

INTERNAL BULLETIN NO. 37

Resolution on Fusion - Workers Power NC

Discussion with Workers Power 25-11-75

'Revolutionaries and the LP' (Workers Power)

On the Labour Party - C.Oliver/C.Reynolds

Workers Fight and TOM - J.Cleary

Ireland - the tasks of British  
revolutionaries (Workers Power)

Report of International sub-committee  
23-11-75

## RESOLUTION ON FUSION

This NC accepts the view of those involved in the discussions between Workers Fight and Workers Power, that there are no principled obstacles to merger between the two organisations. It considers it would be tragic if 1) fusion between two such similar organisations could not be achieved given the degeneration and crisis of the British Revolutionary Left, 2) the flexible resolution of existing differences could not be achieved within a joint organisation. It recognises however: 1) That differences of emphasis exist between us on TOM and the Labour Party, 2) that not all our members are fully aware of the WF positions especially as they effect immediate and particular areas of work. This is no doubt true of WF Cds. too. 3) That issues such as the class nature of the Stalinist states and the nature of the world crisis would not at this moment be definitively and comprehensively decided by either tendency at the present time. Clear discussion and agreement will be necessary.

- Recognising this the NC instructs the Political Committee to initiate a clear timetable for fusion with WF (if this position represents the majority view of WP). We resolve:
- 1) A National Aggregate will be held within two weeks to decide our orientation. If merger is rejected we will produce a fortnightly paper, the purchase of premises and of typesetting machinery.
  - 2) Before that aggregate all branches should hear and discuss each point of view represented on the NC.
  - 3) That a joint WF/WP discussion bulletin be produced as soon as possible on the disputed questions to be with members three days before the aggregate.
  - 4) That this NC therefore commissions clear position documents on, a) the Labour Party, our audience and transitional politics, b) the troops out movement and Irish work.
  - 5) That a fused organisation should produce a joint paper as soon as possible, and that we propose an alternative to 'Socialist Action' as the name of the joint paper. The relationship of the paper to the organisation must be clarified.
  - 6) A fused organisation under proper discipline and nationally agreed guidelines would adopt a flexible policy towards work inside the LP while insisting that the major orientation is and must be intervention in the broad class struggle on all possible occasions.
  - 7) A fused organisation would have a clear line of superseding the present TOM leadership by building TOM as a genuine United Front
  - 8) That where, as with the LP, flexibility of tactics is accepted on fusion, this position will be reviewed after 6 months.
  - 9) That a regroupment manifesto be published jointly - also open letters addressed to particular groups and tendencies for a national regroupment campaign.
  - 10) That in addition the two organisations shall produce a joint Action Programme which will a) render coherent our agitation and propaganda, b) present the political answers of the new organisation, c) be elaborated in a series of popular pamphlets on the fight for components of that programme.
  - 11) That a proper timetable for theoretical discussion be agreed on at the time of merger.
  - 12) That for a transitional period a position of parity should exist between the two tendencies on all leading bodies. This may necessitate changes in our committees.
  - 13) Before the aggregate local and fraction joint meetings should be held to fully acquaint the memberships with each others positions. This is a necessary prerequisite of informed discussion and decision by a national aggregate.
  - 14) that WF carries an advert for WF and vice versa.

A merger between the two organisations would represent a step forward not only for us but for the revolutionary left as a whole. Given the absence of clear obstacles to that fusion we must place the achievement of that fusion as the fundamental task of the organisation in the next period.

PHOENIX CLUB - WORKERS POWER DISCUSSION: 25-11-75

Present: C.Reynolds, J.Cleary, J.Price (PC);  
D.Hughes, S.King (WP).

1. REPORTS FROM NATIONAL COMMITTEES:

CR reported from PC NC. The NC had accepted the previously-worked-out conditions of fusion: merging of the NCs; tactical flexibility on the LP up to the next conference; all probationary members to be upgraded to full members at the moment of fusion and probationary members to be recruited as per PC Constitution thereafter. General feeling was the fusion would be a great leap forward.

JC said that PC NC had also resolved that the fusion should be used as a springboard for a 'unity offensive'.

DH said he had expected some opposition to the pro-fusion resolution (see end of minutes) at the WP NC. There was none. There was only one amendment to the resolution, passed unanimously. From local discussions in various areas, it appeared the problems were small on the Labour Party question, perhaps bigger on the TCM question.

CR said our report-backs from local discussions had been good.

JC said that in Nottingham there had been some problems arising from TCM work. JC had advised the PC comrades to avoid conflict.

JP asked if the problems on TCM were those concerning P.Prendiville or other problems.

DH said that there was general agreement within the WP group on superseding the present structure of TCM. But there were differences on the attitude to the present TCM leadership.

SK said that not many WP comrades had been involved in TCM, and they were not prepared to condemn the Lawless leadership until they had the experience of conflict with it.

DH said we needed a joint perspective for united-front troops-out work. Some in the WP group recognise that such a perspective would entail conflict with Lawless. WP had established an Irish commission which would report to the Political Committee.

JC said that the PC wanted to avoid premature 'confrontation' and allow the WP comrades to learn from experience. Taking hard-and-fast positions before that experience could harden divisions.

JP asked whether P.Prendiville's position were not contrary to the WP position.

DH: yes - PP believes all that can be done in the present situation is to build TCM with its present structure.

JC asked what was the status of the TCM issue. Suppose the WP Irish commission decides for the present TCM structure.

SK: the final decision did not rest with the Irish commission but with the Political Committee.

JC asked if there was support for PP within the WP group.

DH said there was a feeling that the case against PP was not proven.

JC emphasised that PC did not want to exaggerate the PP case so that it became a serious obstacle to fusion.

DH said that the TOM question could be an obstacle to some people joining the fused organisation; but then we would have to assess which was more important, the fusion or those comrades.

SK read out the WP NC resolution (see end of minutes).

JC went through a check-list of points. (a) On Constitution - PC would give copies of our Constitution to WP for amendment if required. (b) There would be a 'Where We Stand' column in the new paper, identifying the Labour Party as a bourgeois party. (c) All PC probationary members would be upgraded to full members at the point of fusion, since WP did not have prob. members. (d) The fused organisation would launch a political offensive against the IMG mainstream. (e) There would also be a unity offensive, including seeing whether there was any life left in various grouplets: Chartists, RMC. (f) There would be a drive to build sales and supporters' groups for the new paper. (g) The first conference of the fused organisation would most conveniently be held on July 9-11, for which dates we already had arrangements made. (h) The fused organisation would do TOM branch work as a relatively low priority. (i) In reference to the WP NC resolution: PC recognises lacunae in our position on the Stalinist states, but we do hold to it quite definitely. (j) Theoretical discussion cannot be strictly time-tabled. (j) On the LP tactic, the situation would be that individual members of the fused organisation (whether ex-PC or ex-WP) would be able to opt out. Each individual case would be discussed with the Secretariat of the fused organisation. This would hold until July. (k) On the Steering Committee and the Secretariat, we proposed 5 from each tendency on the SC and 2 from each on the Secretariat. We saw problems - the SC being over-size and the Secretariat having even numbers and thus being vulnerable to regular deadlock. We reserved the right to re-raise the composition of the Secretariat. (l) PC considered it essential that some leading WP comrades, esp. D.Hughes and D.Stocking, move down to London.

JP said it was important that the Secretariat could meet frequently, if necessary with individual comrades not being able to attend.

DH agreed on the need for comrades to move to London.

JC: on the Editorial Board of the paper. This was a working body; strict parity would be unworkable; composition would have to depend on each tendency contributing what manpower they could.

JP said that the editing<sup>of</sup> our paper had been done very informally.

JC said we should make arrangements more formal after fusion.

DH & JC agreed that the new paper should appear at the beginning of the New Year.

DH said that the WP comrades might want to hold a post-fusion "progress" meeting (from which ex-PC comrades would not be excluded) in early January.

## 2. UNEMPLOYMENT PAMPHLET

GR said that since we hadn't been able to get the full agreed Unemployment Pamphlet out by the 26th, it might be a good idea to put out the PC duplicated

pamphlet, with the polemic against the sliding scale of public expenditure deleted, as a joint pamphlet.

JP preferred a leaflet.

DH could not commit WP group; anyway, did not think it would be good for this pamphlet to appear as the first-ever publication of WP. PC should go ahead with pamphlet if PC wished.

JC said PC would sell WP magazine unless we found something really major in it we disagreed with.

### 3. TIME-SCALE

The following time-scale was agreed:

Before December 7th: both WP and PC produce documents on Labour Party and on Irish work. There should also be local discussions between PC and WP where there haven't already been.

December 7th - WP aggregate.

December 13th - (assuming WP aggregate votes for fusion) fusion extended NC, a short 'fusion manifesto' to be prepared for this NC.

After December 13th - drive for subs. for new paper.

Another NC (of the fused organisation) should be held before the appearance of the new paper; for this NC detailed ideas on the new paper, including the key demands for agitation, should be prepared.

First Aggregate of the fused organisation - July 9-11.

### 4. PAPER.

JC and CR formulated a statement of PC position on the new paper -

- a) There exists an organisation, with a name, publishing a periodical (magazine) openly identified with the organisation. There are also certain comrades openly identified as members of this organisation, who may also be in the Labour Party.
- b) We refrain from selling the magazine in a way which is provocative in terms of Labour Party legality.
- c) There is a weekly paper not openly identified with the organisation.
- d) However, the weekly paper will organise open supporters' groups and will carry a 'Where We Stand' column specifically identifying the Labour Party as a capitalist party (in appropriate non-provocative but not evasive language). In every area there will be a branch of the organisation, and the paper supporters' groups are seen as having the specific purpose of acting as filters and contact-processing agencies for the organisation.
- e) Meetings, leaflets, industrial bulletins, banners, etc. would normally be under the name of the paper; but there is no absolute bar to having them in the name of the organisation provided comrades exercise common sense in relation to Labour Party legality.
- f) Normally we will say to sympathisers that the weekly paper is published in association with the open revolutionary organisation. The point is not to normally deny membership of the organisation or ever to deny that it exists, but to give our comrades in certain Labour Party situations the possibility of effectively, in terms of Labour Party legality, denying membership.

5. IRISH WORK.

JC gave information - we were reviving the "Phoenix Club" as a forum for propaganda meetings on Ireland.

There was further discussion on work in Ireland. JC asked whether P.Prendiville sold the "Starry Plough" by agreement with the WP group or on his own initiative, and DH replied that PP sold it on his own initiative.

MEE TING CLOSED.

## REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE LABOUR PARTY. PERSPECTIVES FOR THE COMING PERIOD

The immediate period is one of intensifying government attacks on working class living standards in the anticipation of at least partial benefits from a temporary world mini-boom during late 76 and early 77.

For the ruling class the Labour Government has proved the most effective weapon for these attacks. It has succeeded where a Tory government would have failed. The fight against unemployment and the acceptance of the &6 bear witness to this at present.

The leaderships of the struggles of the late 60's and early 70's have been confused and disorientated by the Labour Government. They have found it increasingly difficult to gain support for a clear fight against the governments policies. The active collaboration of the Trade Union bureaucracy in the Labour Governments attacks has sown further disorientation in the ranks of the trade union militants. For us the confusion is most important at shop steward and convenor level.

In essence this confusion is ideological:

1. The absence of clear alternative governmental solutions to rally support on the shop floor.
2. Sectional illusions in aspects of the Labour Party's programme or parts of the Labour Party leadership (these expectations have diminished with the demise of Benn and the further tightening of government purse strings).
3. Thorough going false solutions, most importantly import controls, and cooperative and participation schemes (witness the British Leyland shop stewards for example).

This crisis will become more serious as the bosses and government intensify their attack. They plan an ever smaller ceiling for wage rises (£3-£4 or the CBI's 5%-6%), more drastic social service cuts and a continued rise in the unemployment figures.

We are seeing the beginning of a fight back against the governments policies.

1. Particular battles -ie, the Persona dispute and more importantly Chrysler are becoming central to the trial of strength between the class and the government.
2. Local campaigns on cuts and unemployment - for the TU bureaucracy and whole sections of the class these remain special cases for government intervention. This is particularly true of the lower levels of local trade union officialdom.
3. More generalised national campaigning on unemployment. The NW regional TUC demonstration does not signify a clean break between the Trade Union leadership and the rank and file. It reveals fractures within the bureaucracy itself and a growing impatience with the useless collaboration of Murray and Co.

This brief sketch can help us firstly locate the audience that a merged organisation would be relating to. Secondly we can see more clearly the key political problems we must address in our agitation and propaganda. Our priority must be to establish a presence wherever possible in the industrial and general struggles ahead. We must be initiating or developing the unemployment and cuts campaigns in our areas. We must prioritise our work in Trade Unions, in the (often tiny) rank and file groupings we are in contact with, in Trades Councils, Right to Work committees and tenants associations.

The possibilities of Industrial work must be seen in the context of the crisis on the Left. In several areas IS politics, neglect of industrial work at local level (with the collapse of so many factory branches) and internal confusion opens up possibilities for revolutionaries again. The monopoly of the IS in this sphere of work can be challenged. In developing our industrial perspectives we must recognise three levels of work.

1. The struggles of the shop floor and in the Trade Union branches raise clearly questions that only Transitional politics can answer.

To a limited audience our politics on workers control, on inflation, on cuts, on unemployment are relevant and immediate.

2. The strengthening of our perspectives for Trades Council work, coordinating our Trade Union interventions, our fractions. The interconnection of our Irish, Womens and anti-fascist work with trade union work is vital.
3. The development of clear pamphlets and arguments to back up our positions - on unemployment, on workers control, the cuts and the sliding scale for example.

This can inform a strong industrial orientation in the paper. We cannot minimise the problems here. We do not have the base or network for a comprehensive journalistic coverage in the manner of Socialist Worker. But the paper must be saleable at factory gates, at pickets and demonstrations.

If our position is correct, if militants in many areas are feeling demoralised and isolated we must be able to not only convince them of the 'correct arguments'. In the style and presentation of our work we must be able to convince them that the illusions and confusion of their members can be addressed and clearly argued against. We do not hope for mass recruitment by mass propaganda and agitation. We hope to involve militants by our ability to relate to their problems of argument on the shop floor and in the Trade Union branch. This must mean not only an industrial backbone to our paper. It will mean that where possible branches and groups must be producing or assisting the development of rank and file bulletins and factory bulletins.

This test for a group our size however will not be how hard can 'we work' or how seriously we are involved in broad struggles. The existence of IS and our small numbers place at a premium our hitting the key political problems of our audience, at our ability to argue clear political alternatives to the present ideological confusion. We cannot offer numbers or sanctuary, of this we must be absolutely clear. Putting it bluntly our task as a propaganda group will be to clearly and sensitively combat reformist confusions and illusions. Central here is the question of the Labour Party but we must be clear that the question of reformism is an even broader problem than that in the British working class.

What is the Labour Party? The Labour party is a capitalist party. It has a piecemeal programme, it has a structure geared to electioneering not intervention, let alone leadership of workers in mass, direct struggle. Its working class support is maintained not by individual membership. It has never had a mass individual membership along the lines of European Social Democracy before 1914 or the mass CP's of the 1940's. Its constituency organisation is flimsy swelling and shrinking largely in phase with election times. The constituency organisations rarely have any tradition of struggle or mass involvement.

The hold is maintained largely via the Trade Unions. The Labour Party in Britain is only one 'pillar of the Labour Movement'. It is only a secondary pillar both in terms of its party structure and in the life and struggles of British workers. The Trade Unions not only fight a continual economic battle over wages and conditions they also act as a political force for ten million members. They 'misrepresent' the working class far more openly and directly than does the Parliamentary Labour Party. They even 'represent' the working class to the Labour Government - rarely fighting it, sometimes pressurising it and usually colluding with it against their members interests (the 1970-74 period showed them doing this with Tory Governments too).

It is worth remembering and emphasising that the most acute periods of class struggle have been the periods of most sharp disillusionment with parliamentary politics on the part of the most important sections of the vanguard. (The direct struggle of course lies outside the voting and parliamentary arena). The 1910-13 period was a period of industrial unionism and syndicalism. The 1924-26 saw the growth of the CP and the minority movement. Defeats or lulls in the struggle, ABOVE ALL INABILITY TO TACKLE NATIONALPOLITICAL ISSUES, issues of government and state power led to demoralisation and a turn back to parliamentary politics.



The present period is one where apolitical militant trade unionism of the 1960's (with much of the pace and style being set by the car industry), has been floored by the onset of a partial slump in British capitalism. As a result we do have a revival of focus and attention on the Labour Party. Membership figures do show a partial increase too. But we are not witnessing a rounded and generalised process. The current round of battles against unemployment, next years wage struggles will decide the degree of demoralisation and recentring on elements of the Labour party in the class. This process is both geographically and sectionally uneven to date. The non-existence or otherwise of viable arenas of combat outside the Labour Party will decide the question. But we insist that there is no widespread demoralisation and rejection of the effectiveness of TU struggle - this issue in in the melting-pot of the class struggle at present.

Massive Trade Union defeats, or a Left Social Democratic split could and would fundamentally tip this balance. They offer the alternatives of fatalism or, as in the case of a potential Labour Left split the refurbishing of illusions in parliamentary and extra parliamentary campaigning. We see neither as likely or inevitable.

We can relate to, indeed must relate to, those sections of workers outside the Labour Party. We say this arguing that our political alternative to Labour will be our central testing point in the eyes of such militants. We must be able to relate to mass struggles while realising and fighting the limitations of trade union politics and syndicalism. This is our central task.

We must recognise that the Labour Party has a monopoly of the government question. Who else can you vote for? The Labour vote does not represent a vote for socialism, for most it represents a simple belief that the Labour Party will make it easier for the working man and woman than the Tories. More active Trade Unionists are faced with two further arguments:

1. Its easier to push the Labour Party to enact things for the unions than the Tories - we control the purse strings.
2. It doesn't matter who gets in. Keeping 'Labour in Power' only means the Trade Union leaders are less willing to fight.

Only a particular section of the class have more active illusions in the Labour Party, or (more importantly for us), the Labour Left. The present Tribune 'programme' campaign however shows just how such a position can stand as a pole of attraction at a time of trade union disorientation. At their peril do IS try to ignore this clinging to their belief in a section of young militants unscathed by reformism, hating the Labour Party, laying the basis for an alternative and revolutionary party.

We have argued: 1. For a concentration and prioritisation of industrial work.

2. That the question of reformism and the Labour Party is not avoided by that focus (as IS see it).

Rather we confront it where it poses the most serious obstacles to the defense of living standards and the organisations of the class in future struggles.

3. This means we must have not only a clear political alternative to Labour - and only transitional politics can equip us here. We need also tactics and flexibility to relate to active illusions wherever they exist as a brake to real struggle.

IS has this one easily. The Labour Party is 'crap' - it won't give you reforms any longer. Join us because we're fighting. If this means IS is prepared to compromise and accomodate to the reformists of the past - 'Attlee was a good reformist' - so what? At times of governmental crisis IS collapses completely into a 'for gods sake vote Labour and save the unions' approach. They become terrified that militants will abstain out of disillusion - a disillusion crowed about by the leadership as witnessing the 'decline of reformism'.

The supposedly 'anti-economist' IMG commits the diametrically opposed error. Believing the Labour Party 'political' it speculates as to a new class struggle vanguard emerging within the Labour Party. Offering at best a left reformist programme the IMG hope to merge again with this tendency - from which incidentally they came. They enter the

terrain of the RSL - of organisations who see the central battleground of the class struggle taking place inside the Labour Party. This approach abandons a central orientation to the fighting organs of the class and to the actual battles, wages, unemployment, social service cuts etc.,. It liquidates the transitional programme. We have argued that these issues are central - and on these issues the reformists (including the remaining vestiges of 1960s unpolitical sectionalised militancy, and a revival of craftism) the Labour Party and the CP must be tackled and debated with - and above all shown up in action.

How do we do this?

We need a clear alternative programme to that of the Labour Left. We see their programme as a capitalist programme. We do not believe that such programmes can stand as magical solutions to our isolation and lack of credibility. We must put our demands both to the test of the real immediate needs of the class and to illusions in sections of the Labour Party. It is in this context that demands on Labour are relevant.

1. Our demands must be relevant and posed not on the 'What won't Labour do' principle (Duncan Hallas of old) but on the needs posed in actual struggles.
2. We must never suggest that the Labour Party would carry out these demands. We do not fall into the preposterous and bewildering 'Labour to power on a Socialist Programme' syndrome.
3. To workers who believe the LP is a vehicle for agreed and vital needs we must be prepared for a joint fight to put the Labour Party to the test. 'Let us fight together to force their adoption by a Labour Government'.
4. A movement to do this would go immediately far beyond the Labour Party structure. We must pose and argue the forms of direct struggle that can win results. We do not sow illusions in internal Labour Party battle as a road for real improvements and pressure on the government.
5. In such movements - on cuts - on unemployment we can, hopefully draw real forces under a revolutionary leadership demonstrating and exposing the evasions, duplicity and contradictions of all forms of reformism in practice.

ENTRISM: Entrism as a tactic is an important weapon in our armoury. At specific times a revolutionary cadre can broaden its influence and membership in this way. We do not oppose it in principle. What we do say is that the particular period renders this tactic subordinate to our other areas of work. This is doubly so it: 1. Industrial work suffers as a result of entry work. 2. We have no clear pole of attraction for our audience outside the Labour Party - both industrial, trade union militants or the disillusioned and lapsed members of other political formations.

Therefore: 1. We are in favour of such work where comrade time is not pulled away from industrial work.

2. Such industrial work is done - as far as possible - on an open basis by a group independent of the Labour Party.

3. Tribune campaigns etc. must be related to by our comrades in or out of the party.

4. The specifics of localities - the existence or non-existence of other areas of struggle - the nature of the local Labour Party - rather than a 'blanket' tactic should decide our entry priorities.

5. We sow no illusions in the political nature of the Labour Party - we sacrifice not one jot of our political programme - (terminology is not so important) - We make clear the need for an alternative programme and political party. Inside the party we consistently pose and point to the more decisive areas of class struggle outside the party.

6. The LPYS offers specific possibilities for work amongst working class youth. It represents different traditions, problems and forms of work to those generally discussed under Labour Party work.

7. We recognise that in difficult times and areas Labour Party work does offer a sphere of activity to hold the group together.

It offers at least partial debate in the Labour Movement when all else fails. While attractive we think this argument can provide the rationale for a soft option. It must <sup>t</sup>dominate the perspective and allocation of our work. <sup>'nt</sup>

8. In all areas branches must examine the local Labour party. We recognise the need for at least 'fishing' expeditions in all areas in search of contacts and members. We are cautious though of propping up decrepid organisations and of bear fights with Militant before a miniscule audience.

Entrism as a tactic brings particular advantages in particular areas. We oppose its blanket application. We support institutionalised and disciplined flexibility on this question in a fused organisation while emphasising open industrial work as our primary area of intervention and work. We do not oppose certain 'organisational' tactics - the title of the paper, the claimed distinction between supporter and member - to make entry work effective. This is of course so long as the comrades argue clear and principled politics. We do see a problem in industrial work for recruitment and intervention by a 'closed' organisation. We are sure that these problems can be overcome.

1. An open paper and bulletins would be produced. Neither would pose the Labour Party as the central arena of struggle, not that it is not to be central to our agitation and propoganda. They would have a clear 'where we stand' position on the nature of the Labour Party and the need for a revolutionary programme and party.

2. We do not intend to recruit as IS did. Therefore we will hold open meetings of supporters of the new paper to discuss both our politics and local and national initiatives.

3. In such meetings we will make no secret that an organisation produces the paper - that contacts who support, sell and even write for the paper should not know that would be absurd.

4. It will be the style, politics and argument of the paper that will pull people to us not the proclamation of a new even smaller organisation to join.

Hopefully this short document will codify our political positions to date - and open up the new proirities and possibilities we shall face.

John Hunt: for the Political Committee.

# ON THE LABOUR PARTY

Colin Oliver/Chris Reynolds.

## A. FIVE THESES ON THE LABOUR PARTY

1) The Labour Party is a bourgeois party. It is not, never has been, and never will be a revolutionary party. It has a record of treachery, cowardice and collaboration in the face of our class enemy (two world Wars, 1926 General Strike, 1945-51 propping-up of capitalism - to name the most obvious).

Trotsky treats MacDonald and the Fabians with splendid contempt in his writings on Britain in the 1920s. Our paper must continue with this contempt for reformism. We stand in the tradition of the Great Rebellion and Chartism, basing ourselves on the independent self-activity of the working class.

2) The British working class does not see the Labour Party as a bourgeois party. In any major working class struggle, the first people called in are Labour MPs. After the great struggle of the miners, who took on the State and brought down the Tories, we have Harold Wilson and the Labour Government! Consistently the working class vote Labour in their millions as a class vote against the Tories.

3) Where the British working class has broken from the Labour Party, it has failed to build a credible alternative. The CP has the stench of Stalinism hanging about it. The other left groups are characterised by an arrogance and sectarianism often in inverse proportion to their size. There are no signs at present that any one group will benefit on a major scale from the growing politicisation of the working class.

4) Our job is to be with the class in the coming struggles, to challenge reformist consciousness at all stages in the process of those struggle. We aim to break the vanguard from reformism and so provide a means of continuing the fight. We do not do this by the political purity of our resolutions alone, or by blind condemnation of the leadership on all and every occasion - but by carrying through, expanding and linking struggles, always constructively pointing the way forward.

The Labour Party is one very useful and obvious arena for us to do this. The working class will use the Labour Party as a matter of course, and there is no earthly reason why we should not be there too. Those who stand hectoring on the sidelines in this struggle are like car mechanics who have the knowledge but who don't want to get their hands dirty. We are not individual moralists, we are tacticians in a class war - firmness of political principle, flexibility of tactic.

5) Actually, past experience shows that the sectarians opposed to Labour Party entry are usually the first to collapse without trace into a centrist mish-mash. Opportunism is surely the flip-side of sectarianism. A brief look at the history of IS, WRP, IMG and Militant shows this - firmness of tactic, flexibility of principle.

## B. WHO STANDS WHERE AND WHERE DO WE STAND?

1) We are opposed to deep entry ('sui generis').

2) We are opposed to RSL (Militant)-type entry as a strategy. We maintain our

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own independent organisation with probationary membership - no blurring of the edges. We determine our tactics (of which Labour Party entry is only one) from the need to relate to the class struggle, not from the need to stay in the Labour Party.

3) The RSL (Militant) take the present attention being paid by us and now other groups to the Labour Party as vindication of their own 'heads down' behaviour over 20 years. They are wrong - there is a time to enter, there is a time to leave. For example, we say IS was correct to leave the LPYS in 1967-8 and to turn to the many industrial struggles against the LP at the time. The RSL was wrong to stay in. For the IS, however, it was an empirical lurch; there was no theoretical accounting, mainly to avoid any explanation of 15 years of IS sluggishness in the Labour Party and the antics of one D.Hallas, for years a regular contributor to 'Tribune'. But now, with a Labour government trying to curb industrial militancy, is a time to enter the Labour Party and to use it as one means of continuing particular struggles - in the process attempting to break the vanguard of the class from reformism.

4) When examining the SLL (the most successful of the UK entrists) we have to distinguish between excellent organisational techniques and primitive politics. The technique dominated, rather than serving, politics - hence the worn-out husks of a whole generation of revolutionary youth and the distinct impression when attending a WRP meeting of having stumbled into a psychiatric ward.

The 'Keep Left' campaign in the YS in the early 1960s was successful in winning youth to revolutionary politics. But SLL millennialism demanded a facade of instant success, instead of patient cadre-building. The frenetic activity needed to maintain this facade produced, paradoxically, an increasing remoteness from working class struggles and an utter demoralisation among SLL members. The artificial whipping-up of numbers for a one-off demo took the place of consistent contact-processing and base-building.

### C. WHY WE ARE IN THE LABOUR PARTY

1) It is not enough to have correct ideas - we have to gain a hearing among the masses. This is a real problem for us given the tremendous combativity of the class on the one hand and yet its reformist consciousness on the other. For example, miners and engineers challenge the State at Saitley one week, then are out enthusiastically canvassing for the Labour Party the next week : Chrysler workers campaign for the 'moderates' in the AUEW elections one week, the next week demand 'Nationalise Chrysler - No Compensation'.

2) We must maintain firmness of revolutionary principle, we must maintain our own independent organisation. At the same time we must respond to and learn from the struggle of the masses. We need to put down roots into the Labour movement, and to be flexible and energetic in taking opportunities to do that. Anyone criticising from outside "the Labour movement", as defined by the masses, is likely to be seen as a carper and an enemy.

3) While it is an elementary necessity for us to carry out the most energetic direct mass industrial work, it would be an idealist fallacy to suppose that the superiority of our politics will of itself allow us to sweep past the other left tendencies and recruit rapidly from that mass work. More than once it has happened that a small ideological tendency, conducting persistent propaganda

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against the stream for a vital demand, has seen its ideas vindicated... and its bigger opponents gaining organisationally. The agitation of the French Trotskyists for the united front in the early '30s is a classical example.

4) There is some ferment in the adult Labour Party. The LPYS contains several thousand working class youth, and provides a framework within which we can draw many more working class youth around us. We emphasise work within the youth movement, because the youth are especially hard-hit in a crisis, learn more quickly, and are more audacious.

Both in the adult Party and in the YS it is possible to act pretty openly as a revolutionary. Unless we take this opportunity to increase our working class implantation and to train our comrades in political struggle, the opportunity will not/<sup>simply</sup> be missed, it will be turned into a factor against us. Already Militant has been the fastest-growing of the allegedly 'Trotskyist' groups over the last few years, channelling some hundreds of youth into dead-end reformism. (Many of the youth recruited to Militant are people totally alien by temperament to revolutionary politics; at least some of them, however, could be won over).

5) Abstention from Labour Party work is arguably justifiable for a grouping the size of IS. For a smaller group it leads to dilettantish and uncoordinated methods of work, and dangers of political adaptation 'from the outside' to Labourism probably greater than the (no doubt real) dangers of adaptation which arise from being inside the Labour Party. The IMG is a strikingly clear example of this adaptation 'from the outside'.

6) Our orientation to the Labour Party is tactical; it does not debar us from making a sharp turn towards anti-Labour Party industrial struggles when such struggles erupt.

At the same time, when entering the Labour movement we do not do so like Moses with the tablets of stone or some salesman with the magic ingredient X. We "adapt" to our environment in this sense only - we learn to express our ideas in ways that workers can understand and respond to - we learn to be resourceful and enterprising in proposing action.

7) Work in the Labour Party or LPYS done in a passive, 'consumerist' way, without trying to turn the Labour Party outwards and bring in new forces, is useless. A "suck it 'n' see" approach to Labour Party work is therefore wrong. Moreover, if LP/LPYS work is not done as a coordinated national tactic, one of its chief benefits - the opportunity to make a national political intervention and to make new contacts in new areas - is lost; moreover parochialism will tend to erupt in our own ranks. Obviously there will be individual comrades not active in the Labour Party; but we consider it extremely important that the Labour Party tactic is a national tactic.

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## WORKERS' FIGHT AND T. O. M.

Jackie Cleary.

1) Strictly speaking WF does not have a perspective "for TOM". In so far as we have anything like it, it can be briefly stated - to supersede the presently existing single-member abortion called TOM and create genuine united-front work.

2) When TOM was founded WF made certain criticisms of its prospects as conceived by its founders (see the article "Neither Fish nor Fowl"). So far we have been proved entirely right. We are told now that a 'mass movement' would be such as might mobilise about 15,000 on a demonstration. Such mobilisation is possible - though it is far from a mass movement in the minimal sense of a movement that becomes a major factor in the struggle in Ireland.

3) That scale of mobilisation is possible, we think, and we also think it would be reasonable to expect substantially bigger ones than that. What is the relation of the present TOM to such mobilisations? We think TOM is a barrier to such mobilisations. The possibilities are limited, but TOM limits them even further.

4) Sizable mobilisations for British troop withdrawal are possible on the basis of using the strength of the ostensibly revolutionary groups. That requires a flexible united-front structure. TOM's single-member, branch-activist-based structure militates against this. Only if organisations are willing to immerse large-scale resources in TOM branches can they influence what TOM does. Organisations like IS or IMG (or WF) which want to participate in the ostensible united-front work of TOM have to invest large overheads in internal faction-fighting. For IS, already indifferent or worse, legitimate criticism of TOM as a talking-shop acts as an extra cover for their attitudes. For most of TOM's existence the IMG has had the same approach, withdrawing in the latter half of 1974 and recently re-engaging in work. TOM has become the tolerated token activity on Ireland of the British left, a more or less recognised monopoly in the hands of a small clique.

WF accurately showed the limitations for a would-be mass movement such as TOM set out to be, we had few illusions in IS as a component of serious Irish work - but we did not anticipate that TOM would itself be a factor in militating against mobilisation.

5) In practice TOM has emerged as a single-member, branch-structure grouping which does very little - and nothing at all except with the active support of the left groups. (The biggest recent TOM event, the July 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' demonstration, was entirely organised and partly financed by WF). A central clique of ex-IMGers round Gery Lawless balance within the structure between isolated individuals and small groups like the CFB and Big Flame. Structured like a left group, it contains tendencies which would not in a thousand years be in a single group. The result is a level of internal factionalism unseen by us in any organisation except the Irish Workers Group. Inevitably, the activities of such a structure are largely monastic and futile - the record of TOM in terms of activity (the week of action was a token) and of members on the books (391 is the paper membership) proves it.

In sum, TOM acts as a block to mobilisation by:

- a) substituting for activity by the left groups like IS or IMG;
- b) locking its own forces into a totally inappropriate structure which means that a large proportion of energy is inevitably consumed in factionalism;
- c) claiming a monopoly of activity on the Irish issue and actually obstructing initiatives outside that monopoly (cf. the TOM leadership's obstruction of the July 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' demo, organised by us, and of the December

rally, initiated by IMG).

6) The logic of a grouping on a specific issue being organised on an individual membership and local branch basis is entirely against the united front logic. The logic of a united front around Ireland and the troops would be to co-opt the existing contacts, influence and prestige of the left groups - influence gained by activity on a whole range of issues - to allow a hearing to the very complicated case that has to be made on Ireland.

In reality TOM can only call even a demonstration when it succeeds in a measure of such cooperation. The single-member and branch structure implies that the TOM as such (the individuals and the uninfluential groupuscules like CFB and RCG) must gain generalised influence, break down prejudices, etc. Its organisers don't know it, but they have a programme for building a "TOM revolutionary party" - with the result so far of massive and futile in-fighting together with ineffectiveness in its stated goals.

The recent National Delegate Conference line-up proves the situation. A bloc of 'non-affiliateds' and very weak groups (CFB, Big Flame) carried the day at the NDC - against tendencies (IMG, ourselves, Chartists) representing massively greater forces than they do. From the united-front point of view it is the forces that count. The argument of the Lawless clique and their hangers-on is self-satisfied, self-infatuated clap-trap: when they say that national affiliation would hand over TOM to IS, IMG, WF etc, we say: yes, but together these represent dozens of times what TOM apart from them represents or will represent in the foreseeable future.

7) The two slogans of TOM are grossly inadequate even for political differentiation. A sizable proportion of the small band of 'TOM activists' are the CFB (Communist Federation of Britain). They explicitly interpret "self-determination" as allowing for two Irish states.

If we are to have a structured body like TOM, in order to make its case for withdrawal coherent, it should argue solidarity with those fighting imperialism. TOM refuses to do so, and given its present composition couldn't. It is a single-member organisation primarily - but with ambiguous politics; and the tight structure militates against the broadening, the agitational-focus-type mobilising force of a single slogan like "Troops Out", which depends on the existing groups for effectiveness.

TOM is not responsible for the inadequacies of the left groups. It is a product of those inadequacies - but in turn it becomes a factor in perpetuating them.

8) WF believes that revolutionaries must make solidarity propaganda. Further we believe that revolutionary groups can mobilise seriously on a single slogan like Troops Out only to the degree that they have made such propaganda.

Any organisation around the very limited demands of Troops Out should be open-structured and flexible enough to get maximum mobilisation at minimum friction and cost.

TOM's demand "self-determination" is largely irrelevant, since there is no common TOM position on what it means (and still less does it have a clear meaning to the 'man in the street'). Certainly we have no "united front" with the CFB on their pro-partitionist interpretation of "self-determination"! - our "united front" with the CFB is on "troops out", and only on that.

It is largely beside the point to argue about what is a "principled" basis for a united front. Of course "troops out - self determination" is not "unprincipled" - neither is "troops out". But the point of a united front is not to be "principled" but to be effective.



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To answer the question, what political basis for a united front, we have to ask, who is making a united front with whom? We would be willing to have a united front with IMG, IS or any other important labour movement forces on a 'troops out' basis; at the same time we would denounce the IMG and IS for their failure to take up a solidarity position. We are not inspectors-general of history, certifying this or that formation as a "principled" united front, but revolutionary tacticians.

9) Contrary to lying myth, we were in active in TOM<sup>well</sup> before the labour movement conference. We had a comrade as chairman of the Standing Order Committee at that Conference! Experience convinces us, however, that trench warfare in the branches of TOM is both pointless and utterly wasteful.

Our perspectives are these:

- a) ourselves to make full propaganda for solidarity;
  - b) to attempt work on limited slogans such as troops out with whoever and whatever appropriate;
  - c) while continuing a certain amount of work in TOM as now existing (nothing else does exist on the Irish issue) to fight to replace "TOM" with a real united-front body.
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## IRELAND - the tasks of British Revolutionaries

We must not make the mistake of considering TOM to be the sum area of our Irish work. We have firstly to argue consistently and clearly for our solidarity position and politics. Secondly we must relate the Irish issue to other areas of our intervention and activity. Thirdly where it is possible we must unite on as broad and principled basis with all forces to campaign for the withdrawal of British Troops. None of these areas can be compartmentalised or separated. It is preposterous to believe for example that 'solidarity' is a slogan and position reserved for special occasions or passing references in the paper. The actual questions posed by the Irish struggle in the Labour Movement - the bloodbath, the bombs, noationalism - can all only be answered by a clearly sustained and developed position of solidarity.

Neither are we just trying to get the Labour Movement interested in Irish affairs as a separate issue. We see that to wage a clear fight against fascism (witness the relation of the British Right to Orange politics), in order to address properly the effects of unemployment particularly on youth (the lure of recruitment and the appeal of the NF) we are forced consistently to raise and argue the nature of the army and the war in Ireland.

TOM work has to be examined in tis context. Troops Outis a platform, not a political world view. We support the Troops Out platform and seek in all ways to enlarge it and and develop it within broad sections of workers. We do not turn this platform into our politics. We do not think that the Troops Out platform answers the questions and confusion existing in the British working class. Our politics have the only principled answers here. We cannot submerge them in the TOM position. To do so threatens us with laughable unreality given the true nature of the arguments in the British working class.

TOM work is important then (as part of our perspective for Irish work) when and if it enlarges the base in the Labour Movement for its platform. It has to be tested on its ability to actually achieve this.

As an organisation how do we see the strengths of TOM? We have seen them primarily in terms of its broader orientation than the ISC & AIL and its ability (in a more favourable period) to relate to a significant layer of workers on particular occasions ie. the Labour Conferences and certain local meetings. As such our members have taken on responsibilities in TOM both at alocal and national level. We have argued that the crisis of British policy in Ireland makes it more possible than before to talk to groups of workers about Ireland. We have never however overimphasised the size of that audience or fantasised about withdrawal campaigns of Vietnam proportions. TOM has offered the only common platform to relate to this specific audience.

The weaknesses of TOM, we argue start from the shameful neglect of Irish politics by the British Left. Either deliberate lack of involvement, (IS) or irresponsible 'feeling of the water first' (IMG) has seriously depleted the forces of TOM and produced a peculiar leadership. It has also prevented the mobilisation of important forces as a bridge between revolutionaries and sections of the Labour Movement on Ireland (IS has decidedly played this role). We do not however only have a sociological critique of an isolated TOM leadership left carrying the can for the Left as a whole (We do see this as important however).

1. We criticise the individual membership basis of TOM. While we do not foresee vistas of a mass national meaningful United Front we think that atlocal level the present bear-garden individual membership branches (as they so often are) stand as an obstacle to drawing in broader layers and organisations on specific and general initiatives. The individual membership has reinforced and is part of the tendency of much of the personnel of TOM to see it as a surrogate political party - with membership drives, qualifications and supposedly TOM politics (as we have argued - where they do exist TOM politics just do not offer a clear answer to the problems posed).

2. We criticise the artificial shelving of the solidarity issue by revolutionaries in TOM. While we are for unity in expanding the TOM in the Labour Movement this does not mean that revolutionaries (and the majority of TOM members at present claim to have a position of solidarity) hide their own clear politics within that movement. We speak both as TOM supporters and revolutionaries - they do not mean the same thing.

3. We fight to expand the work of TOM in localities. To organise sponsored TU andLP meetings on Ireland. To deck local (and national of course) Trade Union and political affiliations to TOM. We are in favour of anti-recruitment campaign interlinked with the local and national fight against unemployment.

The national leadership has organised a series of national focuses. We are, obviously, in favour of the proposed Bloody Sunday demonstration and the proposed TU delegation to Ireland. We will support those initiatives.

However we see as inadequate a leadership that can only offer these national events as a perspective for Troops Out work. We will work everywhere to create Troops Out work on a more broad basis than the present branches are doing. We think that the attitude of the present leadership to purely national events and the structure of TOM actually inhibits the work of building united activity and campaigns on Ireland. We think the same of the IMGs notion of building the TOM on the streets of London in a series of 'serious' mobilisations. We see no real evidence of a leadership fighting to develop outward orientated work in the localities in between the national focuses.

We have been prepared to support the TOM leadership as long as there has been no thoroughgoing concrete alternative to it. Our support has to be in this context only. We are in favour of building TOM as a genuine United Front of organisations and individuals. We see the possibilities for this as being primarily local at present - involving branches of unions and of political groups (of IS in certain areas for example). At a national level this will, of course be much more difficult. It is only from the branches and areas that we can develop the offensive for genuine Troops Out unity at national level.

We are in favour of work in TOM but always provided this is not impediment to building a broader movement. We see politics, structure and leadership of TOM as standing as a potential barrier to that work. Within TOM we will continue for our own internationalist politics.

We see as vital a clear discussion in any fused organisation on the lessons and experience of actual Troops Out work rather than the internal life of the TOM itself. On the basis of this experience we are confident that a clearer perspective can be posed as an alternative to the present TOM leadership if or when that becomes necessary. The situation in TOM convinces us that this new perspective for broader united front activity is necessary. Only on the basis of its attitude to such an initiative can we finally test the TOM leadership. Structural criticism and accusations are not enough.



Report of the International Sub-Committee meeting 23/11/75

Present: Cleary, Harrison, Armstrong, Lamarre, Gunther, Foster, Rice.  
Apologies: Reynolds

(1) Status of the ISC: Harrison: Cttee. to function as an executive body overseeing international work, and to discuss a) Intervention at international meetings and conferences b) Discussion and correspondence with other groups c) the political situation in specific countries d) supervise the work in progress distributed at the aggregate with a view to education of the group as a whole. (schools etc)

Cleary: Resistance in leading bodies of group to the implications of the aggregate decision i.e. that we should seek the widest possible discussion. If fusion occurs we should also involve LF members in their work.

Gunther: Should initially discuss with groups closest to us & be choosy.

Cleary: Should not limit contact to nominally Trot groups.

Agreed: Gunther to try and arrange the widest possible exchange of papers.

(2) Rouge Fete: Report from Reynolds read: Fete badly organised but ca. 60000 attended. We sold 210 of literature & made a few contacts. Met the Vietnamese Trotskyists, who have maintained a small group since the early 50s. They had made an appeal to the 10th World Congress of the USFI for aid but were rebuffed! They are opposed to both factions in the USFI. Also met an Austrian group (see below). IS seem to have transferred their affiliation from LO to Revolution. (a Maoist group with its origins in the Ligue Communiste) Wf brought out a leaflet in 5 languages explaining who we are and our basic positions.

Cleary suggested publishing the appeal of the Vietnamese Trots. to the USFI in the magazine. Also agreed to try to get cde CL to interview them.

Foster: Further evidence for IS-LO split is that LO invited Spartacusbund to a conference of groups LO considered close ~~frxxxxh~~ to which IS was not invited.

Harrison suggested corresponding with an LO member who could give info. on a general situation, left grps, etc.

Agreed: Reynolds to be responsible for a formal request to LO to exchange material other than papers, correspondence with the Vietnamese & supervising translations into French.

(3) Australia: Gunther: Regular correspondence with t. Ridgood & contact with the Melbourne Revolutionary Marxists who put out a regroupment call largely based on WF's. They broke from the USFI but consist of people with widely differing opinions. 2 cdes. are visiting Europe in 76. MRM want formal discussions on the understanding that it involves no commitment.

Agreed: to ask TB to write more for paper on current events & CL to write an article for magazine on Aust. left.

(4) Germany/Austria: Gunther: Had recently written to Spartacusbund proposing formal contact (in the past it has always been via individuals, 7 regularising paper exchange).

Foster gave a report of discussions he recently had with Sp. Bund. Topics were FI, Social Democracy & future relations between the groups. On FI Sp. Bund hold that FI lost political continuity immediately post-war & organisational continuity with the split of 1953. Have translated the RCG'S article on the FI & may share some of its misconceptions. They see their task as building an international tendency in the short run, as they hold the position that the FI needs to be totally rebuilt and they are holding a conference on the FI in March. On the question of social-democracy they seem to share our basic positions though probably differing on the best tactics to approach the LP/SPD. Sp. Bund ~~hadxxxx~~ are sending some people to London in the next month. It was informally agreed to exchange documents on the FI, translate <sup>and publish</sup> material and to allow WF to send an observer to their conference. In Austria and Italy there were groups which had come out of the 'Compass' tendency of the USFI, who also seem close to the Sp. Bund.

Gunther explained that the Sp. Bund had broken off contact with ~~the~~ the Sparts a long time ago. He also said that there had been a split in the Sp. Bund, which had lost them the majority of their Essen Branch (apparently their main worker base). They had criticised the Sp. Bund for ~~xxxx~~ having propa-

ganda which does not relate to the struggles going on in the class, while they were accused of not putting forward political demands. Some people outside Essen had left but were doing nothing.

Cleary: Worth talking to the IS group (the SAG)?

Gunther: No. They agree with IS politically and are dying on their feet.

Agreed: Not to bother with SAG. Foster to write to representative of split-off, and to write with Gunther an analysis of the German Left and the Sp. Bund. ~~xxx~~ G&F to arrange discussions with the cdes coming to London..G. to write to Austria.

(5) Ireland: Cleary: 2 or perhaps more people with relations with LP. If fusion successful, Cl. would suggest to them entering IRSP though there would be problems with this, PD are more friendly to Big Flame than to us. Agreed to write to them. Some of their members are friendly to us. The IRSP has generally cut the ground from under PD's feet. The situation should at the moment be left open.

Gunther: Group needs a document on the Irish Left. Agreed to ask Lindsay.

(6) Spain: Larrarre reported difficulties in getting contacts, papers, info etc. Harrison suggested using our LP work to contacts elements in the Spanish Socialist Party.

Armstrong: According to Militant, the party hardly exists in Spain, but the equivalent of the YS does. It includes a left faction similar to M. (e.g. they refuse to work in the Workers Commissions).

Agreed: To see if any of the Spanish YS are in London, perhaps by using YS branch to try and get in touch with them via the YS Spanish Campaign.

(7) Portugal: Rice: Had tried to get paper exchange with LCI, PRT, ERP. Only response from PRP. LCI paper only appears sporadically & the PRT is almost non-existent, with no roots in the class.

Harrison: We rely on 2 people for information and need new sources. Suggested 1) Writing to the LCI branch in Oporto for info. 2) Contacting the PRT for info. They appear to have changed their previously correct position on Republica, possibly under financial pressure from the ERP, but have a correct position on the PUR. 3) Consider sending a delegation to Portugal in the spring, consisting of a TU militant, a cde. active in the women's movement, Rice & 1 other. 4) translate the FI 5) Expand Portuguese version of leaflet handed out at the Rouge Fete. 6) write a document on our position on Portugal aimed at Portuguese left groups.

Armstrong: (6) would require a lot of time.

H. also suggested corresponding with different branches of the groups, as we could get info. on what was going on in different areas and as not all branches were the same politically.

Armstrong asked for guidance on how to act in a forthcoming meeting of the Russell Committee on Portugal, where K. Coates is manoeuvring against us & IS to water down its platform. It was finally agreed that this should be discussed by the SC & the Portugal sub-committee.

Rice explained that ~~xxx~~ IS ~~xxx~~ had had a negative effect in Portugal & that the PRP are fed up with them, with the result that IS had recalled its people. The cause was IS attempts to manipulate the ERP, their position on the 20/9 demo and their behaviour with the ~~xxx~~ Republica Workers' Ctee.

(8) American Sparts: Cleary; SL are chronic sectarians. Effectively have Zionist position on the Middle East. Their International Tendency is largely fictitious but they have ca. 200 members in the USA. Now trying to colonise Britain, Their main importance is because of their contacts i.e. the Samarkoddy Group in Ceylon. Should continue discussions with no illusions.

Foster: Probably possible to get an address for Samarkoddy in any case.

Cl; Should try to get a list of their international contacts from them, but otherwise gently break off discussion with them after 1 more meeting.

(9) Miscellaneous: Cl: Problem of being tainted with their politics if we try to contact the OCI with a view to trying to influence their membership. After some discussion in which it was pointed out that this would be used by the Bulletin Group and that it was unlikely that we would gain access to their members, it was agreed to pass the proposal to the SC. It was also agreed to follow up contacts cdes. have with Ukrainians, Chileans & Zimbabweans living in Britain. Agreed to contact cdes. who were given work at the aggregate to see what progress has been made.

Preamble

Workers Fight is a revolutionary socialist organisation, whose aim is to organise the working class for the seizure of power and the communist transformation of society. All its activities, its method, and internal regime are subordinated to this aim and are designed to serve it.

Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such an organisation and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion and experience. From this follows the need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organisation.

The struggle for power organised and led by a revolutionary party is the most ruthless and irreconcilable struggle in all history. A loosely-knit, heterogenous, undisciplined, untrained organisation is utterly incapable of succeeding in this task. A revolutionary organisation has to unconditionally demand from all its members complete discipline in all the public activities and actions of the organisation.

Leadership and centralised direction are indispensable prerequisites for any sustained and disciplined action, especially in an organisation that sees its aim as leading the collective efforts of the proletariat in the struggle against capitalism. Without a strong and firm leadership, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the organisation and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary organisation is a meaningless jest.

It is from these considerations, based upon the experience of international working class struggle, that we derive the Leninist principle of organisation, namely democratic centralism. This principle is embodied in our Constitution and guides us in all our organisational activities.

In any case where the Constitution does not give precise indications, the organisation shall be guided by the established traditions of democratic centralism, and particularly by the resolutions of the April 1940 Convention and May 1953 Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party.

NC

1. Membership.

The fundamental condition for membership of Workers Fight is proletarian class consciousness. Concretely this means that members must:

- i) Agree with and be committed to defend the basic aims and programme of the organisation.
- ii) Engage in regular political activity under the discipline of the organisation.
- iii) Be a member of their appropriate trade union. If there is no trade union at a member's place of work, then he or she must, if possible (from the point of view of victimisation etc.) attempt to form a union branch.
- iv) Sell Workers Fight regularly, especially at their place of work, if this is possible.
- v) Commit themselves to developing an understanding of the theory and traditions of revolutionary communism.
- vi) Pay a regular subscription to the organisation as laid down by the Aggregate.
- vii) Only take a leave of absence with the consent of the Steering Committee (SC) or National Committee (NC).
- viii) Not use political differences as an excuse for inactivity or organisational disloyalty. Any member who does so is liable to be expelled, under the procedures laid down in section 12.

2. Candidate Membership.

The conditions of membership must not only be adhered to by means of verbal agreement but also in reality. For this reason, new members will, as a general rule, be required to join Workers Fight as candidate members. Any exception must, however, first of all be agreed to either by the Steering Committee or the National Committee.

- i) Candidate members have all the rights and duties of full members except as restricted by other sections of this Constitution.
- ii) New members are admitted as candidate members either by the collective decision of the branch they join or by the National Committee.
- iii) Normally a candidate member is expected to go through the basic education programme with a full member of Workers Fight, before being admitted to full membership.
- iv) Candidate members do not have the right to vote, either at branch or national level.
- v) There shall be no formal time limit on the period of candidate membership.

### 3. Full membership.

A candidate member who has satisfied his or her fellow comrades that he or she has fulfilled the conditions of membership shall become a full member.

- i) Full members shall be elected either by the branch or the NC.
- ii) Full members have a responsibility to play an active part in the decision making processes of the organisation through the various bodies which the group has established for this purpose.

### 4. National Aggregate.

The National Aggregate is the supreme policy-making body of Workers Fight, and can override any other body in the group. Its decisions are binding on all members.

- i) The National Aggregate shall be convened annually.
- ii) Every full and candidate member has a right and a duty to attend and to speak.
- iii) Every member or group of members (e.g. branches, NC, fractions, factions) can submit resolutions and amendments to the Aggregate.
- iv) Resolutions and amendments must be submitted in writing to the National Secretary before the date laid down in the Aggregate timetable. The main documents for the Aggregate must be circulated at least 3 months beforehand.
- v) The Steering Committee is responsible for convening and arranging the Aggregate.
- vi) Non-members can only attend by invitation of the NC or the Aggregate itself.
- vii) Minutes of the Aggregate must be produced and circulated to all members not more than one month after the Aggregate.
- viii) A Special Aggregate may be called by the NC when it wishes. A Special Aggregate must take place within two months of the receipt of a demand for one supported by at least 25% of the full members of the group.
- ix) A Standing Orders Committee of three members and three alternates shall be elected by each Aggregate, and reports to the next Aggregate. In the event that a member of the Standing Orders Committee becomes unavailable for any reason, an alternate shall be co-opted.

### 5. The National Committee.

The National Committee is the sovereign body in Workers Fight between Aggregates. It is responsible for political decision making and group organisation. Its decisions are binding on all members.

- i) The NC is elected by the Aggregate and consists of twelve full members and three alternates. The NC may co-opt additional alternate members.
- ii) Each full member attending the Aggregate shall have 15 votes of equal status in the NC election. The 12 candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be the full members of the NC. The 3 candidates receiving the next highest number of votes shall be alternates.
- iii) The NC will, as a general rule, be bound by the decisions of the Aggregate. Changes in the objective situation are the only criteria for reversing Aggregate decisions. If between Aggregates, events occur that are thought by the NC to necessitate a change of line then the NC will have to account for this to the rest of the organisation.



- iv) The NC must meet at least every two months or within one week of receipt of a written request for a special meeting signed by at least three full members of the NC.
- v) Except in very urgent cases, NC members must raise political differences first on the NC, and only in the organisation as a whole after NC discussion. NC members must fight for the implementation of NC decisions within the group, except where they have deep and declared political differences; and in this case they must at least maintain discipline.
- vi) An alternate has the right to vote if an NC full member is absent. The order in which alternates receive the right to vote shall be according to the number of votes cast for each of them at the Aggregate. Any co-opted alternates should come after elected alternates in the order in which alternates receive the right to vote.
- vii) NC meetings will be prepared for and convened by the SC.
- viii) Any member, branch, sub-committee, fraction or faction can submit a resolution to the NC. These must be sent to the National Secretary before the deadline for resolutions.
- ix) Every member of WF can attend NC meetings. The NC may make sessions closed where security requires it or where personal matters concerning individual members are discussed. (Nevertheless the NC has the right to discuss individual comrades in their absence). Non-NC members may not speak without the permission of the NC unless they are defending themselves from disciplinary charges.
- x) The NC shall report as a whole to the Aggregate. Minority reports can be given by NC members who are in disagreement with the NC majority.
- xi) Minutes of NC meetings shall be made available to all members of WF. Minutes must include the full text of all resolutions and amendments put, together with details of the discussion and the vote. Skeleton minutes may, however, be circulated, where security requires it.
- xii) Only the NC has the power to appoint or authorise the appointment of WF National Officers.
- xiii) The NC or its duly authorised representatives (sub-committees, fractions, or branches) has the power to give imperative directives which are absolutely binding on all full and candidate members within the area of their jurisdiction.
- xiv) Relations with other tendencies as such or with members of other tendencies shall be entirely under the control of the NC and those bodies or individuals appointed by the NC to conduct these relations.
- xv) The NC has the right to structure discussions within the group so that maximum political clarity may be attained. The NC may stop debate on any issues; but only after full discussion has led to a decision. Under no circumstances does this override the right of the membership to hold the NC to account at an Aggregate.

#### 6. National Officers.

- i) The NC shall elect the following national officers:
  - The editor of "Workers Fight", who has overall responsibility for the production, distribution, and, within the limits laid down by the Aggregate and the NC, the political line of the paper.
  - The National Secretary, who is responsible for: (\*see end) Communication between the NC, SC, branches and fractions; Correspondence not covered by the editor of "WF" and the Treasurer; Preparing for and convening SC meetings; Keeping an up to date file on membership, reports, correspondence, minutes, etc; Acting as an administrative secretary to the SC and NC.
  - National Treasurer, who is responsible for: Keeping an up-to-date account of the organisation's finances; Collecting subscriptions from the branches; Authorising routine expenditure; Presenting financial reports to the NC and the Aggregate.
- ii) The NC may divide the duties of any of the above Officers between more than one member.
- iii) The NC may appoint such additional Officers as it sees fit.
- iv) (\*see end)

#### 7. Steering Committee

The SC is responsible for the day to day implementation of NC decisions; for reacting to events that occur unexpectedly and require immediate action; for political leadership; for the routine administrative and organisational running of WF.

- i) The SC shall be elected by and responsible to the NC.
- ii) It shall consist of no less than 4 full members of the NC.
- iii) It shall report to the NC as the NC wishes.

#### 8. Sub-committees

- i) The NC shall appoint such sub-committees as it sees fit. They do not have to consist solely of NC members, but they shall contain at least one NC member.
- ii) All sub-committees shall report to the NC as the NC wishes.

#### 9. Branches.

The geographical unit of WF is the branch. Branches are responsible for the political activity of WF in a particular area for the political education of their members, especially candidate members.

- i) Branches will be recognised according to the experience, reliability, consciousness and number of members in a particular locality.
- ii) Only the Aggregate or the NC can ratify the existence of a branch.
- iii) Branches can be sub-divided either geographically or functionally into cells, but a strictly internal meeting of the whole branch must be held at least monthly.
- iv) Only a full branch meeting can elect new or full members.
- v) Branches must send regular reports and minutes of internal meetings to the National Secretary. Branches must ensure the regular payment of subscriptions.
- vi) Branches must organise the distribution and regular sale of the group's publications, especially the paper.
- vii) Each branch shall elect an organiser, who is responsible for the overall functioning of the branch and for ensuring that group policy is carried out. All organisers must be ratified by the SC, which may impose an organiser against the wishes of a particular branch. The branch has the right of appeal to the NC if they disagree with the SC's choice.

#### 10. Fractions.

Fractions are the organisations of WF which coordinate and initiate national activity in a particular area of work.

- i) Fractions are ratified by the NC or the aggregate.
- ii) Each fraction shall elect a convenor, subject to NC ratification.
- iii) Each fraction may be subdivided geographically into cells. The cells must keep in regular contact with the convenor.
- iv) Fraction convenors shall report regularly to the NC.

#### 11. Internal Bulletin.

The Internal Bulletin shall serve as an instrument for:

- a) Promoting theoretical and political discussion in the group
- b) Providing a means of generalising on the lessons that have been learnt from activity in a particular area, industry, union etc.
- c) Playing a centralising and organising role in national campaigns.

To this end:

- i) The IB shall be produced at least once every two months.

- ii) The NC shall elect an IB editor, who will be responsible for commissioning articles, production and distribution.
- iii) The editor has no right to refuse for publication any article submitted before the deadline unless he has received permission from the NC in accordance with section 5 subsection (xv) of the Constitution. He can, however, ask for a contribution and/or labour towards the production of articles over 2,000 words, and insist that any document over 3,000 words appear as a supplement at the expense of the author(s). In the event that the author(s) of such a document lack money, they can appeal for financial assistance through the Control Commission.
- iv) Every member shall receive a copy of the I.P.  
The IB and its contents shall not in any way be communicated to non-members without the express permission of the Aggregate or NC.
- vi) Any comrade submitting a polemical document of less than 2,000 words shall have the right to insist it be circulated within two weeks.

#### 12. Disputes and Disciplinary Procedures.

- i) The Aggregate shall elect a Control Commission annually. It shall independently investigate disputes and disciplinary questions within the organisation which are referred to it by any of the parties to the dispute, the SC or NC. It has the power to subpoena witnesses and have access to all information and documents relevant to the matter. It shall consist of five full members who are not on the SC. Any member of the CC, who is involved in a dispute which is referred to it, shall be excluded from the CC for the investigation of that dispute. The CC shall report to the NC.
- ii) Branches, national fractions, the SC or NC may suspend, reprimand, fine, or censure members under their authority. Written notice of charges shall be given except where bourgeois legality forbids. In all cases, the circumstances must be reported immediately to the SC. Any member disciplined has the right of appeal to the NC.
- iii) Candidate members may be expelled by their branch, the SC or NC. One week's written notice of the charges and an opportunity for the member to defend him/herself shall be given. He/she can appeal to the NC, but not to the Aggregate unless the CC so decides.
- iv) Full members can only be expelled by the NC or Aggregate. Two weeks written notice of the charges and an opportunity for the member to defend him/herself shall be given. Any full member who is expelled may appeal to the Aggregate.
- v) When members resign from the group, the SC must be informed immediately.
- vi) Previously expelled members may not be re-admitted without the approval of the NC or Aggregate.

#### 13. Factions and Tendencies.

Any group of members have the right to form a faction or tendency to fight for a particular point of view within the organisation. WF recognises a tendency as an ideological grouping organised for an ideological discussion within the organisation. WF recognises a faction as a grouping which sets out to fight either to change the policy of the organisation on a particular issue or to replace the existing leadership by members of the faction.

- i) Members wishing to form a faction must circulate a platform explaining their differences with the group's positions, signed by all members of the faction.
- ii) The conditions of membership for factions differ in no way from the conditions laid out in section 1 of the Constitution.
- iii) Factions can produce their own publications for circulation within the organisation, can hold internal meetings to put over their position, and can put up members for election on a faction platform. All faction meetings and documents must be either strictly internal to the faction, or open to all members of the group. This clause cannot be used to restrict private conversation or correspondence between individual members.
- iv) In any dispute between a faction and the NC or SC, then both the faction and the NC or SC have equal rights to use the organisation's apparatus.

- v) A faction must not carry its platform outside the organisation without the permission of the Aggregate or the NC. If it does so then its members are subject to disciplinary procedures.
- vi) The same rules apply for members of tendencies as for factions, except that candidate members cannot be recruited to a tendency.

14. Constitution.

The Constitution can only be changed by an Aggregate.

\* \* \*

Section 6(iv) should read:

"The appointment, pay, terms of reference, and dismissal of full-timers shall be decided by the SC, subject to ratification by or (if factional victimisation is alleged) appeal to the NC.

Addendum to section on National Officers

- ... National Secretary, whose prime responsibility should be the overall political ~~consideration~~ co-ordination, integration and supervision of the activity of the group (under SC supervision); and who is also responsible for...