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* The November 19 1983 and January 7 1984 National Committees discussed proposals about the future of the broad groups. The National Committee finally decided to stop this discussion until further notice. The reason was that although the proposals might have had a majority, a minority was certainly very strongly opposed to them. In the nature of the proposals they could be carried through effectively only by a relatively united and cohesive organisation. Thus we could not immediately proceed with them. Even to discuss them, however, would be damaging: given the heated nature of the opposition to the proposals, the discussion would be bound to spill^{over}, damaging our relationship with the broad groups and perhaps prejudicing the possibility of ever being able to carry out the proposals.

In accordance with clauses 6(x) and 13(iii) of the constitution, the Internal Bulletin is therefore closed to contributions on this issue. Only the NC can reopen it.

Documents by myself, by Picton, and by Scott are affected by this. Two sentences on p.13 of Scott's article in this IB are also deleted in line with this NC policy.

Kinnell. 14.6.84.

Stanford

What follows is not intended as a polished political statement, rather it is an attempt to review some of the presuppositions of our movement vis-a-vis Central America and raise some questions.

Although most concrete examples are generally drawn from El Salvador, the conclusions are applicable to Guatemala and Honduras also.

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Firstly I shall look at the social structure of Central America, then at some of the different Left wing groupings and their strategies and finally at our own assessment of the situation.

Since the late nineteenth century the defining feature of all the Central American Republics (with the exception of Costa Rica) has been the highly unequal distribution of land. The communal land of the peasant villages (Ejidos) was broken up by legal trickery and physical force, church land was also alienated (hence the anti-clericism of the land-owning Liberals) and where subsistence crops or Indigo once grew there was now coffee or bananas. Over sixty years later, sugar and cotton were added to the export crops - both of these require capital intensive cultivation methods hence adding to the problem of rural unemployment. The result of these upheavals was to create a tightly-knit landowning oligarchy and a mass of tenant-farmers, smallholders, semi-proletarians and proletarians.

But these changes in agriculture did not cease once the basic agro-export model had been established. The process whereby tenant farmers first had their holdings reduced and were then proletarianised continued apace through the 60's and 70's:

" money rent and wages progressively eclipsed labour rent because there was simply not enough land available to sustain commercial farming on the basis of 'colonato' or share-cropping Between 1961 and 1971 the number of families possessing less than two hectares grew by 37,194 and those with no land at all rose by 81,657 ".

(Dunkerley, 1982)

In the same period the number of rural landless labourers rose from 12% to 29% (in El Salvador).

On the basis of the foregoing analysis it is clearly erroneous to characterize Salvadoran agriculture as in any way " Feudal " or even " semi-feudal ". This is an important point to which I shall return.

In the post-war period the economies of Central America began to diversify. In El Salvador the dictator Martinez who had crushed the 1932 uprising was replaced by a " reformist " military junta. By a mixture of import controls, redistributive policies and taxation of exports to finance infrastructure the military started a process of industrialisation.

The establishment of the Central American Common Market in 1961 speeded up the process of industrialisation in all the Central American economies. The CACM was supposed to encourage growth by reducing tariffs, promoting intra-regional trade and thus widening the otherwise narrow market available to national producers. In practice the new market was swamped by the products of (mainly US) trans-nationals who set up production in the area in alliance with a fraction of the oligarchic Bourgeoisie.

By the mid-70's the possibilities of the CACM had been exhausted (Honduras had closed its borders to El Salvadoran goods after a border war in 1969) and Central America became a " production platform " where semi-finished goods could be assembled by cheap labour and re-exported (see table).

Comparison of Average Hourly Wages in the US and El Salvador, 1977

	<u>Mechanics</u>	<u>Electricians</u>	<u>Unskilled</u>
El Salvador	between 0.41 & 0.86	between 0.58 & 0.86	between 0.31 & 0.58
US	over 7.50	over 8.00	over 3.10
			(in US dollars)

The early working class movement consisted mainly of artisans and railway workers. The industrialisation of the 1950's to 1970's created a semi-skilled proletariat based in capital-intensive manufacture. Although by US standards the wages of these workers are low, they earn more and have greater job security than the thousands of underemployed and unemployed who flock to San Salvador from the provincial towns in search of work.

Before looking at the organisations of the left one point should be made. The ruling class does have divisions. These divisions are by no means fundamental but remain important and are reflected in the polemics that rage between the far-right ARENA (D'Aubuisson) and the centre-right Christian Democrats (Duarte). ARENA represents that section of the oligarchy which still has most of its interests tied up in the land. As such, it is rabidly right wing and denounces those Americans who advocate limited land reform (ie, ex-ambassador White) as " communists ". The Christian Democrats represent professionals and those sections of the ruling class most closely tied with foreign industrial concerns.

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After the massacre of 1932 the Communist Party of El Salvador (founded 1929) spent most of the 40's and 50's in isolation. According to General Secretary Shafik Handal this period was characterised by extreme conspiratorial methods and excessive timidity.

The economic boom of the 60's was accompanied by relative political liberalisation and a growth in (government-sponsored) trade union organisation. In San Salvador the Christian Democrats formed the municipal government and carried out welfare programs. In these conditions and with their Stalinist heritage it is hardly surprising that the CP put forward the need to form an " anti-oligarchic, anti-imperialist alliance ". In practice this meant an economic trade unionism designed to win the hearts and minds of pro-government workers and in 1971 the formation of an electoral bloc with the Christian Democrats. The peasantry was neglected and armed struggle was seen as likely to provoke the state into destroying the workers' organisations.

Apart from the usual criticisms that Trotskyists would make of such Popular-Frontism one other should be added. It was precisely those " anti-oligarchic " elements in the industrial bourgeoisie who had the closest ties to imperialism in the shape of American and European investors. In the circumstance of El Salvador it is thus impossible to form an " anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchic alliance " with the " progressive " industrial bourgeoisie.

The CP showed its true colours by supporting the " national struggle " against Honduras in 1969, thus precipitating a split and the formation of the " Marxist-Leninist " Fuerzas Populares Libertadores (FPL).

The FPL espouses the strategy of " prolonged popular war " (GPP). GPP is founded on an explicit rejection of Guevara and Debray's " Foco " theory. " Foco " theory is supposed to be an alternative to the reformist positions of the traditional communist parties and posits the need for a highly mobile " armed vanguard " which eventually stirs the masses into action. The FPL says this of such theories:

" (they) led to an underestimation of the different forms of peoples struggle, fundamentally the mass political struggle ... They considered the armed struggle as a struggle of the vanguard and not as a struggle of the people ... "

Like the GPP faction of the Sandinistas the FPL argue that it is necessary to undertake a long period of building up mass organisations, " liberated zones ", and escalating armed struggle in harmony.

Whilst the FPL repeatedly state that the working class is the leading force in the revolution their formulations concerning the post-revolutionary state are ambiguous and they appear to envisage a Nicaraguan model applied to Salvadoran circumstances. This would explain the acquiescence of the majority of the FPL in the current proposals for a negotiated settlement and their willingness to associate themselves with the reformist politicians of the FDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front.

We should note however that all is not well with this organisation. A faction fight over the issue of negotiations led to the murder of a leading member of the FPL in Managua last year by her erst-while comrades and this was quickly followed by the suicide of Cayetano Carpio, founder of the FPL and ex-General Secretary of the CP. In December '83 the FPL split, and those opposed to negotiations formed the MOR (Salvador Cayetano Carpio).

As well as the FPL there are other organisations in the guerrilla alliance. These are notable either by their popular-frontist zeal (Armed Forces of National Resistance, FARN) or their excessive militarism (Peoples Revolutionary Army, ERP).

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The usual Trotskyist position on Central America seems to derive from an unrealistic grafting of the theory of Permanent Revolution on to each and every situation (I shall assume that as we are talking about Trotskyism we shall not bother ourselves with the Schematists of the USFI).

Debray, for all his petty-bourgeois errors, never spoke a truer word when he said: " we see the past superimposed on the present, even when the present is a revolution " (" Revolution in the Revolution "). The usual Trot argument goes like this: " there is a semi-colonial country with a peasantry and a small working class. Because of this country's semi-colonial status and because of those peasants it must be a revolution which still has bourgeois-democratic tasks to fulfill. But the peasantry is petty-bourgeois and the bourgeoisie is anti-national, therefore the leading force in the revolution is the industrial working class. "

Without wishing to stir up a hornets nest, Central America's Bourgeois Revolution was completed a long time ago. In 1825 the Central American Bourgeoisie kicked out the Spanish and thus achieved as much national-sovereignty as any less developed capitalist state is likely to in an imperialist world. Much more importantly, the agrarian transformation that has been taking place since at least 1890 is a thoroughgoing " Bourgeois Revolution ". As noted above, it has not created a small-holding peasantry (like the Chinese or Russian) but has been responsible for a rapid process of proletarianisation.

The point is this: most Trotskyists equate rural warfare with peasant (ie petty-bourgeois) warfare and thus put all the emphasis on the industrial proletariat. But in El Salvador, or Guatemala, or Honduras, rural warfare is in many ways a form of proletarian class struggle. This is not to say that we should become cheer-leaders of the FMLN, far from it. We should criticise their alliance with the reformists and explain why bourgeois diplomacy cannot resolve the problems confronting Central American workers and peasants. But we should not assume that in some way organising urban industrial workers is a greater priority than arming agricultural workers.

Finally, given the immense difficulties involved in organising urban workers at the moment, and given the recent victories of the FMLN, how many comrades wouldn't feel a bloody sight safer in Olive Greens ?!

This document is in two parts. The first part discusses some of the ideas put forward in IB 111 by Oliver, and in the Platform of the DCF. The second part puts forward some proposals on building the WSL.

I want to start by taking two statements one from Oliver, and one from the DCF.

"In taking the decision to join a revolutionary Marxist organisation, militants look to build not a tiny, lifeless clique of polemicists and propagandists dependent on one or two individuals for political development; they look to develop politically in a revolutionary combat party which will seek to utilise the leadership potential of every member, and reach out to recruit, educate and mobilise thousands and hundreds of thousands of workers. To be capable of this, the organisation must fight from the outset against pressures towards sectarianism which arise in small groups, and ensure that the leadership is able to work with comrades - whether they be individuals or organised tendencies or factions. - who hold and argue for views distinct from those of the majority on certain issues. If this is not solved while an organisation is small, there is little chance it will ever become large; nobody can seriously imagine a mass based workers party with the ideological homogeneity of a small faction; and only a sectarian would see such a vision as desirable". (Platform of the DCF pl.)

"Among militants who honestly set out to fight for the rudimentary ideas of revolutionary communism, mistakes and differences should (emphasis added) be containable within a common disciplined organisation. This applies to nearly all the Trotskyist or near Trotskyist Left in Britain..... The existing divisions do not correspond to programmatic ruptures or even to necessary irreconcilability in practical work" (From "The ICL and the Revolutionary Left" quoted by Oliver IB 111 pl).

Let me take the second quote first. Comrade Oliver by reproducing this statement seeks to imply that the differences between the WSL and the expelled Faction are containable within the organisation, and that therefore the majority is being sectarian in expelling these comrades. The quotation actually says that the differences between the various groups should be containable, but there is a big difference between should and are. The question the WSL has to ask itself is were these differences containable? It is quite clear that they were not. They were not containable not because of any objective reasons but because of subjective factors - factors which ultimately resulted in their being as Carolan has described it two distinct organisations within the shell of the WSL.

On p6 of his document Oliver asks for details of how the Faction was disruptive. The answer quite simply is that whether the Faction intended to be or not the effect of their presence in the organisation has ~~be~~ been to disrupt it - disrupt it at the very least in the sense that a large number of comrades got fed up of the wrangling and left.

The link between Oliver's statement and that quoted from the DCF is that they both talk about containing political differences. The DCF link containing

differences to the task of building a revolutionary party. But there is a difference between what political disagreements can be contained within a revolutionary party and what can be contained in a small fraction of that party like our own.

We are attempting to build such a party at a time of great theoretical confusion, and at a time when the pressures of alien class ideas are strong. To combat that it is essential that our organisation be as homogenous as possible. The comrades' idea that such homogeneity is an obstacle to growth can easily be challenged by comparing the experience of the IMG/SL, and of Militant. The IMG/SL has because of its lack of homogeneity swung from position to position, tactic to tactic and suffered continual disruption. Militant on the other hand, despite its sectarian politics has been the only Left group to experience serious growth in the last few years. Under the present conditions homogeneity is a precondition for the kind of internal regime the comrades argue for. If we were a fully fledged revolutionary party we could afford to be less homogenous, we could afford experiments - our inner resources and contact with the class would see us through.

In many ways the situation is similar to that facing Lenin before 1905. He differed from other Marxists in that whilst they saw the Party as a catch all umbrella he recognised the need for a tightly knit homogenous organisation. Only when he felt that the Bolsheviks were a sufficiently homogenous, educated cadre capable of dealing with an influx without being swamped, without their ideas being liquidated, was he prepared to open the doors in 1905 to allow in revolutionary workers.

Our job today is to build an homogenous, educated Bolshevik organisation without the sectarianism of Militant. That does not mean opening our doors to all and sundry, nor allowing people to remain in our organisation whose political differences are such that they disrupt the job of building the League. Avoiding Militant's sectarianism is a matter of how we relate to the wider labour movement not who we tolerate in our own organisation. The more homogenous our organisation the more confidently can we work with others in the wider labour movement, and the more decisive and successful will be our intervention in it.

THE MINERS STRIKE

Thus, the argument on p2 of the DCF platform concerning the expulsions and the miners strike is totally wrong. Given the clear breakdown in the fusion the miners strike was precisely the time when we could not afford experiments, when we could not allow things to continue as they were. It was precisely the time when we needed an homogenous organisation whose intervention was clear and decisive.

Oliver argues (p6) that had the conference been called for 2 months after the March 10th. NC it would have been over by now. But how could we have properly related to the strike with the prospect of a split hanging over us, how could we allow comrades to continue to leave through demoralisation rather than making the break and turning towards the strike. To have had a conference 2 months after March 10th. would have meant 2 months of navel observation during a crucial period of the strike. Instead during that period Cde. Hill has been able to work full time round the strike, and the League has made a number of important initiatives e.g.

in Nottingham.

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The DCF Platform also talks about the comrades who led the Trade Union work of the old WSL being expelled just at the time of the miners strike(p4). But, as past documents have shown the general industrial/TU perspectives of these comrades in the last few months have been totally wrong, and based more on subjective impressions than on Marxist analysis. Their analysis of the situation, and their perspectives would if adopted have led the League down several wrong paths.

FUSIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

On p3 of his document Oliver writes "...one undoubted response will be a retrenchment into sectarian attitudes - against tactics like the SX turn, against unity proposals like that with the old WSL and a refusal to accept that the old ICL leadership could possibly have put a foot wrong in the whole process."

This statement it seems to me is at odds with the DCF Platform which Oliver has signed. It says,

"Its logic is to reject serious fusions (with "non Marxist"?) and instead seek cynical repetitions of the WSL fusion:"

The platform also goes on "as the supply of gullible groupings runs dry, its logic is then to resort to a view of party building one by one, with each new recruit being vetted and screened for conformity to the ideas of the leadership. We have seen this model in operation elsewhere; until now we have been all agreed in branding it as sectarian."

In my opinion this attitude is totally wrong and anti Leninist. If we believe in our politics, if we believe that the WSL represents the healthiest current of revolutionary politics (which presumably we do, or why did we join) then we have a duty to try to organise people around our organisation, and to smash our competitors. That may be done by splitting comrades away from these groups, it may be done by a honest fusion with a group which has been won over to our politics, or it may be done through a tactical fusion with another group entered into with the intention of winning a section from the inside. This last appears to have been the intention of Comrades Smith and Jones if ~~it~~ it is factual that they made a statement to their youth comrades before the fusion that they were going to go in and smash the Pabloite leadership of the ICL.

There's nothing wrong with that in my opinion. Any revolutionary group which believes in its politics should try to build itself, and destroy its opponents. Any group which doesn't can't be very confident in the correctness of its own politics.

The problem with our fusion in my opinion is that not enough comrades were confident in their own politics. Instead of clear political argument the fusion broke down into the old organisations with the exception of a group of comrades like Comrade Oliver who wanted to preserve the fusion almost at any price including minimising the political differences. Too many comrades had become soft. If nothing else the experience of the fusion will, in my opinion, have made us a harder organisation, and as a result of the debates that have taken place an organisation whose members are far more confident in the League's politics.

"A common concern to build broad based campaigns that would offer a real struggle against the TU and MO bureaucracy seemed a solid basis for unity and for the first time, a Trotskyist organisation which would have a serious interventionist orientation to the British workers' movement as a whole.

"What has happened to this orientation?" (DCF Platform p4)

What has happened is that the world, and the Labour Movement with it has moved on. Kinnock has been elected Leader of the LP with the support of the soft left in the CLP's who see him as a left winger. Sections of the soft left like the LCC and the right wing of CLPD now see themselves as (indeed are) part of the establishment. The purpose of the RFMC was to challenge the establishment, now the soft left are the establishment.

Socialist Action and Militant have responded by, at least in part, accommodating to the soft left. By quite rightly refusing to follow suit we will undoubtedly find ourselves more and more isolated on the left. It also means that the 'Left Unity' which made it possible for our comrades to be selected as councillors will as it breaks down make it more difficult (a) to be selected, and (b) to organise inside Labour Groups around our politics. The consequence will be increasing pressure on our comrades which is why it is vital that comrades in this position be well integrated into the local group, and that the local group exercises control of councillor comrades to ensure that they are interpreting and carrying out our politics rather than succumbing to the pressures of the Council Chamber. My own experience has been one in which the soft left saw themselves increasingly as the establishment in the local Party, and seeing that I did not intend going along with their "don't rock the boat" politics ensured my deselection. That same soft left is attacking SX in Stoke at least as viciously as the Right did in the past.

In one way this isolation may be no bad thing. With SA and Militant accommodating to the soft left, and with the soft left's politics being increasingly exposed in class battle after class battle, we can more and more be seen as the revolutionary alternative to the soft left.

BLAME IT ALL ON THE LEADERSHIP

"It is no accident that the forms and structures which are moribund or lacking in the WSL are precisely those which should offer the means for the membership to be kept informed and hold their leadership to account. The lack of area and national aggregates reduces political discussion within the League to a fragmented level of individual conversations or at best Branch meetings (where they occur, and where there are branches left.)" (DCF Platform p4)

This statement seems to me symptomatic of the whole approach of "blame it on the leadership". Firstly, there really is, it seems to me, some justification in Oliver's complaints about lack of Standing Orders for the NC etc. but why is it that it is only now that such a big thing is being made of it? Why wasn't there a campaign amongst the membership, with IB's being produced etc. a long time ago?

Similarly with Area Aggregates - why haven't the comrades made a big thing about it, until now. And finally Branch meetings. Are we really to believe that it's the fault of Carolan and Kinnell that comrades haven't the ability/commitment or whatever to organise their own Branch meetings! No clearly the reason why Area aggregates, and Branch meetings are failing to take place (where that is the case) is more the result of demoralisation in the League, and a feeling that all that can be looked forward to is more wrangling rather than discussing how we can build the League. That's why the NC majority was right to stop the rot.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

"We are also seeing a degeneration to the 'holy scrolls' version of Marxism, where the belief ~~that~~ is held that all is known, and no further work on analysis and development of Marxist theory is necessary. For some organisations this process stops with Lenin; for others with the Transitional Programme of 1938; for Carolan and Kinnell, it stops with the positions they have worked out over the years. This is the very opposite of Marxism/Trotskyism which as a living science must continually analyse and develop its understanding of the world." (DCF p 5)

This allegation is an incredible fabrication. The WSL is marked out from other would be Trotskyist groups by its attempt to develop Marxist theory. Indeed comrades Carolan and Kinnell have been branded revisionists as a result. And branded by who? - by the leaders of the expelled Faction, who really do have a "holy scrolls" version of Marxism, by people who the DCF want us to allow back into our organisation!

In the last 12 months we have tried to come to grips with modern imperialism, and some of us have contributed to the debate. It has been open to all comrades in the organisation to do likewise. Again comrades of the DCF can hardly blame Carolan and Kinnell if members of the League do not take up their right to write articles for the IB.

The idea behind the statement is also basically anti Leninist. If comrades look back to International Communist No. 5 they will find a series of articles polemicising against the IS/SWP on the question of the Leninist Party. (At the present time it is well worth reading these articles). One of the main arguments was over the charge of elitism. The argument was countered by referring to the fact that just as society comprises a spectrum of ability, knowledge etc. so too does a revolutionary organisation. Our task is to select the most able comrades to lead the organisation. That is, or ought to be, the basis of elections to the leading bodies. Comrades Carolan and Kinnell continue to be elected to the leading bodies in the League, not because of cult worship, but because they have demonstrated over the years that in terms of ability, commitment, political education etc. they are the best comrades we have for the job. What comrades of the DCF actually object to therefore is ~~that~~ is the ability of Comrades Carolan and Kinnell. They end up arguing the anti Leninist position that we should suspend all political development in mid air until the membership catch up.

Having dealt with the objections of the DCF and Oliver, I would like in the second part of this document to put forward some ideas and proposals for consideration by the conference on building the WSL.

DEMOCRACY

For a Leninist organisation there must be a synthesis of the greatest possible democracy combined with a strict centralism. The extent of democracy depends upon a number of factors - whether it is possible to operate legally or not, the resources of the organisation etc. In my opinion some democratic norms may have been infringed slightly in the expulsion of the Faction, but it was justified in the interests of the organisation. The same procedure was, for example, used a few years ago in the ICL to expel the Spartacist sympathiser, Smith, who used the same arguments against his expulsion as the Faction and DCF use now. On that occasion no one questioned that the NC's decision was justified.

As an organisation we clearly have a resources problem, but in my opinion the need for a properly functioning democratic regime is so vital that we must as a priority ensure that sufficient resources are available to maintain certain basic democratic norms. In this respect I would make the following proposals:-

- 1) Conference ratifies the Standing Orders for the NC as amended and approved by the NC meeting of 7th. January 1984. We insist that these Standing Orders be adhered to. Responsibility for ensuring this rests with all NC members (and ultimately all League members). Blaming the leadership simply will not do.
- 2) Full minutes of EC minutes must be provided for NC meetings.
- 3) NC meetings to take place at least every 6 weeks (and preferably to be rotated around the country).
- 4) NC minutes to be circulated to branches within 3 weeks of the NC taking place.
- 5) Area Committee meetings to take place quarterly on a fixed date. Comrades failing to attend 2 consecutive meetings without good reason to be fined.
- 6) League branches to meet at least fortnightly, and the Area Committee to ensure that this requirement is being implemented.
- 7) A vital part of any democratic regime is the education of the membership. The League must adopt a centrally directed Education programme to develop League members, and to equip the organisation with the tools to deal with the tasks that lie ahead.

This programme should consist of:-

- (a) A basic education programme/reading list.
- (b) An organised political discussion at Area Committee meetings on some aspect of the League's work/politics.
- (c) To top up these discussions - quarterly, regional day schools.
- (d) Centrally organised speaking tours of our leading comrades,
 - (i) to educate our members and (ii) as a means of recruitment.
- (e) To supplement (d) the production of a series of video films on our politics which can be circulated around branches. Stoke branch has a

comrade capable of organising this.)

These, it seems to me, are the minimum requirements of a healthy democratic regime in the WSL. They will require resources which it could well be argued are already stretched to cope with our work in the class struggle. But as a Bolshevik organisation (especially of our size) our main contribution to the class struggle is not our resources, but our ideas. The best contribution we can make therefore is to develop our ideas, and to educate our members in them as rapidly, and as thoroughly as possible. In addition I believe that some resources could be made available for the above proposals to be implemented by improving the organisation of the League.

ORGANISATION & CENTRALISM

Besides a democratic regime a pre requisite for a Bolshevik organisation is a strict centralism. Mainly for obvious reasons there has been a lack of central direction to the League's work. By centralism I do not of course mean everything happening in London - Bolshevik centralism is not geographic, but organisational. Let us take the example of CND.

Over the last few years CND has organised several very large demonstrations. Yet there has been no organised national mobilisation for these demos. It has simply been left to comrades to turn up with their TU, LP contingent etc. There have been no organised SX contingents on these demos. The consequences of this appear to me as:-

- (a) No great importance is attached to turning up.
- (b) There is no incentive to organise our own transport to the demos which could be used as a means of talking to contacts on the way there.
- (c) Given the size of the demos I have found the experience of turning up extremely demoralising, because of never seeing another SX supporter whilst being surrounded by SWP, SA, Sparts etc. etc.
- (d) It looks bad for our contacts because of our low profile compared to other groups.
- (e) Whilst therefore being part of a TU, LP contingent has some advantages in terms of selling the paper it seems to me the disadvantages far outweigh it.

In future therefore I would argue that we need properly organised national/regional mobilisations for all events deemed important by the NC. Clear central instructions and organisation must ensure that everyone knows that it is a national/regional mobilisation, and that it is not a matter of them deciding if they will turn up.

We also need properly organised interventions in important conferences, with caucus meetings taking place adequately in advance rather than, as is usually the case, a rushed discussion just before the meeting.

RESOURCES

One of the main problems with organising central direction of the organisation is lack of resources, in particular not enough full time workers. We must tackle the problem of resources. I would make the following proposals:-

- 1) That the price of the paper be increased to 30p. This is in line with the price of SA.
- 2) That SX subs be increased to £2 and 50p per month respectively.
- 3) That financial control of the organisation be tightened up. Discipline against comrades not paying their subs or paper debts must be implemented; branches falling more than one month behind in their paper debt should be suspended and papers stopped until the debt is cleared; a system should be adopted which favours prompt payers so as to encourage branches to settle their debts quickly.
- 4) That we look for a site for the centre outside London. There is no overriding argument to justify keeping administration in London. Given that the bulk of branches are to the North of London it makes sense, simply in terms of distribution costs, phone calls etc. to move the centre North from London. Additionally, rents rates, printing costs etc. are less outside London. The money that could almost certainly be saved in such a move could go towards the cost of employing more full timers. A survey should be undertaken to find out costings in various parts of the country to see how much money could be saved by moving to another location.

MILITANT

We can learn some thing organisationally from Militant. The Militant appear to have a policy of 'taking out' very young comrades for 2 - 3 years, and giving them an intensive training in the M's politics, how to speak, organising etc. I think that there is something to be said for this. Some of our comrades are atrocious speakers. The Militant sound boring because of what they have to say, often we sound boring or incomprehensible because we have not learned how to speak in public. Secondly, by taking out a comrade at say 17 and giving them 3 years training would give them 6 years in the J to organise for the League.

We should also encourage our youth comrades to take up full time education rather than jobs. At our present stage as a propaganda group the development of our ideas and education of our comrades is a priority. In full time education youth comrades will have far more time to read and get educated than if they were working or on YTS. Having got that education there will be plenty of time, and they will be in a better position, to become industrial militants.

The M also have a large number of full timers. Whilst we do not have the resources to employ full timers as the M do we must have a fairly large number of unemployed comrades. We should aim in each branch to have these unemployed comrades act as full time organisers. To co ordinate the work these organisers could meet on a monthly or fortnightly basis, regionally. This would not replace the Area Committee, but would supplement it by co ordinating week to week activities.

The signs are (NGA, Miners etc) that large class battles lie ahead. The old easy reformist solutions of the past largely now no longer exist. Kinnock and the soft left have, within months of taking over the driving seat in the NP, shown the bankruptcy of their politics. At the same time Militant and SA have accommodated to the soft left, whilst the SWP has, as usual, been taken totally off guard, and has nothing to say to the working class. In that sense there are great opportunities for

us. If we are not to squander them we need clear decisive interventions, and a tight enough organisational structure to ensure that those interventions are taken up in the class, rather than being just propaganda on bits of paper. It is for that reason that I believe the above proposals are vital to building the WSL. 13

RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Some time ago I wrote documents for the IB on tactics in relation to the USFI/SL and on the relationship between the WSL and SX. For various reasons I agreed that these documents should not be published. Some of the ideas developed in those documents have now been overtaken by events. I would like therefore to summarise the ideas developed in those documents and to make the amendments that I think have now become necessary.

1) Tactics in relation to the USFI/SL. In my original document I argued for a "unity offensive" against the SL. Given the breakdown in the fusion with the old WSL it is now clear that now is not the time for such an offensive. It is clear that the WSL now needs time to consolidate itself.

However, I would stick by the general perspectives developed in that document, and believe that when the WSL has had time to consolidate itself those perspectives should form the basis of our tactics in relation to the USFI/SL.

2) THE WSL AND SX

It is now clear that the idea of SX being a broad campaign is a myth.

3) SX AND B

Whilst the SX groups are not now the type of broad groups we had envisaged the National B network does appear to be at least a possible vehicle for carrying out the kind of tactic we envisaged with SX. It is a broad organisation of the hard left, and it seems to me sectarian to be put off working in it by fear of it becoming dominated by SA. Certainly if we give them a free hand that is what will happen.

We should therefore see B not as the "manifestation of the revolutionary process" as SA do, but as an opportunity to have a second attempt at the SX turn. All branches should be instructed to establish local B groups where they do not exist, and to work in them where they do. Given the split in the SL, and their accommodation to the soft left, B also provides us with an excellent opportunity to take up the politics of the SL.

This is just a brief outline of the ideas developed in my earlier documents. It is impossible to do justice to those ideas in a short space, and so therefore as the reasons for my agreement to hold back publication of these original documents have now disappeared, I am asking that the original documents now be published. The above summary and amendments should therefore be read in conjunction with the original, as an update.

SCOTT June 3rd. 1984

PROPOSALS ON TACTICS TOWARDS THE USFI/SL

I would like to make a number of proposals in relation to tactics as regards the USFI/SL.

- 1) To take up the question of unity with the SL in the paper in order to turn their unity offensive against them - make known in the paper their attitude so far. In other words to launch a unity offensive against them.
- 2) On page 5 of IB 77 Kinnell says ".....The USFI will be profusely friendly, offering comrade Smith international speaking engagements and all the rest of it, while at the same time trying to stick the knife in. My guess is that they will put the word round that progress towards fusion is going just fine, and there is only one obstacle - the 'sectarianism', 'bureaucratic methods', and 'cranky ideas' (so remote from 'normal Trotskyism') of people like Carolan..."

We should then pre-empt such a move by:-

- (a) Inviting Mandel to speak at the WSL Summer School, and
- (b) stating that we are prepared to accept invitations to speak at USFI engagements only on condition that a representative of both the NC majority and minority are invited.

TACTICS IN RELATION TO THE SL

Kinnell p5 refers to the SL's unity offensive being ham-handed, but so too has been our response. Kinnell says (p5) "...just last weekend I talked to a contact in Leicester who had been told by the local SL that we were already fused in London, and separate only outside London!" Is it surprising such confusion exists? We have said hardly anything in the paper about the SL's unity offensive, about their failure to reply to our letters, or their failure to agree on joint work. We've said more in the paper about their antics at Brighton than the unity offensive.

We knew precisely what they were about from the beginning, but failed to use the paper to turn it against them by launching our own unity drive. We are in a good position to carry out such a tactic because:-

- (a) At the moment (and given the SL's size and resources this not be so for long) our broad paper has greater currency within the left of the 'O'. We could easily make the SL look sectarian by such an offensive.
- (b) We could set the terms in such a way (for example before fusion of the 2 organisations the SL to give up SA and join S. to allow a process of convergence) that the SL would be unlikely to accept.
- (c) The forthcoming split in the USFI, which with a $\frac{1}{3}$ of the SL being Castroites will seriously weaken their organisation numerically, will make us more of a pole of attraction for serious militants in the SL.

Of course there are problems with such a tactic, given the divisions

within the WSL, especially if the SL or USFI were to seriously take up our unity proposals. I think, however, that the advantages of such a tactic outweigh the disadvantages. Firstly, the differences within the WSL are smaller than the differences between us and the SL. A unity offensive against another organisation may help to weld the organisation together if it is seen as atactic for splitting that organisation. Secondly, all the advantages that Kinnell says the USFI would gain from announcing imminent fusion with us, we would be able to gain ourselves. Thirdly, faced with such an offensive the SL/USFI would be thrown off balance, and be unlikely to accept our proposals.

Even if they did accept our terms I think the balance of advantage would still be on our side. Let us look at the experience of our own fusion 2 years ago. As a result of the fusion we were able to go from a fortnightly to a weekly paper and to have a bigger impact on the labour movement than our two previous organisations had been able to do. That has been possible despite the limitations the factionalism in the organisation has placed on us for the last 18 months.

Yet even that factionalism has not been all negative. There is a tendency in revolutionary organisations not only to a healthy loyalty to the organisation, but often to an uncritical loyalty to it, and blind hostility to other organisations. That factionalism exists in the fused League therefore is understandable. But the debates have sharpened us all up, and it is healthy that there are not simply two, but three factions within the party, because that signifies that uncritical loyalty to the old organisations is breaking down, a pre-requisite for building a League free of dead end factionalism. Of course there are people who have left the League because of the factional debates, but we are attempting to build a hard revolutionary organisation. If these comrades do not have sufficient commitment, or faith in their ability to intervene in the factional debates which are part of that process, if they are put off the task of building a revolutionary party by such debates then we are better off without such comrades, because they can only make us soft.

It is precisely because of the loyalty to one's own organisation compared to others that a unity offensive against the SL/USFI could act to weld together our organisation just as in time's of trouble bourgeoisie calls on the nation to "rally behind the flag". Having been sharpened up through our own debates we are probably in a better position to take on the SL than if we had become soft through a complacent quiet life in our own organisation.

A fusion with the SL would bring the advantages that we gained from our own fusion and more. Such an organisation would immediately draw towards it new forces which we if we believe in the correctness of our politics would be able to win over. If/when the Castoites split we would comprise

approximately half of the new organisation which means we could not possibly be swallowed up. This new organisation would become a serious opposition to the reformist politics of M in the YM giving us the possibility of getting comrades on the NC which we have got no closer to doing in 10 years of work in the YM. (By comparison the SL have this year got a member elected to the Southern Regional Committee of the YM.) It would also enable us to carry out our Wiganisation programme in the YM.

The paper could be made more readable and to the extent that it would carry factional debates in the paper would be more interesting, and appear less sectarian than where such debates are carried on between two separate papers.

Of course we may as a result of such factional debates lose some comrades to the SL (though this does not seem that much more likely than that individual comrades or a group of comrades might split and join the SL), but if we believe in our politics we must believe that given the opportunity to have direct access to the SL rank and file, to work with them, to go through the debates with them, that we are more likely to recruit from them. Additionally, through such a process of losing some of our comrades, and winning some of theirs we would become a more homogenous/hardened organisation.

Given the shift in the 'O' to the right such a tactic could be a useful measure against the increasing isolation we are likely to face. Through such a tactic we could conceivably pull towards us sections of the hard left around B , and people like Jeremy C , Reg R etc. as a means of launching a counter offensive against the centre right/soft left majority in the 'O'.

To summarise we should launch a unity offensive against the SL, on the basis, and under the terms outlined. We would expect them to reject this, and we would use this rejection as a means to isolate them, split them, and draw sections of the hard left towards us. Should the SL, however, accept our terms we should respond positively because the gains from such a fusion under the present conditions outweigh the disadvantages.

Scott.

