

WORKERS ' FIGHT

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IRELAND AND THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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The reason that these editorials and letters have been included in this bulletin is because many people, myself included, had not had the ideas on Ireland and the Permanent Revolution that Comrade SM put forward at the Workers Fight Day School on Ireland clearly spelt out before. The fact that the IMG still maintain that the Permanent Revolution still holds good for Ireland means that these letters are just as relevant now as they were in 1967. Iw.

Editorial from 'Irish Militant' December 1966

The major point of confusion in the Irish Left today centres on the national question and its relationship to the struggle for socialism.

The Marxist analysis of the relationship of capitalist and socialist revolutions in the modern world was first suggested by Marx with reference to the German Revolution of 1848, and then in this century was fully developed by Leon Trotsky. That analysis is called the Theory of Permanent Revolution.

As expressed by Marx and Trotsky, the Theory of Permanent Revolution can be summarised in these terms.....

The countries such as Ireland that begin their economic development after the initial flourishing of capitalism in the major nations of Western Europe do so under radically different conditions than their predecessors. In these countries the bourgeoisie is much weaker than it was in Western Europe because it is at a vast competitive disadvantage against the capitalists of the advanced countries, a disadvantage multiplied by foreign political rule in the case of direct colonies. At the same time the proletariat is much stronger than its 17th. and 18th. century forebears for the simple reason that it is based upon large scale industry to the extent that industry exists at all.

The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie existed in embryo even in the English Revolution, and played a significant role in the greater French Revolution. But in modern times its importance is so much greater that for the bourgeoisie the decisive political emotion is fear of the working class. Moreover, economically, the bourgeoisie of a backward country is most intimately linked with the old landowning class and the foreign colonial power. For these reasons the bourgeoisie and its parties are incapable of carrying through bourgeois-democratic revolution.

But the fight against the landlords and imperialism is of extreme importance for the whole people and particularly the peasants and workers!

The peasantry, because of its dispersion and its backwardness, cannot lead this struggle. Only the working class in the urban centres can carry it through to victory. At the same time the leading role of the proletariat in the struggle for 'bourgeois-democratic' measures is combined with a struggle for its own class interests against its own class enemy, the national bourgeoisie. The conquest of power by the proletariat proceeds 'to wrest by degrees all capital from the hands of the bourgeoisie'. It does this merely in its own class interest and also because in today's world fast economic development is only possible on the basis of nationalisation and economic planning.

Thus the 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution grows quickly and continuously into the socialist revolution. It is a permanent revolution in the full sense of the word uninterrupted by any period of capitalist rule. It is permanent above all in the sense that the success of a socialist revolution in a backward country, lacking the major technical, material and cultural productive forces required for the establishment of socialism, can be secured only by the extension of the revolution uninterruptedly until it triumphs also in the advanced capitalist countries. As long as it remains isolated in a hostile capitalist world a socialist revolution in a backward country is prey to the two perils of counter-revolution and internal degeneration.

Letter to 'Irish Militant' from S. Matgamna (unpublished)

Dear Comrade,

Your December editorial briefly outlined the Theory of Permanent Revolution of Marx and Trotsky. Without this theory modern history is incomprehensible....the fact that the Russian Revolution took place in a backward country, the logic of the unfolding colonial revolution as in China. This theory is a development of the Marxist laws of combined and uneven development which shed a flood of light upon the course of Irish history, entangled as it is at all points with that of Britain's.

Clearly your intention was to brush away the cobwebs and nonsense of those who deny that the next step forward for Ireland can only be workers' power.

Approaching the question from an idealist, normative conception, these people take the common Menshevik/Stalinist stand that a regime nearer to the classical model bourgeois state has yet to be established in Ireland as a result of the 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution. Supra-historical scholastics of the first water, they take the position that conditions will only become right for workers power after the ideal 'bourgeois-democratic' regime is realised - and this in a world where even feudal and semi-feudal countries like China, Vietnam and Yugoslavia (not to mention Russia in 1917) - have shown that such bourgeois developments are things of the past.

Like the Kautskyite scholastics who refused a birth certificate to Bolshevik Russia because it had been born outside their expectations, they refuse to see that Ireland is a bourgeois state - ie two bourgeois states peculiarly deformed by its history and the relationship with Britain - bourgeois still though, even in the Republic, economically dominated and exploited. Partition makes the country more vulnerable, but even without it, economic domination would still flourish on the basis of the normalised bourgeois market relationships - the power of the big and the weakness of the small. Only the international socialist revolution can transform this - in the last analysis and even if an Irish Workers State was established first - and that is not the 'bourgeois-democratic revolution'.

The law of combined and uneven development is the Marxist tool for understanding Irish history and the curve of future development. I believe this is what your editorial meant to imply, that the next step in Ireland could only be workers' power; but you confined yourself to an abstract outline of the Theory of the Permanent Revolution merely intimating that it answered the professional confusionists in general - without spelling out. But it must be spelt out because your editorial can be misinterpreted when you talk of there being no period of capitalist rule in Ireland this is correct for the theory - but apply it to Ireland and it appears to say that the bourgeoisie don't hold power yet! To deny that the capitalists have direct power in Ireland, even if they in turn are not yet their own masters, would be absurd, and I am sure that was not your intention.

As an analysis of forces and a proletarian perspective of action for feudal and semi-feudal countries, the Theory of Permanent Revolution does not apply literally to Ireland. In your rebuttal of the stalino-menshevik rubbish which has caused so much damage in countries like Indonesia where the Permanent Revolution could apply - given revolutionary workers' parties - you make far too many concessions to the mechanical application of Maoist theories to Ireland.

That Ireland is NOT a model bourgeois state is undeniable...as is the fact that she has not got all the attributes of Capitalism's first-born sons, nor for that matter their economic weight. But only the socialist revolution will end the underprivileged position of Ireland and similar countries under Capitalism. In so far as your editorial asserts this as the next step for Ireland I agree wholeheartedly.

Fraternally: Sean Matgamna

Letter to G. Lawless from S. Matgamna December 1966

Dear Gery,

I raised the question of the implications of the editorial with you. I think we should clear up any misunderstandings that might arise out of it. The real trouble with it is that it is a very good outline, an absolute reply to the Chinese for countries like Indonesia where the Theory of the Permanent Revolution could apply given revolutionary workers' parties - but it just doesn't in my opinion apply to Ireland. As I understand it it is an analysis of the forces in feudal and semi-feudal countries in their relationships with world economy, and politically a perspective of action by the proletariat, necessarily led by their revolutionary parties (it is the abdication of responsibility by the C.P.'s who were allotted the role of leadership in Trotsky's 1928 conceptions that have made for divergencies in many countries...but that is a big subject). But it does not apply to Ireland...though of course the Marxist conception of combined and uneven development on the basis of which Trotsky worked out the Theory of Permanent Revolution is invaluable in explaining Irish history, past and future.....perhaps you won't agree? Anyway I have written a letter on the editorial of 'Irish Militant' which might form the basis for a discussion if the comrades and yourself don't agree. Incidentally, I have gone to quite a lot of trouble to phrase it as diplomatically as possible....

Fraternally: Sean Matgamna

Letter to S. Matgamna from G. Lawless

Dear Sean,

I have just received your letter today. I can agree (with some

misgivings) with the main point of your letter in as far as it applies to the 26 Counties but cannot for the life of me see how you believe that the 6 Counties is a normal bourgeois state - be clear the next step is workers' power north and south on that we are 100% agreed but not the classification of Northern Ireland as a normal bourgeois state.

I agree you have phrased it very diplomatically and as we don't agree the next step is to see what we can do about it.

We could: 1. Debate reference to Northern Ireland (until we have a discussion) - (a) by letter (b) on the Editorial Board (c) in An Solas. And published as a letter.

2. Rewrite (deleting reference to N. Ireland) as an editorial and jointly present same to E.B. as a draft editorial.

Fraternally: Gery Lawless

Letter to G. Lawless from S. Matgamna.

Dear Gery,

Your letter arrived on Friday so there was no possibility of a reply in time for the meeting in London. I don't really understand your objections to the letter, so we had better discuss it in detail. The letter was less than specific on many points and possibly I sacrificed clarity to diplomacy.

You say you cannot understand how I believe that the Six Counties is a normal bourgeois state....But where have I written it? The letter specifically talks of two states peculiarly deformed by its history and its relationship to England. Is that the same as saying that the Six Counties is a 'normal' bourgeois state? But what I do say clearly is that Ireland as a whole though mutilated is still bourgeois.

Analyse it. Do the bourgeoisie in both parts enjoy social power? Are the relations of production bourgeois or not? It is obvious surely that though the power of Imperialism overshadows them even the Imperialist domination is on the basis of bourgeois relations? More and more old fashioned colonialism is giving way to reliance by the Imperialists on their giant economic strength....this is clearly the trend in Ireland. All that is blatantly obvious. Do the bourgeoisie hold state power then? Yes, but again it is relative and their state power is curtailed to an extent by Imperialism and of course direct the Northern bourgeoisie in setting up their separate house, in closer alliance with England than the Southern bourgeoisie wanted. This is particularly true on the keeping of sufficient nationalist people and territory within the Six Counties to make it viable. All right....the state power of the bourgeoisie is very much at the whim of the British, and the set-up is not what the Southern bourgeoisie would describe as a normal bourgeois state....but the direct power denied the Southern bourgeoisie is in the hands of the Northern bourgeoisie acting as a subdivision of the U.K. bourgeoisie. There are conflicts of interest between the Northern bourgeoisie and other sections of their class in the rest of the U.K.but no clear-cut antagonism exists.

The letter says clearly that the capitalists have power in Ireland... even if they in turn are not their own masters. (But then the Stalinists argue even the British bourgeoisie are not really their own masters any more which underlines how relative it is.) You disagree with that formulation? Then you must tell me who has power in Northern Ireland if the bourgeoisie - as a section of the U.K. bourgeoisie - do not? Nobody is denying the role of Imperialism or the peculiarities of N.I., nor the need to describe these features in any characterisation. But I disagree that

these things place in question the bourgeois nature of the whole set-up. The partition of Ireland arose from a genuine split in the bourgeoisie, linking up with the aims and needs of Imperialism. The Northern Ireland bourgeoisie, organised as a regional division of the U.K., at the moment have a large amount of autonomy. (How much Imperialist arms contribute to the acquiescence of the Southern bourgeoisie in this situation is debatable.... their own peculiarities enter the picture as well you know...) There is, of course, absolute economic subordination of N.I.....but this is also true of the rest of the country leading to the present snuggling up to the U.K. Are the Northern bourgeoisie held against their will? The situation boils down to a split in the bourgeoisie, one section maintaining closer links than the other with Imperialism, Imperialism in turn stage-managing the whole affair, the split allowing a direct intervention, but let me repeat that this does not alter the bourgeois nature of the set-up.. ...real, historically conditioned bourgeois, as opposed to some ideal one from the textbooks. I am not denying that it is an appalling mess, but you should not deny that it is a bourgeois mess.

These, North and South, are the only bourgeoisie that we will get. If you want to call the Northern bourgeoisie 'traitors' go ahead, but they are the Irish bourgeoisie, they and their Southern cousins who are only a shade different. Ireland's bourgeoisie are in power, deformed, crawling, divided as they are, getting what relations they can with G.B. as the divided sections do, there can be no other bourgeoisie. Even with reunification under capitalism it will make little difference, the only important effect will be to clear up the issues with which the Orange and Green Tories have occupied the minds of the proletariat for decades (as Connolly in 1914 foretold). Our job must be to explain to the workers of Ireland that these are the bourgeois regimes, weak, rotten, at birth and unable even to unify the nation as they are. It is in the interest of the Cliff-ordites with their perspective and their hope for the future bourgeoisie to shun the pitiable sight of the craven Irish bourgeoisie and promise that a newer and better breed of 'national bourgeoisie' is expected on the five o'clock train from Peking....but it is not in our interest.

I believe that you accept the theory of the degenerated and deformed workers' states. And yet Russia, which has up to ten million slave labourers at various times, is a thousand times more remote from a 'normal' workers' state than Ireland, North or South, removed from the classic model of a bourgeois state. But, once again, the letter mentioned that Ireland did not have all the attributes of Capitalism's more favoured.

What happened with the December Editorial as I see it, is this.... Feeling the need to take up the stalinist confusion because of its implications for the future, its denial of the next step, you reached out for the theory that refutes that sort of 'stages' nonsense in backward countries where a reasonable 'case' can be made out for it....ie. the Theory of Permanent Revolution. In doing that you unintentionally made all sorts of implied concessions to their assumptions about Ireland and wound up arguing on their ground, within their terms of reference, without pointing out the gross, scholastic non-marxist nature of their mechanical application of Chinese theories to Ireland. This is what I object to. It is not enough to take up the issues as they raise them, a piece at a time, without ever analysing their basic mistake, their non-marxist scholasticism and idealism. I think I've said that the ghost of Clifford was never properly exorcised from the group. To go over the Stalinist/Trotskyist history is not enough to root out the essential approach or to teach people to avoid adopting the same stance even when opposing the grosser pieces of Stalinism. As for my letter, if you can write that I say that N.I. is a normal bourgeois state, then you should reread it. Also the letter rightly or wrongly discusses at some length the scholastic approach which denies the bourgeois state recognition because it is deformed....you should at least take up

the argument instead of announcing your disagreement and no more. Busy or not it is impossible to discuss without discussion.....

The Permanent Revolution is an analysis of the classes and forces in feudal and semi-feudal countries....and a proletarian perspective of action (depending on revolutionary parties of the working class arising and playing a positive role...which is why so much of the current colonial revolution seems to refute Trotsky...ie. as Trotsky formulated it as opposed to the way the USFI have garbled it so as to forget the proletariat). These forces, classes and so on are just not the same in Ireland. In using the theory to reply to the Stalinists you made far too many implied concessions to their madness; you engaged in what was a scholastic matching of texts, without reference to reality. But reference to reality like the Indonesia article, is the real killing test for these people. I think there is a real need for a short internal document analysing the idealistic scholasticism of the Cliffordites, not matching texts with them but showing their divorcement from reality. Clifford's stuff reminds me of the talk of people who are insane - it has a strong internal logic, but it has no relation to anything in the real world.

This business of questioning the bourgeois, deformed bourgeois, character of Ireland is injected into the revolutionary movement from the stalinist cesspool in my opinion. The S.L.L. is highhandedly ignoring the national question and minority question in N.I.(as the piece by Trotsky on the national question will show) is wrong but at least they are right to understand the bourgeois nature of the set-up. But then I do not see how anyone can question either the bourgeois nature of the whole or Ireland or the very obvious limitations and deformities and historically conditioned weakness of Irish capitalism. I always took it for granted. The abstract, normative non-marxist Stalinists raise this question for their own ends and only terrible scholastics like the Cliffordites could raise this seriously. At least we agree that the talk of a coming bourgeois democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry is daft (it has never existed anywhere at all).

Who rules Scotland and Wales? The argument that there must be a free, independent, unified, national state before the bourgeois rule..... leads to declaring these countries non-bourgeois!!! It is not predetermined that every nation will manage a free national state this side of socialism. What about the future for Ireland? The gross deformation, the relationship to Britain and perhaps later as a weaker fish in the EEC, will continue until the workers take power. Within this framework there is a very strong possibility of reunification, by agreement, evolution. If the capitalist system continues stable in this period of link-ups, of all sorts, there is just no really serious explosive material in Ireland that could lead to a revolutionary reunification in conflict with Imperialism....ie. a reunification as such - the working class will not rise against the border; when they move it will be for their own class aims. If, while a semblance of the present division remains, there is a revolutionary upsurge the main component will be the proletariat....and following from that, if the upsurge leads to a reunification under the bourgeoisie, the realisation of the 'ideal' bourgeois revolution - then that will be a counter-revolution against the working class (like the 'completion' of the bourgeois revolution in Germany 1918). Our political existence must aim at the prevention of such a bourgeois revolution and we can only do that by preparing a serious proletarian force....educating it against both the Stalinist bourgeois, chauvinist influences and confusions.

There is a point at which this stages theory of the Stalinists can link up with the existing ideas on national independence of people moving towards us and derail them, prevent them from understanding that the struggle is international; that the working class, even if it has inher-

part of that class has inherited the fight for freedom throughout the world. This whole matter of insisting on a perfection of bourgeois stages and states was introduced by the Stalinists at the end of the 20's and has functioned as one of the many excuses for not fighting for workers' power. This thing about an absolutely clear-cut independence, and a perfect bourgeois state has played a reactionary role in many countries. Pre-Hitler Germany, for instance. And the Stalinists are always pandering to British nationalism in favour of British independence from America! This you know. But we would be well advised to clear away from under this sort of confusion by showing just what a pitiable specimen the bourgeoisie of Ireland is.

What to do about the disagreement? It is too late for the next issue so there is time to discuss it. a) Re-read the letter to the editor. b) Reply to the points here. If you really take up what the letter said, as opposed to jumping to unwarranted conclusions about N.I. being a 'normal bourgeois state' then I think that you will find there is no difference (unless of course you seriously want to maintain that N.I. is not bourgeois). In that event I will have no objections in amending the letter so as to spell out the 'deformations'. Or we can do as you say and make an editorial. It would be useful to try and sum up the experience of the struggle in the past, the evolution going on, the proletarian class struggle as the present basis of the struggle for progress....stressing the international character of this struggle; above all, putting the national struggle in perspective as one element and one that will recede in importance with the evolution of the bourgeois/imperialist set-up and to the degree that the proletariat steps forward as a class-conscious, truly independent force. If you feel there is still disagreement then we can have discussion - I would say at first in a short internal bulletin. In that event reply letting me know in detail what your position is.

Fraternally: Sean Matgamna

Letter to S. Matgamna from G. Lawless

Dear Sean,

I'm afraid I must bow the knee. As clarified by your second letter we are in complete agreement. This is genuine. I don't know how I made the mistake but somehow I got the idea that you were claiming that Northern Ireland was a normal bourgeois state. I think you should combine both letters into a draft editorial. Send them down by next Thursday in time for the editorial board meeting and I will present them.

Fraternally: Gery Lawless

Editorial for 'Irish Militant' February 1967

Partition has dominated Irish politics for decades, disrupting the labour movement and, in Connolly's forecast, 'making division (of the workers more intense and confusion more confounded'.

The cause is clear....a division of the Irish Bourgeoisie, originating in economic difference, led to a split which was then manipulated by British Imperialism, according to its practice of divide and rule. The Northern section, having a measure of political autonomy, kept close links with this Imperialism; the Southern section being dominated according to the logic of modern imperialism.

In maintaining its closer links with Britain, the Northern capitalists were aided by British troops, who also assist in holding sufficient

people to make the state viable. Despite this, talk of 'British occupied Ireland' obscures the real identity of the garrison in Ireland...the Northern Ireland Bourgeoisie. The division prevented the accomplishment of one major task of traditional bourgeois revolution - national unification. However, if history and the relationship to Britain make the two statelets peculiarly deformed, they are nonetheless undeniably bourgeois, as a glance at the social organisation and relations of production makes obvious.

Denying this fact certain people use the incompleteness of capitalist Ireland to cloak their refusal to struggle for workers' power. Stalinists of one variety insist that since the capitalists have not played out their traditional role, they must still be considered progressive and supported. Others, deploring the present specimens of capitalist rulers, sit on their backsides awaiting the arrival of a better breed of national bourgeoisie on the five o'clock train from Peking.

We who fight for the workers' international Republic know that the present Irish capitalists are the only ones we will get. Calling them traitors is useless...they are not traitors to their class, the only sphere in which real loyalty, as opposed to demagogic-talk 'loyalty', counts. But if we are also to be loyal to our class, we must put partition in its proper perspective and recognise that it will be ended in one of two ways.-

1. By an upsurge of the workers, the only revolutionary force in Ireland today. But when they move decisively, it will primarily be for their own interests, against the bosses, Green and Orange, rather than against the border as such, which in 40 and more years has proved incapable of evoking a revolutionary movement strong enough to remove it. National unification will be taken care of in passing, as an incidental to the job of expropriating capitalists and linking up with the international working class.

2. By an agreement of Northern and Southern capitalists with Imperialism. This might be from fear of a proletarian revolution or, if they are given time, the product of the present coming together of the European capitalists in the EEC, etc.

In either case, those who see only the border will be disarmed.... but those armed with the Bolshevik programme will continue to fight.

There was a Marxist axiom that big reforms were usually the product of the bourgeoisie's fear of revolution, and therefore that weak-kneed reformists undermine their own aims. There is an analogy here. The Stalinists, believers in the bourgeoisie as the future unifiers, prevent the workers coming forward with their own full programme and thereby prevent the revolutionary solution of the national question. With the IRA and Sinn Fein, exclusive concentration on one issue has cut them off from the explosive material that could achieve their declared aims - the socialist proletariat.

We feel that revolutionary Marxists in Ireland have no option but to attempt the difficult task of combining the ruthless determination of a Rosa Luxemburg, not to be derailed from the socialist revolution by national considerations and the sensitivity of a Lenin to the feelings of a nation on which a sharp consciousness of its own identity has been indelibly printed by centuries of oppression. In preventing the bourgeoisie from exploiting this national consciousness to subordinate the Irish masses to itself, we must counterpose for Irish workers their heritage as part of a world class, inheriting the fight for global freedom as part of the international working class.

Appendix: Excerpts from 'Ireland-Unfree' - B. Purdie (IMG)

"...It has been objected that the Theory of Permanent Revolution does not apply to Ireland, because the land question in Ireland has been solved. This is a serious point, the main bourgeois-democratic task which Trotsky saw the Russian Revolution accomplishing was the land distribution, and the main social force which would support the working class, apart from the working class itself, was the peasantry. But to apply Permanent Revolution in this mechanical way is a grave error. The application of the Theory of Permanent Revolution should be understood as defining those revolutions which must take upon themselves tasks which properly belong to the bourgeois revolution, and the particular tasks which must be tackled can only be specified through an examination of the situation within a given nation."

"...Had the Irish bourgeoisie succeeded in erecting tariff barriers, it would have laid the basis for a strong Irish working class, organised in large scale industries, and therefore ready to struggle for a socialist revolution, untingered by any nationalist demands. As it is the Irish working class must, to create a socialist Ireland create an independent unified Irish economy, and break the stranglehold of imperialism, which distorts the whole economic development of Ireland. Only through this can it achieve the requisite social weight to enable it to re-shape Ireland along socialist lines."

We are reproducing two articles. The first article is by Leon Trotsky, on the case of Michel Mill. Mill was a minor Stalinist official who came over to the Left Opposition and who, because of the Left Opposition's shortage of qualified people and his knowledge of Russian, quickly reached a leading position in the international organisation.

As Trotsky recounts, Mill "took part in the struggle against Landau, Rosmer, etc." Landau was the leader of a German group which soon parted ways with the International Left Opposition because of Landau's complete lack of political consistency and his unprincipled manoeuvrings. Rosmer had been a prominent figure in the French Communist Party and before that in the syndicalist movement. He joined the French "Communist League" (the Left Opposition group) when it was set up in 1930, but not long after he left, because of a disagreement over trade union policy and also, it appears, because of personal conflicts with other leading figures in the movement.

After this, Mill started allying himself with Rosmer against the League, declaring "that such-and-such French comrades 'displeased him'". He was removed from the international secretariat, and later left the Trotskyist movement and returned to the Stalinists.

The main point of the article is this: that for revolutionaries political considerations should always decide, rather than "impressions, sentimentalism, and personal sympathies and antipathies". The relevance to the case of Joe Wright is clear: Joe allied himself with the IMG (whose politics he considered wrong, even to the point of saying he would have refused to sell 'Red Weekly' around the time of the February election if he was in the IMG then) against Workers Fight (whose politics he continued to basically agree with), giving as his reason some organisational aspects which "displeased him".

Trotsky's argument was clearly and tragically confirmed in the case of the Spanish Left Opposition comrades against whom he argues in the article. These comrades later united with a rightist split from the Spanish Communist Party, the "Workers & Peasants' Bloc", led by Maurin. Trotsky condemned this unification as unprincipled and based on no clear politics. During the Civil War, the unified party - called the POUM - played a centrist role, compromising with the Stalinists and reformists rather than giving a clear revolutionary lead.

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The second article is some excerpts from J.P.Cannon's "Letters From Prison". Cannon, along with several other leaders of the U.S. Trotskyist movement, was in prison at the time (1944) because of his anti-war activity. The incident he is commenting on happened when some members of the Socialist Workers Party (the Trotskyist organisation) were found to be having discussions with the Workers Party (WP) without informing the SWP. The Workers' Party was a group led by Max Shachtman, which had come out of the 1940 split in the SWP which is described in Cannon's book "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party" and Trotsky's book "In Defence of Marxism".

Cannon argues that "the party has the right to control and direct the political activity of each and every member... to demand of each and every member disciplined compliance with party decisions and instructions, and 100 per cent - not 99 per cent - loyalty to the party." This is clearly relevant in relation to our attitude to Joe Wright having talks with the IMG.

THE LESSON
OF MILL'S TREACHERY

October 13, 1932

The case of Mill represents one of those episodes which, generally speaking, are quite inevitable in the process of selecting and educating our cadres. The Left Opposition is under terrific pressure. But not all are up to it. There will still be not a few cases of regrouping and of personal desertion. In this letter I would like to draw out of the Mill episode certain lessons which it seems to me are simple and not open to dispute.

Lenin spoke of ultraleftism as an infantile malady. But we must remember that ultraleftism is not the only political infantile malady; there are others too. As everyone knows, children find it hard to realize the nature of their illness or even its location. There is something of this sort in politics too. It requires a fairly high degree of maturity for two groups, at the very moment of their birth, to be able to define more or less clearly the cardinal points of their differences. More often young groups, like sick children, complain of pains in the arm or leg, while the pain in reality is in the belly. Individuals, or little groups, insufficiently hardened for a tenacious and long-range task of organization and education, disillusioned by the fact that success does not fall from the sky, ordinarily do not take account of the fact that the source of their failures lies in themselves, in their inconsistency, in their softness, in their petty-bourgeois sentimentalism. They seek the blame for their shortcomings outside of themselves and generally find it in the bad character of X or Y. Often enough they end by making a bloc with Z, with whom they do not agree on anything, against Y, with whom, as they say, they are in agreement on everything. When serious revolutionists are then astonished or indignant at their attitude, they begin to protest that an "intrigue" is being woven against them. This pernicious road, observed more than once in various sections, has been followed to the end in the Mill episode and that is why it is particularly instructive.

How did Mill become a member of the Administrative Secretariat? I have spoken of this in my note for the press. Objective conditions demanded the presence at the Secretariat of a person who was closely connected with the center of the Russian Opposition, able to translate Russian documents, carry on correspondence, etc. Mill appeared as the only possible candidate, practically speaking. He declared his complete solidarity with the Russian Opposition, and took part in the struggle against Landau, Rosmer, etc. All our comrades will remember how Mill then, in the course of absolutely unprincipled conflicts with the leading group of the French League, suddenly tried to conclude a bloc with Rosmer, who had already abandoned the ranks of the League.

What did this fact mean? How was it possible for a responsible member, in the course of twenty-four hours, to change his position on a highly important question for the sake of personal considerations? Mill himself continued to declare that he had no kind of political differences with the Russian Opposition, only that such and such French comrades "displeased him." In other words, Mill had recourse to the same arguments which only the day before he had condemned in Rosmer. Rosmer has even built on the basis of the opposition between ideas and people a purely anecdotal theory which shows beyond any doubt that Rosmer broke with the Comintern not because he had raised himself to a higher historical point of view, but because at bottom he had not grown to an understanding of revolutionary policy and the revolutionary party.

The only conclusion which could be drawn from the unworthy conduct of Hill was this: for Hill, ~~xxx~~ principles are in general clearly of no importance; personal considerations, sympathies, and antipathies determine his political conduct to a greater degree than principles ~~xxx~~ and ideas. The fact that Hill could propose a bloc with a man whom he had defined as non-Marxist, against comrades whom he had held to be Marxists, showed clearly that Hill was politically and morally ~~xxxxxxxx~~ unreliable and that he was incapable of keeping his loyalty to the ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxxxx~~ cause. If on that day he betrayed on a small scale, he was capable of betraying tomorrow on a larger scale. That was the conclusion which every revolutionary should have drawn.

The Russian Opposition, which more than all the other sections was responsible for having brought Hill into the Secretariat, immediately proposed his removal from that body. But what happened? This proposal, natural, urgent, corresponding to the entire situation, met with resistance among certain comrades. In the first rank were the comrades of the Spanish section, who even considered it possible to propose Hill as the representative of the Spanish section in the International Secretariat. At the same time they declared that they had no political differences with the leadership of the International Left Opposition.

This most unexpected step made a shocking impression on many of us at the time. But we asked, by what do the Spanish comrades let themselves be guided when they take up Hill as a cause? It is clear. They see in Hill a comrade who has been "crossed", and they hasten to take up his defence. In other words, on a political question of exceptional importance they let themselves be guided by considerations which are not political, not revolutionary, but personal and sentimental.

If Hill tried to conclude a bloc with the deserter leader against the French League, the leading Spanish comrades concluded a bloc with Hill against the Russian, French, and a number of other ~~xxx~~ sections, although in their own words they had no differences with them. We see in what manner one can be lost by being guided, on important questions, not by political revolutionary considerations, but by impressions, sentimentalism, and personal sympathies and antipathies!

The fact that Hill "in search of work" entered into negotiations with the Stalinists and finally undertakes to "unwind" the Left Opposition in the press shows definitely that Hill is a corrupt petty bourgeois. Surely no one in our ranks will deny this. But this alone is not enough: we must understand that the sudden turn of Hill toward Rogner was in its time only the direct rehearsal for his present turn toward the Stalinists. The basis for both acts of treason was the same in decency of the petty bourgeois who had fallen into the sphere of revolutionary politics.

I cannot be this question with so much detail not on account of Hill, but on account of the question of the selection and education of the cadres of the Left Opposition. This process is far from finished, although it is precisely in this field that we have important successes to our credit.

The Spanish Opposition at present is going through an extremely difficult crisis. The leadership elected at the last conference has fallen apart although no principled basis for this disconnection can be found; for each member of the Central Committee, we are referred to some particular personal reason. Still, for anyone who in the past had seriously gone into the position of the Central Committee of the Spanish Opposition toward the Hill episode, it was even then clear that the Spanish

Opposition was on its way toward a crisis.

In fact, if the leaders of the Spanish Opposition ~~did~~ ^{did} not understand the principled importance of the struggle which we were carrying on against Rosner, Landau, etc., if they thought it possible to ally themselves with Mill against the fundamental cadres of the International Opposition, if at the same time they repeated that they had no differences with us and thus removed any justification for their manner of acting, for all ~~xx~~ these reasons we could not fail to say to ourselves with alarm, "The leaders of the Spanish Opposition will scarcely give a correct orientation to their section; but where a well-grounded orientation is lacking, there inevitably appear personal motives and feelings." To weld into a whole people of different training, character, temperament, and education can be done only by means of clear revolutionary principles. Otherwise the disintegration of the organization is inevitable. On personal sympathies, on friendships and clique spirit, nothing can be built but a lifeless debating club of the Souvarine type or a home for political invalids of the Rosner type, and not even that for a long.

Disagreeable as the task is, I must again touch on a "delicate" point because the interest of the cause demands it; no sound political relations can be built on suppressions and conventionalities.

When in our letters we asked the leading Spanish comrades by what principled motives, by what political and organizational considerations they let themselves be guided in taking up the defense of Mill against the Russian, German, French, Belgian sections, etc., we received the following type of reply, "We have the right to have our own opinion," "We refuse to be ordered about," etc. This unexpected reply seemed to us a highly alarming symptom.

Let us admit that someone among us really has a tendency to order people about. Such a tendency should be resisted, and the stronger the tendency the more the resistance. But the necessity for the most resolute struggle against any such habits of simple command would not free the Spanish comrades of the necessity of establishing a political foundation for their factional intervention in favor of Mill and against the overwhelming majority of the sections. In the request for principled motives for this or that action there is in no way a tendency to simple command. Every member of the Left Opposition has the right to ask the responsible institutions of the Left Opposition the question: Why? To get rid of the burden of a concrete answer by mere affirmation of the right to have one's own opinion is to replace mutual revolutionary obligations by half-liberal, half-sentimental compromises. If, for such an answer, one could not fail to say to oneself again, "Certain leading Spanish comrades have not, unfortunately, a sufficiently solid connection with the International Left Opposition. From this proceeds their inattention to the history of the Left Opposition, to the struggles through which it has gone, to the selection of cadres which it has carried through; from this proceeds also the tendency to be guided by personal impressions, by psychological estimations, by individual criteria; from this also, the affirmation of 'liberty' of opinion instead of a Marxist foundation for the opinion."

It is unnecessary for us to say how far removed we are from the thought of comparing any of the Spanish comrades to Mill. But it remains a fact that the leading Spanish com-

The incident of the New York membership meeting (where several comrades were censured for conducting political discussions with WP members without the knowledge of the party) appears to have touched off a debate in which some fundamental questions, on which the party has more than once spoken decisively, are again called up for review. That is strange, for even at a distance, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ without knowing the details of the affair, it is difficult for one to misunderstand the simple issue involved.

The New York Organization wants to control and direct all the political activity of its members, and took this method of asserting its will in this respect. A Leninist can only applaud this attitude. Of course, one may hold the opinion, since it ~~is~~ is our traditional practice to go very slow with organizational measures, that a pedagogical explanation of this elementary principle, without a formal censure would have been sufficient. If the protests were limited to this secondary, organizational side of the affair, redress of the grievance could undoubtedly be obtained. A big discussion over such a small matter would not be worthwhile.

The article of Comrade Morrison, however, raises larger issues. This was the case also, as I am informed, in the discussion at the New York membership meeting. ~~These~~ These issues require discussion and clarification.

In appealing to the party against the procedure of Local New York, Morrison resorts to arguments which are far-reaching in their implications. A discussion of these arguments is decidedly in order and necessary ~~since~~ since, whether so intended or not, they represent an assault against the traditions of Bolshevism all along the line in the name of - the traditions of Bolshevism.

This anomaly can be explained ~~in~~ on only one of two hypotheses. Either ~~is~~ Morrison has neglected to inform himself of the traditional practices of Bolshevik organization; or he is again indulging his well-known penchant for underestimating the intelligence of ~~the~~ other people - this time of people who know something about the tradition which he invokes, the tradition of Bolshevism, Morrison's arguments have a tradition, but it is not the tradition of Bolshevism.

What does Morrison mean when he refers to the history of Bolshevism? Doesn't he know that it is our own history? What have we been doing for the past sixteen years but writing the continuing history of Bolshevism in life? Bolshevism is not a mummy preserved in a Russian museum, but a living movement which long ago crossed the borders of the Soviet Union and became worldwide in its scope.

The Russian part of the history of Bolshevism was never definitively written; and although its main outlines are well known, there is a sad lack of documentation ~~in~~ in the English language available to the modern student. Our part of this history, however - the history of the Fourth International in general and of our party in particular - has been written and documented.

The history of our party is a chapter of the history of living Bolshevism. And not the poorest chapter either, for it was written in sixteen years of reaction, defeats and uphill struggle all the way from the beginning up to the present day. (More.)

Continuing: We have waged an unceasing and irreconcilable theoretical and political fight against the Stalinist degeneration. But not only that. Our record is also a record of struggle against ~~the Stalinist~~ all other anti-Marxist tendencies as well. Our fight against sectarianism

was conducted on classic lines. Our fight on all fronts - theoretical, political and organizational - against the petty-bourgeois revisionists recapitulated the whole historical struggle of Bolshevism and Menshevism. In building our party we employed, from the beginning, the organizational methods of Lenin, and successfully fought off every ~~xx~~ attempt - and there were many - to replace them by anarcho-Menshevik substitutes.

The older members of our party know its history as a part of the authentic history of Bolshevism. They do not need to be told that Morrison's arguments are not drawn from this arsenal. The younger party members who want to know what the traditional practices of Bolshevism are have not far to seek. They need only study the history of their own party. There is no lack of material.

The contentions of Morrison can find no support in this history, but on the contrary are directed against it. In a published letter, written while at work ~~z~~ on the pamphlet which forms the first section of The Struggle for a Proletarian Party, I remarked that the pamphlet was not designed to influence the course of the inner-party struggle then drawing to its end, but was, rather, being "written for the future." The arguments of Morrison transform this "future" into the present. The answer to these arguments, written in advance, appears in the polemics directed against the organizational conceptions of the petty-bourgeois opposition.

When it comes to organization we follow Lenin, and nobody is going to talk us out of it. Lenin always paid far more attention to the "organization question," was far stricter, firmer, more definite about it, precisely because he really aimed to build a party to lead a revolution. The Mensheviks only dabbled with the idea, but Lenin was in earnest; he had it in his blood.

This difference - and what a difference! - manifested itself even before any political differences were formulated. So it has always been. "Hard" and "soft" approaches to the organization question have marked every conflict of the two opposing tendencies from the very first preliminary skirmishes at the Russian party congress of 1903 up to the present time. The documents of our party history testify to the role this question played in the last great party fight against the petty-bourgeois faction of Burnham and Shactman.

It is a historical fact that the 1903 split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks - a premature split, to be sure - took place over the formulation of the first paragraph of the party constitution defining party membership. Even there, says Trotsky in his autobiography, "the two divergent tendencies were unmistakable. Lenin wanted clear-cut, perfectly definite relationships (More.)"

Continuing the quotation where I broke off in my last letter: Within the party, Martov "tended towards diffuse forms." The debate which has arisen over the affair of the New York X membership meeting in the year 1944 sounds like an echo of these words.

Insisting on "perfectly definite relationships within the party," Bolshevism - all the outraged howling of its opponents to the contrary notwithstanding - has nevertheless always been, and is now, completely free from any trace of dogmatic rigidity, fixity or finality in its organizational forms and procedures. Our organizational methods are designed to serve political ends, are always subordinated to them, and are readily amended, changed or even turned upside down to suit them.

Democratic centralism, for example, is not a dogma to be understood statically as a formula containing the unchanging quantities of ~~100~~ 50 percent democracy and 50 percent centralism. Democratic centralism is a dialectical concept in which the emphasis is continually being

shifted. in consonance with the changing needs of the party in its process of development.

A period of virtually unrestricted internal democracy, which is normally the rule during the discussion of disputed questions under legal conditions, can be replaced by a regime of military centralism for party action under conditions of external persecution and danger, and vice versa; and all conceivable gradations between these two extremes can be resorted to without doing violence to the principle of democratic centralism.

What is essential is that the right emphasis be placed at the right time. Bolshevism, far from any dogmatic rigidity ascribed to it by superficial critics, is distinguished by the great flexibility of its organizational forms and methods. This does not signify, however, that there are no definite rules, no basic principles. These principles, in fact, are unchanging in their essence no matter how flexibly the party may see fit to apply them in different situations.

Two of these basic principles, which are recognized by every Bolshevik but which appear to need reassertion in the light of the dispute over the New York Incident, may be set down as follows:

1) The party is conceived as a combat organization destined to lead a revolution. It is not a freethinker's discussion club, not a mere forum for self-expression and self-improvement, imposing no personal obligations on its members. The party is not an anarchist madhouse where everyone does as he pleases, but an army which faces the outside world as a unit.

2) Following from this, it is an unchanging party law that the party has the right to control and direct the political activity of each and every member; to be informed about and to regulate and supervise the relations, if any, of each and every member with political opponents of the party; and to demand of each and every member disciplined compliance with party decisions and instructions, and 100 percent - not 99 percent - loyalty to the party.

Anyone who disputes these principles does not talk our language. (I will have to continue this paragraph in my next letter.)

Continuing the paragraph where I broke off; Anyone who disputes these principles must seek support for his arguments from some other source than the history of our party. He will not find it there.

Here are some notes on "The Trotskyist Party and Other Parties - the History of the Question"; Morrison rejects the idea that the party has the right and duty to be informed about, ~~x~~ and to ~~xxx~~ regulate and control, any and all relations which party members may have with political opponents. This idea, concretely demonstrated by the ruling in the case of the four New York comrades, impresses him as "having a resemblance to Stalinist procedure." When the party leadership insists in strict rules in this regard, it indicates, to Morrison, only that "the leadership thinks it is impermissible to discuss ~~x~~ questions with ~~members~~ of the WP"; that they lack pride and confidence in their ideas.

In contrast to the party leadership's attitude toward opponent organizations, Morrison proceeds to lay down some rules of his own. Relating what his own practices have been, he recommends them to the party members as a guide. Morrison sees nothing abnormal in a member of our organization shopping around at the meetings and affairs of other political organizations, fraternizing with their members and discussing political questions with them, formally or informally, on his own responsibility. Whether such activity should be reported to the party or not - that, says Morrison, is up to the individual member to decide. On this

point, he again refers to Lenin and the Bolsheviks:

It would have been better to leave Lenin out of it: Morrison's view of this matter is not new, to be sure, but it has no right to represent itself as a Leninist conception of normal relations between rival political organizations and their members. This question also has a history, which apparently has made no impression on Morrison. (More.)

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Continuing: The formulas he offers would take us back to the primitive conceptions of party organization which dominated American Labor radicalism, before the First World War; that is, before the movement grew up and learned the meaning of a program and a party. It was precisely what we learned from Lenin that enabled us to discard these outmoded and entirely inadequate conceptions of a full quarter of a century ago. And in this, as in so many other fields, experience corroborated Lenin's theory and, in turn, supplied its own instructive lessons along the same line. Morrison's formulas contradict the theory and disregard the experience.

Before the First World War the dominating sentiment among the various social protest organizations and groups, despite all their differences and quarrels, was that of fraternity - the feeling of oneness, the opinion that all the groups were part of one and the same movement, and that all would, sooner or later, "get together". As a rule, a definite distinction was made between the terms "organization" and "the movement."

One's own particular organization, be it the Socialist Party, the IWW, any one of the numerous anarchist groups, local forums, or even a club of Single Taxers or an independent socialist educational society - was thought of as a part; the "movement" was the whole. It was common practice for the "radicals" of different affiliations to patronize each other's meetings and affairs, to participate in common forums, reading clubs and purely social organizations. In Kansas City and San Francisco, to my knowledge, "Radical Clubs" were deliberately organized to promote fraternization at monthly dinners. Radicals of all tendencies mingled socially and intermarried without thought of personal incompatibility arising from a conflict of ideas.

Nor did the separate organizations draw sharp lines in their admittance of members. With the exception of DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party, which stood aloof and was with some justice regarded as intolerant and sectarian, they were all rather catholic in their composition. Reformists and revolutionists, "ballot boxers" and "direct actionists," belonged to one and the same Socialist Party. Christian socialists and professional "God-killers," prohibitionists and partisans of the open saloon, kept them company. The propaganda branches of the syndicalist IWW extended their hospitality alike to socialists and anarchists. Anarchism was thought by many to be more radical, more revolutionary, than socialism; and anyone who was against "authority" was free to call himself an anarchist. Free-lance radicals, whose name was legion, were regarded as part of "the movement" on even terms with all the others.

In Europe, the prewar Social Democracy was an "all-inclusive party." Unity was fetishized; the left wing shrank from the thought of split. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were party comrades with Kautsky, Noske and Scheidemann. In Russia, Lenin resolutely carried through the split, but Trotsky insisted on the unification of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

The state of affairs in American labor radicalism prior to the First World War is related here without intention either to praise or to blame. It was due to the circumstances of the time; the organizations, in their membership composition and in their relations with each other, could not rise above the level of their own understanding. This was the period of the infancy of the American revolutionary movement. Neither theory nor experience had yet taught us any better. The differences

of prewar days - where Morrison's conceptions would take them - but from the most recent experiences in which our organizational principles and methods were tested in life: the great struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40. (More.)

All the forty years experience of Bolshevism - in organization as well as in theory and politics - was recapitulated in that historic struggle. The new party recruits can learn about Bolshevism and Menshevism on the organization question by a study of the documents of this fight. It is not without interest to note that the party leadership, in the dispute over the incident ^{of} the New York membership meeting, shows its unqualified hostility to any sign of looseness or irresponsibility - to say nothing of disloyalty - in relations with the Menshevik traitor clique of Shachtman and Co.; while Morrison, in his plea for unsupervised fraternization, manifests a more conciliatory attitude. On both sides, here as always, the organizational method serves the political line.

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Trotsky: THE LESSONS OF MILL'S TREACHERY .. continued

But it remains a fact that the leading Spanish comrades have not understood in time why we attacked Mill in an intransigent manner and why we demanded that the others do the same. Let hope that now, at least, this serious lesson may lead to our coming together and not to additional discussion.

IS - R&F and the Teachers

The last NC's discussion on teachers' overtime revealed disagreement on the question of how to build a R&F movement and our relationship with IS - R&F. This disagreement has been implicit in arguments in the NUT fraction meetings, and since this fraction is apparently the only working fraction in WF, it is probable that the same points would arise elsewhere.

The main argument in the NUT fraction, as I see it, is between a) those cdes who want to concentrate work in IS - R&F and b) those cdes who do not want to be constrained by IS - R&F nor indeed by NUT.

The position I shall argue for is the latter one.

The Importance of Theory

There is, as far as I am aware, little or no application of Marxist theory to Education. Socialist teachers are prey to libertarianism (eg. IS - R&F, Radical Education), reformism (eg. NUT, CP & LP teachers' publications) and economism (esp. NAS). We need to develop a Marxist theory of Education to attract socialist teachers by cutting through the present confusion and also, of course, to clarify our own perspectives.

I suggest that the first priority of the NUT fraction should be self-education and articles on the following:

1. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci on Education. The dialectical materialist approach as opposed to other approaches.
2. The experiments in post-revolutionary Russia & their implications for today.
3. The present arguments in the sociology of education - Bernstein, culture clash, the Black Papers.
4. Critiques of IS - R&F publications and of those of other socialist groups.

What is the NUT?

1. The NUT does not cover teachers in a) University (AUT) b) Training College c) Polytechs and Techs (ATTE) d) Nurseries (TCWU).
2. The NUT does not cover teachers in Scotland.
3. It is by far the largest Union covering Primary & Secondary Schools, but even there are itger Ybuibs 'BASM ANAM BAGTM YWTM AOT(and a large % of non - Union teachers.
4. The NUT Executive is dominated by Head teachers (compare by foremen in a factory!), as are the local branches.
5. The local branches are based on LFA districts not on schools - therefore the Union has little day to day effect on working conditions.
6. It has a long history of sell-out and compromise. The fear it puts into the hearts of management can be summed up as zero.
7. In its favour can be said that its line on educational matters is progressive (ie. along the lines of current LP policy). It also allows women to join ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ (cp.NAS)!!

What is R&F Teacher?

1. It is a ginger group in the NUT and is dominated by IS. In the large cities it has a good membership but tends to attract only committed lefts - IS, IMG, WF. Often non-aligned socialist teachers are put off by IS domination. Also, in my experience, its meetings can be a means of letting off steam and sounding militant for teachers who are as quiet as mice in the schools.
2. R&F was started by London teachers around IS and 'Militant' and launched nationally at the Young Teachers' Conferences of 1968 and 1969 as a "magazine for socialist teachers in the NUT". As such, the R&F resolutions at the 1968 & 1969 Conferences were concerned with reformist education topics - non-streaming, secondary reorganisation and democracy in schools. It was a WF comrade (myself) who put resolutions on salaries (an increase in the

basic scale, setting up of strike fund, a fight against the prices and incomes policy) and on conditions of service (a type of Factories Act list) - and R&F showed little interest in these at the time.

3. R&F pamphlets are still dominated by this reformism added to some libertarianism and some mindless militancy.

4. R&F teacher has done good work around the London allowance and in some local branches by stirring up the Union. But it still goes no further than gingering up the NUT and it is still a sectarian organization (it is regarded as terrible bad form and sectarian to mention IS and its role in R&F Teacher meetings - see even the lengthy IMG pamphlet - yet it is the truth and everybody knows it). There are also other ways for socialist teachers to work.

Some Suggestions

1. The main aim at all levels and in every resolution and publication must be to overcome the divisions between teachers. All calls to action must be accompanied by calls to involve all teachers and all Unions. Surely the Houghton Report has shown us this must be No. 1 priority.

2. Start building at "shop floor" level - in the schools, Colleges etc.

3. Some ideas for activities:

a) Joint Union meetings and Committees in your school to take up issues of conditions of service against LEA and Head.

b) Joint meetings (to spread a)) with feeder Primary Schools.

c) call for local NUT staff reps meetings to be called regularly.

Spread it to involved other teachers' unions' staff reps.

d Call for joint district committees (NUT, NAS, APTI, AUT etc.) - through Trades Council, at NUT etc meetings, to get a united policy on salaries and conditions.

e) Link all this with LP work - campaign in local LP about education cuts and conditions, lobby governors, Education Cttee members etc, get sympathetic teachers and parents to join LP (ie. before you take them to R'F) to fight with you.

f) Encourage LPYS to set up NUSS branches and to recruit to LPYS.

4. I do not advocate abandoning work in R&F - what I do say is a) we must not assume it is first priority (particularly in areas where it is weak or does not exist) b) we must fight to drive R&F outwards along the lines of 3. above. Unfortunately R&F Teacher is often an extension of student politics - some of its members are indeed part-time teachers with M.A.s and PHDs. on their mind with little commitment to a knowledge of schools. Attending R&F meetings can become part of the "blue-arsed fly syndrome" - the same left milieu every night in meetings with different titles, taking in each others washing - an incestuous affair.

POST SCRIPTS.

On Splits **

Since writing this contribution, I have received minutes of an SC decision to split the NUT Fraction into NUT and APTI Fractions. According to SCY (and how does he know?) conditions etc are different. They certainly are! - the Houghton Report which covers both APTI and NUT wages made use of that (see WF 81) - it is the ruling class policy of divide and rule, you may have heard of it. It is precisely for this reason that the NUT fraction should not be split - we are all teachers!

I hope it is cynicism on my part which leads me to suspect that the SC decision is a shabby device on the part of those who lost the NC debate on teachers' overtime pay to avoid the now urgent discussion on perspectives and to ghettoise the opposition (in true IS fashion!). Certainly it will be seen by comrades that the SC (no doubt unwittingly) have found in favour of those cdes. in the NUT Fraction who want to concentrate on R&F Teacher as against those who do not - without, however, the discussion having taken place! - and without the NUT Fraction and certainly APTI members having been given the normal courtesy of a say in the matter!

** See NC minutes 19.1.75 on this point

What next after Houghton?

The Houghton Report seems to me to confirm everything I have said - the governments' cynical divide and rule policy, the cringing toadiness of NUT leaderw, the failure of R&F to build up any real opposition.

What will happen? In my view there will be little or no unofficial action - on the salaries issue the government have won. Their next step will be to railroad education cuts throughut - expecting no opposition because of the demoralisation of teachers.

R&F too has to answer for a failure to organize - the main reason for this is the total cowardice of NUT and the structure of the NUT which makes it very difficult to fight. We must call for joint NUT and ATTI R&F meetings in the areas to discuss this failure and plan a common strategy.

We must press, in my view, for unity of all teachers against the education cuts and for a fight on decent conditions of service. This fight can start at School, College, University level with unofficial action and help break the Union Structure.

One example - at President Kennedy School (Rs L's school) in Coventry the staff refused last year to take on extra classes because of non-appointment of new staff to replace those leaving. They got press publicity and the new staff were appointed. This year 6 more staff left at Christmas, the staff said the same again, the local NCT secretary said they were wrong, they had ~~xxx~~ enough staff - 6 new staff were found. Yet at the same time it is known that some Coventry schools are up to $\frac{1}{3}$ down on staff! The lesson is clear.

No education cuts.

Fight for better conditions starting at School, Collège, University level.

Maximum unity of all teachers in struggle.

For one national Union of all teachers.

DS.

COPY OF LETTER TO BOLTON ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE FROM EILEEN MURPHY.

To: the Bolton Anti-Fascist Committee.

I am married to Neil Duffield, but I hope I have done enough work in the anti-fascist committee to deserve a hearing independent of him. It is not possible to get a baby sitter tonight so I've written a letter giving my opinion of the events which took place at our house on Sunday. I am speaking not just as a worker on the anti-fascist committee x but as an activist in the Women's Liberation Movement.

First, we were certainly late in preparing for the meeting, so that X when Tom and Kath arrived we were in the middle of having a sandwich for our dinner. That it is undesirable to be late for meetings is not disputed, but the reasons in this case, far from being 'crap' (Hanly's description) are very relevant and are bound to recur if we continue to hold meetings in small houses where there are children, or if we hope to involve in our work x people who have responsibility for children. So a brief resume of the reasons for our being late:-

1. The baby has been ill for some days. We had already been up with him during several nights including Saturday night. He slept late in Sunday morning and I took advantage of this to sleep in myself (I now accept that I should have got up at least $\frac{1}{2}$ hour sooner.)
2. When he did wake the baby demanded a lot of nursing which made progress through the necessary routine of feeding and changing much slower than usual. Meanwhile Neil was producing the leaflets to be given out at the Queens Cinema - he could not do this earlier because the baby had been sleeping in the room in which we keep the Gestetner.
3. There is only one room in our house in which the baby can stay during the day - the main room - Neil or I usually go upstairs to the bedroom when a meeting is in progress in which we are not involved - it is not possible to take the baby up there in the winter because the only form of heating is an unguaranteed electric fire to which x he is obsessively attracted.

The above details are not listed as excuses - as already stated I accept a degree of guilt for our lateness. They are listed because they are the objective conditions of my life and, because we try hard to share responsibility equally, of Neil's life too. It is of course the duty of revolutionaries to take into account such conditions when making their arrangements - but it is virtually impossible to predict or timetable a sick child. Tom Hanly said his own child was sick - in that case he ought to have shown that he understood our difficulties. Instead he started an aggressive, hysterical and insulting tirade which stopped only when Neil hit him.

If every time Hanly had been late, if every time he had caused arrangements for meetings at his house to go wrong, Neil or myself had ranted and stormed at his wife and child, she would by now no doubt be a nervous wreck. But we would not think of it. Not merely because we do not want to insult Rosemary, but because we think that women are doubly exploited in this society and we regard the conditions in which they have to work, not as domestic trivia or 'women's matters', but as central to the machinery of their exploitation and therefore the proper and urgent concern of all revolutionaries. To dismiss them as unimportant indicates extreme chauvinism - to dismiss them in the manner used by Hanly on Sunday was infuriating and extremely provoking.

Of course there was a bad atmosphere as soon as Tom arrived in the room because of last Thursday's meeting. But his chauvinism on Sunday alone deserves censure.

Should Neil have hit him?

To begin with I said definitely 'No'. I regarded Tom's fault as more serious than Neil's because the kind of uncontrolled hysterical way in which he behaved seems to be a persistent character trait which can, and does, have very harmful political consequences. On the other hand it is the first time I've seen Neil hit anyone (I doubt it will recur frequently). Nevertheless at first I said I thought Neil had been wrong.

Since then I have changed my position. Since I have been involved in anti-fascist work I have given a lot of thought not only to 'no platform for fascists', but to physical attacks on fascists. I think that physical attack is the correct tactic in certain circumstances, and I also believe it is a tactic which can be used, in certain circumstances, against male chauvinists. It would take too long to go into the reasons for this analysis here (and I must stress it is my own analysis and not Workers Fight's)

There are a great number of male chauvinists on the revolutionary left where they are particularly obnoxious because of the contrast between their declared aims and their actual personal and domestic attitudes. It therefore follows that physical attacks may be necessary against chauvinists who work on the left. I believe that such an attack was justified against Hanly on Sunday. I only wish that it had been me who attacked him - the political point would have been made with much greater clarity. As it is I cannot condemn Neil for doing instinctively what I believe I should have done on a principled basis.

In sisterhood,
Eileen Murphy.

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO JOE WRIGHT FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE SC

Dear Joe,

I understand that I have been censured for hitting Tom Hanly. Naomi has informed me that 'no personal grievance should have been allowed to endanger political advantages'. And a commission has been set up to investigate whether 'further disciplinary action is necessary'.

I object most strongly to these decisions - especially as they were taken without anyone thinking to ask for our side of the story.

Here it is anyway. I would be grateful if you could convey copies of this letter and Eileen's letter to the AF Committee to all SC members.

On Sunday 24th Nov an Anti-Fascist sub-committee meeting was arranged at our house for 1pm. The previous two days our baby had been very sick and Eileen and myself had had virtually no sleep. As a result we were late in our domestic organisation on Sunday morning. Nevertheless at 1 o'clock only one person had arrived (and he promptly sat down and began

eating some sandwiches he'd brought). Eileen suggested that we too should have a cup of tea and a sandwich - we were both very tired. We had just begun to eat when Hanly arrived with Kath Ryde. So as not to keep them waiting I handed them copies of the draft anti-fascist bulletin to be reading through. Hanly immediately began suggesting amendments and criticisms. I kept quiet and carried on with my lunch. He seemed to think I was purposely ignoring him and demanded to know whether the meeting had started or not. Eileen pointed out we were having our dinner. Hanly claimed we should have had it before, that the meeting was planned to start at 1. Eileen told him of our sick child and of us having had no sleep. He (shouting loudly by now) told us we weren't the only people in the world with a sick child, that his child had been sick too. Eileen (also shouting by now) said that if that was the case he ought- to realise some of the problems involved. Hanly ranted that he knew as well as anybody the problems involved but that he had made efforts to overcome them - so should we. At this stage I got up from the table and hit him.

Why did I do it? Because he ~~was being grossly~~ ^{was being grossly} insulting to the family of which I am a part and was making no effort to make allowance for our domestic problems. Hanly's record of turning up late, and of not turning up at all, is the worst of anyone I know. This made what he said doubly abusive and I was convinced he was saying it specifically for the purpose of insulting Eileen and myself.

No doubt he has explained my action as some sort of personal difference between himself and me, this he tried to do in the AF Committee. It is a blatant lie. I attacked him because of the way he was behaving - I considered it to be male chauvinist in the extreme.

He reinforced this chauvinism three days later in the AF meeting when he once again dismissed our reason for being late as 'shit', and the charge of chauvinism as being conjured up as some sort of excuse for my hitting him.

That's not what Eileen thinks. And as far as I'm concerned I place more weight on the arguments of a woman who accuses a man of chauvinism than I do on the arguments of a man who dismisses the charge as 'shit'. I expected WF to do the same. Paper resolutions mean absolutely nothing unless we're prepared to act against chauvinism in our own lives. As far as Eileen and myself are concerned it is a war, and in a war you sometimes have to use violence.

What I find incredible is that everyone throws up their hands in horror and says 'No violence please. Peaceful means only. We don't hit comrades! Are we revolutionaries or liberal pacifists? If I'd hit a proven racist no-one would have batted an eyelid. Because I hit a rampant male chauvinist everyone wants to censure me. What's the difference? The difference is this: first nobody thinks male chauvinism is important, and second Hanly chooses to belong to a left group and refer to himself as 'a comrade'. Well, I think male chauvinism is important - far too important to ignore ~~xx~~ even if it is someone whose thinking of regrouping with us - and I regard no chauvinist as 'comrade'. In the same circumstances I will act in exactly the same way again, whether it be Hanly or anyone else. In this sense I ignore the censure motion passed on me. It has not only been imposed undemocratically. It is politically wrong and implicit support for male chauvinism.

Before I leave the subject of Hanly and his chauvinism, don't take mine or Eileen's word for it, ask Crompton Cortwaite (also of the RSC and present at our house that afternoon). After the incident between myself and Hanly, Hanly demanded that Crompton leave with him. Crompton refused and stayed behind to talk to Eileen myself and George. He mentioned living for several weeks at Hanly's house and spoke of Hanly's persistent chauvinism towards his wife. He gave us the impression that he was sympathetic to

be heavier - perhaps a public whipping;;; - for his other crimes?

4 It might appear from the above we are being flippant about MCism. Our position is as follows:

i. It is something more insidious, more ingrained and less obvious than racialism. Unlike racialism, male-dominated sexual relationships are presented as having many good sides. The family, rather like Marx's description of religion, is seen as "the heart of a heartless world." Even once perceived, explained and fulminated against, MC persists within the socialist movement, (indeed, the revolutionary socialist movement), unlike racialism. Moreover, its only in the past 5 or so years that anyone has begun to tackle it. Much confusion exists (inc in ND's letter, as we'll show) and it hasn't been uniformly treated on the left.

ii. We are still putting our own house in order and we can't in any case make any demands or have any ~~w~~ expectations from members of united front cttees such as anti-fascist cttees. We might, indeed, be collaborating in such cttees with stalinists, soc. democrats, Zionists even. The principle of such cttees is agreement on one issue.

The Q of TH joining the fp is a separate one. If he is reckoned to be seriously MC, we would have to pay special attention to re-education:

iii. How - by beating him, or talking to him?

It may be that this individual is beyond talking to. But that's not what ND says. He says all MCs should be hit. Just like fascists. After all, we're revolutionaries, not liberals, aren't we?

Does ND know why revolutionaries use violence against fascists? The implication in his letter is that we do it because we're tough and hard, rough riding cowboys not liberal milksops. (If that smells of MC, by the way, read on...) It isn't. It's because the challenge from fascists is essentially a physical one - as thugs and shock troops. We have to get them before they get us. We can discourage them and cut at their growth by smashing the swagger and the glamour of their "virility" etc. We have to make sure we don't see them breaking up our meetings.

However vile all sorts of other people may be - hypocrites, bureaucrats, zionists, racialists, male chauvinists - we don't go around belting them. Many workers are racialists. All but a tiny few male workers are MCs. If they are all enemies, where is the revolution going to come from? We have to win them over.

5 In the incident related, we are not convinced that it was TH who was the MC. Certainly as ND relates it, he had attacked both equally, and not merely Eileen - ie. it is ND and not TH who is posing the question of the sick baby ~~x~~ as "Eileen's problem." The reaction to defend violently the 'honour' of one's family (even when covering tracks by saying "the family of which I'm part") is clearly a standard, time-honoured MC reaction.

By the absurd "principles" advocated by ND, perhaps he should be hitting... himself!

Finally, discipline:

1. Should be put to a vote, if ND is serious. It's obviously not gp policy, in fact a serious departure from such. The point is, revolutionaries don't do things first and theorise about them afterwards. And you don't do your own thing.

2. EM's initiation of WIM leaflet to AF cttee defending ND is a serious breach of discipline, and also a breach of the agreed procedure with RMC of having a commission: that should have made the matter, sub-judice, at least to the extent of not putting out leaflets about it.

RACHEL LEVER

NUT NATIONAL FRACTION MEETING: MINUTES OF OCTOBER 19th

Present: CSMg DS IH MCy JB CBy RyL CL (am only) KB BW IW
Apologies: SA JWd(ill) CT(parents)
Absent: TBr AH LY PS AT RR

REPORTS:

Coventry: RyL pointed out that the NAS action on covering in her school has caused NAS members to drift to the AMA, not the NUT as reported. JB asked about the teacher/social worker. It was not one person doing two jobs, but a social worker who was once a teacher.

Nottingham:

KB NUT rep blocking work in school. Rep was not elected.

IW Resolution to be put to Nottm assn calling for adoption of a Chilean colleague.

This would entail maintaining contact and sending material support through an organisation such as Amnesty International. (This in response to a question from IH). A big problem was coordination among school reps. Area meetings and day schools for reps?

CBy Agreed with reported proposal of Nottm IS member that R&F should be organised locally on more of a campaign basis. Thought a local campaign on the cuts would be a good idea.

London:

JB How are paper sales going?

IH About half a dozen max at branch meetings. Three or four at R&F meetings, but often to the same people. About four or five at school, including a regular taker who is a technical assistant and an occasional sale to one of the school keepers.

IW Recognised fluctuating membership in London.

MCy Haringey R&F hold public meetings with reps from eg Race Today.

IH Local branch has just set up a staffing action committee to work on a campaign around the teacher shortage.

Liverpool:

CBy Apologies for no written report. No free time. Selling tactics for WF in schools: don't blaze it around because of gross cynicism from staff. Be discreet. Organisation in school mainly through staff society. Must work out our perspectives for the R&F NC. Agreed with North London proposal to organise school NUT on a committee basis.

JB R&F business meetings are boring for the uninitiated and tend to scare off potential recruits. An idea is to include a short general talk by a member at each meeting.

Bolton:

DS relayed report from SA. SA going to TUC Women's Conference and NUT Education Conference in January. R&F non-existent in Bolton. WF cdes delegates to Trades Council.

CBy Is it worth bothering with the NUT Conference in January? It will probably be just a talking shop. SA & CBy already going. Suggest other WF cdes decide for themselves whether they think it's worth it. Move absent cdes send in reports.

IH moved secretary's ~~xxxxxx~~ resolution calling for monthly reports from the branch es. Deferred till after next report.

Bracknell:

SMg School rep WRP. SMg very isolated and has to do much travelling; NUT branch covers a very wide area. School branch meets once a month. The nearest R&F group is in Reading, but this relates to another NUT branch; furthermore it now clashes with LPYS work. Possibility of liaison with JR in Reading. As stated, NUT branch very spread out so Executive has complete control, eg it does not allow any delegates to the Trades Council.

DS I thought they were obliged to send delegates to the Trades Council?

CBy Not so. Liverpool have been refusing for years!

JB NUT is affiliated to the TUC, but individual NUT branches decide whether or not to affiliate to the local Trades Council. Fight to get TC speakers at union branch. If necessary accept recommendation to ballot members on whether to affiliate or not, but only as a second best approach. We have been fighting for 3 years in Liverpool on this.

NUT Fraction, 2

IW Asked how many cdes were delegates to TC's. Answer 4.

IH Put motion on reports from branches.

CBy Add reports from schools and R&F groups.

KB Add details of WF sales: where and how many. Also R&F sales.

JB Add details of contact work. One person from each branch to send the report.

IH Accepted all additions.

MOTION PASSED NEM CON.

Note from sec'y. Implementation of this resn will mean that synopses of branch activity should be available to cdes before each national fraction meeting, with the result that the nat frac minutes will be shorter and sooner, and won't eat into time needed for branch circulars.

PERSPECTIVES:

1) Organisation

IH Should add regular R&F Public meetings to business meetings, otherwise alienation of potential recruits.

DS Public meetings just for teachers?

IH Aimed at recruitment to R&F, so yes.

CBy Must extend this. Cf campaign attitude in Nottm R&F. Emphasis on business depends on level of struggle in branch, but nonetheless we must find ways to integrate new teachers. It is false to counterpose business with general discussion.

DS Agreed depends on level of activity, cf North London and Bracknell. But is R&F always the best organisation to work through?

IW (Potential R&F recruits must be in the NUT). R&F public meetings should not be reserved for NUT members, they should not be closed in any sense. However, we must stipulate that R&F members must be in the NUT (since we are in favour of one union for all teachers). Separating business and discussion deadens the group. Attempt to build local branches of NUT Young Teachers as potential recruiting grounds to R&F.

JB Move we discuss DS's conclusions to Overtime Document, 1 & 2. AGREED. These are:

1) The structure of the NUT (and other teachers' unions) and the divisions between teachers' unions are MAJOR OBSTACLES to the building of militancy among teachers. R&F has unfortunately become a left ginger group of the NUT and because of IS sectarianism perpetuates both the NUT structure and the divisions.

The WF line put in the Liverpool resolution to the last R&F conference should be extended.

This means---we must not be constrained by R&F or NUT.

We fight to open R&F to all teachers of all unions.

If this is refused, we form Socialist Teachers Groups.

We insist on theory being discussed and matters of interest to socialists.

We fight at school level for bettering of conditions---against the head and the LEA. We fight for liaison with other schools and educational institutions in the immediate locality of our school.

We fight for liaison committees to be set up at local and district level between all teachers unions against the LEA.

MCy Agrees that business meetings alienate new teachers.

DS That is an example of the way R&F accepts and adapts to the NUT structure. We must not be constrained by R&F or the NUT. We should include LP, TC etc in our work. I have been banned from NUT R&F meetings because I'm in the ATTI. The authorities are blurring distinctions between teachers while R&F is crystallising them.

JB We must distinguish between how to work within R&F (IH), and our attitude towards it (DS).

IW Unfortunately, the two are interdependent.

DS R&F started out on a wider basis than it has now.

CBy DS is trying to get round problems. IS tactics may be bad, but their aim is OK.

How could we expect to gain support from R&F in our NUT branches if we insist on putting motions that we have been defeated on in the R&F group? We would soon lose all credibility if we did.

NUT Fraction, 3

JB There is currently a debate in R&F on their relationship to the NUT machine, we must intervene in this debate. Compare the reorganisation of NUT branches based on the schools with IW's Nottm demand for responsibility and training for reps.

KB What are we supposed to have as topics for these 'theory' meetings?

IW I agree with CBy. This is short cutting the problem.

IH DS's attitude to R&F is similar to the Left Opposition's attitude to the rank and file papers conference. If R&F is in fact a road block in the way of developing consciousness of teachers, we don't just turn our backs on it and attempt to build an alternative (not until it's past redemption anyway), we fight within it to break down the obstacles. What are our priorities within R&F? At our last public meeting on Heads in the Union, we had to break off debate to discuss motions for the coming R&FNC. Combined discussion/business meetings are always subject to this danger. In an area of high activity it is necessary that much time be spent on business. At the moment we have separate public R&F meetings that are open to all teachers (ie advertised only among teachers.)

DS Would accept first 3 paras of Organisation section of perspectives document, but would replace 4th with conclusion 2 because we are revolutionary socialists first and teachers second. Would also add joint work with NAS and NALGO (viz school canteen staff). If there is no R&F group in the area, why bother to form one? Why not a broader front? Education cannot transform society. We must fight to involve other trades unionists and parents, etc. We are not under any R&F discipline. I will compose a motion over lunch to be submitted this afternoon. AGREED.

2) TOM

SMg How many TUs are affiliated to TOM? (Subsequently I have asked the organiser of the North London branch of TOM. She does not know of any. We are currently fighting in North London NUT against an out of order ruling by the CP chair over affiliation to TOM. The anti army recruitment in schools aspect of TOM means we have at least a chance - IH).

Rank and File Papers Conference

CBy reminded cdes that they could, if necessary, get delegated from their school branches. Try and get local meetings held before the conference.

3) Working Women's Charter

JB Moved we delete sentence 3 and bracketed statement after it. Substitute: we involve ourselves in debates on the specific problems of women teachers and attempt to extend the argument outwards. CARRIED.

CBy Amendments to the WWC can be submitted to the R&FNC. We must fight on all sections. On the call for amendments against discrimination against part time teachers, we should argue for the amendment to apply to all part time workers.

4) Fascism

JB Propose add at end of section "Where anti fascist committees exist we fight to affiliate NUT branches, TC's etc to them." AGREED.

IH Repeat position at last Fraction meeting: we don't set up anti fascist cttees where there is no sign of fascist activity.

IW(?) If we fail to get an NUT branch to affiliate to a local anti fascist cttee, then strive to get local R&F group affiliated.

RyL Should clarify "to refuse to work" in motion. (IH proposed "to initiate strike action" AGREED).

JB Propose parallel resolution on right of black students to have black studies courses, initiated by themselves where possible. (AGREED in principle, but not formalised through lack of time.)

IW Particularly relevant in Midlands; the link between black studies and anti fascist work is obvious.

SMg Do we push the R&F motion on the NF if there is no NF activity in the area?

JB Push it if there are fascists around. If there is no immediate problem, put it in the branch as a conference resolution. Branches can put as many resns to conference as they like, but must finally prioritise 6, eg Liverpool are putting in 10. (I have subsequently phoned Hamilton House who tell me that NUT branches are only supposed to submit 6; certainly we are not allowed more in North London - IH.)

BREAK