

PLATFORM OF THE INTERNATIONALIST FACTION

1. Our primary orientation is to the working class. It is on the basis of this orientation and the needs of this orientation that we determine our tactics in relation to work in the MP. We reject the notion that work in the MP and MPYM is the central area of our work. We are for a major turn towards work in the trade unions, workplaces and amongst the unemployed. The current struggles in the car industry show that the openings exist for a turn to the advanced layer in the factories. In particular we should systemise the production of revolutionary socialist workplace bulletins; the building of fractions around the paper and bulletins; building genuine rank and file formations in the unions pitted against the bureaucracy; the fight against the TUC and the Stalinists for a national unemployed workers union and trade union organisation of the unemployed.
2. Our work in the MP is directed towards breaking workers from reformism as part of the struggle for revolutionary leadership in the class, not simply to helping the left to develop or evolve. It is precisely through our consistent orientation to the class, our clear criticism and our ability to show members of the left how they can locate their individual socialist commitment within the struggle to develop the only force capable of making the revolution - the working class - that we will win the best elements of the left to our politics.

Some years ago in 'Workers Action' Carolan argued:

"one of the major reasons for the divisions in the revolutionary marxist left in Britain has been different attitudes on what to do about the Labour Party. This is the major strategic question for militants trying to restructure and remould the British labour movement"

In saying this, Carolan was downplaying the central importance of the class's primary fighting organisations (the unions, and workplace organisations) In its stead he elevated the struggle around the working class electoral alternative to the Tories.

We do not reject work in the MP. But we do say that it should be subordinate to an orientation to the militants in the unions and workplaces, currently a minority, who are confused and disarmed after years of Labour misrule and Tory iron rule - also to the unemployed and specially oppressed sections of the class. We do not accept that the unions which embrace millions can be equated with a reformist political party, consciously joined by only thousands (despite official figures).

3. In line with our orientation, our press must be directed towards the situation of the most militant layer of the class and the mass of workers behind them. In the present period that requires a clear revolutionary programme and bold revolutionary propaganda and agitation which can address the problems faced by these militants, in a language they can understand, providing an explanation and an understanding of their experiences and drawing them towards an understanding of the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat. In practice, this means having a party paper.

By contrast, Socialist Organiser uncritically promotes Benn, Race & Co. - there was no criticism of Bishop Stortford or of the loyalty speech at conference; no criticism of Race on the Malvinas; no criticism of the liberal-reformist strategy of Tatchell; no independent strategy advocated within the democracy movement in the MP.

SO's open forum (not Trotskyist) approach to various questions (Women, Peace etc) whereby assorted centrists, petty-bourgeois feminists, pacifists, Tribunites etc speak for the WSL without editorial comment means that the voice of Trotskyism has to filter through this web in the form of individual contributions or letters - in most cases with little prominence or impact.

Of course there is, in reality, one distinctive body of opinion in the pages of SO. It is contained in the voluninous outpourings of one John O'Mahoney. His series on democracy - an elaborate attempt to prove that bourgeois and workers democracy are compatible - was a classic in that respect. His front page lead on the Chelsea Bombings presented as the paper's editorial proved both that the paper is O'Mahoney's property and that the WSL itself has no public and accountable voice.

4. The question posed by the witchhunt is not one of a choice between staying in or getting out of the MP, but between taking our politics to workers or not taking our politics to workers.

We regard the register as a witch-hunters noose and campaign consistently for all socialist groups to boycott the Register and for the CLPs to refuse to carry out expulsions. At the same time we must point to the politics of the witch-hunters as social chauvinism, as with the Malvinas and the Irish liberation struggle, and of open accommodation to capital as with their support for wage controls.

We refuse to register because to do so would negate our fight against the witch-hunt and because to comply with the register would also oblige us to repudiate all international links in favour of the 2nd International. Rather than voluntarily limit our own politics, in the event of a defeat of the fight against the Register, we should adopt illegal methods of work in the MP while continuing our campaign against bans and proscriptions in the labour movement.

In fact, our response to the witch-hunt was wrong all along. failed to fight uncompromisingly for a united front on 'No Registration, No Expulsions, No Withdrawal or Democratically Selected Candidates' These policies were not optional. They answered every line of attack from the Right. It was necessary to fight to defeat the weapons of the Right as well as their use of those weapons. We should have called on every force, paper and figure, including Benn, on the left, to unite and fight. Instead there was passive acceptance of the fact that Benn was going to limit himself to verbal protestes and NEC votes, that Militant would limit itself to a few rallies and using the courts, but wouldn't defy expulsions or de-selections, that the IMG would not commit its 'campaign' to non-registration

SO maintains a verbal radicalism in the hope of being the last to surrender - but in practice is secretly preparing to register and at the LAW conference opposed any definite commitment to refuse to register under any circumstances, even while posing as the intransigent opponents of the Register within the CLPD.

5. Now the leadership appears ready to liquidate the SO into an even 'broader' paper - Briefing or Tribune. SO's practice has meant that the WSL has had no distinctive role in the Labour Movement and that contacts have joined bigger organisations - as well as the steady loss of members to the extent of nearly a third of the organisation (100 out of 300). What we have is a de facto liquidation.

A dramatic turn is necessary to rally the remaining healthy cadre to Trotskyism and a fight against the centrist leaders!

6. We reaffirm our orientation to the specially oppressed, women, blacks and gays, who, because of their double and often multiple oppression, are often amongst the most militant layers of the class. Within this work, we must necessarily develop special methods of work which can enable us to respond sensitively to the problems and experiences of these layers.

7. In our work amongst women, we reaffirm our primary orientation towards working class women in struggle, and reject the characterisation of that orientation as 'miserable economism'. We support positive discrimination for women as a tactic, not as a substitute for the mobilisation of working class women in struggle and a programme necessary to relate to those struggles. We oppose an uncritical approach to the separatist politics of petty bourgeois feminism. At the same time, we defend the right of women to organise and caucus separately, even if we are opposed to separatism as a policy in general, as the basis for creating the most favourable conditions for real, voluntary unity.
8. We orientate to youth because we are conscious of the historical revolutionary role of the youth in the mass struggles of the class. We work to politically organise youth and involve them in the mass of the labour movement. As a part of that it is necessary for us to orientate to LPYS and to fight to build a revolutionary tendency within it. We do not, however, substitute the LPYS for working class youth as a whole, nor do we relegate our youth work to simply building a tendency in the YS. We use Class-Fighter groups to enable us to relate flexibly to all layers of youth, win them to our politics and draw them with us into the struggles inside the mass labour movement.
9. We regard it as essential that revolutionaries must be, at all times, the most implacable opponents of their own imperialism, resolutely defending all those in struggle against it. We reject the notion of solidarity which attempts to incorporate pacifist denunciations of the actions of those fighting imperialism and declare our support for the resolution of the Irish Commission submitted to the NC in December 1981 with regard to the military actions of the Republican movement. We reject the strategy of guerrillaism, but unequivocally defend the rights of those in struggle against imperialism to determine their own methods. Our differences with the Irish Republicans is over strategy, not over the targets of their military campaign.

The Malvinas War, the Palestinian question and the Irish question - in relation to all of these, Carolan's appetite for revising fundamentals of the Marxist programme have been exposed. This revision is in order, to render the marxist programme harmless and no longer a barrier to much sought after left reformist allies. Carolan has only hinted at his position on the Zionist state and Palestine. His attempt to prevent the SO delegate conference last Autumn from recognising self-determination for the Palestinians was an ominous sign. Self determination, it seems, is alright for 1,800 Kelpers on some rocks in the South Atlantic, but not for millions of Palestinians kicked out of their homeland by the imperialists and kept out by the Zionist state.

On Ireland, Carolan has been more specific and explicit. In SO his articles on the Protestant working class have codified his abandonment of Permanent Revolution.

The Programme of Permanent Revolution for Ireland neither means ignoring the protestant working class, nor seeing the national struggle as a separate and distinct stage which must be completed before working class unity can be achieved. It means recognising the existence of a national question in Ireland as a cardinal question that requires a democratic and transitional programme. Permanent Revolution in Ireland would mean a struggle to drive out the British troops and smash the sectarian state by mobilising the working class on both sides of the border. It would mean fighting for the working class to lead the national struggle in a socialist direction. In this struggle the Orange State will inevitably mobilise the Protestant working class to its advantage. Our strategy must be to show that the protestants have nothing to fear from a working class united Ireland. However, we cannot compromise with them on our goal of smashing the Orange State and establishing a socialist united Ireland. In the course of this struggle, revolutionaries would defend all of the partial

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interests of the whole of the working class (wages, jobs, rights etc). Along this road of probably quite bitter struggle, there is the hope that the protestant workers can be broken from the protestant state. The history of the twentieth century shows that such a dramatic rupture, a dialectical leap, will be the only way the protestant workers will be won to the cause of revolution and a socialist united Ireland.

Against this perspective, Carolan, despairing of the Republican-led solution he once thought possible and unable to provide a proletarian answer, reshapes his programme with plunder from the programme of left reformism and from the camp of the two nationists. He now advances a democratic solution in the vain hope that the protestants can be wooed away, rather than broken from, the state they identify with and its imperialist overlord. Thus, in place of the call for a socialist united Ireland, Carolan argues:

"Now, when the Tories propose new, foredoomed and very dangerous tinkering with the artificial and undemocratic Six County State, is the time to raise the whole question of an independent and united federal Ireland. This is the only fundamental solution to the tragic mess that successive British governments, Labour and Tory alike have made and continue to make, in Northern Ireland' (SO 15/5/82)

No mention of a 'workers republic' or of socialism as the only fundamental solution. This position has since been made even more explicit. In the recent series on the protestants, the comrade advanced the above strategy with the following justification:

"If we do not have a democratic programme, then we rise no higher than the miserable partitionist Southern Irish bourgeoisie ... We must instead be consistent democrats" (SO 3/2/83)

Lenin's enforced legal euphemism for the illegal Bolsheviks before the First World War is, indeed, rendered more profound by Carolan! It is given a pure and simple democratic meaning.

His position on Ireland is not wrong because it expresses a concern for the protestant working class. We share that concern. It is wrong because it is a pro-imperialist programme rather than a democratic one. Carolan can do this with good conscience having de facto junked Lenin's theory of imperialism and Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution during the Malvinas war. We will not give up these theoretical gains so lightly. We reassert that only the struggle for a socialist united Ireland will resolve the national question in the North and break forever the Orange sectarianism of the Protestant question in the North.

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10. We approach the anti-Imperialist struggles of the oppressed masses of the dependent and semi-colonial countries from the standpoint of Lenin's theory of Imperialism as decaying capitalism in which the essential feature is the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. We see these struggles as proceeding within the framework of Permanent Revolution. We therefore support the established positions of TILC on the Malvinas and Palestine.

The Carolan/Kinnell leadership's attitude to the Malvinas issue was a consistent social/pacifist one. It was in no sense a Leninist, International one. The most refined version of their position in IB 18 states that the war was reactionary on both sides and that for marxists the key issue is a 'democratic' one - namely, defending the Falkland islander's right to self-determination. Point 5 of their resolution states:

"support for the right of the Falkland Islanders - a distinct historical, ethnic, linguistic, economic and geographic community 400 miles from Argentina - to determine their own future, is axiomatic for Leninists .. The Falklanders' right to self-determination cannot be invalidated by a desire by them to adhere to the now-imperialist state that spawned the Falklands community"

Despite this stalwart defence of the community, however, Carolan and co. conclude, somewhat contradictorily:

"support for the Falklander's rights plainly does not necessarily mean any support for military action to enforce those rights. In the actual situation, with Britain an imperialist power, we rejected and opposed the British military action" (p2)

No doubt Carolan would have preferred an economic blockade like Benn, Militant and unfortunately the Class Fighter comrades who voted for one at last year's YS conference.

The Carolan/Kinnell's position recognises the right to self-determination for a tiny settler population and migrant labour force that is neither politically nor (despite Carolan's false assertion) economically distinct or independent. In case Carolan did not know, the islands are owned by a British firm. Their adherence to British imperialism has enabled Britain to build a Fortress Falklands to police Argentina's waters and the South Atlantic. Why will Carolan not support military action to enforce the right he purports to defend? if that right is threatened by military force, then only military force can defend it. The comrades have an untenable position. If it were logically pursued then it would lead them to Militant's view that a Labour Government (with socialist policies, mind) is needed to pursue a working class war against Argentina. Of course, the comrades draw back from this and retreat into the social pacifism displayed by Benn Race and coo. Their position, like SOs was untenable. No matter, they held it and therefore so must SO and the WSL. If the price for maintaining this rotten bloc is the abandonment of a few old principles, then it is worth paying. Out went Trotsky's position of defence of semi-colonies against imperialism (Mexico/Brazil). Indeed, the whole notion of semi-colonies, Lenin's theory of imperialism and ultimately Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution were reduced to historical curiosities by Carolan/Kinnell.

If these theories are out dated, as some of Carolan's less sophisticated followers claim in their bid to prove that their opponents are mere dogmatists, then please show us the proof. Produce the documents to refute these theories. This does not mean producing statistics to prove that Argentina is a comparatively rich semi-colony. Prove that it is not a semi-colony.

The Malvinas debate also showed up the real character of the internal regime in the new WSL. So desperate was the leadership to conceal the

change of line from its Bennite allies, that it suppressed debates on the subject. It criticised the very idea of holding a conference to resolve the issue. Open debate is anathema to those who have set course on a liquidationist project. It gets in their way.

Not only was discussion abruptly and bureaucratically stopped, but the change of line barely saw the light of day. SO never mentioned it. A supplement to WSR 2 (8 pages at 40p hardly attracting a mass readership) was produced but many members, let alone the public, never saw it. It was hardly sold at all. Carolan obviously did not want to upset his hoped for left reformist allies. After all, Reg Race had already vowed never to grace an IMG platform again after Grogan was forced to reveal that the IMG was Argentine defecist. Heaven forbid that fearless Reg should take the same line with us!

Unfortunately, through the whole Malvinas episode, the old WSL leadership did not provide the necessary challenge to Carolan/Kinnell's social pacifism. They moved to a position of defence of Argentina far too late, their final position - which does not recognise Argentina's right to the Malvinas - is still short of revolutionary internationalism, and since the defeat of the Carolan leadership's position, they have failed to wage an unremitting fight for SO to carry the new line.

Internationally, the leadership of the WSL unilaterally converted the TILC Summer School into a WSL school in order to prevent TILC sections from polemicising against the SO line. The Carolan leadership has attempted to wreck the TILC because they have dared to criticise the WSL leadership openly on the Malvinas. Then it claimed that the Internationalist tendency was 'RWL inspired'.

11. We base our assessment of the bureaucratised workers states on Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, and in particular on the need for political revolution in all of these states. We reject the reflexive resort to a classless call for 'self - setetermination' in Poland, Afghanistan and Kampuchea as being compatible with a consistent defence of the property relations of the Soviet Union and the other bureaucratised workers states. We support, instead, the call for political revolution and an independent workers state in each of these countries as a means of establishing the need to guard the nationalised property relations which are progressive in themselves, not merely potentially progressive when Stalinism is overthrown.

12. We support the transformation of the TILC into a democratic centralist tendency as proposed by the Italian and American comrades at the December TILC Conference. We argue for a WSL commitment to this as a vital step in our struggle for the reconstruction of the FI. We reject any attempt to create endless organisational and political barriers to democratic centralism. The contention that there is not the necessary political agreement within TILC does nothold water as the so-called political differences pale into insignificance beside the yawning differences within the WSL since fusion and between the WSL/ICL prior to fusion.

This is not to say that there are not unimportant differences between the oppositional TILC sections on the nature of the fragmented FI. The Italian LOR subscribes to the TILC Founding document's contention that the 'world Trotskyist movement' exists within the scattered fragments of the FI. The RWL would, apparently, reject such a view and would see these fragments as centrists, adopting a harder characterisation. Then there are those who would probably support the FITs conception that the Usec is 'counter revolutionary'. These differing views lead to different conclusions about how we relate to the fragments of the FI. The struggle against revisionism has forced many in the IT to rethink their position on this question and this is bound to have repercussions on TILC in terms of differences to be resolved. Such differences must be resolved by a time table of discussion between now and the Autumn conference

Other possible differences that have emerged between us during the course of our struggle (such is the dialectic of struggle) INCLUDE: (i) orientation to other international tendencies, and their characterisation

- (ii) 'World Trotskyist Movement' as a useful concept.
- (iii) The LOR's entry into the LCR
- (iv) The Labour Party slogan in the USA
- (v) entryism in the British LP
- (vi) anti-imperialist united front
- (vii) democratic and transitional demands in the semi-

colonies.

Unlike Cunliffe and Smith, however, we are not going to sit back and regress into national Trotskyism. We are going to do the maximum to assess the importance of and resolve these possible differences, along with other healthy tendencies that may be open to serious discussion. To this aim, we propose the following programme:

1. A timetable of discussion of differences within the WSL and agreed at fusion, but not yet implemented.
- 2) A similar international timetable within TILC, between now and the AUTumn alongside a campaign to remove from the WSL leadership the Carolan revisionists and all who compromise with them (which appears at present to include Cunliffe, Smith and Jones)
- 3) To demand the following provisional timetable for this:
 - a) the immediate circulation of all major internal documents throughout the TILC sections, particularly, the national perspectives documents.
 - b) the setting up of a sub-committee of the TILC secretariat composed of language specialists to do this task.
 - c) April TILC meeting to be a pre-conference to determine the agreement/disagreement within TILC.
 - d) May/July discussion via international discussion bulletins on all disputed questions
 - e) July/August Summer School focussed on outstanding differences and problems of democratic centralism.
 - f) November/December. If agreement reached on any major differences, in particular on whether the key tactics are seen as tactics as opposed to a strategy, a conference to establish democratic centralism within the non-revisionist TILC sections and the WSL with the Carolan leadership removed. This might also incorporate a commitment to a systematic timetable for resolving any outstanding detailed differences within a democratic centralist framework as long as these were openly recognised and stated in advance.

To sum up, we recognise that TILC can be turned into a genuine democratic centralist tendency. We propose that the goal of an international tendency can and must be achieved by a systematic discussion on programme involving all the TILC groups to include a re-examination of our positions on the key questions of

- The Fourth International
- Reformism and Stalinism and the tactics for fighting them
- The workers states and political revolution
- Imperialism, Permanent Revolution and the tactics and strategy in semi-colonial countries
- Principles of the work of Trotskyists in the unions, reformist parties and the movements of the oppressed.

13) We reject the notion of a workers government as a necessary stage or strategic goal for revolutionaries, except in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This does not imply however that we should not raise the slogan of a workers government at specific points in the class struggle as tactically appropriate.

The new WSL was founded on a revisionist and centrist distortion of the workers government slogan. The position contained

in the fusion document was based on the articles produced in Workers Action on the slogan. These were themselves a rightist revision of the old ICL's use of the slogan in its manifesto 'The Struggle for Workers Power'. The fusion document showed that the old WSL leaders had abandoned the position on the workers government outlined in the Socialist Press polemics against the Workers Action articles. It declared:

'The Brighton/Blackpool/Wembley decisions to control MPs and to give the majority of votes on who shall be Prime Minister if Labour has a majority to the CLPs and TUs could open the way to a new kind of Labour government--a workers government; instead of the government of the trade union party which merely administers capitalism according to capitalism's own laws, a Labour government potentially accountable to sections of the organised working class. The extent of that accountability would depend on the extent of independent class mobilisation and organisation' (fusion platform)

This formulation of the workers government -- the old ICL's formulation, accepted block stock and barrel by the old WSL leaders-- sums up the organisations wrong attitude to social democracy, despite the deliberately ambiguous amendments from the old WSL leadership. Social Democracy, mildly democratised, becomes the form of workers government that we have been reduced to propagandising for. The electoral college and the reselection process are put forward as the means of making a government potentially accountable. And the outcome we fight for is to be a left Labour government accountable to CLPs who, hopefully, will be crowded out with workers. Gone are the guidelines of the revolutionary Comintern for the workers governments that Communists fight for. Gone are the key organs of struggle that we call for a workers government to be responsible to--workers councils/soviets and workers militia. These organs are called for separately from our call for a workers government, not as the indispensable bedrock organisation of any real workers government. The tasks allotted to this government by SO are vague and general. It will be 'anti-capitalist'. It will, to an extent, dismantle the power of the bourgeoisie, etc, etc. Compare this vagueness with the Comintern's prescription for the what the immediate tasks of a workers government would be:

'The most elementary tasks of a workers government must be to arm the proletariat, disarm the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, bring in control over production, shift the main burden of taxation on to the propertied classes and break the resistance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.'

'Such a workers government is possible only if it is born out of the struggle of the masses and is supported by combative workers organisations formed by the most oppressed sections of workers at grass roots level'.

In posing the workers government (read, left Labour Government accountable to the Labour Party) as an inevitable stage, we have robbed it of its tactical value as a slogan and built it as a strategic goal into our own programme. This error has paved the way for further liquidation. Given the recent victories of the right, a Labour government elected in the immediate future would not be the workers government hoped for and called for by SO. This change of perspective has not led us to question our use of the slogan, but to drop even that slogan in favour, simply, of a call for a Labour government pledged to Labour conference policies. This is precisely what we have argued for in the Socialists for a Labour Victory campaign (SLV). We have addressed demands to a future government on the basis of workers needs, but on the basis of what the LP conference has decided! SO's liquidation is now complete as it vies with SL to limit this campaign to Labour policies and assures the fake 'lefts' that their reformist programme is socialist and the adequate basis of a campaign against the Tories. In an article in SO 122 the type of electoral campaign advanced was limited to pursuing CND, producing leaflets and the launch of an anti-Tory crusade modelled on the ANL. There was no mention of the need to mobilise the working class..

14. We support the method and programmatic content of the Transitional Programme, and see the TILC document, The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle, as a historic gain for the TILC, but see it as requiring further elaboration. We reject the notion that a bridge to this programme is needed in the form of democratic demands. We do not see democratic demands as a substitute for transitional demands. For example, the call for 'police accountability' (a utopian reformist illusion under capitalism) should never be substituted for workers' defence squads. Our programme is constructed precisely as a bridge from today's consciousness of the class to the consciousness needed for socialist revolution. We do not need a bridge to a bridge.

15. What must be done

- a) The Carolan leadership must be removed. It has shown that it is not fit to lead by:
 - i) social pacifism on the Malvinas war
 - ii) rampant revisionism on fundamental issues - permanent revolution, Imperialism Ireland, Workers Government
 - iii) its disloyalty to the membership - viz the attempted expulsion of oppositionists.
 - iv) its conciliation and liquidation into Bennism and left reformism in general
 - v) its hostility to building an international tendency - viz its attitude to TILC
 - b) For a major turn towards work in the trade unions, workplaces and amongst the unemployed as outlined in point 4.
 - c) For fraction work in the MP as the basis for a fight to build a tendency around our revolutionary politics. For a fight against the witch-hunt to the end. No registration. No expulsions. No disbandment of CLPs. For the recognition of all democratically selected candidates. We will work in the MP in a legal fashion where possible but may have to do illegal work in a period of witch-hunt. We will not compromise on our politics
 - d) For a regular party paper and a quarterly theoretical journal as organs of programmatic clarification and as the means to fight for our politics in the working class. For other bulletins/papers (MP, youth etc) to be produced if logistically possible. For a monthly bulletin for MP work.
- The paper should raise the Transitional Programme and fight for a British section of a reconstructed FI.

16 Addendum on the politics of the Carolan leadership

- a) Their method is an eclectic mish-mash of common liberalism and bowdlerised 'marxism' (e.g. the analysis of Stalinism, 'Socialism and Democracy' articles, self-determination as an a-historical category)
- b) They do not argue from clearly defined theoretical premises, but bury their arguments in amorphous, rambling, and often incoherent, long-winded tracts; they specialise in ambiguity, ambivalence and cynical duplicity; everything is left open to differing interpretations (like the small print of a rather dubious commercial contract).
- c) Revolutionary activity and practice is divorced from theoretical considerations. Theory is used to 'justify' activity which is actually based on pragmatic, rule of thumb criteria. They cannot (or do not want to) see that only marxist theory can impart revolutionary direction to practice. Hence their emphasis on 'practice' and the dismissive attitude to historical and theoretical references to the legacy of Marxism and Trotskyism ('dogmatism')
- d) They repeat against the consistent Trotskyists the arguments of the reformists (e.g. on the Malvinas) while borrowing from Trotskyism in order to whisper a few diplomatic 'criticisms' which are shorn of practical conclusions, against the reformists. In general they coo like doves to the reformists, while reserving their venom for Trotskyists.

- e) They do not state openly the conclusions and implications of their politics, but substitute for this a policy of manoeuvring and diplomacy. They will acknowledge in the abstract their commitment to Marxism and Trotskyism as a formality, but seem to fudge or obscure the practical conclusions by worming in of their shabby and shoddy opportunist manoeuvres by the back door (as the attempt to endorse the MP document at the recent Conference, while banning discussion on the MP earlier on). They formally declare for defence of the semi-colonies in the abstract against imperialism only to abandon it in actual practice (Malvinas, Poland, Afghanistan) without acknowledgement.
- f) They are not independent of the politics of the reformists, but prostrate themselves before them, and are inclined to remain diplomatically silent on their opportunist crimes, and to cover up their actions before the working class (Benn's loyalty speech to the LP Conference)
- g) They frequently cover up their diplomacy by accusing those who oppose such a policy of 'sectarianism', by which they mean not a tendency to self-isolation from the labour movement, or passivity, but an active concern for defending the objective interests of the working class against the reformist sell outs
- h) they occupy a position between reformism and Trotskyism somewhat similar to that which a petty-bourgeois occupies between a capitalist and a worker: they kow-tow before the first and have contempt for the second.
- i) on the international plane, they distinguish themselves by the Amlo-centric policy of 'Socialism in One Reformist Party'. They are obliged to renounce (or hide) their commitment to the building of an international party as a result of this.
- j) They readily agree to united fronts, but empty it of its revolutionary content by diplomatic, manoeuvring opportunism, and by transforming a tactical method into a supreme principle of strategy (as entryism)
- k) They resort to moralism to cover up their ideological emptiness, without basing their morality on the premises of marxist doctrine but on liberalism instead (Afghanistan, Malvinas)
- l) The above points characterise Carolan as a centrist.

15. Addendum on the politics of the old WSL leadership

For the old WSL to be able to fuse with the Matramna clique, there had to be something 'not quite right' with their method and politics. It is important that we try and identify what it was so that, if we were unable to avoid the debacle that has occurred, we can, at least, correct the error that led to it. What were the factors that led to fusion?

There was a crisis of perspective. The old WSL never broke fully from Healyite conceptions of party building. The break was partial. Of course the catastrophist nonsense was thrown overboard, but to what extent was a realistic balance sheet of Healyism made? Aspects of Healyism were obviously dealt with, but where was the fully worked out, complete assessment? To what extent did the WSL manage to assess its needs to re-adjust its sights and expectations according to the new conditions of size and resources? It was obviously necessary to avoid a retreat into armchair theoretical debates; but neither could it carry on in the old SLL way, either, with the same expectations of recruitment etc. (there was a rejection of mass recruitment as advocated by Healy)

To what extent was the assessment of the possibilities of growth and level of struggle in the working class a factor, in the aftermath of the Thatcher election, in the crisis of the WSL? It was obviously correct to attack those who blamed the working class for defeats in order to cover their own sell outs and betrayals. But when mass unemployment began to hit the level of struggle, and the 'forward movement' of the working class became less forward and more retreat and defeat, was the WSL able to adjust? At the same time, the democracy battle in the MP grew sharper. To what extent did the WSL leadership get conned by the glowing reports about the possibilities in the MP which came from the pro-MP work wing of the WSL? Wholesale entry is justified only when a mass left wing influx of workers occurs into the MP. There was no evidence of this then or now, despite sounds of battle and fury. Membership has in fact declined. There is

There is a small turn over of members, a trickle of workers and many more petty bourgeois elements joining at present, which would justify a fraction of our resources and members working there, but certainly not wholesale entry.

The fusion with the ICL and the debacle since has revealed a number of aspects of the Smith/Jones/Cunliffe leadership's politics which indicate a degeneration:

- a) The failure to implement the timetable of discussion and resolution of differences which was agreed at fusion
- b) The fact that the fusion document could be so ambiguous and open to interpretation (as has been demonstrated since). For example, the workers government section, drafted by Carolan and amended by the WSL leadership to include what they wanted but without challenging what, as has become clear since, was a reformist conception
- c) the handing over de facto control of the apparatus of the Party to Carolan - press, full timers, control of IBs etc.
- d) The failure to fight Carolan on his politics as a whole (ie revisionism) and the pretence of a fight over this or that aspect, while recently denying Carolan's revisionism.
- e) The fudged resolution on the Malvinas presented to Conference
- f) The closing down of the Tendency without consultation after the special conference
- g) The acquiescence to Carolan's refusal to publish the change of line in SO
- h) The refusal to pursue the revisionist arguments that emerged during the Malvinas debate and refusal to draw the conclusions about Carolan's general political method - specifically with regard to imperialism, Ireland, Palestine etc.
- i) The complicity involved in blaming the TILC sections for the walk-out at the summer school, after going along with the ^{decision} that it should be a WSL school without informing the TILC sections, and agreeing to the limitation of the TILC speakers to positive statements without the right to polemicise.
- j) the reneging on the memorandum drawn up by Cde. L. in September to alter the voting back to the status quo, and on the agreement to vote for some form of democratic centralism.

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- Dissenting on
- (a) P4, lines 33-34 'It is wrong... one'
 - (b) TILC position on Palestine (p5)
 - (c) Section 12 first para. P6. TILC and democratic centralism
 - (d) Section 14, first sentence, P9. TILC document a historic gain.

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