

CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS

AGENDA

NC recommended agenda is as below. For resolution from the DCF, see this IB.

APPEAL BY THE OXFORD FACTION

BALANCE-SHEET OF THE FUSION & WSL ORGANISATION

'Defend the Unity of the League! Democratise the WSL!', IB 92, moved by the DCF

'Building the WSL', IB 107, moved by Carolan and Kinnell

Amendments to 'Building the WSL', in this IB, moved by Kinnell

'Organisation Report', draft in this IB, by Kinnell

Resolution on Finance, in this IB, by Entwistle

THE MINERS' STRIKE: RESOLUTION IN PAPER NO. 173, MOVED BY OUTGOING EC.
PERSPECTIVES AND TASKS

'Some immediate tasks', IB 86, moved by the outgoing NC

'British perspectives', IB 74, moved by Quelch

Resolution on our work, in this IB, moved by McInnis

'A Question of Strategy', IB 114, moved by McInnis*

AFGHANISTAN

'For the withdrawal of USSR troops', in this IB, moved by Carolan for the EC.

SOUTH ATLANTIC WAR & OUR PROGRAMME AGAINST IMPERIALISM

September 1982 resolutions, in WSR 2 supplement

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

'International report', draft in this IB, by Kinnell and others

NC ELECTIONS

Any comrades missing copies of any of the above should write or phone in immediately to get copies.

AMENDMENTS

The deadline given for amendments in branch circular no. 55 - June 17 - was a typing error. The true deadline was given in circular no. 54:

JUNE 24

Please send all amendments to the centre before that date.

* It is not quite clear whether McInnis wishes this document voted on as a whole or taken as background to his resolution in this IB.

RESOLUTIONS

On agenda

This Conference recognises that the Constitution of the WSL makes no provision for mass, collective expulsions of comrades such as those proposed by the NC majority. The Constitution spells out the individual right of comrades to appeal, which should be upheld.

Conference therefore decides:

1. That on principles of natural justice, the representative and observer for the expelled comrades must be allowed to hear and reply to the speech from the NC majority which motivates and seeks to justify the charges of 'disruption' laid against them.

2. That all the expelled members who so wish should be present during the appeal period, and be given the right briefly to add additional points in their own defence if they wish.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIST FACTION

On perspectives and tasks

Conference agrees to concentrate WSL's energies through focusing on the following:

1. Developing our use of the transitional programme beginning with the framework outlined in 'A Question of Strategy' (IB 114).

2. Developing our approach to mass work beginning with the approach outlined in the documents passed last summer (Oliver on Wiganisation, Jagger/Hoplin/Fraser/Organfield on youth work).

3. Developing our existing workplace organisation including workplace O. branches, and further developing our work around industrial disputes.

Comrades will be required to focus their political commitments through these methods whilst scope will be given for branches to develop new initiatives.

Branches will be expected to send proposals to the incoming NC for an immediate programme of education around these areas of work drawing on international as well as national experience.

As soon as the branches and NC have discussed this approach, area aggregates will be expected to complete the details and coordination.

MCINNIS, EDINBURGH

McInnis has also asked for the document 'A Question of Strategy' to be put on the agenda. I am not clear as to whether he wants the whole document voted on, or is submitting it as background to the above resolution.

Finance

1. Minimum dues will rise from £2 to £4. 2. Any comrade who attends a conference or event which involved receiving expenses will donate at least 10% of those expenses to the organisation. (Branch organisers and National treasurer to implement). 3. Any comrade who receives a sum of money over £50 from a windfall, rebate, etc. will donate at least 5% to the organisation.

ENTWHISTLE, NOTTINGHAM

[Note. Under each of the headings in this report I have consulted comrades centrally involved in that work, and in some cases the section is written by such a comrade rather than by me. I had talked to Dupont about Southern Africa work and Keith about Palestine work, but was not able to contact either of them when finally drafting this report, so they bear no responsibility for the respective sections.

Given the limitations of the pre-conference period, and the heavy pressure of other agenda items, I have focused the sections in this document on practical solidarity work.

Some sections are very brief and could usefully be expanded by amendments.]

CENTRAL AMERICA

Our basic position on the current struggles in Central America is set out in the December 1981 TILC resolution (WSR 2). Discussion on this is further taken up by Stanford's forthcoming Internal Bulletin on 'Revolutionary Perspectives in Central America'.

Duarte's victory in the El Salvador presidential elections is a victory for the US. Despite that the US remains very far from stabilising the situation in line with its wishes. The Nicaraguan government's moves for elections are certainly a part of an attempt by the Sandinistas to 'call the bluff' of the US by aligning themselves with a solution acceptable to EEC imperialism and Mexican capitalism, but they are also positive in themselves for working class socialists, and reflect the strength of the Sandinistas' position. The problems faced by US imperialism in its tactics are expressed by its forced climbdown over the mining of Nicaraguan ports.

The basic pressures in the situation thus drive the US either towards acceptance of the sort of solution proposed by the EEC and Mexico, or towards full-scale intervention. As we noted in December 1981, "US imperialism faces problems in moving from threats to actions, because of (a) the weakening of its power... (b) the opposition it would face - for diverse reasons - from the American people; (c) the increased importance for imperialism of its relationships with Third World bourgeois and military rulers, who in turn have become increasingly conscious of their own interests in some cases running counter to those of their US sponsors..." And Nicaragua would be a different proposition from Grenada. Nevertheless, Grenada showed that the US is willing to move from threats to actions, given the conditions. The conclusion of December 1981 holds today with double force: "Sounding the alarm is a major task in the workers' movement of the imperialist countries".

Our solidarity work (STANFORD:) To the best of my knowledge our Central American work consists of my (rather inconsistent) activity in Manchester. There were four or five comrades from around the country at the labour movement conference.

It's probably fair to say that the mainstream within ELSSOC and the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) see solidarity work as a charitable venture - at the moment the NSC is cooperating with War on Want to send school-books, medicines, etc. to Nicaragua. They also see themselves as pressure groups. Last year the NSC saw one of its main priorities as lobbying for an increase in EEC credits to Nicaragua. ELSSOC spends a lot of time making propaganda for the proposals of the 'Contadora group' (a diplomatic grouping of Central American governments including Nicaragua).

Intl/2.

Not surprisingly, the SL more or less completely liquidate into this current - they certainly don't challenge things like the proposals for a negotiated peace (as far as I can make out they think that negotiations are a good tactical ploy). Despite this, there are various rumours to the effect that the leadership of ELSSOC are unhappy about Trotskyists wrecking their campaign. It seems likely that Stalinists have been stirring things up.

In Manchester, where the ELSSOC branch is dominated by the SL, the Stalinists and 'human rights activists' split off to form their own campaign.

ELSSOC has regions which more or less correspond to Labour Party regions (the NSC doesn't seem to have many local branches). Given our limited resources, I suggest that we keep our intervention to one or two comrades in each of the ELSSOC regions. Whilst rejecting any sectarian propagandism, we should put forward our own perspectives on Central America and the need for a more clearly labour-movement-oriented solidarity campaign.

Such a principled position should bear fruit, especially as the arguments inside the solidarity movement heat up.

TURKEY (by Levy)

Last November's elections in Turkey have led to, not a return to civilian rule, but a modification of the military dictatorship in power since September 1980. Both the conditions under which the election took place, vetting of parties and candidates by the junta, compulsory voting, etc, and the eventual victory of the conservative Motherland Party with an absolute majority, confirm the generals' insistence on there having been a 'return to democracy' as mere rhetoric.

It is aimed, in particular, at Turkey's NATO and EEC partner countries to offset growing unease about the junta's banning of independent trade unions, tortures, executions, and mass trials of its political opponents.

The Motherland Party therefore accepts and operates within the harsh and heavily restrictive guidelines drawn by military supremo General Evren who, as self-appointed President, retains virtual dictatorial powers over the new government following drastic changes in the constitution.

Turgut Ozal, the new Prime Minister, and the MP may not have been the junta's first choice (there was, after all, one party standing led entirely by former armed forces leaders), and there is no doubt that large numbers perceived them to be the most independent option, but Ozal himself had formerly served as the junta's own economic adviser, valued for his close links with the IMF and OECD.

While continuing to expose as sham this 'return to democracy' it is still possible to argue that, in a sense, so far the junta has been successful in pursuing its programme; it has established the foundation of a new form of state, managed to secure the elections - however undemocratic they were - and prepared the conditions for a government which has 44% of the vote, 212 seats out of 400 in parliament, and does not need to struggle with coalitions.

Although it could be argued that as the civil politicians take over the control of the junta will diminish, all the signs are that it will survive for quite a long time yet, mainly because of the new constitution straitjacket and the low level of popular opposition.

Our solidarity work: On Saturday September 22 a labour movement conference is being held in London on the issue of Turkey solidarity. It has been called by a group of Labour MPs, recently come together to campaign on Turkey, in association with all the Turkey solidarity committees active in this country, including the Turkey Solidarity Campaign who originally proposed the conference.

Intl/3.

Considering the history of generally poor relationships, and often sharp antagonism, between these committees, agreement to jointly organise this meeting itself a significant step forward for international solidarity work and will, hopefully, have longer-term implications for unity. We have always given full support to the TSC (which was, in fact, initiated by comrades who are now * supporters) so our preparation for, and participation in, this conference is of special importance. For this reason, and to help comrades get some idea of the rather complex situation within the Turkey solidarity movement, there follows some background information on the way the conference came about and the present state of Turkey solidarity work.

The TSC was set up shortly before the coup of September 1980. Its aim then was to warn of the dangers of a mass fascist movement there and probable military coup. Its supporters at that time were few and drawn mainly from the smaller left groups. Soon after, contact was made with a number of Turkish activists involved in local solidarity committees in various cities. These comrades were supporters of left-of-CP/guerillaist organisations which had built up substantial followings, usually on an anti-fascist basis, during the late 1970s. We agreed with them a common platform of solidarity demands and reformed TSC on a stronger basis. The larger non-CP British left groups began to participate, mainly through their Turkish comrades. The main British forces continued to be us and, increasingly, Socialist Challenge/Action.

TSC's primary aim has been to take the issue of Turkey into the labour movement at all levels but especially among the rank and file. A regular Bulletin has been produced and a Speakers' Tour organised in the spring of 1982. The campaign has fought to base itself primarily on Trade Union and Labour Party activists, and includes in its demand a call for a British trade union boycott, through direct action, to stop trade with the junta.

TSC has also been active in support of Turkish political refugees, begun with the successful national campaign in defence of Dogan Tarkan. Lately the campaign around the mass trial of Fatsa townspeople has brought wide support from Labour councils, notably in London, and publication of a joint Hackney Borough Council/TSC pamphlet on this issue. A campaign and discussion group for Turkish women has recently been^{re-}formed in London.

In contrast to this approach, the other two solidarity organisations have concentrated largely on the national labour movement leaders, especially those in the orbit of the Communist Party. Similarly, both the longer-established Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey and the Solidarity Committee for Democracy and Trade Union Rights in Turkey have their origins in the Communist Party of Turkey. British CPT supporters in CDDRT split in the late '70s and the rival SCDFURT (chair Alex Kitson) together with various satellite committees on Peace, Women and Culture, was established by majority CPT supporters in May last year. Bitter rivalry has existed between these two factions, spilling over into a street brawl at last year's Labour Party conference.

Lying behind this continued disunity, which TSC has always tried to overcome, is a fundamental disagreement over conceptions of what solidarity work should be, and specifically the distinction between a political party and a solidarity campaign. To coincide with recent moves by Labour MPs to promote cooperation and joint activity between the various Turkey campaigns, TSC has produced a statement setting out its views on this issue.

The Parliamentary Labour Party Turkey group is, as yet, an informal grouping. It is based on those MPs in London whose constituencies contain the largest Turkish communities: Jeremy Corbyn, Chris Smith and Ernie Roberts, and has the active support of about another ten. Given the acute problem of relations between the solidarity committees, it has become virtually the only body with sufficient independence and authority to command the support of all of them. The conference has come about as a result of a series of joint meetings hosted by these MPs held since last November.