

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

See later

MINUTES

Armstrong asked about the EC minutes on the youth conference. Cunliffe moved that the reference to Morrow's threat to resign should be removed from the minutes. Wolf said EC minutes should be fuller.

Agreed to refer to the EC the minutes on Morrow's threat to resign, and the general issue of how minutes are kept.

Hill gave notice that he would re-raise the item from the EC about Joplin's position on the youth steering committee.

FINANCE

Kinnell reported. Hill moved from the organisers' sub-committee that all employed comrades be asked to donate a week's wages. Discussion: agreed comrades would formulate resolutions for voting later.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

Cunliffe presented a resolution on TILC, and some amendments.

(See resolution reproduced separately).

Page 1, point 3(a), para 3: for "most vocally committed to", read "who were the strongest advocates of".

Pages 1-2, point 3(b), para 1, line 2 and following: for "give the WSL grave concern at the internal procedures and the treatment of political opponents of the RWL leadership. Some of the political issues raised in that crisis by comrades of the ex SL DC...", read: "mean the WSL would wish further to discuss the internal procedures of the RWL leadership. Some of the political issues raised in that crisis by both sides..."

There was a lengthy discussion, with contributions from Carolan, Parsons, Johnson, Kinnell, Traven, Kendall, Keith, Jones, Wolf, Hill, Hunt, Gardiner, James.

Carolán moved amendments:

A. Page 1, point 1, lines 3-4: for "reconstruction and political regeneration", read "political regeneration and organisational reconstruction".

B. Page 1, point 3, line 4-5: for "material and political obstacles", read "political obstacles", and after "... at the forthcoming December conference", add, "In addition there are major material problems".

C. Page 2, point 4, line 6: for "large-scale fusions", read "significant fusions".

D. Page 2, point 5, throughout, for December read Easter.

E. Page 3, point 5(6): for all after "... should discuss", read "the situation".

Hill moved an amendment:

Page 2, point 5, first sentence: delete all after "... the following steps".

Kinnell moved a counter-amendment to Carolán's amendment D:

Page 2, point 5, after first sentence add: "(The list of documents below may have to be restricted in line with the ability of the WSL and other sections to adequately prepare. The WSL EC should meet urgently to discuss this)."

Carolán also moved that Cunliffe's second amendment (on the RWL) be voted on.

Voting

Cunliffe first amendment: accepted without vote.

Cunliffe second amendment (on RWL): LOST by 11 votes to 12.

Carolán amendments A, B, C: accepted without vote.

Kinnell amendment: CARRIED by 13 votes to 10.

Hill amendment: LOST by 11 votes to 12.

Carolán amendment on 5(6): (amendment E): LOST by 9 votes to 13.

Carolán: further amendment - page 2, at end of point 13, to add: "and by rigidifying relations, could lead to the dispersion of the forces presently grouped in TILC".

Resolution as a whole: CARRIED by 22 votes for to 1 against (Hill) and 3 abstentions (Gardiner, Carolán, Kinnell).

Carolán moved a supplementary resolution on the RWL.

"The new WSL is by the fusion agreement a democratic centralist organisation. Its borders are defined by membership of the WSL and not by membership of the loose and politically non-homogeneous federation which the TILC is at present. The WSL will at all international conferences etc relate to the other components of TILC as a democratic centralist organisation to distinctly separate organisations unless the WSL NC or EC has decided otherwise. The relations of WSL members with the RWL etc. will be strictly under the supervision and control of the NC and EC through the agency of the US commission".

Cunliffe moved that NC instead endorse the decision of the Organising Committee of 6.8.82:

"US commission to be re-established as channel for any comrade wishing to maintain relations with RWL, so that relations with the RWL are under the control of the leading committees of the WSL".

Agreed unanimously.

Parsons moved a resolution on the RWL.

"The WSL notes with alarm the split in the RWL. We have played a crucial part in the struggle to build a nucleus of the future American revolutionary part and we have a responsibility to continue to do so through a decisive intervention into the disputes within the US TILC supporters.

"Our immediate priority is to preserve the longstanding relationship we have had with the SL(DC) ods. Whatever assessment we might make of their decision to leave the RWL we must recognise that they have struggled to the best of their ability to build a consistently Trotskyist group in the US for many years.

"We must reluctantly recognise that the US fusion has, for the time being at least, failed. We urge the TILC to recognise the minority as an independent force and will propose giving them a seat and a vote at the December conference.

"We will initiate an inquiry within the TILC into the failure of the US fusion including all the organisational and political points at issue and the possibility of re-establishing unity.

"The NC instructs the EC to (a) prepare a political critique of the minority documents 'Statement of the Proletarian Tasks Faction in the RWL' and 'Party Front or United Front: the Broad Left Trade Union strategy for the 1980s', (b) publish these documents in the IB immediately, (c) convene a meeting of the revamped USA commission whose job it will be to control and organise discussion with all the US comrades".

Amendments

Jones: in point 3 to read instead, "Urge one of the minority comrades be allowed to attend the December conference". CARRIED by 14 votes to 6.

Whettling: in point 2, to delete all after "... RWL". Accepted without a vote.

Cunliffe: in para 4, to add at the end, "or alternatively of recognising the minority as an independent force with a seat on TILC in the short term". Accepted without a vote.

Johnson: Delete "inquiry", insert "discussion"; delete "organisational and". LOST

Parsons resolution as amended: CARRIED unanimously.

POLAND

Jones made a brief report

FINANCE: VOTING

The text of the resolution as amended is in branch circular no.28. Amendments, and voting on them, were as follows:

Parsons: in point 3 to delete a further alternative acceptable form of raising the money, "paid-off old (i.e. before October 1) arrears". CARRIED.

Jones: to delete point 5. LOST.

Hill: to delete points 3 and 4. LOST.

Hill: in point 7, to say that comrades not paid^{up} for dues by December 31 will be "lapsed", not "required to answer to the OC". LOST.

Carolán: in point 5, for "excuses will be accepted", to read, "excuses may be accepted". CARRIED.

Levy: At beginning of point 2 (about area meetings), to add "where possible". CARRIED.

Hunt: to read December 31 everywhere instead of the original date of December 13. CARRIED.

Points 1 to 7 as amended: CARRIED, none against, 1 abstention.

Proposal that NC expects all employed comrades to be on standing orders: CARRIED.

Proposal that each branch be asked to discuss increasing comrades' WSL dues. CARRIED.

Traven proposal: to introduce a 'supporters' price' of £1 for the paper. Referred to EC.

BL VICTIMISATION

Jones reported and there was a discussion.

LABOUR PARTY

Introductions by Hill (on current situation), Cunliffe (on his resolution).

Resolutions - Kendall, Carolán, Kinnell (in IB 21), Cunliffe (circulated separately, replaces resolution in IB 21).

Amendment (McVicar) to Kinnell's resolution: In 6(c), for "local T", read "local LCC or T". In 6(d), add, "and to buy 5 shares in T". At end add, "The NC further resolves to concentrate resources on the production of a monthly magazine".

McVicar procedural proposal: to vote only on practical conclusion parts of the resolutions. CARRIED, by 13 votes to 11 with 2 abstentions.

This was interpreted as meaning:

Kendall resolution - left on table.

Carolán resolution - voting on page 2 paras 1, last sentence of 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.

Cunliffe resolution - voting on the section starting "In practice".

Kinnell asked that the latter part of point 5 of Cunliffe's "In practice", i.e. "But such 'illegal' work...", be voted on separately. Cunliffe agreed to withdraw it from voting.

For details of voting and NC attendance see over page.

	1.	2.	4	5	6.	7.	8.	9.
	Carolán	Parsons	McVicar	McVicar	McVicar	Kinnell	Cunliffe	Carolán
	resolution	amend.	amend.	amend.	amend.	as am.	motion	motion
Armstrong	abs	for	for	for		for	for	abs
Booth	for	ag.	for	for	for	for	ag.	abs
Carolán	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Chorley	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Collins	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Cunliffe	ag.	for	abs	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Fraser	for	ag.	for	for	for	for	ag.	for
Gable	- has offered resignation to NC: resignation not yet accepted -							
Gardiner	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Grassac	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Gunther	- absent							
Harding	- apologies (work)							
Harrison	- absent on second day of NC							
Hill	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Hotchkiss	- apologies (family)							
Hunt	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Jagger	- apologies (sick)							
James	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Johnson	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Jones	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Keith	- apologies for second day (family)							
Kendall	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Kinnell	for	abs	for	for		for	ag.	for
Levy	- apologies for second day							
Lewis	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
McVicar	for		for	for	- had to leave early (transport)			
Maddox	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Matthews	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Morrow	- apologies (sick)							
Noonan	- absent							
Oliver	- apologies (domestic)							
O'Toole	ag.	for	ag.	ag.		ag.	for	ag.
Parkinson	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Parsons	for	for	for	for		for	for	for
Pearson	for	ag.	for	for		for	ag.	for
Picton	- absent for second day of NC							
Piggot	- apologies (TU commitment)							
Smith	- apologies (TU commitment)							
Stevenson	- apologies (domestic)							
Traven	- apologies for second day (gays in education conf.)							
Wheeler	abs.	for	abs.	ag.		ag.	for	for
Whettling	for	ag.	for	for		for	abs	for
Wolf	for	for	for	for		for	ag.	for
	<u>17-8-2</u>	<u>12-13-1</u>	<u>18-7-2</u>	<u>18-9-0</u>	<u>2-10-13</u>	<u>17-9-0</u>	<u>11-14-1</u>	<u>16-8-2</u>

Votes

1. Carolán: resolution in IB 21, pages 2 paras 1, last sentence of 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, with the Carolán and Hill amendments in IB 21 accepted.
2. Parsons: to delete points 6(c) and (d) in Kinnell resolution.
3. Hunt amendment to Kinnell resolution as in IB 21. LOST on tied vote: 12-12-3.
4. McVicar amendment A: to add LCC
5. McVicar amendment B: to add 5 shares
6. McVicar amendment C: on magazine
7. Kinnell as amended
8. Cunliffe: "In practice" section, omitting all after "... such MO work", in pt. 5.
9. Carolán resolution on education, see below.

Explanations

Parsons amendment: Parsons explained that the amendment did not exclude work in T and LCC groups.

Kinnell parts 6(c) and (d): Kinnell explained that this did not mean that all

comrades^{were} obliged to join T groups etc. It meant that contact should be established where such groups exist, e.g. by one comrade going along.

McVicar amendment on magazine: there was some discussion before the vote as to whether this meant resources for the magazine at the expense of scrapping the paper.

Parsons statement: I voted for the resolutions (as amended) by Carolan, Kinnell and Cunliffe because as they appeared on paper I could not see any real difference between them.

If anyone can explain to my satisfaction a significant difference between these resolutions I shall donate £1 to the fund.

While I can't really see much difference between the resolutions I recognise that the political conceptions behind each resolution are quite different.

Carolan resolution on education

It is a life or death question for the WSL to make itself organisationally effective in the current crisis of the O. This requires us to educate all our members on the O. question - on the principles, politics, experience, history and perspective that guide our work in the political labour movement. In so far as there are differences within the organisation, the education of the membership will best be furthered by a candid and frank confrontation of the different positions and nuances. Accordingly we resolve that each branch will within the next month organise a meeting at which the broad group tactic^{etc} will be discussed. A member of the EC/NC will lead off that discussion. If there is a demand for it, there will also be a speaker from any opposing viewpoint within the WSL. We will explore the practicalities of also putting this issue on the agenda of the forthcoming aggregates on finance and BL.

YOUTH

Hunt gave a brief report.

W. F'BK.

Parkinson reported from the EC. We now face a witch-hunt against us in W.Fbk, and to improve our position for the fight against that the EC has decided that Todd and Andrea should resign from the WF SC, making an appropriate statement.

Parsons called for more NC discussion on W.Fbk.

Agreed to put it on the next NC agenda. Cunliffe's document and Collins' document on perspectives to be tabled for discussion.

DECISIONS OF THE N.C.

- * To refer to the EC the minutes on Morrow's threat to resign from responsibility from youth work.
- * To refer to the EC its practices on minutes.
- * On TILC: Cunliffe resolution as amended, reproduced separately.
- * On RWL split: Parsons resolution as amended, see below.
- * To endorse the Organising Committee decision of 6.8.82: "US commission to be re-established as channel for any comrade wishing to maintain relations with RWL, so that relations with the RWL are under the control of the leading committees of the WSL".
- * On finance: resolution as in branch circular no.28
- * On the LP: Carolan.

The register is not a principle. The principle is to resist and fight the purge, and to stay in the fight^{new} within the mass political party of the British labour movement.

Our commitment to building the revolutionary party - the League - in the existing labour movement rules out passively accepting that Marxists in the LP should slide into automatically being outlawed.

The alternative is to fight the register until it is established (if eventually it is) and Militant's hard core is purged, and then go with groups like CLPD, LCC etc if they register. We should oppose the registration of the CLPD at its January conference, but assessed coldly it is unlikely that the Marxists will win.

The only matter of principle here is that Marxists do not apply to register if by doing so they are ratting on Militant and making it easier to purge them, or ratting on the possibility of a real fight against the register. In general, revolutionaries boycott a Parliament, or the register, so long as there is a chance of breaking, overthrowing, or sidetracking it; if that is not possible, then the revolutionaries have to find ways of working for their politics within the structures that we are not yet strong enough to overthrow.

It is improbable that the Marxists will be acceptable on the register (though not impossible - that too will depend to some extent on the combativity of the Left and its success or otherwise in limiting the purge). Irrespective of that, however, it is important that they apply to register if the conditions require it as above. If they are refused they can campaign among the broad Left on the matter. It will make the difference between fighting every inch of the way against their exclusion, thus protecting their major forces, and passively accepting exclusion. Politically for the Marxists it means a commitment to continue the orientation to the mass political party of the class, a commitment to attempting to find means of continuing to organise the broad Left (for example, in a campaign against outlawing the Marxists).

In the event that the Marxists are outlawed by whatever process, my proposal would be that the Marxists maintain the paper and its organisation as at present and also seek alliances to create a new publication that can play the role of left wing organiser that the present paper has played at its best. In general they must create alternative means of continuing their work (as in Kinnell's resolution, etc.) This would obviously be a transitional phase of work. At a certain point, after the election perhaps, they would have to assess where they are at and perhaps rationalise publications.

* On tactics - Kinnell

1. Our guideline for tactics should be total inflexibility on political content, total flexibility on forms of organisation and expression.
2. The present witch-hunt makes it very likely that soon we will not be able to operate in the O as openly as at present.
3. Whatever happens, we will need to maintain some method of publishing our full politics.
4. Tactical choices must however be guided by the strategic importance of the O and the tactical importance in the near future of being within the struggles of the broad O left that will come into conflict with a new Labour government or be forced to rethink by a new Labour defeat.
5. In the event of our present methods of expression being banned, the option of only publishing our full politics - i.e. of breaking with the O to proclaim an alternative party - is to be rejected. So is the option of remaining in the O only to do 'illegal' work there. We need also to prepare possible channels of 'legal' work in the O to supplement our 'illegal' work.
6. The best such channels that can be seen at present are the various local 'B' and the 'T' groups being set up around the new T. We should prepare paths. Possibly these contingency plans will be unnecessary, but we should maintain as many options as we can.

The NC therefore instructs members:

- a) To get involved in local 'B' where they exist, or in moves to develop new ones;
- b) To float the idea of a national conference of 'B' groups;
- c) To get involved in local LCC or T groups where they exist, being aware that the latter involves selling a few copies of T;

d) The NC further instructs the OC to develop a systematic policy of contributions by our comrades to T and to buy 5 shares in T.

* Carolan on branch discussions on the O. :

(Text as in page 5 of minutes).

* To put W.Fbk. on next NC agenda: Cunliffe and Collins documents to be tabled for discussion.

Parsons resolution as amended

The WSL notes with alarm the split in the RWL. We have played a crucial part in the struggle to build a nucleus of the future American revolutionary party and we have a responsibility to continue to do so through a decisive intervention into the disputes within the US TILC supporters.

Our immediate priority is to preserve the longstanding relationship we have had with the SL(DC) cds, whatever assessment we might make of their decision to leave the RWL.

We must reluctantly recognise that the US fusion has, for the time being at least, failed. We will urge that one of the minority comrades be allowed to attend the December TILC conference.

We will initiate an inquiry within TILC into the failure of the US fusion including all the organisational and political points at issue and the possibility of re-establishing unity, or alternatively of recognising the minority as an independent force with a seat on TILC in the short term.

The NC instructs the EC to (a) prepare a political critique of the minority documents 'Statement of the Proletarian Tasks Faction in the RWL' and 'Party Front or United Front: the Broad Left Trade Union Strategy for the 1980s', (b) publish these documents in the IB immediately, (c) convene a meeting of the revamped US commission whose job it will be to control and organise discussion with all the US comrades.