

platform of the democratic  
centralist faction



**workers'  
fight**



## FOREWORD.

"Theory is now the strongest practice, and we are absolutely incapable of predicting to how large an extent it will become practical."

(Letter to Harx from Bruno Bauer)

Whilst Bauer may not have been capable of predicting the practical importance of theory, we at least, with the benefit of hindsight, can see the results of both its use and non-use, in the victory of the Russian revolution and the failures since. The crisis of leadership described by Trotsky has further resolved itself into a crisis of Marxism. Trotskyism once embodied the development of Marxism in that it crystalised the practical and theoretical gains made by the science since the death of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Trotskyism still does in the abstract, but Marxism since Trotsky's death has become transformed into half learned dogmas and onesided mutilated slogans. Such has been the strength of bourgeois ideology resting on the 'boom' of capitalism and the betrayals of Stalinism, that Marxism has been tainted with all possible deviations and distortions that it is a task in itself to re-discover the real content of Marxism. Almost daily the foundations of Marxism come under attack from the very people who advocate Marxism. Once again it becomes of vital importance to defend the 'foundations' and scientific methods of Marxism. For revolutionaries theoretical struggle is practice. It is not all of that practice but it is a fundamental part of that practice. I had thought that that was what we were about in Workers Fight; now I'm not so sure. It now seems that some in our group now see themselves as the sole interpreters of Marxism, and label critics as parochial, or cliquist. That this non-class way of designating opponents, goes without challenge is further cause for concern, all of which brings me to the realisation that a struggle for the development of Marxist theory and a Marxist cadre is inseparable from a struggle against the bourgeois ideas and methods which daily permeating our group and increasingly influencing our practice. It is recognised of course that this struggle of ideas will necessitate at some stage a struggle against the exponents of these ideas.

The documents enclosed are the first part of a series which it is envisaged will become a platform for those wishing to take part in this struggle.

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The platform is, as yet, far from complete and the following list indicates the parts of it which are included now and the parts of it which are to follow.

1. World economic perspectives (included)
2. British economic perspectives (included)
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4. Theory of the party restated (to follow)
5. British political general (included)
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## INTRODUCTION

'The acute problems which the present period poses is causing and will continue to cause for some time, crisis and chaos in all political groups and parties in British society. This is true of the revolutionary left just as much as the Tories, Labour, and the Communist Party. The sudden and new changes in the class struggle which commenced in 1972 with the miners strike has caused a profound crisis within the revolutionary left, and has revealed in all groups a profound internal crisis of Marxism.'

Nowhere has the truth of the above statement been more clearly shown in practice than in Workers Fight during the period since it was written.

Since the rejection of the correct Marxist perspective, of which this was part, by the 1973 Special Conference of Workers Fight, the organisation has drifted, in effect without perspectives, from one expedient to the next - first Labour Party entry, now regroupment - with rank and file work, under the shadow of IS, in between. This lack of direction and political lifelessness was nowhere more evident than at the Aggregate of 1974, where all the perspectives proposed by the leadership were, rightly, rejected as inadequate, and no political perspectives were even presented.

This situation alone would justify a political challenge to the leadership of Workers Fight. But it is not all. The period since the 1973 Special Conference has also seen the hardening of an increasingly bureaucratic attitude on the part of the leadership towards the proposer and supporters of the correct perspective which was rejected then. The Bolton Branch has been, in effect, dissolved by its fusion with the Manchester Branch in a manner which has now assumed the character of an act of factional warfare. This must not be allowed to go unchallenged. It raises the question of democratic centralism, now being posed in false terms by some elements of the leadership. The unprincipled campaign by these elements against the comrades in Bolton must be answered in a principled political way.

We welcome the proposed regroupment as a chance for the renewal of Marxist method and politics. The last year has shown us that this can only take place in opposition to the old political leadership of Workers Fight. It is for this purpose that we form the Democratic Centralist Faction. We propose these perspectives as a contribution to this task.

## WORLD ECONOMIC.

World Capitalism has entered a period of intense economic and political crisis. With the slight exceptions of temporary falterings, the Capitalist World as a whole has expanded its production without major set-back since the end of the 2nd World War. It now faces a period of contraction and instability, as attempts are made to overcome the obstacles which capitalism itself has created during the 'boom' period. Two of the most important obstacles being the rise in the price of Labour (wages) and the tendency to set up production as if there were no barriers to production, and expansion. In the latter case the barrier is the capitalist mode of production itself (ie production solely for profit.). Both these 'obstacles' were offset by world capitalism as a whole. This was done by controlling the prices of raw materials thro' "spheres of influence", and by increasing the productivity of labour by new techniques. In Marxist terms;

$$\text{rate of profit} = \frac{S}{C+V} \quad \text{WHERE } S = \text{surplus value,}$$

C = constant capital, and V = variable capital. C includes machinery and raw materials and V includes wages and salaries. By ensuring cheap and steady supplies of raw materials and by increasing the productivity of labour (S) the advanced capitalist countries were able to counteract the fall in the rate of profit even with increases in wages. For example an increase in V to V+1 could be offset to some degree by an increase in S to S+1. But this increase in the demands of organised labour for higher wages could not be offset to the same degree by each capitalist country. Those with greater 'spheres of influence' could bag the lions share of raw materials. Those with stronger economies or more advanced technique, stood a better chance of increasing the surplus value extracted from their workforce. The USA by investing in the two most shattered economies Japan and West Germany, created a market for her goods, but also created the means by which these two countries were able to overtake their former 'enemies'<sup>+</sup> and eventually to begin challenging the US hegemony of the World Market.

Any increase in C or V without corresponding increases in S reduces the rate of profit<sup>++</sup> therefore alternative ways to

<sup>+</sup>Britain and France. <sup>++</sup>The rate of profit is important to the capitalist, because capital is only invested for profit so if it takes an investment of £1000 to make a profit of £100 ( a 10% rate) in one sphere, while in another it takes only an investment of £500 to make £100 profit (a 20% rate) then the capital will ~~XX~~ 'migrate' to its most profitable outlet. Also long term loans etc and preference shares which are contracted at a given interest have to be paid no matter if the rate of profit is falling.

(World Economic-2)

offset this trend were sought by some countries. One way was to increase prices and at the same time remaining competitive in the world market by devaluing the currency. This method was often resorted to by British Capitalism. A wage increase would be followed by a price increase and when the balance of payments started to reflect this lack of competitiveness the government would devalue the pound. The devaluing of the pound and the price increases would cut into the standards of living of the workforce and so pressure built up for further wage rises. This search for an increase in the rate of profit using these methods merely set in motion a process which did nothing in the long term to offset the fall in the rate of profit, because by devaluing the currency the Government had merely devalued the profits (where the profits are realised in money.).

By 1972 other factors which were gathering force in the monetary spheres, broke to the surface, as terrific bouts of speculation in currencies began. The reaction of nervous governments in closing down the 'exchanges' and in devaluations and revaluations and finally in the ending of fixed exchange rates, led to a flight from money into commodities. Commodities were increasingly sought as a means to 'take cover' from the uncertainties of currency speculation, and thus maintain the ~~XXXXX~~ value of money capital. This speculative flight into commodities however, forced the price of essential raw materials to double and even treble. Copper, zinc, tin and steel not to mention wool, grain and other foodstuffs. Although this demand led to a flurry of activity in 1973 in the productive levels of world capitalism, it was really the beginning of the end for the World capitalist post war 'miracle'. For now both factors C and V were rising rapidly without compensating rises in S. This meant that the rate of profit was rapidly declining and could only be balanced by equally rapid price rises, hence the phenomenal rates of inflation thro-out the world.

#### INFLATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

73/74

Australia	13.2%
Brazil	13.0%
Britain	12.0%
Canada	10.0%
Germany	7.9%
India	21.0%
Japan	19.1%
USA	9.2%

(source OECD, UN IMF)

The effects of this inflation is felt greatest by those countries without masses of reserves to fall back on, or high levels of technique to use in a competitive battle. This massive

(World Economic 3)

price escalation could not go on for long without effecting the Capitalists process itself and becoming a viscous circle. As costs were rising faster than companies could process the materials sell the finished products and buy new stocks at even higher prices, there was an even greater twist to the decline in profits. The results are obvious, defaults on loans, cash flow shortages, and increasing bankruptcies. At the same time the high flying financiers were gambling with the new possibilities opened up for buying and selling currencies due to the 'floating' exchange rates. Wild chances were taken and large fortunes made overnight only later to be lost just as easily. In this way many well known banks were forced to accept exceptionally large losses. The results of this process and the resulting loss of confidence were finally to be transmitted as a general lack of confidence and saw the whipping off of millions of pounds from the stock exchange.

"stock market crashes have now already gone further than those in 1929." (Economist 21/12/74.

All this instability and uncertainty in the financial superstructure of western capitalism had its repercussions in the underdeveloped countries as the ruling stratas of those countries watched their buying power gradually dwindling. One of the results was the announcement by the Arab oil producing countries, of massive incrdases in the price of crude oil. The essential elements of the crisis were well under way and the oil increases are not something seperate from this overall crisis they are but another 'symptom' of the crisis as it develops. Even though as a symptom they at present loom large, one has only to see the effects of a deep recession on thier 'position' in the world market. A sharp decline in the production of cars and oil based products would result in a sharp decline in the demand for crude oil, this together with the frantic searches for alternative oil supplies, could lead to a dramatic fall in oil prices. Indeed the advanced countries during a slump would find it easier to take steps to end their almost total dependance upon Arab oil, by subsidising home produced oil. In this situation the huge transfer of "power" which some commentators seem to think has ocured will seem magically have disappeared. It should be stressed here that the 'power' of money capital is dependant upon the capitalist mode of production which is in turn dependant upnn the existance of a landless propertyless proletatiat and a Capitalist Class which owns the MEANS OF PRODUCTION. Finance Capitalism arose at a definite stage in the development of Capitalist

Finance Capitalist

(World Economic 4)

The economist and various other organs of international big business now compete with each other in predicting doom and gloom. Even the most myopic of commentators now predict crisis. The more impressionistic ones of course, now see deeper crisis than anyone else, when before they saw less. This of course does not demonstrate their conversion to a scientific method, but merely once again shows the instability of their impressionism. From no crisis to super colossal crisis; from lethargy to panic stations may seem to show a conversion as rapid as St. Pauls, but in actual fact if one looks at their method there is no conversion at all. Their methods are essentially empiricist. They take appearances as the substance, they take the symptoms as the cause, and for them life is a series of still shots. They do not see the unfolding, developing, contradictory dependant nature of the world. And of course the materiality of the world is for them but a reflection of the ideas in mens heads; evil men evil times, etc.

What we have then is not a crisis of inflation nor a crisis of petrodollars. There is no shortage of markets for commodities nor is there a shortage of labour or raw materials. but there is a decline in the rate of profit, there is therefore a crisis of overproduction RELATIVE to the social conditions under which capitalist production takes place. (ie production for profit) The steady increase in wages (V) was not a particularly acute problem for US capitalism as it was more than offset for long periods by the productivity of American Labour which used the most advanced technique.

PRODUCTIVITY PER MAN HOUR (1969)

United Kingdom.....	1.68
France.....	2.43
Italy.....	1.75
Netherlands.....	2.59
Germany.....	2.46
USA.....	5.80
Japan.....	1.32.

(source Hudson Report.)

Thus the productivity of US labour was three and a half times greater than that of the UK. The removal, of the self imposed barriers to expansion, by the second world war led to the enormous expansion of US Capital and drew with it the expansion of credit and money capital.



(World Economic 5)

Although the role of State expenditure is extremely important in modern capitalism, it is soon dominated by the extremely rapid growth of private expenditure during a period of 'boom'. In 1946 public debt in the USA stood at 269 thousand million dollars, whereas private debt stood at 153 thousand million. but by 1974 public debt had risen by two and a half times to 660 th/m whilst private debt jumped by thirteen times to 2000 th/m. Money Capital is needed not only for the immediate production and consumption of commodities, but ever larger amounts are necessary as the world market expands, due to the time and distance lag between buying raw materials and their transportation their working up into commodities, re-transportation and sale. This process requires an extension of credit and means of payment which are independent of actual accumulation of capital but are at the same time dependant upon the process of accumulation.

"...there must be a plethora of money capital in definite phases of the cycle and this plethora must develop with the expansion of credit. And simultaneously with it, the necessity of driving the productive process beyond its capitalistic limits, must also develop: over-trade; over-production, and excessive credit." (Capital Vol 3 p 495/6)

In 1971 the then massive US deficit of trade of \$6 billion caused by the overtrading of the US with its capitalistic rivals, brought to the attention of the world the massive pool of dollars which had been circulating around Europe (euro-dollars) when these dollars started to be unloaded onto various Capitalist Governments who had fixed exchange rates. This unloading brought the reaction of 'floating' rates of exchange and restrictions on currency exchanges. This had the effect of causing the speculators for a period to turn to commodities for the protection of their capital as has been referred to earlier. And so we are back to the present period of bankruptcies, bank failures, loss of confidence and a contraction of production. One factor which is scarcely mentioned but which will inevitably occur sooner or later is a fall in prices not only in oil but generally as the processes mentioned earlier going into reverse (ie lack of demand, lack of confidence, lack of speculation, unemployment and a general lowering or attempts to lower the price of labour)

(World Economic 6)

Trotsky in his short piece on the "Curve of Capitalist Development" describes periods when the process of capitalist development is characterised by "sharply deliniated booms and weak shortlived crises" and others when the basic curve dips downward. Trotsky's graph is reproduced below. We would conclude from our analysis which began in early 1973 and continous, that we are now at the breaking point of Capitalist development and thus at a period where politics cease to flow along in the same forms as the last period and that therefore it becomes necessary to analyse all the more deeply the impulses of economics upon politics. And all the more important to subject every slogan or panacea learnt by rote during the past period to vigorous criticism and analysis to see how it fits or otherwise in the present conditions.

## BRITISH ECONOMY.

With the exception of Italy, Britain is now probably the weakest Capitalist country in the Western Imperialist camp. British Capitalism has moved jerkily and parasitically along the world boom created by the powerful US economy after the 2nd World War. Whenever that 'boom' slowed or hesitated British Capitalism was the first to be thrown to its knees. Alternating between policies of devaluations and wage controls, attempts were made to maintain the competitiveness of British Capital with its stronger rivals. As stated elsewhere British Capitalism was among the first to feel the effects of the decline in the rate of profit. The recent accelerated rate of inflation has understandably hurt the weakest economies most. And with the ruling class in no shape yet to combat the working class head on, the British Economy, close to collapse, lurches on, on the strength of international loans. Despite these loans however the inherent weakness of the British economy still manifests itself daily. Banks have admitted losses of over £1000 million on unauthorised foreign exchange dealing, and the trickle of collapsing fringe banks has become quite a flood. A number of property companies were swept with them, and the crisis already effects many large insurance companies, not to mention holiday firms. Although the crisis at first manifest itself in the monetary spheres it is increasingly effecting the industrial and commercial levels as it bites deeper.

Although the big industries often appear to be central to the crisis, as they are able to make big demands (such as British Leylands request for £50million), and consequently get good news coverage, nevertheless they increasingly do so at the expense of the smaller businesses. Big businesses with cash flow problems have been able to offset them to some extent by squeezing smaller businesses by withholding payments to them for anything up to six months. These small businesses employ almost 1/3 of the working population and contribute 1/4 of the total output of the private sector and 20% of the Gross National Product. They are now being wound up at the rate of 100 per week. This fact alone is one of the material conditions assisting the development of the National Front type politics. The small businesses are the least likely to be able to borrow money from the banks even at the high interests rate demanded, because the banking institutions themselves in a shaky condition

(British Economy 2)

are presently borrowing money mainly on short term and are thus unable to lend long term, without Government support.

"British Companies now borrow more short term money than any other major industrial country." (Sun Times 27/10/74)

In fact long term loans and share capital all but dried up last year and now the vast majority are only able to continue trading by operating on short term loans, much of which originates from re-cycled petrodollars which at present is still flowing into British banks. An interruption of this flow of course would have the result of further crashes. A continuation of this flow only postpones the day of repayment and all the added interest with it. It is estimated that altogether British businesses were about £3000million short in working capital in 1974. This shortage had to be made up by loans. The snag is though that loans need repaying. In many cases large profits are announced but are often the result of inflated rises in the value of stocks from when they are bought to when they are sold. This inflated profit is subject to 50% corporation tax and so leaves insufficient capital left to buy the same volume of stocks to recycle. The difference is often made up by additional borrowing, needing further increases to repay the loan plus interest plus new increases in prices, and so on. If the banks were to be encouraged to make long term loans available then it is to be expected that they will demand Government guarantees of liquidity should they be drained of short term loans. But over this question there are noticeable splits within business circles on the way to finance these shortages.

Meanwhile the £ is continuously under attack and its sinking value against other currencies only translates itself into the domestic economy in the form of rising prices of imported goods. These rises in turn mean more pressure for wages. In the present state of British Capitalism and with the contraction of world trade, there is left little room to manoeuvre and great pressures upon those who govern and choose to run Capitalism. Among the few alternatives left are those of either conceding to the demands of the working class in wage and salary increases and therefore to move further into a condition of runaway inflation, or to savagely stamp on the brakes by deflating the economy, and causing widespread unemployment and business failures. Both alternatives mean sooner or later taking on the

(British Economy 3)

the working classes in an attempt to decrease the price of labour; as did runaway inflation in Germany in the 30's and as unemployment and wage cuts did in Britain in the 20's. Given a Labour Government and the uncertain and split nature of the ruling classes the likely political choice will favour a little bit of both. The effects are likely to be to give some concessions to wage demands, some concessions to big business, with a continuing neglect of the smaller businesses which will continue to be squeezed out of the productive process and add to the ranks of the unemployed their workforces. This growth of unemployment of course having the effect of sapping the combative strength of those left in work and fighting to maintain their standards of living. This course of events will have the effect of a tendency to split the organised working class into two camps at first; those fighting for the right to work; and those fighting to maintain their standards of living. But a further tendency also manifests itself in that process. The alienation of those other classes which do not have the strength or the traditional solidarity of the organised trade union movement. The small businessmen, shopkeepers, self employed etc will increasingly look for a strong arm to represent their interests as they are incapable of representing their own, except through the medium of either the working class or the ruling class. They will be drawn irresistably toward National Front type formations if they are not won to the working class. The crisis of Capitalism offers the increased opportunity of exposing to these layers the role of capitalist governments in the attacks upon themselves and the working class.

The increasing balance of payments problems will severely hamper the flexibility of the ruling class offensive and will act as a restraint upon the amount of concessions available to any section however strong. Given the low state of reserves and the need to borrow finance its debts the British Government can expect shortly to have the terms of loans dictated to it, which will undoubtedly include wage controls of some kind.

The delay in the direct attack will not prevent the next twelve months from being a period of struggle as sections struggle for the right to work and to maintain their standards of living. The propaganda tasks will therefore be to explain



(British Economy 4)

to the working classes and to other potential allies the precise nature of the concerted attack upon the majority of the population by the ruling strata and their representatives. To expose the all-round nature of the many phenomena facing them and the sources of these phenomena in the collapse and crisis of the capitalist economy. The political tasks will involve formulating a programme of transitional demands and to agitate and to organise around them, leading to the greatest possible unity and independence of the working classes and its allies against the political attacks of the ruling class whether directed through the State machinery or through the organised thuggery of fascist type organisations.

## Perspectives

British capitalism faces a prolonged period of economic and political crisis, arising from the culmination of its long term decline as an imperialist power, together with more immediate problems related to this, such as relations with the Common Market and the world market, within the context of the international crisis of capitalism.

This crisis cannot be solved within the traditional terms of British politics over the last hundred years; that is either Tory paternalism or Labour reformism. The continued survival of British capitalism on a world scale demands the decisive defeat of the working class in Britain; still among the most confident and well-organised in the world as a result of twenty-five years of full employment; a problem not faced by either the ruling or working class in Britain for almost fifty years, since the years before the General Strike of 1926.

The greatest strength of the working class lies in its militancy and organisation at the place of work. Its greatest weakness is its lack of overall class consciousness and political organisation and leadership. The strength of the ruling class lies in its control of the state and in the ideological domination of the working class by reformism, through the medium of the Labour Party.

If the working class is to avoid defeat this time, as it failed to do in 1926, then it must overcome both of these two problems. That is, it must be able to defeat the bourgeois state organisationally and the ruling class politically. For this, the class requires both the centralisation of its organisation and struggles, under its own control, and also the leadership of a revolutionary party equipped with a scientific programme and understanding of its struggles, which will necessarily lead the class beyond the limits of the bourgeois state and reformist ideology.

The combination of these two necessary tasks is the work of revolutionary Marxists in the present period.

## Capitalism and the Working Class

'The working class comes into existence side by side with capitalism, the system which imprisons it.' (WF Rank and File Programme)

British and world capitalism now face the prospect of continuing inflation and recession, a situation which cannot last for long without producing the classic features of a capitalist crisis - unemployment and declining production. In Britain, the effect of the crisis will be more severe than in other countries, due to its exposed position on the world market, the importance of finance capital (the City of London) and the reduced profitability of British industry because of its lack of capital investment, and the persistent demand of the working class for a higher standard of living through higher wages. The solutions to this crisis are increasingly seen to be political, with the increasing importance of state intervention in all economic fields, through nationalisation and subsidies, increasing state capitalist planning and integration of the trade union bureaucracy into the state machine.

Whether these solutions include nationalisation and workers participation or unemployment and legal attacks on pickets, as is more likely, they will demand a political response from the working class in revolutionary and socialist terms; for workers control and planning, expropriation of the means of production and workers' self-defence; ultimately for a workers government and a workers state.

All of this requires a programme and strategy, and a centralised revolutionary leadership, capable of organising and guiding the class to the seizure of political power, against the existing bourgeois state. This means a programme of transitional demands leading to the unification of all struggles against the ruling class and the state, by workers and other oppressed groups, transforming the whole of working class consciousness and social relations. It means taking every step necessary to increase the political and organisational independence of the working class within and against capitalism, in order to be able to free itself from capitalism.

## Tactics and Strategy: Transitional Demands and United Fronts

'In the last period we have related to the class primarily on the level of tactics (general strike etc.) Whether the coming explosions lead to victory or defeat, it is in either case vital that we conduct more adequate propaganda for a full rounded programme for the transformation of society. This is in principle separable from the question of demands on the Labour Party and governmental slogans.' (RR Perspectives, 1973)

Any strategy demands also the means of implementation, that is tactics. The chief tactics of revolutionary Marxists in the present period are transitional demands and united fronts. In the absence of a revolutionary party the existing revolutionary groups inadequately confront the reformist consciousness of the working class and its organised expression, the Labour Party. Transitional demands and united front tactics are the methods by which to begin the task of breaking this dominance over the working class.

Revolutionary Marxists use transitional demands in accordance with the real needs of the working class and other oppressed groups in society in their struggles against capitalism and the state. These struggles and demands lead necessarily beyond the limits of reformism in the period of capitalist crisis. In relation to the Labour Party, we direct these demands to the leadership through agitation within the rank and file, independently of the Labour Party itself, in a systematic manner determined by a definite programme and perspective, to increase the independence and self reliance of the class as a whole; in addition to demanding that a Labour government introduces those reforms which it promises and are demanded by the rank and file, where they are to the benefit of the class.

Raising and fighting for these transitional demands involves the formation of united fronts with sections of workers and others around them, including other revolutionary groups and rank and file trade unionists and Labour Party members, as well as tactics such as entrism and intervention in rank and file organisations and struggles. These interventions must take place on the basis of a transitional programme and a unifying political perspective and strategy.

## Programme

As well as propaganda systematically and consistently for the full transitional programme; for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the establishment of a planned economy under workers control, we must also agitate and organise around specific, immediate transitional demands meeting the present needs of the working class under the existing conditions of ruling class capitalist attack through the instrument of the Labour government, to unite sections of the working class fighting back against this attack and therefore against the Labour government.

This requires an action programme of transitional demands for the coming period, around which to concentrate our agitation, inside and outside the Labour Party, and to organise campaigns, united fronts and action groups together with other revolutionary tendencies and militant sections of workers and others fighting against the government's anti-working class policies, such as the social contract.

We propose the following action programme for this purpose:

1. Work or full pay; factory occupations against redundancies; an emergency state house-building programme, nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of all bankrupt companies and of all firms causing redundancies.
2. A rising scale of wages, benefits and public expenditure, no cuts in welfare spending; cost of living index drawn up by the trade unions, and committees of housewives and trade unionists to invigilate prices.

NO INCOMES POLICY.

3. Full implementation of the demands in the working women's charter.
4. United action against racists and fascists, repeal of the Jenkins measures, the conspiracy laws, defence of democratic rights.
5. Immediate withdrawal of all troops from Ireland and the immediate release of all detainees and Irish political prisoners.

For united front campaigns and organisations on the points above, with other revolutionary groups and sections of workers,

### FOOTNOTE

We realise that this programme is very general and needs spelling out more precisely. This will be done as soon as possible.



## The Social Contract

Whether the social contract succeeds or fails, the working class has no political answer to it. If it is broken by continuing wages militancy; by the miners again, perhaps; then the result will be either a compulsory incomes policy, with perhaps a wage freeze, and/or higher unemployment than has been experienced since the 1930s - and this time under a Labour government.

If it succeeds, as intended, in reducing wages and increasing profits, this will also cause lasting damage to the organised labour movement, through its deliberately divisive effects, of which the proposed NCB productivity deal was a good example.

The social contract aims to divide and defeat the working class by attacking it where the class is weakest; politically and ideologically. It is designed to reinforce the sectionalism of the trade union movement, attacking solidarity between higher and lower paid sections, for instance by isolating the miners, and plays on the traditional ideology of 'fairness' and the lack of understanding of capitalism fostered in the labour movement by the reformists, whether Labour MPs, trade union officials or Communist Party militants, who all share this ideology with the rank and file, however militant they may be.

The present crisis, therefore, will not be solved, from a working class point of view, social contract or no social contract. Neither is it soon likely to be solved for the ruling class - who have just reasserted their political power through the courts over the Shrewsbury Two's appeal. The perspective is therefore one of a continuing crisis, lasting possibly for a number of years before reaching a decisive stage of confrontation, until either the capitalist or working class can assert its political supremacy over society by imposing its own solution, either for the restoration of capitalism or else for the socialist transformation of society. It is for the latter that we must prepare our programme.

# CADRE BUILDING

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This section is split up into 4 main parts as follows:

1. Evidence that there is no firm cadre in Workers Fight at present.
2. The immediate effects of such a situation
3. The reasons why the group has no cadre.
4. What we should be doing to put matters right.

Each section is itself divided into subsections.

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## SECTION ONE

Is there a reasonably high cadre level in WF ?

No.

This is generally accepted.

"....One of the main problems remains the gap between a small number of leading comrades and the rest of the organisation..."

(part of resolution on organisation carried at last aggregate)

"...The good side of WF was its break with dogmatism ... But there was a bad side to this good side, and this was the failure to develop cadres"

(Sean Matgama, Aggregate Minutes. IB 23)

".....Lack of education. No firm cadre. Weak internal democracy."

(Andrew Hornung Aggregate Minutes IB 23)

Two years ago the situation was just as bleak:

" The general situation is that we have not managed to start - even to start - on the higher education programme ... We have many comrades with little political experience ... We do not yet function as a cadre processing machine ... we need to start functioning as such a machine "

(Sean Matgama IB Sept 1972 )

So in over two years there has been no improvement in the building of a cadre in the group. For a group such as ours, such a situation can have disastrous consequences:

"(without a cadre) the group will never be capable of either playing the necessary role in the class struggle, or collectively shaping up to the ideological problems presented by the day to day course of events.... At the least there is a constant problem of unevenness. At worst and ultimately, there is a danger of the creation of a sect - which in nearly every case arises as a result of a low level of political culture"  
(Sean Matgama IB Sept. 1972)

If we are to accept comrade Matgama's assertion of the danger of cadre-less groups degenerating into sects ( and we have no reason to dispute it) then we must apply the logic to Workers Fight. For over two years the group has been without ' a firm cadre'. There is then, according to Sean, a real danger of it becoming a sect. It is our contention that this process is already well under way.

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## SECTION TWO

The immediate effects of not having a cadre in the group

This section is subdivided as follows:

- A) Failure of the group to combat bourgeois ideology.
- B) Generally poor approach to organisational tasks.
- C) Tendency to use slogans without paying enough attention to their meanings and use .
- D) Increasing bureaucratism.

### A) Failure of the group to combat bourgeois ideology.

Bourgeois ideology is present in all of us. We were brought up in, and conditioned by, capitalist society and it would be silly to attempt to claim that we had been unaffected by the process. Even among experienced revolutionaries ideas and methods which have their origins in the ruling class are constantly springing to the surface. It is the duty and task of any revolutionary group to conduct a constant struggle against them.

We have, to a large extent, failed in this task. One of the most obvious examples is the question of male chauvinism. This runs at a high level in the group, and there is an almost complete lack of understanding of the problems of men and women who have children, and virtually no effort made by the group to develop ways of integrating such men and women into the group.

Male chauvinist attitudes are an integral part of the ruling class ideology, and also one of the most deeply entrenched parts. So deep does it go in Workers Fight that the convenor of the Women's Fraction, Fran Brodie, in an argument with Eileen Murphy in the Manchester Branch, announced that being a housewife isn't working, and that after a hard day's 'work' a man shouldn't have to get up in the middle of the night to see to a crying baby - that is the woman's job!!

In a discussion on the NC on Dec 14th 1974, Andrew Hornung, Martin Thomas, Pete Radcliffe and other leading comrades argued that the question of who looks after children was not a subject that the Women's Fraction should discuss, that they had more important things to do, and in any case it was not a political concern for a

revolutionary group.

But the depth of male chauvinism in the group is perhaps best demonstrated by the following quotation from a letter from Martin Thomas to Eileen Murphy

"...the approach to fighting male chauvinism is idealist. As Marxists we reject the idea of building some little island of perfectly communist-minded people within bourgeois society. The working class can and will overthrow capitalism while still rising no higher than bourgeois standards in personal day-to-day behaviour. A reformation in that sphere will come only after (accent in original) the overthrow of capitalism, gradually, over generations."

By this handy little argument we are virtually excused the task of combatting male chauvinism in our own group. The quotation goes on:

"Of course, we fight for every comrade to behave as much as possible in a communist manner in their everyday personal life. But if we ever allow that side of things to become more important than our public activity in the labour movement, we have taken the step from being a practical organisation to being a utopian coterie. And it seems to us that it is only on the basis of that utopian conception that you can justify the inclusion of Workers Fight among those who 'have not effectively fought male chauvinism in their own ranks' "

Why, we ask, does this little argument not apply to other aspects of bourgeois ideology - racialism, nationalism, etc? The answer is, of course, that it does. In fact it can be used to cop out of any ideological struggle you care to name - IS have used it to duck out of the ideological struggle against racialism; and Workers Fight have quite rightly criticised them for doing so. It is no marxist who uses the excuse of 'public activity in the labour movement' to avoid an uncompromising struggle against the ideas of the ruling class.

Martin Thomas was writing on behalf of the whole SC when he wrote this letter and it is interesting to compare his, and the SC's, assertion that "a reformation in this sphere will come only after the overthrow of capitalism, gradually over generations", with the resolution carried at the last aggregate. This resolution reaffirmed Workers Fight's 'unconditional and unequivocal support for the Women's Liberation Movement' and we take the following quotes from it:

"That WF's support for the WLM does not only demand token acceptance of the 6 demands and a general willingness to show solidarity around associated campaigns. Rather, it means that WF members take steps to acquaint themselves with what is happening in the WLM and recognise the need to assimilate the developments taking place there; using these developments to fight male chauvinism in the group and in the working class"

"That acceptance of a motion of support for the WLM means that male comrades have a responsibility to recognise the relevance of the motion in regard to their own attitude as revolutionaries and that they ~~xxx~~ try to understand their own sexism and its place as a very definite support of overall bourgeois ideology.

"That WF recognise the division of labour involved in housework and looking after children and accept the validity of mobilising women in the community as well as at work....."

"Babysitting for Workers Fight is a revolutionary duty as an enabling condition participation in revolutionary activity of men and women comrades and comrades."

"Male comrades must fight to develop a full understanding of the subordinate role .... imposed upon women by capitalist society, so that instead of perpetuating this role through their own behaviour and expectations they can assist women in their struggle to free themselves from what capitalism decrees for them and develop their own definition of their existence and sexuality as women" (All accent ours)

The enormous contrast between this resolution and the SC's letter to Eileen only demonstrates that workers fight pay no more than begrudging lip service to the oppression of women. No mention in the resolution of the struggle against bourgeois ideas taking second place to "our public activity in the labour movement". No mention of the problem being shelved till after the revolution. In what they said at the NC on Dec 14th Andrew Hornung and the others were quite clearly in contravention of this resolution. In what the SC wrote to Eileen on 5th January, the resolution was quite obviously ignored both in detail and spirit. Rather than ~~xxxxxx~~ helping Eileen to 'develop her own definition of her existence and sexuality as a woman' she was quite bluntly warned of the dangers of comrades seeing themselves as "trade unionists, or students, or black people or women first, communists second". Rather than setting about the task of 'using the developments in the WLM to fight male chauvinism in the group and in the working ~~xxx~~ class' they maintain that the 'working class can and will overthrow capitalism while still rising no higher than bourgeois standards'.

The 'utopian idealism' of which comrade Thomas speaks rests not with Eileen, but with himself and the SC. The bourgeoisie are the ruling class in every sense - including the ideological sense. Their ideas are the predominant ideas in society - and, as a result, in the working class. It is our task as conscious revolutionaries to replace, in the vanguard of the class, those 'ruling' ideas by revolutionary ones. This should not be seen as separate from 'our public activity in the labour movement' but as the very essence of that activity. Unless the ideological battle is won the working class will be completely incapable of defeating capitalism. In a literal sense, the class must become armed with the ideas of scientific socialism. And this will not be achieved merely through the spontaneous activity of the class itself. 'Politics is a science and an art that does not drop from the skies' Lenin tells us. It is our job to fight to 'raise the spontaneous movement to the level of Marxist programme'. And that implies a battle of ideas. The ideas of the ruling class against the ideas of revolutionary socialism. Our ideas against theirs. "Socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without" (Lenin. What is to be done) For Lenin, this was the task of the revolutionary party.

And yet to win this battle - to be capable of exposing and defeating bourgeois ideology in all its aspects - we ourselves have to be aware of the full extent of that ideology, and strive to eliminate it in our own attitudes and methods. If we leave this job till after the revolution then we really are idealists.

In all probability the SC would agree with these arguments with relation say to nationalism. The fact that they do not apply the same logic to the question of male chauvinism is first a measure of the extent of bourgeois ideas in the group, and second a consequence of the dominance of men in the group, and the reticence of many of them to surrender the privileges bourgeois society has given to them. One of the most important contributions the WLM has made in recent years is to analyse in great detail the various problems which arise as a direct result of the objective conditions of life of ~~xxxx~~ most women. Problems (such as the problems of looking after children) which for centuries have been regarded as 'personal' have been shown



(and shown to quite large numbers of women) to be of a political nature. Yet the depth of this analysis has largely been ignored by the left, who have tended to take only the 'trade union' and 'economic' pickings out of the WLM, and preferred to continue seeing the other problems as 'personal' (Hence AM's and MI's assertion that "who looks after baby" is not the political concern of our group) Little wonder that there is such widespread suspicion of revolutionaries in the WLM! Half the population of the world is plagued with these 'personal' problems. It is time we began to give them the importance they deserve - not because we wish to set up 'little islands' or 'utopian coteries', but because we need first to create the material conditions for the participation of men and women with families in the revolutionary organisation, and secondly because in order to defeat the bourgeoisie we have to defeat their ideas first in our own party and second in the vanguard of the class. We will not do it completely, but we must do it to the best of our ability.

Perhaps the SC imagine that, unlike the divisions caused by nationalism and racialism, divisions in the working class arising out of the particular oppression of women are not dangerous. We ask them to consider the Cowley wives, the women workers at Checkmate in Leicester who volunteered to take a wage cut, the male workers at SEI who refused to back up their sisters on the picket line and in fact scabbed on them. We all know male revolutionaries and militants who have 'problems with their wives' yet we do nothing about these 'problems' except perhaps to advise divorce!

We need the support and active participation of large numbers of working class women, if we are even to hope of being effective. To get that support we need to improve both in our theoretical understanding of the problems relating to sexism and in our practice related to that theory.

To end this piece on male chauvinism we include one last example of how little many comrades in the group understand about the problems of caring for children.

At a W/C branch meeting just before the IS Rank and File conference, Roy Ratcliffe suggested that Ian Heyes should go to the conference to propose a motion on the Shrewsbury pickets. Roy further suggested that we should try to enable Annette, Ian's wife, to go with him for the weekend. This meant looking after the children (3 of them) for 2 days. Suggestions came forward on the lines of 'I'll do it for a couple of hours on Saturday morning' 'Can you fill in from six till eight Friday evening?' etc, etc. Someone even began drawing up a rota sheet! What the state of the children would have been like after two days of being passed from stranger to stranger in rapid succession, apparently occurred to hardly anyone. (One of the children is a baby of 18 months, the others are still very young) What the comrades did not realise is that looking after such young children ~~xxxxxx~~ - feeding them, putting their clothes on, bathing them, dealing with their moods and tantrums, getting them to bed, even just playing with them - is not as simple as sitting on an egg. Quite naturally Roy raised objections. The arrangements were not adequate - Annette would not agree to such an offer, etc. Sean Matgamma then accused Roy of trying to counterpose the 'non-political' question of who looked after Ian's children to the 'political' usefulness of Ian going to the conference. Roy gave up in dismay ~~and~~ at this point and not surprisingly the scheme fell through, and Ian did not go to the conference.

In general WF's insensitivity to Ian's situation, and the general lack of understanding in the group about the daily life and commitments of working men and women who have children, have served quite markedly to alienate Annette from Workers Fight and from revolutionary politics in general. She forms ~~xxxxxx~~ her opinions about us, as most other workers do, by our attitudes to her particular situation and the problems arising from it. She has found our attitudes, to say the least, ~~xxxxxx~~ unattractive - and who can blame her?

We finished with this example not to gripe about one particular

incident in the Manchester branch but to illustrate a general point. We cannot hope to increase the worker composition of our group with attitudes so ignorant as these. If we treat recruits from the working class ~~with the same way we treat Ian and Annette~~, the vast majority of them will very quickly tell us where we can go with our party.

We will illustrate our argument about the group's failure to combat bourgeois ~~xx~~ ideology with one other important example - the Open Letter for a Revolutionary Regroupment. We ~~xx~~ make the following points about it:

1. The very first sentence, 'We are already entering the most serious world capitalist recession for decades..', demands recognition of a previously incorrect analysis by the group which in fact contra-dicted this sentence. No such admission is to be found in any of the group's publications, in any of the meetings of its leading circles, or even in private conversations. (Note 1)
2. "This simmering crisis offers tremendous opportunities for recreating a mass revolutionary workers movement, for building substantial organisations". In other words, "Crisis - big chance for left!" While it is undeniable that we cannot think of creating a mass revolutionary movement unless the objective conditions are right, it is vital ~~xxxx~~ to remember that the objective conditions are not the only factor in the equation. If this were not so, every crisis in history would have produced its corresponding mass revolutionary organisation. The same 'simmering crisis' we talk of, offers ~~xxxx~~ fascism its 'big chance', and which of us it is who manages to hit the jackpot, depends on who wins the ideological battle. On this level - the ideological - revolutionaries have hardly begun to make an impression. In the eyes of the masses, marxism has not yet even become a factor in their struggle. The struggle against the ideas of the ruling class, and for marxism, is still being waged inside the left groups. And this struggle has to be won before we can seriously talk about 'big ~~xxxx~~ chances'. Building a mass revolutionary movement is not simply a matter of working hard when the right conditions present themselves.  
NB. In fact this question - whether a mass revolutionary party could be on the cards for the immediate future - was posed by a comrade outside WF at a regroupment meeting in Manchester early in January. 'Can we, in the here and now, seriously envisage the building of a party that is both mass and revolutionary?' he asked. And in the 'reply' by Martin Thomas, he was given no answer.

#### Note 1

From RR's perspectives document:

"The world phenomena of recurring trade imbalances and monetary crises are surface symptoms, giving advance warning of an approaching deep economic crisis for world imperialism" This was described by those who opposed it as 'the catastrophic perspective'.

The alternative which was accepted at that time was at first so woolly as to make it impossible to crystallize but later as the argument sharpened, we find the following (from PS article in IB 14)

"Thus we need to prepare politically, without a catastrophic perspective....."

The difference between the two perspectives can best be summed up in the following way:

RR. Deep economic crisis since 2nd world war.

PS. Need to prepare without catastrophic perspective. "perspective is one of stagnation."

3. In the analysis of the left we find no mention of the conditions inside the most important group - ie the group calling for regroupment!

These include:

i) a serious disagreement over perspectives and LP entry. And since the perspectives have altered without debate, without reference to previous perspectives, differences arise due to the lack of seriousness of certain comrades towards their theory.

ii) that no perspectives were offered to the group at the last aggregate, and the analyses that were offered were referred back.

iii) that a 'slander' campaign is already underway and a 'herding' has already taken place in the Northwest (quotes refer to Open Letter comments on the IMG)

iv) that WF is losing its worker content

v) that discussion on certain subjects has been suppressed within the group.

So why were these points not offered in a 'serious' debate over regroupment? It could be seen as an opportunist manoeuvre on the part of WF to sweep up the dissidents within the other groups under the guise of 'serious regroupment'. Such a tactic could rightly be called sectarian. If on the other hand, it amounted to a mere oversight - a blind spot on the retina of the authors - then it ~~travels~~ ~~travels~~ ~~travels~~ truly reveals the serious lack of revolutionary marxist method in our group - the same disease which is endemic in all the left groups.

Far from being 'armed with the science of ~~the~~ marxism' we are as yet groping for a fuller understanding of the science we identify ourselves with. It is precisely because marxism is not a ready-made answer, but a living guide to action, that it reflects the ever-changing objective reality and, by the fact that it is embodied in the consciousness of human brains, is ~~a~~ subject to alien and bourgeois adaptations.

In a period of sharp change these forces are most forcefully reflected inside the marxist movement (ie the collective embodiment of marxism). Sharp changes therefore necessitate a reappraisal of basic assumptions in the light of changed circumstances. A more diligent searching and sifting of the data and information we are receiving, and a more demonstration and proof of the marxist method. In short we need to lift the general level of consciousness of our comrades if they are not to be ~~a~~ inundated and confused by the proliferation of bourgeois currents both inside and outside the marxist movement.

But the analysis in the Open Letter does not begin to do this. The Militant ~~xxxxxxx~~ group is characterised by its 'elderly, if not senile, statesmen'. Is there something wrong with being old then? Does it imply an automatic state of idiocy? It would seem so. We find the same adjective again to describe IS whose 'old centrist leadership' has kept its 'hold', while Socialist Worker has become 'trivial and shallow'. The WRP (who WF once thought important enough to publish a sixty-page pamphlet about) are swept aside in one scathing paragraph - gangsters and sectarians. But it was on the IMG that the Open Letter really went to town. We find that it has a 'kaleidoscopic variety of theoretical breakthroughs, usually wrong and often bizarre', its leaders are 'lilliputian theorists ~~of~~ (a) pygmy organisation".

What are we? Marxists or pop-song lyric writers? We hurl out all this non-political abuse and then have the audacity to proclaim that 'To refuse to unite until agreement is reached on every dotted i and crossed t is the act of a sectarian, not a principled politician .... it is the act of one who believes that his group is the source of all wisdom, who believes that no other tendency has anything of value to offer.'

Any reader with an ounce of discerning grey matter who had managed to plough his way through all the expletives about gangsters and lilliputian theorists only to come across this last sentence, must

surely have tossed the Letter away in dismay. Are we really incapable of seeing the irony of it ourselves?

What we have done is to caricature the other tendencies in a non-Marxist and casual way. We make no attempt to define them by how they reflect the present day bourgeois upheaval. We label them rather than analyse them. And the habit of labelling is a bourgeois one, and a consequence of the bourgeois ideas and methods prevalent in our group. We find it elsewhere - in Young Socialist (No. 2) where we discover on the back page that "once you've spoken to one of their members (PSL), you've spoken to them all". We find it in the labelling of our own opposition to the Workers Fight leadership, which has been variously described as 'cliquism' 'parochialism' 'Burnhamism' 'Abernism' 'Phariseeism' etc.

On the dangers of labelling, Trotsky had this to say:

"..As long as politics keeps flowing in the same forms within the same banks, and at the same speed, ie as long as the accumulation of economic quantity has not passed into a change of political quality, this type of clarifying abstraction (the interests of the bourgeoisie, imperialism, fascism, etc) still more or less serves its task. Not to interpret a political fact in all its concreteness, but to reduce it to a familiar type .....

....When a serious change occurs in the situation, all the more so a sharp change, such general explanations reveal their complete inadequacy and become wholly transformed into empty truisms. In such cases it is invariably necessary to probe analytically much more deeply in order to determine the qualitative aspect..." Notice here that Trotsky is talking about far more admissible labels (such as 'fascism') than we have used in the Open Letter. It seems that we have 'begin in the elementary class and start our 'analytical probing' into labels like 'senile'. Otherwise how else do we hope to extract the qualitative aspect out of the changing reality around us?

It should not be necessary to point out why we need to deepen our political probing, why we need to eliminate labelling and mud-slinging, why indeed we should bother to combat bourgeois ideology. Marxism is a rigorous scientific method and for that reason all of these things should be self-evident. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Yet we have read of 'serious regroupment' which really means 'Build Workers Fight'. We have been told of the dangers of 'senility' and 'lilliputian theorists! We have heard ourselves described as 'parochialist' and 'incapable of political debate'. We have seen how the SC excuses itself from the necessity of waging war on bourgeois ideology as it expresses itself in relation to women. And so we are prompted to include the following allegory from Plekhanov to demonstrate (perhaps somewhat over-simply) precisely why the ideological struggle is all important. "There is a very remarkable legend among the negroes of North Guinea. 'One day', it says, 'God summoned the two sons of the first human couple. One of them was white, the other dark-skinned. Placing before them a heap of gold and a book, God ordered the dark-skinned brother, as being the elder, to choose one of the two. He chose the gold, so the younger brother received the book. An unknown force immediately transported the younger one with the book to a cold, distant country. But thanks to his book he became learned, terrifying and strong. As for the elder brother, he remained in his native country and lived long enough to see how superior science is to wealth.' The bourgeoisie once had knowledge and wealth. Unlike the dark-skinned brother in the negroe legend, it obtained possession of both gold and book, because history, the god of human societies, does not recognise the right of classes which are under-age, and commits them to the guardianship of their elder brothers. But the time came when

the working class, slighted by history, grew out of childhood and the bourgeoisie had to share with it. The bourgeoisie kept the gold, while the younger brother received the 'book', thanks to which, despite the cold and darkness of his cellars, he has now become 'strong and terrifying'. Little by little, scientific socialism is ousting the bourgeois theories from the pages of this magic book, and soon the proletariat will read in the book how they can gain material sufficiency. Then they will throw off the shameful yoke of capitalism and show the bourgeoisie 'how superior science is to wealth'." (Philosophical Works)

Not only do the proletariat need 'the book', they need it to be free of 'bourgeois theories'. That is our job. And it is one we are not doing well.

. . . . .

B) GENERALLY POOR APPROACH TO ORGANISATIONAL TASKS

This, like the admission that there is no firm cadre ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ appears to be one of the things that is fairly well established in the group. At the last aggregate we find Dave Spencer saying,

"Poor organisation has been an endearing feature of WF in the past - this must now change" (Aggregate minutes)

We will not dwell on the examples ~~in~~ in depth. In Manchester we have experienced a variety of them. There were the 'control commissions' set up by the centre to look into and report on the 'problems' in the Manchester/Dolton branch. They never functioned, never visited us, ~~never~~ never did their job. We have seen WF comrades left to fend entirely for themselves after being arrested and fined whilst on demonstrations. We have seen complicated plans of educational that never got off the ground. We have watched how unreliable the system of passing information to the centre can be. We have seen how slow the organisation was to react to the sudden growth of a rolling strike movement in Manchester to free the Shrewsbury Pickets - despite the fact the very wheels had largely been put into motion by Ian Heyes, a WF member and UCATT steward. We heard how the organisation was 'suddenly' massively in debt. We listened to endless explanations for the delay in production of Permanent Revolution.

Enough! Unlike Dave Spencer we do not find such inefficiency 'endearing'. Nor do we imagine it can be improved simply by stamping our feet and demanding that 'this must now change'.

There is a reason for such inefficiency. It is a consequence of there being no firm cadre in the group. Until we begin to produce comrades who are revolutionaries in the full sense of the word (ie they possess both a sharp political consciousness and a deep commitment to struggle) then inefficiency will always be with us. It is the mark of amateurism. No amount of foot stamping and use of imperatives will change that.

. . . . .

C) TENDENCY TO USE SLOGANS WITHOUT PAYING ENOUGH ATTENTION TO THEIR MEANINGS AND USE.

In fact this tendency exists far more in other groups than it does in Workers Fight. But it nevertheless does exist in our group, and appears to us to be on the increase.

That it is caused by the lack of a cadre is fairly obvious. The inexperienced revolutionary, unsure of himself and the politics he has adopted, has a tendency in difficult situations to fall back on the slogans he has learnt. The experienced revolutionary on the other hand will not be frightened of making compromises where they are necessary. He will not see the slogans he uses as immutable in themselves - sacred cows - but necessary weapons in the armoury of a revolutionary; weapons moulded and shaped by a deeper theory. The experienced comrade



will therefore possess greater flexibility, and, as Lenin put it, will know how to 'use his brains' in different circumstances. This does not imply he will have no use for slogans - he will have a very important use for them. But the great difference between the experienced and the inexperienced revolutionary is that the former will understand the full meaning and relevance of the slogans he uses, and, just as important, he will be aware of their limitations. They will not be something to fall back on in difficult circumstances - for him this will be the method of marxism - a far more substantial prop to lean on.

Of course, you don't acquire experience overnight. You have to be inexperienced before you can be experienced, and so we regard it as quite normal and acceptable to find comrades in any revolutionary group who treat slogans rather as though they are the very substance of our theory. What is not normal and acceptable though is to find the same sloganising in the leading bodies of the organisation and in the publications. The following are examples of just this:

#### Young Socialist Issue No.2

As Labour Party work is 'No 1 priority' for all members, we expect the politics in this publication to be well thought-out and convincing. Yet in YS No.2 we find the following:

".....we should be fighting for practical measures.....In our LPYS branches and wards, we've got to stop passing resolutions and feeling good about it. ACTION is needed in support of the following demands:

#### DEMANDS

We must fight against

- . unemployment. Work or full pay for every worker.
- . rising prices. Take the food companies and supermarkets out of the control of speculators and profiteers and place them in the hands of workers and housewives committees.
- . Incomes policy. The working class will not have its living standards reduced in the interests of big business "

Someone reading this passage with any seriousness must have asked himself what sort of 'ACTION' he could take to bring about these demands, other than just passing resolutions. On the first and third of the demands, he would probably make some headway. They are demands that many ordinary workers can see as just and reasonable - self defence measures in fact - but demands which are not automatically seen to challenge the capitalist system. 'ACTION' on these demands is possible here and now. We can fight unemployment in a number of ways - occupations, reduced working week, etc and central to such action is the demand for 'work or full pay'. Similarly with Incomes Policy; 'ACTION' can come in the form of wage claims outside the Social Contract, and industrial action in support of them.

So on those two demands our serious reader would not be presented with too much of a problem to deal with. But what about the second demand? After reading this one he must have scratched his head long and hard. 'Take the food companies out of the hands of profiteers..etc' What organisation is going to do the taking? His trade union? His LPYS branch? The Labour Party? Who and what are these 'workers and housewives committees'? Who's setting them up, and on what basis? Perhaps our serious reader is meant to set up these committees? Perhaps this is what is meant by 'ACTION'. But suppose he were to set up such committees - how are these committees supposed to 'take control' - by walking into the local branch of Safeway and taking over the tills? Perhaps the demand refers to the Labour Party. Perhaps we're meant to press them to do this job - but how do we do that, other than just by 'passing resolutions'?

At this stage of the game

should only appear as a natural supplement to agitational work. He stresses that it is the agitation (and particularly the skill and clarity with which different aspects of the exploitation of the ruling class are 'exposed') that is the most important aspect of the work. If this is done thoroughly and convincingly, the demands should be so self-evident as to be hardly necessary.

The demand in question is hardly a natural supplement to the article preceding it. It is a propagandist demand tacked onto the end of quite a shallow piece of agitation. As for 'ACTION', what we are in fact calling for in this case is nothing short of a revolution. How else do we expect to take over food companies and place them in the hands of workers and housewives committees? And if we are calling for a revolution, do we really expect it to begin in the supermarkets before it begins in the factories?

The 'demand' is nonsense, linked as it is to 'ACTION'. Yet it appeared on the front page of a publication we regard as central in our work. We can only conclude that the temptation to throw slogans around in any old haphazard fashion goes much deeper in our ranks than it should.

#### No platform for fascists

This is a slogan that has been headlined in our paper probably more times than any other. For this reason alone we would have assumed that its meaning and use would have been clearly understood in the group. But this is not the case - even a fairly simple slogan like this one, if not properly understood, can lead to confusion.

No-one doubts the correctness of the slogan. But it is a slogan that has to be implemented in action, and it is in the implementation that one has to 'use one's brains'. For instance, on such a question as whether or not to allow a NF member to address a meeting in a university or not, there can be little doubt. You do not even allow them to enter the university. But what about when the NF call their own meetings, in a pub say? We try and stop that too, naturally. But what happens if they have a meeting of 50 and only six of us turn up to stop them? Do we stand like Horatius on the bridge and die a valiant death? Of course not. We 'use our brains', admit temporary defeat and pledge ourselves to organise better the next time. Yet technically it could be said we had allowed them a platform. And in a case which was not so obvious as this (say where there had been not six, but twenty) there would probably have been those who would have made the ~~staxxx~~ accusation. There are no guide-lines laid down for us in the making of such decisions. We are expected to implement the slogan as well as we can and according to our own judgement of the particular situation. Some will take the slogan completely literally and indulge in sheer adventurism, others will be over-cautious in the tactics they use. But what is clear is that the slogan is not as simple as it sounds. To use it, or not to use it, in varying situations demands skill and experience.

In view of the high level of importance we attach to the slogan it would have been wise to have some discussion in the group about its implementation. There are other considerations too.

While no-one would deny that in 99 cases out of a hundred the slogan as a principle was absolutely correct, there could be cases (admittedly rare) where it would be more advantageous to us to allow a fascist to speak, even when we had the ability to prevent it. This is not arguing against the slogan. But we should not see it as wholly immutable. What is more important, and completely inescapable, for us as revolutionaries is the necessity of defeating fascism. And so if circumstances arise where we judge that the fight against fascism could better be furthered by allowing a fascist to speak, then we should not be completely hide-bound by our 'No platform' slogan. We should be able and prepared to compromise on it. We should not aim to be dogmatists, but thinking marxist. On compromises, Lenin wrote 'It would be absurd to formulate a general rule (No compromises!) to serve all cases. One must be able to find one's bearings in each separate case.'

In Bolton recently such a situation was put to the test. ND, who was chairing a large public meeting organised by the anti-fascist committee, discovered there were two National Front members in the audience. One of them stood up to speak after some time (to try to claim that he wasn't a racist!) and ND did not immediately tell him to sit down and shut up.

ND took this decision, not because he does not agree with the slogan 'No platform for fascists', but because in those particular circumstances it seemed to him that more could be gained ~~xxx~~ by allowing the NF to go on speaking. He did not consider he was giving the NF a 'platform' but a noose to hang himself with. Because of the alignment of forces in the meeting anything the NF member could have said would have been verbally hung drawn and quartered by the rest of the meeting. ND saw it as a chance to use two isolated NF members as guinea-pigs, and use them to expose to utter trash and rubbish that the NF ~~xxxx~~ put out. This had been one of the principal aims of the meeting anyway and the presence of a real-life laboratory model seemed too good to waste. There was no question of any 'liberal' debate. We had the chair, and we outnumbered them 70 to two !! They were there purely and simply as a 'visual aid' to the exposure job we were doing.

However some comrades in the meeting were not satisfied. In their eyes the 'No platform' slogan was a sacred cow never to be broken. Complaints were made against ND, and though they were never made to stand up in the anti-fascist committee, WF and MCC thought them important enough to hold an investigation over.

ND appeared before the NC and related why he had acted as he did, arguing that if he was wrong in his action, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ it was because he had misjudged the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ particular situation and not because he had broken a principle. The NC as ~~xx~~ a whole did not take up ND's line of reasoning and argue against it - either to establish that there are no circumstances when the slogan can be compromised on, or to establish that these particular circumstances were the wrong ones. Instead they merely reaffirmed that it is Workers Fight's policy not to give platforms to fascists and moved a resolution reminding ND of the fact. (Only at one point did the discussion show any signs of going any deeper - when SM mentioned in an aside that he ~~xxxxxxxx~~ considered that on one occasion when he refused to speak on the same platform as a fascist, because of the particular circumstances, he would have been better to have used the platform and spoken. The remark was not developed or taken up by any other NC member)

The Commission inquiring into the incident came to the conclusion that ~~xxxx~~ the logic of ND's argument meant that we should always give a platform to fascists!!! They did not expand on how they managed to come to this amazing conclusion!

The result of all this was that we learnt nothing. ND is no nearer knowing whether he judged the situation rightly or wrongly. We are no nearer knowing whether there are circumstances when you can make the sort of compromise he made on that occasion - and if there are, what they are. We are no nearer knowing what we mean by 'a platform'. We are no nearer knowing how you prevent an NF member speaking in such a meeting or how you make him leave if he refuses.

Circumstances arose which gave our group a chance to deepen its understanding of this slogan, and to sharpen our skill as revolutionaries. We chose to let the chance slip. The NC and the Commission fell back on the slogan as a means of covering up their lack of analysis. They acted as slogan shouters - a stage a long way below that of critical revolutionary.

#### Socialisation of housework

There has been a developing tendency to use 'the socialisation of housework' almost in the manner of a 'demand' - to make it into an organising slogan. For those who do not know what it means (for it isn't always explained when it is used), it means communal canteens to replace the individual preparation of meals, communal laundries to replace the family wash-day, communal child-care facilities, etc, etc, ..

and all of these within easy reach of the majority of families. It is rightly a long term aim of socialists in their struggle against the oppression of women. But that it is 'long-term' should be beyond dispute. In fact to imagine or to suggest that such changes could take place before a socialist revolution, ie under capitalism, is grossly mistaken. Even after a socialist revolution, the setting up of such a scheme is fraught with difficulties - as the Bolsheviks found out. Of their communal canteens and laundries Trotsky tells us 'The fact is that from the moment of the abolition of the food card system in 1935, all the better placed workers began to ~~return~~ return to the home dining table....so much the more withering was the judgement of the workers and their wives upon the 'social feeding' organised by the bureaucracy. The same conclusion must be extended to the social laundries where they tear and steal linen more than they wash it' (1)

Trotsky was not here arguing against the socialisation of housework, but he recognised that for it to work at all it had to offer a cheaper and better service than workers could provide for themselves in their own homes. 'Caring for children in public facilities, as well as feeding of adults in communal canteens is cheaper than in the family. But the transfer of material means from the family to the child care centres and canteens will take place only if the social organisation learns to satisfy the primary demands better than the family' (2)

It is unimaginable that such a service could be established under capitalism. And even after a revolution it would be a long job. So we must be especially careful not to present the idea as some sort of magic abracadabra. It is an aim for the future, but in no way is it a demand that is at all relevant to the here and now.

"(The emancipation of women) can be accomplished only through the organisation of communal methods of feeding and child rearing. The road is not a short one." (3)

Two things are worthy of note in this quote from Trotsky. First that establishing the socialisation of housework is a long job, and second that he uses the word 'through', not the word 'by'. ~~xxx~~ He considered that the socialisation of housework is one (albeit very necessary) step on the way to emancipation, but there are other steps, other factors. A socialist revolution does not guarantee the emancipation of women. Alongside the struggle to overthrow capitalism must go a struggle by women themselves - to overcome male-dominated ideas and practices. This struggle has to take place before during and after the socialist revolution. And here lies the source of weakness that so many on the revolutionary left display on the question of women's liberation. More often than not, their attitudes boil down to "Capitalism is the real source of your oppression. You can't do anything till you've got rid of that. So stop pissing around with all these petit-bourgeois feminist activities and come and help us get on with the real job". Of course this misses the whole point of the need for women to organise separately ~~xxxx~~ to arrive at an understanding of their role and to develop ways of combating it. It ignores the simple fact that ~~xxxxxxxx~~ capitalism (and systems preceding it) have given all men, including those on the revolutionary left, a privileged position in relation to women. It shelves the whole ideological question until after the revolution. And finally it provides a convenient cop-out for the left on many of the issues and activities that the WLM consider to be important in helping women arrive at a deeper understanding of their position as women in society, and in developing ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ methods of self-help against the background of male-dominated ideology.

#### Footnotes

- 1) Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed
- 2) Trotsky: 1925 article from Za Novyi Bit
- 3) Trotsky: Letter to a women's rally. Pravda 1923

And so we come back to the group's concentration (almost to the point of making it a campaigning slogan) on the socialisation of housework. As we have established above, this cannot take place under capitalism, so we are directing attention to a point safely in the remote future. Doing this would be fair enough if we were also allocating adequate amounts of time, activity, and importance to the problems and the oppression of women here and now - if, for instance, we were assimilating the ideas of the WLM and developing ways of tackling that oppression, if we were making a serious effort to combat male chauvinism in our own organisation. But we are <sup>not</sup> doing these things at all adequately. And so our concentration on the socialisation of housework cannot be explained as an attempt to see where we are going in order that we can shape ~~xxxxxxx~~ our day-to-day practice more precisely. It is in fact just another way of saying what all the rest of the left are saying - "Sorry girls you'll just have to put up with things as they are till after the revolution". In using this 'slogan' as we do, we indulge in theoretical debate while at the same time we cop out of the struggle going on at ground level; the sort of struggle the Bolton Womens Liberation Group undertook recently when they published a detailed 2-page leaflet on what they saw as male chauvinist attitudes among left-group members on the Bolton Anti-Fascist Committee. After having read the leaflet Workers Fight SC decided it was 'wrong' (SCminutes) and detailed Martin Thomas to explain ~~to~~ Eileen Murphy why it was wrong. We have already quoted extensively from this letter. In short it dismissed the fight of the Bolton Womens Liberation Group as 'idealist'. And who could blame the sisters in the Bolton WL group if they read our socialisation of housework articles and said 'idealism'? We have to win the right to present long term aims to the WLM and expect them to listen; and the only way we can win that right is through our day-to-day activity and practice. It is precisely here, just like the rest of the left, that ~~WL~~ ~~xx~~ has its failing.

#### D) INCREASING BUREAUCRATISM

One of the principal reasons behind the bureaucratisation of the Soviet State in Russia was that, whereas before the revolution and the civil war there had been a highly class conscious working class, a hornet's nest of revolutionary ideas and momentum, after the civil war there was no such group. The war and the resulting collapse of industry decimated this highly political working class. Many were killed and maimed, and the rest, for the most part, scattered over the length and breadth of Russia. The Civil War left the vast mass of the population demoralised and apathetic. The tiny working class which remained did not have the same political consciousness as it had in 1917. The party grew in size but not in quality. A small number of cadres at the centre of the party were faced with the mighty task of organising their own party and the world's first workers' state.

Because of the lack of this political consciousness in the class and in the party, bureaucratism became inevitable. It was necessary in order to get the party and the state functioning and to prevent the drift towards a complete breakdown of all social activity. The Bolsheviks knew that a long period of this state of affairs would be disastrous. What they expected was that the Western European revolution would come to their aid. We know this didn't happen. Bureaucracy developed until it was no longer an unavoidable expedient that had to be eliminated as soon as there was the opportunity. It became a self-perpetuating process, stifling the growth of cadres, and actively assisting in the elimination of any forces which threatened it.

Although the scale is vastly different, the problems for WF are essentially the same as they were for the Bolsheviks. If we are to have an organisation that is capable of functioning on a day to day level, we must have either a high level of political consciousness among members of the group, or an ever-increasing tendency for the centre to take decisions bureaucratically and use heavy calls on discipline to implement

those decisions. Along with the latter course, just as with the Bolshevik party, goes a gradual decline, and eventual elimination of, internal democracy.

We have already established, with the help of Sean Matgama and others at the centre, that we do not possess the first of these two alternatives. It remains then only to establish how far we have travelled down the second.

The people in this faction have not only been aware of bureaucratic manoeuvres, suppression of democracy, etc for some considerable time, we have been made the object of them all too frequently. We do not know to what extent most members in the group have become aware of the trend, but for us, the examples are legion.

It is not just in its relationship to opposition trends within the group that the centre has revealed its bureaucratic nature, but it is in this particular field that it has revealed itself most sharply.

Opposition began to form in the NW almost 2 years ago over the question of perspectives and Labour Party entry. The centre, and in particular SM, saw Roy Ratcliffe as the ringleader. A campaign began against him which has eventually reached hysterical and near-paranoid proportions, and which has also been extended to include John Strauther in Liverpool and the rest of the comrades from the old Bolton branch.

The motivation for the fusion of the Bolton and Manchester branches grew out of this campaign and the centre's desire to put paid to the growth of opposition in Bolton.

It was declared that the situation in Bolton was 'unhealthy'. You can take your pick from the string of nasty words - 'cliquism', 'parochialism' etc, etc, - which have been trotted out. But the situation was supposed to be that the comrades in Bolton were 'incapable of political debate' and Roy was using undue influence to lead them all astray.

Just down the road (if you can call twelve or thirteen miles 'just down the road') however there was a branch full of loyal followers. They had a small problem too though. As a group actively engaged in the revolutionary struggle they barely functioned at all. Inefficiency and an abysmal approach to organisation were permanent features.

On the other hand Bolton contrasted this with almost super-efficiency. So the answer (at least as the centre saw it) was simple and obvious. You stick the two together. Roy would be stopped from leading his meek followers still further from the fold, and some of the Bolton efficiency should rub off on Manchester. What should come out is the perfect branch.

Such are the thought processes of those who want to see no further than their nose-ends. The fusion was pushed through despite the continuous and unanimous opposition of the Bolton branch who saw the scheme as unworkable. They maintained from the beginning the the practical problems were insuperable. The work in both towns would suffer, friction would develop, demoralisation would set in, and ultimately, if the centre persisted, there would be stagnation or even collapse.

All this has happened, apart from the ultimate which we are still trying to avoid. Frictions have developed, relationships have been stretched to near breaking point, the work has been unorganised and sloppy, demoralisation runs through the whole branch.

Yet even now the centre have not acknowledged their mistake - nor do we ever expect them to. They have found a neat way of turning ~~the~~ the impasse to their advantage - blame it all on Roy and some of the others in Bolton. And so the theory of fillibustering was unfurled. The reason the joint branch wasn't working was because certain people - notably RR, ND, EM - were actively sabotaging it. The failure of the fusion rested on their shoulders not the centres. Charges of fillibustering, apolitical wrangling, anarchy, lack of commitment, etc fell thick and fast. If the facts didn't fit, they were made to fit. Misreporting of meetings, distortions of arguments, personal smears have all been used.



No-one on the SC or NC made any real attempt to get to the bottom of the matter. No-one came to listen to the Bolton side of the case. SM's reports were accepted along with HW's apparently as a true reflection of what was going off. No-one said 'Hey hang on a minute - there might be just a chance that there's some bureaucracy creeping in here somewhere'. Nobody said 'Wouldn't it be a good idea if someone went up there who was seen to be less involved in one side or the other than SM is.' On the contrary, everyone was happy enough to allow SM to go on 'managing' the fusion.

On the 26th Oct 1974 the NC declared all discussion on the subject closed, and passed a string of resolutions all of which smacked of bureaucratism - we'll quote from them, but the really interested reader should read the lot in the IB.

".....any majority decision can be fillibustered by a vocal minority... this NC recalls the experience of the Strateford/Brent faction, where 'opposition' was cooked up with no clear political foundation (emphasis in original) on the basis of messrs S/D being able to carry on 'discussion' (i.e. malicious gossip) without any practical commitment to the group. The NC resolves not to allow anything similar to happen again."

The picture is clear - the basis of our differences with the centre are 'non-political'. Our arguments are 'malicious gossip'. We have no practical commitment to the group. In fact our sole function is to wreck the fusion through fillibustering. Meanwhile, not one single line is written in an attempt to reply to the specific arguments we raised on the impracticability of the fusion. The necessity of replying to criticism was dodged by one good old hearty mud-slinging session.

John Strauther had written from Liverpool, disturbed by what he saw was taking place, and defending Roy against what he saw as a witch-hunt. On this matter the NC declared

"that an alliance between these two comrades against the WF majority is an unprincipled combination, serving only to obscure the political development of the group"

As you can see, the NC decides which opposition is 'political' and which is not, which arguments are 'malicious gossip' and which are 'serious' criticism, which alliances are 'principled' and which are not. In fact it is hard to imagine how one stands any chance of expressing disagreement against them. Even the basic action (which you would think was every comrades duty to every other) ~~xxxxxxx~~ of John Strauther in defending Roy against a witch hunt, was elevated to the status of 'alliance' and declared unprincipled.

The Bolton comrades had written jointly to the NC requesting that Joe Wright and one other NC member who had not been involved in the difficulties in Gt. Manchester should come up and hold talks with the aim of getting things sorted out. The NC deplored the letter and ignored the request.

~~xx~~  
At about the same time we began noticing the 'either/or' syndrome which seems to have seized Workers Fight. This consists of ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ describing differences as belonging either to one extreme pole or the other, "either it's black or it's white - there are no other possibilities!"

We give the following as examples. There are many, many more. All these are from SM:

"Either ~~the~~ WF is the serious organisation and the IMG a monstrous blind alley and waste of valuable resources, or Vice versa" (In other words, one or other of them has to be the source of all wisdom. The possibility of there being some good and some bad in both is not considered)

"Either John Strauther is mad or I am mad" (No possibility of simply disagreeing)

"Either RR comes on the NC and becomes integrated into the leadership of the group, or, eventually, he is expelled" (In other words, "Start agreeing with the rest of us, or get out.")

Such tricks are straight out of text-book bureaucratism. The subtleties

of arguments are all erased by presenting the differences as a matter of loyalty to the group (ie. the bureaucratic centre of the group). In a similar way mistakes are covered up, swept discretely under the carpet, but, true to bureaucratic method, never openly admitted and analysed.

We have already mentioned how our perspectives seem to have been turned on their head. (first sentence Open Letter) without any acknowledgement of the fact internally, without any analysis of why, or what else must change as a result.

"Failure is not disastrous as long as we learn the lessons" (MI) (IB23) No-one would disagree with this statement of Martin's. But how much has Martin and the rest of the centre learned from the failure of the Labour Party entry tactic? How much have they even attempted to learn? How far have they gone even in admitting the failure?

Well at the last aggregate they went as far as to say

"The decision to carry out entry work in the Labour Party has not been carried out adequately" (Andrew Hornung IB23)

"...conference decisions must be carried out - the one on LP entry hasn't" (Sean Matgama IB23)

"The lack of preparations for the LPYS conference only reflects the whole sluggishness of the group with regard to LP work over the last six months" (Steve Corbishley NC January 1975)

So it seems that something is not as it should be. There has been some sort of failure - even the centre admit this, though of course they shy away from actually using the word 'failure', partial or whatever. Yet none of these comrades said what they did in an attempt to begin a serious reassessment of the tactic, or even to discover what reasons lay at the root of the apparant failure. No. ~~they said what they did~~ they merely wanted to present their own simple answer to the solution, "Comrades haven't worked hard enough. They must get stuck in". No discussion took place of why comrades hadn't worked hard enough on this matter. They hadn't and that was that. The solution was to make them get on with the job by strengthening the entry tactic to include all members and making it not political priority. There were no political reasons for this. The decision appears to have been taken purely as a means of making comrades do what they had so far shown a deep reluctance to do.

That the centre can carry such resolutions, act in this way, without being challenged by the membership who, despite making their feelings all too clear by their very reluctance to implement the decision, give the leadership placid support, displays all too clearly the consequences of not having a cadre in the group. The centre acted towards the membership as a whole, over the question of the Labour Party, in a manner that we are more used to seeing in the WRP, where any battle-weary, demoralised comrade who raises a half-articulate groan of protest against the leaderships proddings and pushings, finds that he is told the fault is all his own. There is nothing wrong with the tactic - that is beyond criticism - what is at fault is his own commitment; it's not great enough. He must take a deep breath, remember that the revolution is just round the corner and 'get stuck in'.

There are more people in the WRP than there are in WF and they certainly don't consider they belong to a bureaucratic organisation, or that their leaders are capable of distortions, gross errors, bureaucratic manoeuvring, campaigns to crush internal opposition, etc, etc.

We should learn from their blindness. And the lesson to learn is that you never trust your own leaders more than you have to,

When those who have power and influence in the group begin to use that power and influence bureaucratically, then unless that bureaucratic trend is arrested it can only quickly become worse. Methods like those used in the Manchester/Solton Fusion and the campaign against Roy can only become more common and be brought to bear on anyone who attempts to take a different line of argument from that of the centre. Groups like IS and the WRP did not become bureaucratic by accident nor because their leaders wanted it that way. WF has become bureaucratic and we hope the majority of the membership will discover it before it becomes too late.



It has become bureaucratic not because people like Sean, Andrew and Martin are by their nature bureaucratic, but because bureaucratism is inevitable in any group that fails to build and establish a cadre.

SECTION 3

REASONS WHY THERE IS NO CADRE IN THE GROUP.

- A) Cadre building is not the central aim
- B) The class composition of the group
- C) The internal education system
- D) The paper

A) CADRE BUILDING IS NOT THE CENTRAL AIM OF THE GROUP

"In a sense there is an 'iron law' of cadre preparation from which there is no escape. If we don't recognise it, it will recognise us - with disastrous consequences, as the history of revolutionary politics amply confirms"

(from General Perspectives passed at extended MC Aug/Sept 1973)

"....our main task is to elaborate plans for making our immediate practice more & effective in such a way as to prepare a cadre for the future at the same time"

(...do...)

We could not agree more. Time and time again in our internal literature we come across similar warnings of what will happen if we fail to produce a cadre. We come across innumerable statements like the one above, announcing that we must produce cadres - often they are accompanied by admissions of our failure to do so until now.

So when do these warnings come into effect? When does the threat of disaster become the reality of disaster itself? How long can we go on operating without a cadre? 6 months? a year? 5 years? indefinitely? When does the 'iron law' begin to assert itself?

We maintain the iron law has already asserted itself in no uncertain terms, and WF is no more an exception to the rule than is the IS or the WRP. Periodic warnings of what is bound to happen do not insulate us from the reality actually happening - not unless something is done to prevent it. Nothing has been done. We still have no cadre.

So it is time to start analysing our failure, and belatedly doing something about it. Bureaucratism can only be offset by raising the political education and experience of the group as a whole.

"Only a fully active membership can be an approach to a guarantee of full democracy. Members who are fighting actively know that ~~xx~~ every twist and turn of the leadership, every lapse of the centre, has a direct immediate bearing on themselves, that their local work may be ruined by the national leadership. Consequently they will be compelled, as they value their party and its work, to keep everything under review, to decide, take a position on every issue to their best of their ability" (SM. from document written when in RSL)

This ~~xx~~ has been our situation precisely. Our local work has been and is being ruined by the national leadership. When we complained we were called 'parochialist'. The decision to form ourselves into a faction did not arise out of 'cliquism' (the centre's view), but from necessity caused by the lack of a cadre in the group. We were 'compelled' to act because we 'valued' the 'party and its work'.

The central hinge of our platform is the question of cadres. We must make it quite unequivocally our central aim.

"But it is our main task already!" will be the inevitable retort. "Look

at the documents - you'll see it's clearly stated." Of course we will! But if building cadres is in reality so much a central aim, why then have we failed so consistently and so completely to fulfil it? We should not be convinced merely by the words of the leadership, we have already seen how empty they can be in the shape of resolutions on the oppression of women. The phrases on cadre building are just as empty. When it becomes a matter of action, there has been no serious attempt to analyse why we have failed, nor any serious campaign initiated to put the matter right.

Instead there has been a lot of ill-conceived chasing of tails, and panic-motivated attempts to build WP. Cadre building being only a minor consideration. The Labour Party tactic is a good example. Why did we go in in the first place?

There were a number of reasons: "We see the likelihood of a limited turn of the class towards the LP and look for the possibility of making limited gains by the entry tactic" (LP Perspectives); "The LP and LPYS provide a milieu ~~xxxxxxx~~ where comrades can win influence, build a base and make useful contacts." (IB Supplement); "the training of cadres"; "the immediate tasks of building WP" (IB Supp) So training of cadres was a consideration. But was it a major one? Well in 1973 we were cautious enough to say

"Given our small forces, our lack of implantation in the class, we should send a comrade in each locality, preferably one with experience of LP entry work, into the LP now to do some reconnaissance work, to feel the ground out there and keep a watchful eye on developments. It will be necessary . . . to train comrades generally on the nature of the LP, the pressures faced in working in that environment, and how best to relate to LP workers."

In other words we recognised then that it would be foolhardy to send all comrades into the LP. Instead of helping in their training, the reverse might very well take place. There are many old hands in the LP who are more than capable of making a monkey out of the unwary and untrained revolutionary. So before comrades went in, they had to be trained. In short they must have reached a certain cadre level first before going into the LP could be of any benefit at all in their further training.

Since the original decision to enter the LP there has been no movement of militants into the party, the level of education in the group has not risen, there has been no significant 'building of WP'. In short most of the reasons for entering have, in practice, been negated.

In such a situation we would have expected a major re-think of the entry tactic. Yet, as we pointed out in Section 3, far from doing this, the centre decided it was all the membership's fault, that the tactic had to be strengthened and now . . . "every comrade to ~~xxxxxx~~ belong to the LP and to work actively in it as No. 1 political priority"

Originally we were out for 'limited gains' and LP work was to be 'geared and subordinated to the basic task of building the industrial fractions'. Comrades had to be trained before they went in. Suddenly all that goes, and the LP becomes No. 1 political priority for all members. Why? What is the political justification? How are raw comrades expected to cope with the difficulties? What is the perspective now for their training? What about those areas where comrades already have a better milieu than the LP?

Of course none of these questions were answered. As far as the centre was concerned, they couldn't have mattered very much. Somehow or other WP had joined the ~~xxxx~~ stampede for recruits and the LPYS was going to provide us with a bonanza. 'Build WP' was the one reason for existence in the LP, and the centre were happy to forget the other ones, cadre-building included.

In a conversation between himself, Eileen Murphy, Naomi Windbourne and Neil Duffield, Sean claimed that we could 'treble the membership in a year from LPYS' and that if this, or something very close to it, did not happen, he himself would be prepared to admit that the tactic had been a failure.

We already have a huge gap between the membership and 'a few leading cadres'. At the same time it is admitted that "for the most part the LPYS membership is raw and inexperienced in Marxist polemics" (LP Pers.) So what do we achieve by trebling our membership in a year from LPYS? Only a ~~six~~ situation three times worse than the one we are in now! We would have a membership that was no more than putty in the hands of a centre that is already operating bureaucratically.

We can see two reasons that remain ~~for~~ valid for entry work:

- i) to provide a milieu where one does not exist already  
(this is obviously a matter of local conditions, membership, etc)
- ii) to help in the training of certain comrades - but even then, only after they have acquired a certain amount of training and experience first.

In no way do these two reasons justify every member making LP work no.1 political priority.

To us it is evident that the training of cadres was only a very secondary reason for LP entry, in the eyes of the centre. Whatever their original reasons (some of which have entirely disappeared), their sole remaining one is 'Build WP' - and even that is interpreted only in its numerical sense.

If 'Cadre Building' had been the central aim of the group, the whole question of entry work would have been conceived and argued for differently to what it has been. As it is the LP saga has been a ~~xxxx~~ story of failures swept under the carpet, sudden switches based on the centre's whims, and indifference to the political capabilities of the membership.

#### B) THE CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP.

Speaking about the Socialist Workers Party of America in 'In Defence of Marxism', Trotsky says the following:

"The party has only a minority of genuine factory workers..... the non-proletarian elements represent a very necessary yeast .....but our party can be inundated by non-proletarian elements and can even lose its revolutionary character.

"Predomination in the organisation of intellectuals is inevitable in the first period of the development of the organisation. It is at the same time a big handicap to the political education of the more gifted workers.

"...in such a change of the situation, when general formulas and fluent pens are not sufficient, where acquaintance with the life of workers and practical capabilities are necessary. Under such conditions a gifted worker reveals a sureness of himself and reveals also his general political capabilities.

"...intellectuals and white collar workers might suppress the worker minority, condemn it to silence, transform the party into a very intelligent discussion club, but absolutely not habitable for workers.

"Members of the party untested in the class struggle must not be placed in responsible positions. No matter how talented and devoted to socialism an emigrant from the bourgeois ~~ix~~ milieu may be, before becoming a teacher, he must first go to school in the working class.

"The class composition of the party must correspond to its class program. The American section of the 4th International will either become proletarian or it will cease to exist."

WF suffers from a similar dearth of workers. What is worse is that we actually seem to be losing the ones we have. Such a state of affairs has a direct effect on cadre development. As Trotsky points out, "petit-bourgeois and especially declassed elements, divorced from the proletariat, vegetate in an artificially shut-in environment. They have ample time to dabble in politics, or its substitute. They pick out faults, exchange all sorts of tit-bits and gossip concerning the party 'tops' ... discussion is their native element."

The intellectuals in the group must clearly learn from the workers, just as much as the reverse, and this two-way learning must be continuous. Trotsky was not joking when he maintained that emigrants from the petit-bourgeois milieu must first go to school in the working class - it is precisely for this reason that there was opposition in Bolton to the transfer of John Cunningham to the centre to take on a position of responsibility. He is by no means the only person in a position of responsibility who has not been 'sent to school in the working class'.

Workers have an acquired experience and knowledge, derived from the daily struggle, which, although not always articulately expressed, can often lead them to the very heart of a problem, while those with 'fluent pens' scratch their heads for the right solution.

On the other hand workers can get pissed off with meetings which are eternally dominated by the same verbally articulate committee men who aren't particularly interested ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in, or good at, listening to what working people have to say for themselves. They get tired of being lectured at by people with insatiable appetites for addressing meetings.

Increasing the worker content of the group is not optional to cadre building. It is an essential aspect. We have to learn to absorb the experience of worker members into the group as a whole - which means that some of those who are regarded as leading cadres will have to start learning (in some cases almost from scratch). As a group we have to start orientating ourselves towards recruiting more workers and making sure that once they are recruited they are not 'condemned to silence' or elbowed out of the group by pedantic intellectuals. We have to give workers responsibility in the group. "It is absolutely necessary ... to introduce in the local and central committees as many workers as possible. For a worker, activity in the leading party body is at the same time a high political school" (Trotsky, In Defence of Marxism). How many workers, no matter how gifted, have been integrated into the WF leadership?

~~zzzzzzzz~~ To sum up, workers are needed in the group if we are to build a cadre. Their experience and directness is essential to our collective understanding of Marxism. Trotsky, in the "Young Lenin", wrote this: (he was writing of the growth of Marxist ideas in the Russian revolutionary movement)

"The ideas, having gained wide currency among the intelligentsia, were immediately distorted to suit the character of this social stratum. Only with the appearance of a conscious proletarian vanguard did Russian Marxism finally stand firmly on its feet. Does this mean that ideas are unessential or important? No, this means only that ideas are socially conditioned; before becoming a cause of facts and events, an idea must first have been the result of them. Or to put it more precisely; an idea does not tower above a fact like a court of higher appeal. The idea itself is a fact which can enter as a necessary link in a chain of other facts."

### C) THE INTERNAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Concentric circles is a basically inefficient system of education whose very form assists bureaucratism. It apparently found birth in the Lutte Ouvriere group in France who originated as an underground organisation during the war. Even through the long period of legality after the war, however, it maintained its 'underground' method of organisation and operation - ie a system of one-to-one contacts and anonymity. Thus nobody knows who are the leaders of LO, and even the members of the same cell may not know each other. In relation to theory and education, this means that LO has been frozen in the same position for the last 30 years; for example, it still holds that only Russia is a workers state, and the rest of Eastern Europe is still capitalist - a position which cannot stand up to any examination or debate, and ~~xxx~~ clearly could only be maintained through such a closed and hierarch-ical system of indoctrination.

Concentric circles requires each comrade in the group to be taught by a 'guru'. The guru knows more than he does, is better at arguing, has a higher political understanding, etc, etc. In other words the educational takes the form of a lecture - all one way traffic. In nine cases out of ten the pupil will be incapable of holding his own in debate with his guru. He will have to take much of what he is taught purely on trust as there will be no-one else present to pick out and criticise points which he is not capable of doing himself. This sort of education - isolated from the contradictions and criticisms of a group meeting (where it is far more difficult for dubious argument to go unchallenged) amounts to spoonfeeding. The pupil does not extract ideas from an atmosphere in which they are counterposed against their opposites, he merely opens his mouth and the medicine is poured down. The system is therefore tailor-made for reinforcing bureaucracy. It is inadmissible for another important reason - it ~~xx~~ allows information and knowledge to flow in one direction only. From the centre outwards. The chances of the centre learning from the peripheries, and absorbing the experience of the workers in the factories, is so remote as to be discounted altogether.

Finally the system is practically almost unworkable. It consumes far more time, energy, and money than a system of group educationals. There is a far greater chance of arrangements going wrong. It requires ~~xxxxxx~~ complicated organisation and clumsy 'diagrams' of operation. It would be interesting to find out just how many places it is working in. It certainly has never worked in Manchester. And if it does work, how accurate is it? We all know funny stories about messages that get passed down a line of soldiers and finish up with a completely different meaning to the one they started out with. It only requires one small section of what is being taught, to be misunderstood somewhere along the chain, and the misunderstanding will become exaggerated beyond all recognition by the time it has reached the end of the line. We cannot build a cadre with such a white elephant as the concentric circles system of education.

### D) THE NEWSPAPER

This does not play the part that it can and should play in the education of members. The original Workers Fight did. It was a paper we read and learned from. It was a good paper to sell and a good one to read. We will make no in-depth analysis of the paper here. Only mention that its role as a factor in the education process is not as great as it should be. No-one is advocating a Workers Press, whose only relevance can be to the members of the WRP, but there is a danger of drifting too much in the other direction - the direction of Socialist Worker and low-level agitation. It is in this direction that the paper has drifted.

## SECTION 4

### WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING TO PUT MATTERS RIGHT

We give here only a brief list. It needs filling out and making more detailed and concrete. This will be done in course of time.

1. Make 'Building a cadre' the unequivocal central aim of the group. All our activity to be directly related and linked to this.
2. Begin immediately a conscious struggle to eliminate the growing bureaucratism of the centre and to establish democratic centralism.
3. A conscious effort to increase worker members, and to integrate workers into the leadership of the group.
4. A struggle against bourgeois ideology in the group - particularly against male chauvinism.
5. Scrap concentric circles. Education to be organised on a group/study circle basis. Leadership to take more part in education and at same time they should learn from the membership. Group educationals at least fortnightly. Should not always be leading cadres doing the introductions. Often a good idea if subject is a new one to group, that 2 people should take responsibility for researching and introducing it.
6. Industrial bulletins - these can help a lot in cadre building. Should be produced locally and writing, production, etc to be spread as much as possible. Local production does not exclude national co-ordination.
7. Contact work - to be placed on a much more organised footing than at present. Regular contact study groups.
8. LP work. Entrism to be a matter of local conditions. To be carried on where thought to be of value in developing a cadre.
9. Paper to play more part in the internal education. Along the lines of the original dual-purpose Workers Fight.
10. Scrap the Manchester/Bolton fusion and restore separate branches in order to allow political work in both towns to get under way again.
11. As a special priority, and because of the high level of male chauvinism in all groups on the left, study, agitation, propaganda, and work in the WLM to be given much greater priority than at present. WF should lead the other groups on this question and become the left group with which militant women can identify.