short and medium term to establish their grip on the group.

MORE POISONOUS ARTICLES

Naturally, the lead being given by Carolan and Kinnell by way of poisonous articles and disciplinary measures was quickly taken up by Carolan's co-thinkers in Glasgow who promptly produced "Galtieri Gang Rides Again" in IB 38, and dutifully sent in a resolution for the conference disciplining the Tendency leaders.

It would be well worth odes who are not sure who is responsible for the development of the factional heat in the group, going back through the first 60 IB's, particularly the ones I have quoted here, and judge for themselves what sort of language was being used, and who was whipping it up.

A FACTION FORMED

After the conference we formed a faction, not because we could not accept being a minority (in fact, the elections produced an NC which was pretty evenly divided, certainly before the IF left), we formed it for protection. Point 3 of the Faction declaration said the following:

"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 IT at the conference to be expelled, and the far-reaching 'Party Building' document which they attempted to get onto 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 the coming months. This situation cannot be countered other than in an *organised* way."

It proved to be a very necessary step. The attitude of the majority, particularly at EC level hardened after the conference. Open statements were made on the EC about a split, and that only the I-CL would survive it. Carolan and Kinnell began to act irrationally to any challenge to their authority, or to the loss of a vote on the NC. There was Carolan's outrageous intervention into the LMCFF conference, and then his sudden insistence that we must adopt a position on Afghanistan, contrary to previous arrangements on it. All this convinced us that the newly established majority was going to be used to drive us out of the organisation a few at a time - which would have the advantage for Carolan that he would get rid of us, and get rid of a competitor organisation at the same time. To alert comrades to this, the Faction put a statement into IB 63 outlining the situation. (This is reprinted in this IB)

When it came to the August conference, Carolan and Kinnell wanted to reintroduce their 'Party Building' document, again under conditions where it could not be adequately discussed. After an EC discussion it was agreed that the final section of it, in the form of a resolution would be put to the conference. This was the bit dealing with "one person management". Cunliffe put the following amendment to it: "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 co-ordination 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."

The difference on this really was the nub of the matter in two ways; firstly, what kind of party - instructions handed down vertically or cdes developed at all levels , and also in dealing with us as an opposition, which could be better carried out by a vertical structure.

There was a sharp debate at the conference, and the Carolan/Kinnell position was voted down decisively. Cunliffe's amendment was carried.

This decision, however, was never implemented. Quite the reverse. Everything became more centralised. The implications of Carolan's replacement of Kinnell as joint editor of the paper with Cunliffe became clearer. (According to some accounts, the switch was made because Carolan considered that Kinnell was letting Cunliffe get away with too much.) Carolan had control of the coverage of the September SX trade union conference, and manipulated the coverage factionally. I complained to the NC, but was voted down on the complaint.

The biggest change, however, came over the Christmas holiday. Attitudes had clearly hardened. Cunliffe had said in December that he was not prepared to continue working on the paper with the prevailing political conditions. He called for more democratic controls. No concessions were made. In fact things got worse, and Cunliffe left the paper. The NC on January 5 refused to have a spring conference - which ~~was~~ the only place we ~~could then go~~; to the membership. We began seeking support for a conference to try to change the decision at the next NC. There was a sharp tightening up of the regime. Cunliffe was banned from writing for the paper, and a lengthy article I wrote on the industrial situation was rejected by Carolan on political grounds (see IB 81). Kinnell as treasurer began a series of disciplinary moves against comrades, completely outside the constitution of the WSL. I took these complaints to the Control Commission which was promptly interferred with in the most outrageous way (see Control Commission report - 9.3.84). They were told they were out of order in dealing with my case, and the EC passed a resolution instructing them not to meet, and declaring that if they did meet, the report would be disregarded. In fact, the Control Commission (only one comrade of which is a minority supporter) upheld my complaints in every case, with the exception of the date of the annual conference.

The NC of course, rejected the Control Commission report on almost every aspect of its findings, and passed a resolution at the same meeting which is clearly obvious to everyone, designed to expel us.

We therefore, have to reject Carolan's view that all the factionalism has come from the minority side.

THE "SELF-DESIGNATED WORKER LEADERSHIP"

Carolan, Kinnell and everyone on the EC and NC of the WSL knows very well that Jones and I have never referred to our selves as "the worker leadership". It is true we have from time to time tried to argue that the fact that we are leaders of the movement who also work in factories should be taken into account. Particularly in the first two years of the fusion when Carolan did not have a job, although paid as a full-timer (at least whenever the question was asked as to what his job was, there was only an embarrassed silence followed by "he writes articles for the paper"), and could arrive at EC meetings well-read and ready to debate anything and everything. We tried to argue that if there was to be workers in the leadership, the difficulties they face had to be taken into account. Particularly the difficulty, under conditions of mass work in big factories, of switching from an industrial to an intellectual environment and back again repeatedly, and of keeping adequately informed on an intellectual level.

Several times we explained how different it was in the old WSL, where in my opinion there was a very good relationship between intellectuals and workers. There the different components of the leadership (and of the movement) tried to understand that they had different - and equally important - contributions to make, and that it was necessary for each to draw on the particular strengths of the other.

In the old WSL, intellectual comrades, or comrades from academic backgrounds, never tried to take advantage of the problems of worker comrades - inside and outside the leadership - might have in tackling theoretical problems or for example, keeping up with the political developments on a world scale.

Attempts to discuss such problems in the new WSL, however, were a waste of time. Carolan and Kinnell were determined that they were going to dominate the fused group, and nothing would get in the way of that. They do in any case see things very differently. Kinnell told a recent EC meeting that one of the advantages the old I-CL had over the old WSL was that it had a leadership comprised of "professional revolutionaries", and not people with other jobs. It is a very significant point. Carolan and Kinnell see "professional revolutionaries" not as comrades who dedicate their lives to the struggle for a revolutionary party - as many comrades do - but those who are employed full time by the group. They have argued this many times.

We have never argued that workers should be "deferred" to, although there are clearly times when comrades working in a particular sphere can make a particular contribution. Carolan has in any case never deferred to anyone at any time - except maybe for cynical tactical advantage. The change which has taken place in the organisation is not from a position of deferring to workers. The change which took place last summer was a decision by Carolan never to accept any of the political positions or assessments put forward by myself or Jones. Comrades can check for themselves in the paper. Everything we have written since then has been challenged or countered in some way by Carolan or Kinnell. Even the report I wrote as delegate to the T&GWU conference last summer was followed two weeks later by an alternative report by Carolan giving a completely different (and wrong in my opinion) emphasis to the decisions taken. Nothing was ever said to me. Just a second article on the conference clearly implying a different assessment to the one I had made.

Far from proclaiming ourselves as the "worker leadership" I think, in hindsight that we conceded too much ground on the issue. Despite the theorising of IB 50, having workers in the group at all levels, is clearly such a major issue and such a major problem. No group ever had a problem in establishing for itself a leadership of petty bourgeois intellectuals. Such leaderships make various contributions to the struggle for Trotskyist leadership according to their politics, their abilities and opportunities; but the struggle is always to base the group in the working class - and that means recruiting workers and integrating them at every level in the organisation. That is the most difficult thing to do without resorting to syndicalism or opportunism to do it. The methods of Carolan and Kinnell rule it out for all time.

CAROLAN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE OLD WSL

Like most of IB 83, Carolan's assessment of the old WSL goes well over the top. It does, however require an answer.

Broadly, he says the following: The old WSL was created - like "Tariq Ali" and "Jack Dash" - by the capitalist media and the USFI press. "Lots of people flocked to the WSL, amongst them petty bourgeois intellectuals from other organisations". (page 3) The group then declined because it lost its "neo-Healyite verve and coherence"; it was almost saved by the fusion until we decided to be factional over the South Atlantic war.

That takes the prize for nerve if not for accuracy. It is true that we did recruit out of our record in Cowley, it would have been surprising if we had not. We had after all been involved in a series of major struggles, many of them political strikes, over a period of twelve or fourteen years. It is a slur on the comrades who came with us, to say they were influenced by the capitalist media or the USFI press. This was not, however, the main way in which the old WSL developed and recruited its members. Its main line of development was intervention in direct action struggles and recruitment out of them.

SMITH'S INDUSTRIAL WORK

There is only one other point worth answering in IB 83. That is the allegation that "Smith has done nothing as industrial organiser". Leaving aside how provocative that charge is, coming from Carolan, the allegation is completely dishonest. Carolan knows the discussion which took place on this soon after I was victimised. The problem was, what was meant by "industrial work". If I had felt that we had an agreed conception of that, I would have accepted the job, since I intended to spend (and have spent) most of my time on that work anyway. There were two problems - the first being my commitments on the day to day work in C.....(BL), which was raised by Levy. He doubted whether I could do the job of industrial organiser, and still play a detailed leadership role in C..... He certainly had a point. Given the de-prioritisation of the C..... work which prevailed that would have needed a lot of discussion.

(For example I meet the C..... cdes almost every day. I am involved in every tactical decision. I do practical back-up work. I have very regular meetings with our most important contacts. I still hold an official trade union position in the plant)

The second reason was the book I am writing on industrial work based on the long history of Trotskyist trade union work in that factory. In other conditions this would not have been a problem. In the old WSL, for example, I am sure it would have been seen as a part of the work of an industrial organiser to write such a book. That is not the case in the group as it is. Carolan is generally hostile to the book and has talked at the EC about "Smith spending time on a book that we may eventually have to disassociate the WSL from". As I have said myself at the EC, I regard Carolan as so hostile to the project (because it may cut across his general denigration of the C..... work) that he would be incapable of making an objective decision on it.

Because of these reservations, I agreed to take over (or work with Levy on) a part of the industrial work. This would be to work with Levy on POEU - which I have done - I attended for example a number of POEU BL's, and I have worked closely with Ricky H. on it. I agreed to take over the NHS work - and while I would not claim that this has been adequate, I have held a number of meetings, and was closely involved from the inception with the Bradford conference. I have taken responsibility for interventions like the lobby of the TUC and the LCDTU *delegation*.

C..... has remained my biggest commitment, and has been a major WSL gain over the last year (not as a result of my work of course, but the work of the cadre as a whole). We were centrally responsible for the victory of the new left leadership in the assembly plant, and strengthened our own position considerably at the same time. Much of this was due to the authority our comrades gained in the hand washing strike and other strikes in the past year. The blow we received when I was victimised has been recouped over the last year, and our cdes have actually strengthened our position. In the body plant - with a traditional labour force, and a strongly entrenched right wing - Jones almost equalled the vote of the right wing candidate, and transformed our position in the plant.

I know that for factional reasons, none of this has been adequately reported back inside the group. But where else has the WSL made comparable advances over the last year? I challenge those who say "Smith has done nothing as an industrial organiser" to point to other examples. Again I say that the real job was done by the comrades inside the plants. But I did as much as could have been done as an industrial organiser outside.

Another example of the hypocrisy involved has emerged this week with the miner's strike. At the NC, I proposed that I work full-time for the duration of the strike, going to Yorkshire, working with the miners, and writing for the paper. Two days later I phoned Kinnell with some detailed suggestions on this, and got no response. At the EC at the end of the week, I was the only one with any suggestions on what we should do. I then did some work around the pits in North Yorkshire. On Tuesday I phoned Carolan to suggest that I write an article (a political assessment piece) for the paper on the strike. Carolan refused this on the basis that I would be writing my "individual opinion". I could write a descriptive piece, he said, but not my political opinions. So what is the job of industrial organiser? The organiser goes out and works around a strike, and the people in the office sit and write an assessment of it. The fact is that Carolan and Kinnell don't want me as an industrial organiser, they just want to make propaganda alleging that I am not doing the job.

(I have of course written regularly for SX - but perhaps that is not regarded as a part of the job of an industrial organiser.)

SMITH

March 26th 1984,

THIS STATEMENT FROM THE FACTION WAS WRITTEN LAST JULY
AND PRINTED IN IB 63. IT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO WARN
ABOUT THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN THE GROUP.

A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY IN THE GROUP

We have produced this statement because we think there is a very serious problem of democracy in the group which ought to be brought to the attention of the members. These developments not only threaten the democratic rights of the membership as a whole, but threaten the minimum democratic conditions necessary for our faction to continue as a minority without being crushed.

The problem is ^{the} very destructive stance now being taken by the leaders of the present WSL majority, in particular comrades Carolan and Kinnell. It is plain to us, that as a result of recent developments, they have decided that since they can neither win us to their politics nor assimilate us into the old I-CL tradition, we must be driven out of the organisation a few at a time until we are dispersed as a political tendency. Comrade Smith raised this at the EC on July 29th, and the response of Carolan essentially confirmed it. Carolan said that a split would not be very serious; it would be a splitting away, he said, of a segment of the organisation which would then be destroyed in the process - the organisation itself would continue and survive.

The implications of such a statement are obvious. Given such statements, and all the other evidence, we can only interpret it as the second stage of the driving out of the old WSL as a whole.

This situation has been rapidly developing since the second conference and since the Internationalist Faction left. Before that, when both traditions in the group were roughly the same size, there was a liberal attitude to democracy - pressure was put on branches like Leicester in more subtle ways. Now things have changed dramatically. With Carolan and Kinnell in a clear majority, they have plainly taken the decision to heat things up to breaking point - on both organisational and political questions. Thus majorities established at conference on perspective documents covering specific areas of work are now being used to dominate the group on all political issues quickly and without discussion. This convinces us that no significant political opposition is going to be tolerated. Carolan and Kinnell now regard any vote against them as an unacceptable challenge to their personal authority. Examples of this attitude are comrade Kinnell's astounding reaction to the loss of the vote on the Labour leadership resolution at the June NC, and Carolan's reaction to the loss of the vote on TILC at the subsequent NC on July 9th. At both these meetings, there were other pretty astounding examples, such as Kinnell's irrational attacks on Parsons and Jagger.

A possibly more important example of the lack of democracy in the group is provided by the issue which arose at the conference of the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine. There, Carolan and Kinnell actually managed to change the established position of the group on the question of self-determination for the Palestinians, and organised the production and distribution of a leaflet at the conference which actually argued against self-determination. This was done over the heads of the majority of those comrades normally engaged in that area of work. It is worth going into the details of this.

A few days before the conference, Carolan raised with Keith objections to the fact that self-determination appeared clearly on the statement to be put to that conference. He claimed that this was not precisely WSL policy, and personally invited Keith to the next EC to discuss it later in the week.

Jones and Smith missed the meeting because of a transport breakdown. At that meeting, a decision was pushed through, authorising a statement to be drawn up by Keith "clarifying" our exact position on self-determination - but with the specific condition that it would not argue against it - and to be distributed at the conference. Meanwhile, long discussions were held with Keith (as described by Comrade Kinnell) which resulted in agreement between them. The result was a statement which gave the Jewish population of occupied Palestine a veto over the right of Palestinians to self-determination - the key sentence reads "The precise nature of that state would be the outcome of the determination of both Jews and Palestinian Arabs; it would not be self determination by the Palestinian Arabs alone." This was distributed at the conference, despite the protests of minority comrades.

All this, of course, was nothing to do with developing the conference itself. It involved only the internal power politics of the WSL. It was not accompanied by any work or mobilisation for the conference at all. In fact the conference itself was clearly seen as irrelevant. It ended up with 20 people, 11 of them WSL. Nor was it an attempt to change the platform of the campaign, since the EC decision was that we would vote for the statement, having argued against it. It was simply a device to publicly change our agreed position of self-determination for the Palestinians.

Equally important was the reaction of Carolan and Kinnell when this issue came up at the EC. We raised it together with Cunliffe and the Oxford area committee as a question of party democracy, seeking to condemn the attacks on the democracy in the group by this kind of organisational manoeuvre, and hoping to prevent it recurring in the future. We were then met with another manoeuvre. Carolan and Kinnell tried to turn it into a discussion on the merits of the self-determination slogan. When we insisted that whilst a discussion was important and has its place, our purpose was to discuss whether democratic norms had been violated, we were accused of "wanting to avoid politics."

It appears that the decision to introduce a "no holds barred" situation and heat things up to breaking point was taken after the July 9th NC. Since at the first EC after it, on July 9th, there was no dialogue at all, just the cold pushing through of decisions which had clearly been discussed in advance.

The major decision taken at that meeting under those conditions, was on Afghanistan. Out of the blue it was now asserted that our lack of position on Afghanistan is unprincipled, and we must have one immediately. Such a dramatic switch after two years has plainly nothing to do with Afghanistan itself (where there has been no dramatic recent development). It is located and can only be located in the internal politics of the WSL, and the conjuncture we have reached.

As comrades know, a decision on Afghanistan was unresolved at the time of fusion. It was scheduled for discussion. For various reasons we have held this discussion off. This has always been by the overwhelming majority on both sides. Carolan, who now raises it on the EC, not only agreed with holding it back, but actually advocated it. He opposed it going on the conference agenda earlier this year on the basis that it would "split the movement". Now (at the EC) he argued that not only was our lack of a position unprincipled, but it had been so for a long time.

A resolution was consequently voted through, placing Afghanistan on the agenda of the August NC meeting, for its possible inclusion on the September conference agenda. After the August NC, or in the event of the August NC failing to deal with it, Carolan would have the right to start putting articles in SX about it.

At the EC on July 29th, things changed again. When it became clear that it was impossible to discuss it at the August NC, a decision was taken to begin putting articles in the paper straight away - from a troops out position! This would lead to a public debate in SX on the issue. This outrageous move has established a de facto position of the group on Afghanistan without any discussion at all. A troops out position is now established, and the onus is on the minority to change it.

As comrades know, our common position right from the fusion conference has been that we should only open a debate on Afghanistan when we have the right conditions and can have a full debate amongst the whole membership.

This has now not only been changed out of the blue, but it has been changed to the extent that five people voting 3-2 have effectively established our position on Afghanistan, since it was made very clear by Carolan that articles will be written from a troops out position. We are now forced into a public debate on the issue under conditions where we have had no internal debate at all. No branch discussion, no aggregate meetings, no documents. A proposal from Cunliffe that we now embark on a proper internal discussion culminating in a decision on Afghanistan at the end of it, was rejected by the comrades. This dramatic switch of position (the arguments advanced to show that our lack of position is unprincipled could have been advanced at any time over the past two years) was obviously not made lightly, and cannot be taken lightly, particularly since it is quite clear that an EC meeting has no authority at all to take such a decision (remember it becomes immediately effective - before the next EC) since the way we would proceed on Afghanistan was voted on at ^{the} fusion conference itself. It is outrageous that an EC meeting should change a decision taken by the whole of the movement.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that this switch of position has been thrown in to heat up the internal situation. There is no possible way that such a destructive move could be anything but divisive. At the EC on July 29th, Carolan actually said that he had held back in the past for the sake of ^{the} unity of the group - if that is true, it would again imply a decision to let things rip.

One more thing should be added to complete the picture. At the EC meeting on July 21st, when it was suggested that the movement is in danger, Carolan said, "That is wrong; we may split, but we will survive just the same." At the EC meeting at the Summer School, when we raised the Palestine Campaign, he "warned" us: "This is the end of your manoeuvring, next time you will get it back with interest". Then at the July 29th EC (as reported above) he went much further, trivialising a split, predicting the destruction of the minority after the split, and arguing strongly that the majority which remained would continue and survive just the same.

We have included these details not to nit-pick (since whilst they may have been brief, they were calculated statements) but to try to bring home to comrades just how fast things are moving, and how dangerous the situation is. These are our fears, and we ask that they be taken seriously within the group. We call upon the majority to reverse the course they have taken. We want to be part of a WSL in which we can advance our ideas, and know that our democratic rights, and those of everyone in the organisation will be protected.

Smith 30.7.83

For the faction.

CENSORSHIP

The treatment of my article in SX 153 on the US invasion of Grenada is scandalous and should be condemned. It amounts to a well-known and well tried method of censorship much used by the BBC and IBA by which unwanted criticism of the established order is allowed but neutralised by editorial intervention.

The fact that I raised on the EC in advance whether or not an article written by me on Grenada and the world situation would be blocked by Carolan and Kinnell shows the pressures, as does my concession that it could be presented as a "discussion article". What happened in fact, was that the article was given the least prominence possible, and was subjected to a comparatively long introduction by Carolan who is one of the main opponents of it.

The introduction introduces issues which are not mentioned in the article at all in order to influence the reader - such as the opposing views on Argentine defencism, which were at the centre of the Malvinas debate. I make no mention of this, yet the introduction chooses to introduce it. It goes on to summarise the arguments I use. Yet my article is hardly a problem for the reader; it is no longer than some of the letters on the letter's page. The summary is of course slanted in a particular direction. He attributes to me for example, the view that the Grenada invasion was "organically linked" to the Flaklands War. I never said that of course, it is a skillful way of exaggerating my point. It treats the Begin invasion of Lebanon in the same way. Carolan is saying - don't read this article objectively, this is the way to read it.

All this is made worse by the fact that at the end of the article, the reader is informed that there will be a reply next week anyway. So you undermine the article before it is read, and then launch a major attack on it next week. Such a situation cannot be seen as a democratic regime.

Finally, my article was a signed article. When have other signed articles by supporters of Carolan been censored in the same way? There have been many articles sharply critical of WSL policy which have never had this treatment.

WSL POLICY

The introduction starts by casting my article in the role of the minority view. It presents the positions of SX during the war as if they have remained the same through until today. It ignores the fact that the WSL and therefore SX position changed at the special conference. The size of the majority is beside the point. Yet we have the incredible position that my article, written from the majority position is presented as a discussion article and carefully censored, whilst Carolan and Kinnell are able to write articles from the minority view which are presented as straight SX policy.

It is quite clear that the points I made which are contentious were all voted positions at the special conference. In particular the necessity to make an assessment of the "world balance of forces" and the assessment that the British victory in the Malvinas war altered the balance of forces on a world scale to the advantage of imperialism. To write an article today assessing the extent to which the Grenada invasion was influenced by that, must be legitimate of SX. (The influence of the Falklands war on Begin's invasion of Lebanon was also voted on at the special conference).

This creates a situation in the WSL which is contrary to all forms of Communist democracy.

A REPLY TO IB 83 - CAROLAN'S ATTEMPT TO GENERATE A "SPLIT ATMOSPHERE"

Carolán's document is a dangerous and divisive one. He presents the faction as the 'Smith faction'. The Smith faction! The Oxford Faction! The hysterical shouts have echoed throughout the organisation. Carolán attempts to portray the faction as a small grouping of people from Oxford around Cde Smith who blindly follow and defer to Smith on all questions. That is an insult to the comrades in Oxford, and it is also an insult to those comrades outside Oxford, to all who were not in the old WSL and to those who joined the WSL after fusion. Carolán seems to imply that the comrades in the faction can make no political judgement of their own. Carolán has a strange view of the membership of our organisation - a membership that is not capable of exercising its own political judgements. He has a strange view of leadership.

But that is an aside, albeit an important one. Let us examine Carolán's document in a little more detail.

He charges the faction with "refusal to accept the practical consequences of the decisions" of the three-part conference i.e. that the faction is a minority and likely to remain so for the immediate period ahead. That is a nonsense! The faction are obviously aware that they are members of a minority.

And then Cde Carolán presents two alternatives for the faction - split, or act as a disciplined minority. Cde Carolán points the direction he wishes things to go. Since the faction are already acting as a disciplined minority (in so far as it is able to do so under the internal regime within the organisation), Cde Carolán can only be saying one thing. SPLIT. He leaves the faction one alternative. Enough is enough - split. Of course, as is Carolán's wont, he dresses it up by saying that "Smith & Jones are valuable and experienced comrades, with much to offer in the leadership of the organisation" and by quoting the NC resolution "that a split is neither desirable nor necessary, and that it can be avoided if...", but behind it all is a deliberately inflammatory and divisive series of slanderous allegations that are clearly saying to the faction - 'get out of the WSL! I don't want you.'

What are the slanders?

He accuses the faction of launching "an escalating course of disruption." This is patently untrue, and any member of the L. must be able to see that the faction has been forced to take up issues of democracy and to a large extent nit-pick because of the fanatical desire of Cde Carolán himself (and others) to shift the emphasis of the debate away from the major political questions. Cde Carolán has tried to present the faction as disruptors, by clouding the political issues through the denial of basic democratic rights to faction members, and through his own deliberate flouting of the norms of democratic centralism and of the organisation. Cde Carolán is unable to accept that he is ever wrong, that he ever makes a mistake. Any opposition he pounces on like a rabid frothing animal. Cde Carolán seems unable to accept that while many in the organisation agree with a lot of his political views, even more find his behaviour within the L. obnoxious, inflammatory and divisive. He refuses to realise and accept that he himself is the cause of much of the disruption within the organisation over the recent period.

Carolán states that the faction are over-represented on the EC. As far as I am aware, only Smith & Jones from the faction are on the EC. 2/7ths of the EC. It seems about right.

Carolán states that positive discrimination for 'them' operates in L. work. "For example, Cunliffe continued as joint-editor of the paper." Perhaps Carolán shares the SWF's conception of 'sub-conscious factionalism'. For his information, in case Carolán had not known - Cunliffe is not a member of the faction. To try and present him as such is downright slanderous, and can only serve the purpose of trying to fuel unnecessary heat within the organisation.

And then Carolan goes on about the "priveleged position of the Smith group leaders", a point he labours again and again throughout his document. Perhaps Carolan instead of the lies he puts to paper, could produce some real evidence of this. Nothing that Carolan points to serves as evidence of his assertions.

He maintains that the faction is "unconcerned with the work of the organisation." But it is precisely because of the faction's concern with the work of the organisation that the faction exists!

"The only rational perspective for a political minority in their position would be propaganda focussing on basic political issues." Perhaps Carolan thinks that Ireland, the nature of imperialism, orientation to the working class, fighting women's oppression, democracy within a democratic centralist organisation etc., are not basic political issues. If these issues have become somewhat clouded, it is because of the C/K/H bloc's determination to cloud these issues. I accept the charge that the issues have not been put forward in an entirely focussed manner and that there has been some fudging - but this has not been helped by those who seem determined to stifle and smother any political opposition.

And then we are faced with a whole catalogue of slanders directed at Smith & Jones. Can Cde Carolan really think that these allegations are going to help his cause? He talks of the "grouping" that Smith & Jones brought into the new organisation. Were not the WSL and the ICL approximately the same size at fusion? He talks of S & J scattering most of "their" forces to the four winds - but have not many of the comrades who came into the fusion with Carolan now left the organisation? Or does Cde Carolan hold that Smith & Jones are responsible for that as well?

And then what of these "TILC-oriented youth""who were never really integrated into the organisation and its work anyway"? Does Carolan really see something wrong with these youth having an orientation to TILC? TILC I thought was meant to have been the main instrument of our international work at the time. One rule for Carolan, one for the rest of the organisation it seems. So much for integration into the organisation and its work.

"The third wave of ex-Smith-group forces has dropped away one by one since, because...they took seriously what Smith and Jones had to say about the organisation and its majority." If these comrades had taken seriously all that Smith & Jones had said about the organisation and its majority, then these comrades would still be in the organisation today! And - what is so criminal about comrades taking seriously what Smith & Jones have to say? Perhaps Carolan sees it as such a crime because if comrades do listen seriously to Smith & Jones, then perhaps Carolan's version of events, and political analysis do not seem nearly so credible.

"The whole history of the Smith group shows the unviability of trying to build a political organisation around a self-designated worker leadership..." If Cde Carolan could present the evidence for this assertion that the "Smith group" is trying to build a political organisation around a self-designated worker leadership rather than clear politics and clear political accounting then I for one would be interested to hear the evidence. 'The Battle For Trotskyism' clearly shows that when coming out of the WRP they never tried to do that. Their history within the fused ICL/WSL has never indicated that. Indeed (to take just one example) it was Smith who sought that political accounting in the wake of the NGA dispute be made. Instead, what did we get? A diary of the NGA dispute, culled from the Financial Times! That is just one example. There are many others. I personally have great respect for Smith & Jones - not because they are part of a self-designated worker leadership - but precisely because of their struggle for clear political accounting and clear politics. Their fights within the WRP, at their workplace, and within the WSL I think prove that.

And then Carolan has the audacity to condemn the old WSL for attracting petty-bourgeois intellectuals! I for one would rather trust a petty-bourgeois intellectual's political judgement and analysis if they accepted the discipline of a revolutionary organisation and constantly proved themselves within that organisation, than the political judgement and political analysis of petty-bourgeois intellectuals from outside our organisation who Cde Carolan so desperately tries to court, or who the Glasgow cdes feel would be so valuable to the building and health of our organisation - so much so, that it would be worth scrapping the WSR and setting up a non-L magazine in order to attract these people!

Carolan's document is deliberately inflammatory - if he stuck to the facts it couldn't be so; it wouldn't have the effect intended. So, instead, Cde Carolan has to resort to slanderous allegations and snide comments to achieve the effect he wants. That effect - a split atmosphere.

"The choice facing the minority is either to resume (SIC!) full organisational autonomy or accept that they are a minority."

"The way the Smith group is now going, a split is inevitable."
and from the NC resolution "...the situation must be resolved in the next few weeks. The faction must decide to go out of the WSL or come into it."

"A hiving off by the Smith group would probably now lead to an increase in the organisation's activity rather than a loss of real resources."

and these statements are presented in the most divisive way possible -

"...the refusal of the faction to accept.."

"They...launched an escalating course of disruption."

"Smith & Jones talked, acted and responded as monarchs by right."

"They responded in a spirit of vendetta."

"Instead of accepting the verdict of the conference.."

"They...continued to poison the organisation with an envenomed campaign of slander and demonology.."

"...unconcerned with the work of the organisation."

on debts, "the basic path of development is illustrated by the Oxford Factory Branch."

"...the faction is a more or less wholly negative force within the organisation."

on why Smith & Jones are not outside the organisation, "...the only possible reasons are the fact that they have no better alternative to the WSL, and/or a desire to do the maximum damage to the organisation."

It is quite obvious what Carolan wants - the faction out of the organisation: and if it means twisting, distorting, and fabricating evidence then so be it. If it means heating up the atmosphere in the organisation, then so be it. If it means the destruction of the WSL, then so be it.

Comrades should seriously examine these Healyite (or Ma.....aite ?) tactics - what is the political method underlying these tactics and manoeuvres? Cdes should seriously think about the call for a special conference. Instead of seeing the call for a conference as a 'faction tactic', they should consider the reasons why a conference is needed, why the problems within the L. must be taken to the membership. They should consider why Carolan (and Kinnell) seem to have such a conference phobia, why they are so frightened of the ENTIRE L. membership being together under one roof, and why with the denial of the Annual Conference they have also been denied the opportunity of electing a new NC.

Cde Carolan's attempt to drive the faction out of the organisation must be condemned; it must be fought. Democracy must be restored. Carolan's fuelling of the factional fire must be quelled. Perhaps then the political issues can be discussed in a manner resembling the way political issues should be discussed in a democratic centralist organisation. Perhaps then we can avert the split which Carolan so desires.

On the other hand, maybe Carolan has done his dirty work too well, and put rifts within the organisation too deep to heal.... It is to be hoped that this is not so.

COOK . 18th March 1984.

