Meeting of Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

April 9-12 1982.

Attendance: WSL (Britain); RWL (Sympathising section, USA); LOR (Italy); TAF (Denmark); Hackney Group; Rigal (France).

Absent by arrangement: Australian SF - written report. Expected: Delegation from Spain failed to arrive, no explanation.

Agenda: FRIDAY APRIL 9: (3pm - 9pm) Secretariat Report
Organisational Discussion
Political discussion - extended
on Falklands war.

SATURDAY APRIL 10: (9am - 9pm) Danish Report
Poland
Anti-imperialist front
Italian Report
French Report
El Salvador resolution.

SUNDAY APRIL 11: (9am-9pm) World Movement report
Discussions with Morenist LIT
Open Conference demand
History of FI - document
International Perspectives - draft
Australian Report
British Report
USA report.

MONDAY APRIL 12: (9am-4pm) US discussion

Hackney Group discussion

Falklands resolution

El Salvador resolution

Proposals on intervention in

FI crisis

WSL Summer School.

Secretariat Report: J reported on some of the major world developments since the December TILC meeting. In particular events in El Salvador/Guatemala (see resolution), Malvinas/Falklands war, and Polish situation. Also reference to the rightward shift of the Turkish junta - releasing fascists, cracking down on intellectuals and hanging leftists. In Britain the working class faces a major crisis over Tory anti-union laws, which the TUC leaders are accepting.

On the work of the Secretariat, J reported that the first TILC Bulletin had been produced despite huge technical problems. Two monthly letters had been produced - and written reports begun to come from sections outside Britain. A draft discussion document had been written on the crisis of the FI and its history, and in accordance with the outline document presented in December 75% of an International Perspectives text had been completed.

As agreed in December an approach had been made to the Morenist LIT on our call for an Open Conference, and discussions had been held with a Morenist envoy from Venezuela - resulting in a series of LIT proposals to advance the discussion further in public.

The commitment to prioritise discussions with Chilean contacts had been carried out, and productive talks held with cdes of the LC and ex-FIT. The ex?FIT cdes had declared themselves largely in

agreement with TILC documents, while the LC cdes had been slightly more reserved. Suggested that both groups should be invited to send observers to the TILC meetings (this was agreed but proved impossible to arrange).

Efforts to pursue discussions with the FIT had proved fruitless - no reply to two Secretariat letters sent since December proposing format for further exchanges. But material sent to WSL from Palestine FIT group.

Exchange of correspondence had taken place, both with RWP and ex-Healy grouping in Sri Lanka - but no further material available on their political positions. Suggested it would be premature without such information to press ahead with proposed trip to Sri Lanka for talks.

Greece: correspondence with cde S had shed new light on politics/regime of Morenist tendency, and pointed to the use of bureaucratic/ultimatistic methods in place of political persuasion. Cde A to visit Greece end of May.

Spain: signs of activity from cdes, with adavanced plans for publication, and renewed plans for publication.

Organisa tional discussion:

Franco: Steps forward have been taken in last 3 months. But TLLC IB2 not produced, and TLLC Bulletin needed in French. We should make it a priority to develop dialogue with Bolivian POR de Pie. If we go to Bogota to see Morenists, why not go on to La Paz as well?

Leland: Poor technical quality of material a problem.

Ali: WV Palestine more contact with us than FIT in Lat. America. We should promote dialogue.

Political discussion

Franco: LOR Secretariat divided 3-1 on Falklands. Majority view is for support to Argentina as underdeveloped country in conflict with imperialism, despite nature of the Argentine regime. cf TILC '9 Points' document, point 6. Reconquest of Falklands, irrespective of Galtieri's metives, is historically progressive. Question of islanders is secondary.

(Franco's minority view) - I see nothing anti-imperialist in invasion - simply a ranoeuvre in which the correct position is revolutionary defeatism on both sides. But WSL (referring to initial statement) appears to start only from democratic rights of islanders. It is necessary to speal out that if the conflict escalated to an all-out war, then we defend Argentina.

Ali: Even medium development capitalist countries can hold expansionist "imperialist" aims - eg Turkey (Cyprus) or Iraq. Trotsky 1938 position on Brazil only relevant if Britain were threatening to invade Argentina.

Kemal: conflict weakens links between regime and imperialism. Wrong to call for removal of Argentine troops - since this would accept British rule.

Jette: important to know how masses respond to the invasion. It is too limited to see question as one of self-determination.

Leland: Agree with LOR majority. British attempt is to terrorise an underdeveloped nation into surrender.

Ali: In 1938 there was something for the Brazilian workers to defend in a war: I see no gains for the working class in Argentina out of the current struggle.

Alan: Position of British imperialism motivated by (1) fight for authority to protect other enclaves - Gibraltar etc; (2) material interests - mineral rights/ Antarctica; (3) political situation in Britain - chance to rally support on a chauvinist platform.

El Salvador: brief discussion on level of commitment of Cuba/USSR to FMLN struggle.

Saturday:

DENMARK - written report circulated. Important development in Odense beyond level of propaganda work. Contact with Vargaites, especially around Polish work. Invitation to participate in Vargaite "March to Gdansk", and suggestion of exchange of space in papers.

Discussion.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITED FRONT

Franco-introduced initial text - explaining that a full statement

would expand particularly on Point 3 - the last 40 years.

We cannot simply base ourselves on the (confused) document of the 4th Congress of the Comintern - need to assess subsequent developments. Importance of Chinese revolution in which Trotsky synthesised Theory of Permanent Revolution. As late as 1925 Trotsky was emphasising the impossibility of socialist revolution in China. China showed treacherous character of the national bourgeoisie even in the field of simply national democratic tasks. At the same time we must understand the necessity for a united front with the revolutionary petty bourgeois masses which often constitute the a majority of the population in such countries.

The experience of the last 40 years has confirmed Trotsky's views. The national bourgeoisie has in every situation completely and openly capitulated before imperialism. National bourgeois parties - WAFT in Egypt and APRA in Peru have become agencies for

imperialism.

At the same time we have seen the emergence of radical petty bourgeois nationalist movements which have also won support from urban workers - they have confronted imperialism and sometimes inflicted defeats upon it. We cannot avoid the question of our relationship to such movements.

In the struggle against imperialism and reactionary regimes we must make a sharp distinction between bourgeois nationalist forces limited by their class basis, and with whom we cannot make an alliance without losing class independence; and petty bourgeois nationalist forces with whom it is necessary for our own tasks to make united front agreements.

The Anti-imperialist United Front must, like the workers united front be a tactic and not a substitute for the building of a rev-

olutionary party.

FIT position: we should distinguish between line of PO (Argentina) on one hand and POR on the other. PO bases itself largely on text of 4th Congress CI, and since that text is confused, so is PO. They say AIUF is possible - sometimes with petty bourgeoisie, sometimes with bourgeois forces. At other times they say that all that is possible is limited tactical agreements. Under pressure of Peronism PO tends to be opportunist - hailing return of Peron as "victory" for Argentine masses. But often also sectarian attitude to radical petty bourgeois forces - eg first resolution of FIT on Nicaragua.

We should remember that while the working class is large and a central factor in Latin American countries, the 4th Congress text was drafted for Eastern countries where the proletariat was a tiny minority.

4) (Franco on AIUF, cont'd)

POR different position, based neither on Trotsky or on 4th Congress. Must be characterised as a Bukharinite theory, of the "oppressed nation" in which the national bourgeoisie is obliged to put itself on the side of the petty bourgeoisie and workers a gainst imperialism. In this bloc of clasees there could be a struggle by the proletariat to win "hegemony" and "imprison" the national bourgeoisie.

This theory, shared by Lora, is false because national bourgeoisie will never allow itself to be hegemonised by the proletariat: rather it will use the bloc to s mash the working class (China!) Theory is even more ridiculous because Lora recognises it cannot apply in Bolivia, where the bourgeoisie is so tied to imperialism that Lora can enter no alliance with them. He has developed a whole theory on Bolivian exceptionalism, in which the role of the bourgeois nationalists is taken by petty bourgeois nationalists or sections of the armed forces. There have been episodes in Bolivia where L has proposed alliances with bourgeois nationalist groupings: but this is not a consistent line.

However weakness of POR is that it holds AIUF as a strategy, through which it hopes to bring workers to power in a bloc with the Stalinists and other radical forces.

Discussion:

Ali: In Kurdistan, cde Franco's definition would leave us with only one possible group to ally with. The major forces are led by the bourgeoisie. In these countries there are bourgeois forces in a position to mobilise the masses. Way round this problem is AIUF. We don't go looking for bourgeoisie artificially: but in countries where bourgeois forces are leading an armed struggle against imperialism you have to have an answer, Of course in Turkey/Argentina bourgeoisie has no progressive role - part of imperialist control.

J: AIUF tactic, like UF was addressed by Comintern as proposal for use by mass CPs with other mass parties. This is not the position we face today.

Two forms widely applicable of UF tactic for Trotskyists - that of possible "entry" into larger movements in which masses are radicalising; or of "critical support" to struggles by mass organisations or leaders.

We need to question the application of the term AIUF where all that is involved in reality is attempts of small Trotskyist groups to arrive at a correct tactical relationship to large anti-imperialist forces.

Second Congress CI correct to distinguish between "revolutionary nationalist" forces - those prepared to struggle - and other nationalist currents. We must seek united front with revolutionary nationalists.

In backward countries revolutionary struggle must not be conceived simply as armed struggle but as political relationship to proletarait and peasantry. It is this which limits our common front with the revolutionary nationalists — not all of whom share our social programme, and some of whom will fight to the death against it. 1920 Congress spelled out need to strike together, but not in a way which cramps our political fight.

Franco: AIUF is an alliance, though not a global one which would abandon our own programme. It could even result in the formation of a joint government - the govt of Bolsheviks and SRs was an alliance.

Question is can we make such an alliance with bourgeois parties? Trotsky's answer on China was 'no'.

Conclusion: It was agreed to publish Franco's text in the IB and

invite written contributions to further discussion.

POLAND DISCUSSION (see separate minutes)

Poland events: Franco underlined correctness of December resolution in its analysis. But there is now more information on the involvement of conscious elements in the struggle. Evidence on contact by leading left wingers within Solidarnosc with USFI. The ideas of Trotskyism thus played a role in the emergence of a current within Solidarnosc which we could call revolutionary socialist.

This in turn has influenced the USFI's politics - from initial tail-endism to more developed position echoing break of groups in Solidarnosc left wing from the positions of the KOR. A recent Tribuna Ludu attack on Trotskyists shows that the bureaucracy now recognises a threat p but at the same time advertises Trotskyism to Polish workers.

We should have a positive evaluation of Solidarnosc congress in which Walesa/KOR wing received a setback. The criticisms which we have raised of the forces on the left of Solidarnosc now emerge as the issues they are debating: (a) Their illusion that the Polish bureaucracy itself could not defeat the Polish working class — which made them underestimate the need for work in the army and militia, looking instead simply towards a Soviet invasion. (b) The hope that the tactic of the "active general strike" put forward by the Ledz group would be enough to bring down the bureaucracy; (c) The realisation that in response to the coup, sitting in factories is not a correct tactic.

In Poland the working class was confronted with only 20,000 members of the special militia. But because the workers were sat inside factories, these simply went from one plant to another capturing militants. Inside their plants the workers lost any contact with the rank and file of the armed forces.

Kowalewski's latest article raises the inadequacy of the workers guards and criticises weakenesses on military strategy.

ITALY: written report, supplemented by verbal details. Discussion focussed on question of relations/discussions/notion of fusion with Mandelites and Morenists in Italy.

FRANCE: A contradictory political situation in which workers were challenging their bureaucratic leaders and fighting on wages, hours and conditions; but on the other hand the unions are losing members and the right wing is making gains in the elections.

There are difficulties in intervention. R's branch of LCR concentrated on a firm where he does not work. Branch full of long-standing members. But there had been the emergence of a relatively healthy tendency prior to the last Conference, meeting in mid May.

R working on French translations of TILC documents for French edition of Bulletin. Target date end of May. Important meeting called by USFI in Paris June 5 to coincide with Reagan visit: TILC should intervene

Between TILC meetings R will meet Secretariat either in London or Paris.

Should try to get TILC material into leading left bookshops internationally.

AL SALVADOR: Draft resolution presented for discussion - outline amendments agreed, for rediscussion Monday.

SUNDAY
World Movement Report
M reported, 3 major issues have polarised and divided the movement

in recent months: Poland, Central America and France. At the last meeting we discussed split in FIIC in which the main issue was France, but also differences on Poland, where the Lambertists were putting forward only democratic demands.

The Lambertists have now proposed an "Open Conference" on Poland - a straight factional manoeuvre against the Morenists. WSL proposes

we do not get involved.

The Morenists, in line with their general method are looking for new allies in a possible regroupment. When we discussed with their delegate his response was that they may at some point agree to an Open Conference, but that at present they seek only to involve us in presenting a "strong alternative to the USFI and OCI", which he told us are "collapsing".

The other side of the picture is the growing divisions in the USFI - now on a level as sharp if not sharper than in mid 1970s. European groups have launched magazine in opposition to IP. SWP fraternal greetings to French LCR insist upon "Marxist, proletarian and revolutionary" character of Cuban leadership, and the fact that the industrial turn is seen as not simply organisational, but "political": "It is also a turn towards the Cubans, Nicaraguans and Grenadans."

The initiative in these instances has come from the SWP. Their insistence that Central America is the centre of the world revolution has led to a strange debate in the IMG as to whether Central America is "more important" than Poland. SWP view is that the "attack on Solidarnosc weakens the struggle in Central America!"

European USFI reply extremely weak. On Cuba the LCR leadership admits that the Castro leadership "bases itself upon Marxism ... can be defined as proletarian ... and is revolutionary to the extent that it supports revolution in certain countries and particularly Central America". But they also claim that Castro "oscillates between revolution and Stalinism", which should be taken up in "fraternal discussions" between the USFI leadership and the Cuban leaders.

We should discuss the best way to intervene.

S.: On Iraq/Iran war USFI offers nothing like a revolutionary assessment of the world. SWP line on Iran is a class betrayal. This is a qualitative degeneration of USFI.

Franco: Qualitative degeneration is in the SWP faction, not the USFI as a whole. And the degeneration began under the old leader-ship (Hansen's final writings on Cuba). SWP has lost members, while USFI European sections actually getting stronger.

We should focus on the European USFI sections - much more important for us than the Morenists or the Lambertists.

- SWP has also carried an article by Lenin on "democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry", with a commentary saying how valuable this is in light of struggles since 1917. No mention of Trotsky or Permanent Revolution, Mandel has replied without referring to the original article: giving an account of the Theory of Perm Rev.
- A : Mandelites are the only grouping to have maintained any form of healthy internal regime while of course focussing more on democracy than centralism!
- B: Urgent to resume orientation towards USFI lost since we were excluded from XIth Congress. Less enthusiastic about Morenists.

 Moreno documents since the split give a strong impression of a sharp sectarian turn since break. Main doc. on France traces a "thin yellow line" through Bernstein etc to Lambert. This is not serious polemic, M. line in France is simply "down with the bourgeois govet; workers to power; dictatorship of the proletariat".

Extreme style of denunciations: "Capitulation of OCI, LCR to Mitterrand is the biggest treason in the history of Trotskyism":

The Morenists are keen on us when they have nobody else in Europe. But Spanish cdes report they are discussing with Vargaites in Paris.

Ali: Wrong to miss out on Morenists. They are important in political terms.

CONCLUSION: proposals to be formulated for Monday vote.

MORENISTS: John reported on proposals made by Morenist envoy (see monthly letter No. 2)

Franco: I agree we should accept these proposals to develop discissions. But we should make sure we get a written agreement, to prevent these things being used against us.

Italian Morenists report real size of PST Argentina as 1,600-1,700,

<u>Jette</u>: We should not confine our Open Conference call to the Morenists. We need to find ways of appealing to others.

- B: We should draw out obstacles between us and Morenists material on France, women, gay liberation (Morenists have dismal record).
- Propose we write to Morenists saying we accept proposals but give no guarantees of prospects of fusion. Ask for deadlines of their journal. Secretariat to be responsible for submitting material in discussion with sections. We should agree to carry replies (of reasonable length) in TILC Bulletin. agreed.
- OPEN CONFERENCE: John proposed Secretariat draft a document for both Morenists and USFI and other tendencies, arguing case for an Open conference, Invite replies and seek in this way to reopen channels to USFI. agreed.
- 1 CRICIS: HISTORICAL DRAFT: John proposed draft be published as individual contribution in TILC IB. Its contents had proved to be contentious within WSL and would require lengthy discussion if it were to be amended or agreed prior to December Conference.

Franco: I'm in complete agreement with the general line of the document. If we agree with general line why cannot it be presented for voting in December?

on cases where the doc. says "this or that position was taken by the Lambertists" I am in agreement - though most of these points are in other documents. But there are more general points with which I strongly disagree, particularly first 5 pages and section on Stalinism page 17.

Party is based on programmatic positions, not on analytical monolithism. Theoretical differences cannot be easily decided by a vote. It is not necessary for TILC or WSL to throw ourselves into such historical discussions between now and December.

Franco: Another text exists - a sketchy outline Theses on the Crisis of the FI submitted to the founding conference of TILC. Could we use that as a basis?

Ext should focus on current assessment of FI crisis.

Jette: Support putting present firaft in IB, Quite legitimate for Trotskyists from different traditions to discuss such issues.

AGREED: "Theses-style text to be drawn up based on pages 9-11 of the draft, the TILC resolution on the PC/FIIC, the section of the WSL "Platform" on the FI, and the GBL "Theses" - especially no.15.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Despite advance mailing of initial draft (75% of project), only one or two cdes in the meeting had read it through. John explained WSL EC position - document too extensive, raising issues both controversial and unnecessary at this stage in formation of tendency. This could be published in WSL magazine as part of discussion on analysis of post-war period, but not as document for voting in December.

Franco: We have already reopened discussion on TPiTCS. Some of this new draft overlaps. And we already have the TILC 9 Points document. I suggest a third, short text on the current world situation, El Salvader, Poland, etc. CONCLUSION

Texts needed for December Conference

Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle (Reopened)
'9 Points' Programmatic Basis (Reopened)
Forld Situation (Our Tasks) - to be drafted
Statutes on Democratic Centralism - to be drafted
Crisis of FI - to be drafted
Section perspectives.

AUSTRALIAN PEPORT: Written material ciculated, amplified by verbal report from cde M. Consolidation of gains made before December meeting, and important work in Civil Service union as well as on solidarity with Central American struggles.

SF cdes have been very good at communicating with WSL - papers and internal documents forwarded, plus phone calls. Weakness in WSL Australia commission - and complaints from SF cdes over lack of contact from other TIIC sections,

Secretariat urges all sections to correspond with SF cdes. At the same time we should point out to the cdes that their apparent desire to settle differences of historical analysis and present tasks simultaneously is, in our view over-ambitious.

BRITISH REPORT: In line with reports circulated in monthly letters. Major successes included intervention at Labour Party YS conference (100 youth supporting our tendecy); 300-strong conference of women trade unionists convened by WF; and SO conference at which platform indicated developed relationship with key militants, WSL only force on the left fighting seriously on Tebbit anti-union Bill. Important work done on Poland, including intervention into Polish Sclidarity Campaign.

Franco: I want to raise some questions over work in the Lahour Party. We have strong doubts on some of this work. We agree with critical support to Benn, but danger of adaptation. We don't support Benn for his policies but because of the new broad left current which has not yet gene beyond reformist conceptions. We must regard Benn as an enemy.

I : It would be aseful if Franco's points could be written down, and replied to in writing.

Leland: I share France's concerns. Nobody in RWL would have written a series of articles quite like those of John O'Mahony on socialism and democracy. But we recognise that he was writing to reach an audience.

S: We have to encourage reciprocal open criticism within the TILC. I urge cdes to spell out their disagreements. We have criticisms of RWL press, which we wish to discuss.

USA REPORT

- (a) Canada: Cde G withdrawn from some political work for personal reasons, but also voicing severe criticisms of WSL, talked of resigning from TILC. If WSL cde visits RWL conference, it would be good to visit G.
- (b) USA: "givebacks" screwed out of carworkers by bosses and bureaucrats in Ford and GM, accepted by large majorities even of production workers. Only cur caucus and a group of skilled workers in the Rouge Plant held ot and fought against the sell-out. Large 'no' vote - but deal accepted. In St Louis we campaigned from outside the plant - and it was the only assembly plant (Ford) in the country to reject the package.

In Detroit, hospital work with ongoing recruitment. Development of Gay Committee Against Racism. leading hospital cdes to attend

WSL Summer School.

In Ann Arbor, despite organisational crisis recruitment has gone on, work in university, hospital and students, also Jackson state prison.

Work advanced among Iranian exiles, also with Arab students and

workers in Detroit.

St Louis: progress in integrating cde J's work, building caucus of cab drivers.

New York: classes of 8 regular contacts - sometimes more. Bay Area: all comrades active, out list of activities would take all night. In particular Turkey Solidarity work, Iranian work, prospects for improved hotel work.

Perspective hopefully of Iranian group as part of TILC. Anti-fascist mobilisation success - but physically attacked by

Sparts.

Fusion a success in St Louis, proceeding well in Bay Area.

: Gap between this impressive work and its reflection in the paper.

Leland: Yes - inadequate resources to put into Workers Struggle. Mostly written by rank and file members. We are only just beginning to learn the rudiments of political journalism. Adavantage is that we are developing large no. of cdes in process of developing the paper.

HACKNEY GROUP REPORT

New wave of repression in Turkey. Ecevit arrested again. Message from junta to European Parliament is that Generals are determined to carry through their policies despite pressure. And their target is to overthrow the constitution.

Turkish left is in complete disarray. Main activity now in Europe. Discussion on nature of the regime centres on understanding class struggle in Turkey. Only we and one pro-USFI group analyse junta as bonapartist. Others underestimate the strength of the working class and its struggle in Turkey.

Kurtulus pasition refers to Marx/Engels/Lenin on Bonapartism and accepts possibility of state standing above class struggle all others see state and state forces as "fascist". K line is healthy trend in Turkish left - but leaves out Trotsky's work

on pre-fascist bonapartism. In Britain, gains in Solidarity work on Turkey - successful TSC speaking tour. Now Stalinist CDDRT has written to TSC asking

for discussions on uniting the two campaigns.

Crisis in Hackney group has prevailed since December meeting. Bulletin not produced. Proposed by Ali: 1) Regular discussions with WSL/TILC leadership; 2) Formal discussions on TILC documents; 3) Translate perspectives into English for TILC discussion.

: Central question must be the Bulletin. No matter how imperfect I : Central question must be the Bulletin. No matter it is, it is vital for promoting contacts and presenting politics of the group.

Franco: Wrong not to have formed a group earlier. We are still at the level of a discussion group.

Jette: TAF has been through similar problems in transition from a discussion group to running a paper, etc. It is a hard jump, but necessary. Important a cde from the group come to Denmark to follow up contacts we have.

CONCLUSION: Secretariat to arrange further discussions with group.

FINAL RESOLUTIONS:

El Salvador: - as amended, carried unanimously.

Falklands/Malvinas: revised draft presented by WSL. LOR Majority text also presented for voting.

Leland: Both take an anti-imperialist line: the difference is that LOR is Argentine defencist on Falklands issue. This is a small but a real factor in the anti-imperialist struggle. We must start from the movement of the Argentine masses, not the rights

Franco: Proposed some changes on WSL resolution - all accepted. In any event must follow LOR line and vote for LOR text.

<u>Jette</u>: It is wrong to focus on the rights of the Falkalnders.

Voting: WSL text (amended) - for 7 (WSL, TAF) against 5 (LOR, RWL) abst 1 (Hackney) CARRIED

LOR text - for 5 (LOR, RWL) against 6 (WSL) abst 2 (TAF, Hackney)

CRISIS OF FI

- 1) Write to Morenists as agreed accepting proposals for discussions.
- Secretariat to draft polemical material dealing with USFI majority/ minority positions on (a) Poland (b) Cuba/Central America; (c) Iran (d) the politics of the proletarian turn in Britain and USA. Thse to argue the policies of TILC as well as critique of USFI.
- 3) Secretariat to draw up brief article arguing case for an Open Conference to be submitted to TILC sections for agreement and then to both Morenist LIT and USFI.
- 4) WSL to carry material on USFI in WSReview.
- 5) Sections to supply the Secretariat with all possible information about positions/actions of these groupings and their sections. Unanimously agreed.

SUMMER SCHOOL: Leicester, July 25-31. WSL EC to notify TILC as

NEXT TILC MEETING: July 23, 24 and August 1.