

Resolution on TILC - adopted by WSL NC Nov 13 1982.

"The WSL fights for the political regeneration and organisational reconstruction of the FI founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky. We seek the maximum contact, cooperation and dialogue with the forces of Trotskyism internationally, as the means for reaching theoretical and political clarification and forging organisational links.

The WSL is part of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee and seeks to develop it into a democratic centralist tendency, as our immediate contribution to the development of revolutionary forces. Success in this development will of course only be a step towards the greater task of political regeneration and organisational reconstruction."

(WSL Fusion Platform, July 1981)

1) This National Committee reaffirms its commitment to the building of a democratic centralist revolutionary international tendency pledged to struggle for the political regeneration and reconstruction of the Fourth International.

2) We recognise the important steps taken in this direction by the programmatic discussions and decisions and the political work of the TILC and its sections since its formation in December 1979.

3) We remain committed to the development of TILC into a democratic centralist tendency. But as we pointed out at length in July and must reiterate now, we recognise that substantial political obstacles stand in the way of establishing such a disciplined framework at the forthcoming December conference. In addition there are major material obstacles. Indeed not one of the problems to which we referred in July has been in the least resolved in the intervening months.

(a) On the one hand the enormous organisational problems faced by the small numbers of the TILC sections have meant that we have failed in repeated attempts to generate a real internal life and ongoing processes of discussion within the ranks of TILC between full meetings. The material and organisational resources to function as an international centre have yet to be created; and the ability of national sections to devote sufficient time and energy to the development of discussion on international questions has yet to be proven.

For the transformation to a democratic centralist structure to be any more than a change in the label attached to the TILC, it must mean the development of a genuine, functioning international leadership capable of maintaining a regular and continuous dialogue with the national sections, and thus taking decisions which amount to more than simply bureaucratic pronouncements over the heads of the sections.

The failure of even the TILC sections who were the strongest advocates of the establishment of d/c in December to fulfil the organisational commitments spelled out in the July resolution on preparations for the December conference (submission of amendments to main documents, etc) clearly sums up the organisational problems in taking this step.

(b) In addition to this, we must recognise that the crisis that has erupted and now produced in effect a split in the American RWL, the most prominent sympathising section of TILC, gives 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 cdes of the ex-SLDC also appear to require further clarification and discussion in TILC.

For these reasons we feel that a decision this December to enter into a binding commitment to the establishment of d/c would be politically premature and without organisational foundation. Rather than in practice advancing the building of the TILC, such a step could open the door to substantial new problems. Indeed by rigidifying the organisational structure as d/c without the necessary prerequisite



of political agreement would probably lead to a scattering of the forces now grouped around the TILC.

4) It might seem that by taking this stance the SL is retreating from long-standing obligations to fulfil a timetable for the adoption of a d/c structure. But we feel it would be quite unrealistic to adhere to the formalities of such a timetable without recognising that the two largest political components of TILC - in Britain and now the USA - have been completely transformed by significant fusions which have of course posed their own problems at national and international level. It has been the very development of TILC beyond its original component parts which is now one side of the problem in establishing d/c, while it is the failure of the TILC sections - including in particular the WSL - to generate sufficient material resources to function on a satisfactory level internationally which has produced the other.

We remain committed to the fight for d/c; but we are convinced that more is required than simply the passing of time to provide the conditions for that step to be a serious one.

5) We therefore propose to the sections of TILC the following steps which, if fulfilled, should prepare for a decision on d/c in the autumn of 1983.

1) That the December conference discuss amendments to the existing TILC documents plus the new texts commissioned - the Theses on the Crisis of the FI (drafted) and the Theses on the International Situation and Our Tasks (to be completed by the end of November).

2) That each section of TILC attending the December conference should present a brief text setting out their views on the practical workings and organisational basis of international d/c. Particular questions to be addressed should be:

(a) the scope of international discipline in relation to tactical decisions by national sections;

(b) the extent to which minority views in national sections could be reflected in the international discussions of the tendency;

(c) what should be the composition of an authoritative leadership body capable of taking binding decisions between full meetings;

(d) how that leading body should relate to national sections;

(e) how these activities should be sustained financially and organisationally.

3) These texts should be reproduced in the IBs of each section and submitted to discussion by their full memberships in preparation for a detailed debate on an organisational document for a May meeting of TILC.

4) That in the same period a full and frank debate should be promoted in the TILC IB on two contentious items raised in the recent period: (1) Trade union work - particularly in the USA; and (2) MO work in Britain.

5) That from now on a renewed trial period be established for the commencement of regular monthly correspondence and internal discussion between the TILC sections between conferences - with each section undertaking to ensure that arrangements are made to assign cdes to TILC work. As we stressed in July, until such internal relations are firmly established and maintained for a significant period, there can be no serious prospect that a d/c tendency will be any more than a sham.

6) If these requirements are met, and sustained progress made on political clarification, a May meeting of TILC should discuss an advisory motion for submission to each section, proposing the establishment of d/c discipline and structures from an extended TILC conference in autumn 1983. From here too the necessary organisational preparations (pre-conferences, etc) could be begun.