

AN OPEN LETTER FROM WORKERS POWER
TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND MEMBERSHIP
OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

THE CASE FOR PRINCIPLED REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT.

THE CRISIS ON THE LEFT.

The great miners' strike of 1984/5 sent shock waves through the British left. A struggle of such magnitude was bound to have a profound effect. Sealed off from the class struggle the idiosyncrasies, the fetishes and the downright idiocies of the centrist left can thrive with relative impunity. Errors of a purely literary character can be easily concealed and quickly forgotten. However, a mighty class battle, whether the centrists like it or not, draws all sections of the labour movement - reformist, centrist and revolutionary communist - into its vortex. Policies and programmes are put to the test of struggle. Mistakes cannot be so easily concealed. Even groups that had previously built a brick wall between themselves and other sections of the labour movement - like the Healy led WRP - cannot escape the impact of such a test.

No less significant than the strike itself was the fact that it was defeated. Explaining that defeat in a hundred and one different ways has intensified the turmoil on the left. The British section of the United Secretariat - the Socialist League - split. The Thornett group decamped from the Workers Socialist League (the misbegotten product of a marriage between the WSL and the International Communist League of Sean Matgamna).

The WRP itself has undergone a profound split with the expulsion of first Healy and then the IC inspired faction led by Hylands. The left inside the Labour Party - staffed by numerous ex-Trotskyists - is still going through the process of "realignment" with whole sections of the left going over to Kinnock and support for his witch-hunt of Militant.

The Communist Party's decline has continued with the split between the union-bureaucrat loving Chater gang at the Morning Star and the coalition of trendies and careerists who now dominate the CP and purvey their anti-working class wares in Marxism Today and 7 Days.

These splits and realignments testify to the depth of the crisis in British society today. Britain, after almost three years of a faltering economic recovery stands on the verge of a new recession. Four and a half million, at least, remain without work. Thatcher's promised "new industries" have not materialised. Instead factories continue to close. Even sections of the ruling class - as their own public faction fight over Westland shows - are worried. Thatcher, despite having inflicted major defeats in the working class, has not yet come near to solving the fundamental problems of ailing British capitalism.

The defeat of the miners' strike has not, as Kinnock hoped, closed the curtains on the class struggle. In 1985 there were major flare-ups - in the Post Office, on the railways - as well as outbreaks of localised struggles that have turned into very bitter fights - Silent Night, Contracts, Forgemasters etc. And now the printers are being drawn into battle as Murdoch and the courts try to smash their unions.

Britain's economic decline and the class struggle have tested the centrist and reformist left and found them wanting. We need not speak here of those who have joined Kinnock's bandwagon - like the ex-Trotskyist Chartist - but only of those who claim to be revolutionary Trotskyists.

MILITANT.

Under the leadership of Grant and Taaffe this grouping has maintained the course it set for itself in the mid-1960s. The Militant believe that the Labour Party can be captured for marxism. In the 1970s this led them to downplay any serious work in the unions. In the 1980s, in order to assist their Labour Party work and capture the block vote in the unions they set up their new Broad Lefts in unions like the CPSA and POEU. Not only did these Broad Lefts end up splitting, they also betrayed strikes - in the civil service in particular.

The latest phase of Militant's struggle to capture the Labour Party is the fight in Liverpool. In this struggle Militant have whitewashed Kinnock's role in the interest of 'unity', and have refused to build a united front against the witch-hunt with other left forces. In the struggle to defend the council, Militant used the workforce as a stage army (even threatening them with redundancy) instead of mobilising them in strike action.

At every turn Militant's strategy involves an adaptation to reformism. Their proposed Enabling Bill to introduce socialism is a parliamentary road position virtually indistinguishable from the CP. Their call for a 'socialist' war against Argentina was a social patriotic position. In sum they are a right-centrist, tame-marxist sect inside the Labour Party.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER.

Another right-centrist grouping within the Labour Party is Socialist Organiser. The origins of its leading figure Sean Matgamna lie within the SLL. They share Militant's strategic conception of capturing the Labour Party with all its defects. Sean Matgamna now rationalises his break from the SLL in the 1960s in terms of a rightist critique of Healy's split with the Labour Party.

While the ICL (now WSL one of the sponsor's of Socialist Organiser) were pushed leftwards in the early and mid-1970's under the impact of the struggle against Heath, the dissipation of these struggles and the experience of the 1974-79 Labour Government pushed them back to the right.

Since 1978/79 SO has been a prominent advocate of propaganda blocs (eg SCLV) and peace-pacts with left-MPs in a manner reminiscent of Healy's Socialist Outlook project.

In the last six years SO has steadily blunted the edge of the revolutionary programme. In the Foot inspired debate on the sovereignty of parliament SO abandoned the revolutionary attitude of smashing and replacing all bourgeois government institutions by soviet-type bodies. They now call for 'workers parliaments'. They have followed Militant in abandoning the programme of Permanent Revolution in Ireland and the Middle East - adopting instead a variant of the democratic stage involving capitulation to Zionism and Protestant loyalism. As a consequence of their view that the revolutionary party must arrive as a result of transforming the Labour Party they have developed a differential hostility to Stalinism.

THE UNITED SECRETARIAT.

The British section of this organisation has split into a pro-Mandel wing around International and a pro-SWP(US) wing around Socialist Action (SA). The Mandelites bleat about the 'proto-stalinism' of SA and yet do not murmur so much as a criticism - let alone call for a political revolution - against the stalinist Castro. They heap praise upon the petit-bourgeois FSLN in Nicaragua. Like the Mandel of the late 1940s who quibbled with Pablo's definitions but accepted entirely his premises on Yugoslavia, International quibbles with, but does not break with SA's adaption to stalinism. And in South Africa where SA uncritically hails the ANC, International sing the praises of Azapo without criticising its black nationalist limitations. Neither wing offer the independent programme of permanent revolution to the black masses.

In Britain similarly these two groups are separated only by a hairs breadth. SA argues that there should be no challenge to Kinnock, that Arthur Scargill is a demi-god and that an 'alliance for socialism' led by Benn (if one is to judge from the space they give him in their publications to conduct his increasingly irrelevant ramblings) rather than a revolutionary party is needed.

International 'counterpose' to this a hard left (reformist) alliance under the auspices of Labour Briefing. In vain one searches for a revolutionary critique of reformism in International. Like their mentor, Mandel, they seek blocs with reformism as a way around the difficult task of building Trotskyist parties. They are no better than SA. They occupy the same centrist terrain on the fringes of the Labourite left. They will continue to tail whatever 'vanguard' happens to be in fashion.

THE ANTI-PABLOITES.

Apart from the WRP itself there are several organisations claiming to stand in the 'traditions' of the IC and its fight against Pabloism. Many in the WRP will be looking at these groups afresh. Such openness is to be welcomed. For our part we welcome the opportunity to seriously debate out our differences with them. We believe that in the course of such open discussion we can demonstrate that 'anti-Pabloism' is no alternative, and never has been, to the Militant/USEC groupings that emerged out of Pablo's FI.

The Socialist Group, which produces Socialist Viewpoint, is the descendant of Alan Thornett's WSL. This grouping was bureaucratically expelled from the WRP in 1974. It enjoyed an independent existence until 1981 then fused with the I-CL. At the time of the fusion it boasted 150 members. At the time of the split with Matgamna, in 1984, the Thornett faction numbered 35. They were joined by another group, the Democratic Centralist Faction, of about 20-30 comrades. In the process of this unprincipled fusion and subsequent split the Matgammites also declined sharply in numbers.

We detail these figures not because we want to carp in a philistine manner about small groups. We are the object of too much carping on that score to indulge in it ourselves. No, we simply wish to demonstrate that in over a decade Thornett's policies have led to a diminution of cadres, indeed a squandering of cadres.

In our view the WSL of the 1970s, despite many healthy political positions, failed to make a decisive break with Healyism. Whilst it rejected the sectarian aspects of the WRP's politics they held fast to the Healyite method of party building. Despite their smallness they tried in the style of the SLL, to be the 'alternative leadership'. This led them to build a miniature version of a future mass party (a 'mini-mass party'), complete with a Women's and Youth paper. Members were bussed around the country to interventions to 'prove' the mass nature of the WSL. The level of activism called for was out of all proportion to the WSL's size. More important it deflected the organisation from the programmatic and theoretical tasks that were necessary for it to make a real break with Healyism.

The mini-mass party perspective and the lack of programmatic foundations demoralised members, led to two splits to the Spartacists, the setting up and then splitting of the TILC, with the loss of more members and finally the fusion and split with Matgamna.

Since the split with Matgamna, Thornett and Socialist Viewpoint have steered a right-wing course. In the first issue an article on the NHS was headlined, "Wanted: A Scargill to lead health service struggles"! What happened to the 'revolutionary leadership' call of the 1970s? Clearly the stay with Matgamna had had an effect in pushing Thornett rightwards. This was confirmed last October at a national conference of Miners' Support Groups. At that conference Workers Power supported resolutions that called for the building of a rank and file movement.

In our view the lack of such a movement during the strike allowed the bureaucratic betrayals and defeat to take place. Thornett who was prominent in opposing this resolution explained in Socialist Viewpoint that the conference "rejected a controversial resolution" that called for the building of "a militant minority movement" (No. 8). He does not explain why this resolution was defeated. It was because he, in a bloc with others, opposed any strategy that would bring the Miners' Support movement into conflict with left sections of the NUM bureaucracy.

Thornett's evolution since the split with Healy has been uneven. In our view had the discussions that the WSL began with us in 1979 been carried through then a principled fusion might have been possible. Thornett broke off these discussions in favour of an unprincipled fusion with the rapidly rightwards moving Matgamna. The result was a catastrophe - the loss of cadres and the appearance of Socialist Viewpoint - itself indicating a marked shift to the right by his grouping since the 1970s.

Another group of 'anti-Pabloite' contenders for the WRP's attention are the Socialist Labour Group (SLG), the British section of Lambert's Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction). Formally established in 1979 this group has its origins in the Bulletin Group. Its politics have been more consistent than Thornett's, guided as they are by Pierre Lambert. They have been consistently right-centrist. In particular they, like Militant, have a strategic conception of Labour Party membership. In their case however, this is boosted by profound Stalinophobia and a preferential attitude to social democracy; that is, the SLG consistently underestimate the counter-revolutionary and bourgeois politics of social democratic reformism. The SLG, like Lambert's PCI, believe that social democracy's independence from the Kremlin and its commitment to (bourgeois) democracy lays the basis for this preference. In fact this distinction leads to nothing other than opportunism, ignoring as it does the dependence of social democracy on imperialism and its own bourgeoisie.

In particular, the central slogan of the SLG, "Labour to Power", (which echoes Healy's 1950s/60s schema,) posits a social-democratic government as a necessary and inevitable outcome of struggles against Thatcher. Such a view is profoundly mistaken and in practice disarms militants faced with Kinnock doing all he can to demobilise the class struggle now, so that he can "take the power" through an election in the future.

The SLG compensate for their opportunist slogans with fantastic perspective. Their view of reality is only a little less blinkered than Healy's. Despite the setbacks in the class struggle they argue (Fourth International Nov-Dec 1985) that Britain is in a pre-revolutionary situation. For marxists this term has a precise meaning. Trotsky, writing on France on the eve of the upheavals that accompanied the Popular Front in 1936, described the situation (in 1934) as pre-revolutionary. He was right. French capitalism was in a severe crisis, pronounced bourgeois tendencies developed in the state, fascism began to grow as a mass force, the proletariat pushed its parties towards unity against the right. For Trotsky this situation meant that arming the proletariat was a task of the day lest the pre-revolutionary situation turn into a counter-revolutionary one. In other words he linked his understanding of the situation to his slogans on the principle that:

"Out the most striking features of our epoch of capitalism in decay are intermediate and transitional: situations between the non-revolutionary and the pre-revolutionary, between the pre-revolutionary and the revolutionary or . . . the counter-revolutionary. It is precisely these transitional stages which have decisive importance from the point of view of political strategy." (Once Again Whither Franco?)

Yet the SLG make no such distinctions between the stages. For them the defeat of the miners' strike alters nothing, since the 1985 riots have apparently kept the 'pre-revolutionary situation' on the boil. This is to render the term 'pre-revolutionary' meaningless. It is to substitute phrases and formulae for a concrete analysis of the reality of the class struggle. Above all it ignores what Trotsky described as the "reciprocal action of objective and subjective factors". It exudes faith in the objective historical process. In a word it is unregenerate Healyism of the 1930s and 60s vintage.

In place of a concrete analysis with appropriate slogans we get generalities about "difficult and complex" situations requiring "the broadest possible front of workers in struggle". So, the SLG offer a pre-revolutionary situation which, to go forward, requires a Labour government under Kinnock and a united front with only vaguely specified goals. In fact the SLG and the whole Lambertist formation has a strategic and not a tactical view of the united front.

An embrace with the SLG and Lambertism would also be to turn ones back on a break with Healyism's record of capitulation to petit-bourgeois democratic forces. They have abandoned the programme of Permanent Revolution in favour of the revolutionary democratic programme. For Trotskyists, revolutionary democratic demands and aspirations can be (South Africa today) extremely important levers in the proletarian revolution. But they presuppose the independence and leadership of the working class under revolutionary communist leadership if they are to be successful. The Lambertists, on the contrary, cow-tow to the existing leaderships of the anti-imperialist struggle. *Newsline's* past uncritical attitude to Sinn Fein and Arafat are painful reminders of the underlying political unity between Lambert and Healyism - despite the 1971 split.

If the WRP members really want to break with Healyism, and we think they do, then they will also have to rebuff - through open discussion not bureaucratic obstruction - the advances of the SLG.

The final "anti-Pabloite" suitors that the WRP have encountered at their meetings are the Spartacists. We will waste few words here on this degenerate and sectarian grouping. Our book on the Fourth International deals with their whole history. Suffice to say that this organisation broke with any semblance of Trotskyism when in 1981 it called for the crushing of Solidarnosc by Soviet tanks. It is a stalinophile sect. Little wonder that its own guru, James Robertson of the SL(US), set up a 'Yuri Andropov Brigade' in his youth section. Reliance on the stalinist bureaucracy and despair in the working class are Spartacist hallmarks.

WHERE NOW FOR THE WRP?

The WRP has made a break with Healy. The political process underway in the WRP indicates that a political break with Healyism - catastrophism, destructive and sectarian methods of party building, false 'dialectics', and the capitulation to left-reformism and petit-bourgeois nationalism - is currently taking place.

If this process is to be completed then the open discussion, promised by the leadership, must leave no stone unturned. Every crime for which Healy's regime was responsible must be accounted for, and wherever possible rectified. Necessarily WRP leaders who were in one way or another either guilty of or complicit in such crimes (violence in the labour movement, unprincipled collaboration with bourgeois nationalists etc.) must publicly account for and repudiate their former actions. Such a process is necessary not in order to exact retribution, but in order to clear the way to a fresh start under a trusted leadership.

But in making this total break with Healyism the WRP faces serious dangers. If it has nothing to replace Healyism with then the danger of replacing sectarianism with opportunism is a real one. Thurnett's history demonstrates this all too clearly. In our view it would be as much a mistake for the WRP to try and continue the "anti-Pabloite" tradition as it would for them to join hands with Pablo's descendants in the USEC.

The groups that we have briefly surveyed in both these traditions remain bogged down in the quagmire of centrism. Since the programmatic collapse of the FI at the 1951 Congress, none of these traditions represent the continuity of Trotskyism. Their politics are a sharp reminder that that continuity was shattered.

The major groups in Britain outside of these traditions - the SWP and the RCP - will be no

allies of the post-Healy WRP. Both groups explicitly reject the fundamentals of Trotskyism embodied in the Transitional Programme. Both disavow the need for simultaneously building an international tendency. Neither regard the USSR as any form of workers' state. For the SWP it is state-capitalist, for the RCP it is defined simply by one of its features bureaucratic wastefulness! In the class struggle the SWP's economism leads it to twist and turn according to the pace and direction of the class struggle. Thus recent defeats have witnessed it moaning that the 'downturn' means that revolutionaries can do little or nothing to affect the class struggle.

The RCP, on the other hand, have scant regard for the actual class struggle and the real labour movement. Through a number of front organisations - Workers Against Racism, the Irish Freedom Movement etc. - they have created their own 'perfect' labour movement. It may only include a couple of hundred people at the most, but it is not marred by the reformist politics that dominate the actual, millions strong labour movement. The RCP are classic sectarians whose fantasy world is sustained for them by the numerous video-makers they have recruited from one of their prime areas of intervention - media studies courses in the colleges!

We believe that the WRP must decide in which direction it is going, during the open discussion period. If it does not then it risks the fate of reproducing the politics of one variety of centrism or another.

Indeed, a pre-requisite for a fruitful discussion is to first of all reject the simple division of the political world into 'counter-revolutionaries', 'CIA agents' and the revolutionary party (WRP). The political spectrum is occupied mostly by varieties of centrism, some leftward, some rightward moving. The WRP must examine all groups in a spirit devoid of sectarian malice and without ignoring the political defects of groups (SLG, SV) simply because they were once the victims of Healyism. Certainly, in this case two wrongs do not make a right.

REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT.

The open discussion must, therefore, set itself a clear objective. We believe that that objective should be revolutionary regroupment on a principled basis through a fusion with Workers Power. We submit that our politics have avoided the twin dangers of opportunism and sectarianism. In the most recent acid-test, the miners' strike, we fought for the general strike to help the miners to victory. But we did not invoke spectres of Bonapartism in order to lend this slogan credence. We rooted it in the unfolding dynamic of the strike and raised it in a focused way at key moments - during the docks strike, when the NUM's assets were seized, during the TUC Congress.

Moreover, while we gave critical support to Scargill whenever he acted in the interests of the miners and of the working class, we never fell into the uncritical stance of preaching reliance on Scargill that was so fashionable on the left, including, it must be said, in your own ranks. Throughout the strike and since we have called for the building of a militant minority movement in the NUM. Most importantly these political positions were not mere literary exercises. Despite our limited size, our organisation threw itself into every aspect of the strike. Our work enabled us to launch and sustain a special bulletin for miners, *The Red Miner*.

We do not ask the WRP to judge us purely on the miners strike. We are prepared to submit documents and to engage in joint work and discussions to prove that our record in the miners' strike was no accident. On the key questions of reformism, the unions, the FI, key revolutionary crises around the world, Stalinism and many other questions, we have maintained consistently revolutionary positions in contradistinction to the waverings of the centrists. We believe that an honest discussion on the positions we have developed - in full view of and even with the participation of any of the centrist groups we have listed - can prove this to the WRP and help it make its final break with Healyism without falling prey to opportunism.

A fusion of our forces at the end of such a process would enable an organisation numbering hundreds, with a firm orientation to the working class, to raise the banner of authentic Trotskyism in Britain and mount a serious challenge to the domination of the far-left by centrism in its sectarian and opportunist forms. Both our organisations have a responsibility to seize such an opportunity.

The defeat of the miners' strike has not marked the end of the class struggle. But it makes the conduct of that struggle more difficult. Defeat has strengthened the strangulating grip of Kinnock and the union bureaucracy on workers organizations. Struggles tend to be longer. Defeats are more common. The bureaucracy, for their own purposes, are leading the retreat. The defeat of the miners' strike has left the left-reformist bureaucracy, personified by Scargill, winded and unable to stop the retreat. Yet, at the same time, the Tories are divided and unable to capitalise on their victories. But they will be able to do so if the retreat of organised labour continues.

Stopping that retreat means challenging the reformist leadership and building a new leader-

ship, a revolutionary leadership, accountable to the rank and file. Solving the crisis of leadership cannot be done overnight. Pretending that an organisation of hundreds is already the alternative leadership merely resolves the crisis of mankind in the heads of the organisations members, not in reality. We contend that a revolutionary regroupment of our forces would be a small but significant step in the direction of building a real revolutionary party in Britain. It could rally many new recruits, standing, as it would, as an alternative pole of attraction to the centrist groups.

It could produce a weekly paper that is neither just propagandist or agitational but combines both functions. It would not merely report struggles, but offer a strategy for winning them. It would be open to debate and polemic without for a minute deflecting from its primary pre-occupation with the class struggle. Such a paper, used effectively by an organisation of revolutionary cadres orientated to the class struggle, is desperately needed in Britain today. Revolutionary regroupment could lay the basis for such a paper.

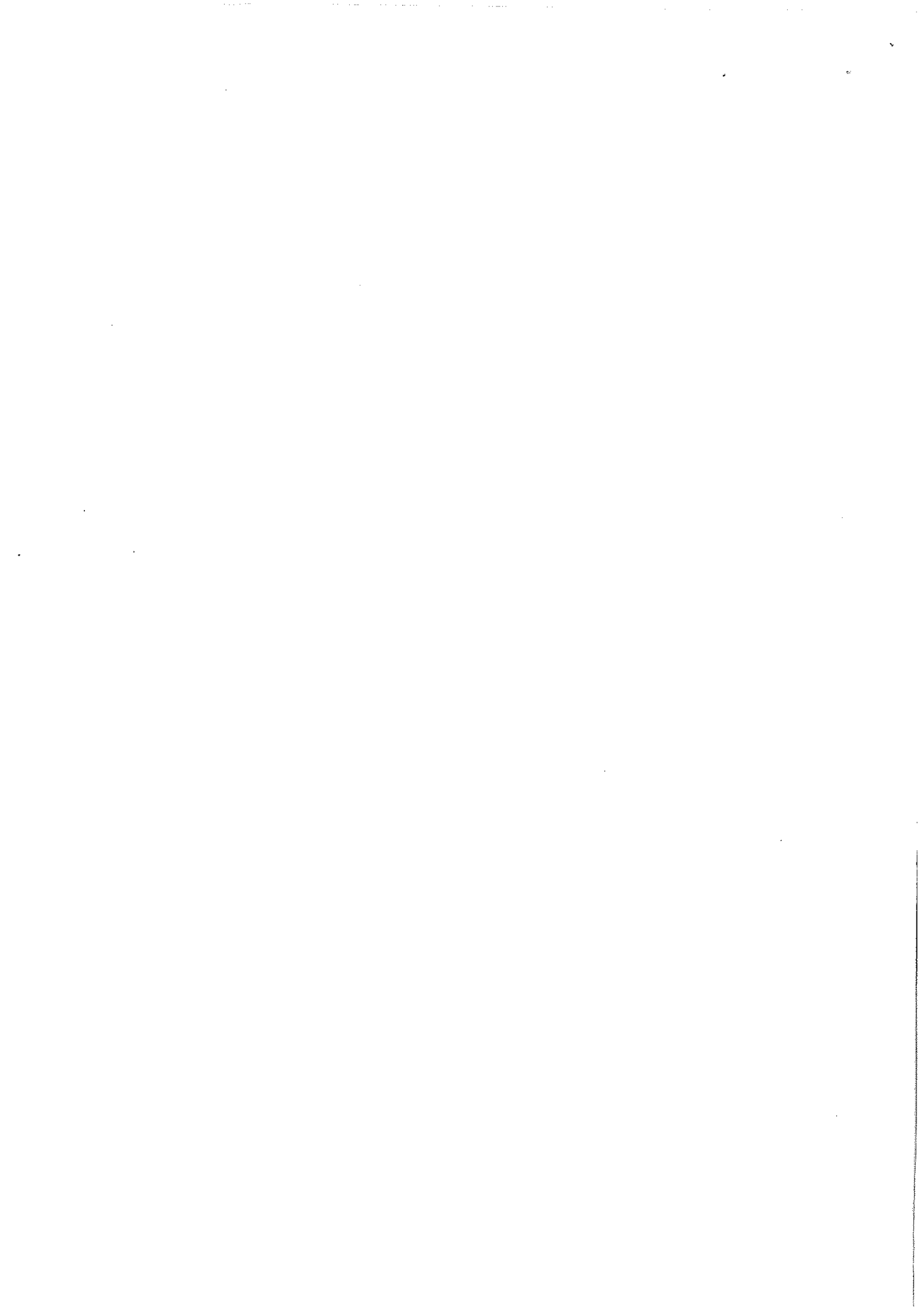
POLITICAL GUIDELINES FOR FUSION.

It is our view that only a thorough discussion between our organisations can ascertain whether or not principled fusion is possible. We wish to point out to you the political guidelines that underly our proposal for regroupment. In 1975 we were expelled from the International Socialists following the 1974 miners' strike and Labour's electoral victories there was a ferment on the left not dissimilar to that which exists today. The class struggle was the catalyst for turmoil within centrism. The fact that between revolutionism and reformism centrism exists and that it is not counter-revolutionary, but transitory, was clearly demonstrated. Furthermore our own split from centrism shows that revolutionary communists can be won from the ranks of centrist organisations. It is imperative to know how to relate to centrism if winning more subjective revolutionaries from its ranks is to be achieved.

A concrete analysis of which direction centrism is moving in - leftwards or rightwards - is essential. By ascertaining the direction of an organisation appropriate tactics can be developed. In our view these tactics revolve around encouraging, through debate and polemic, a process of splits and fusions. Splits must be made from centrism towards revolutionary communism. Fusion between comrades carrying through such splits and genuine revolutionary groups must be attempted. However, this whole process must be conducted in an honest political fashion and not via factional manoeuvres. Unprincipled manoeuvres will, in our experience, weaken the chances for revolutionary regroupment. In 1975 we attempted to apply the tactic of splits and fusions in an honest fashion. We split from the IS and fused with Workers' Fight to form the I-CL. That fusion failed as a result of Matgamna's dishonest and unprincipled methods.

In 1979/80 we attempted to conduct an honest discussion with Thornett. We were repaid by being shunned while the ill-fated deal with Matgamna was hatched. The lesson we draw from both experiences is not that splits and fusions are impossible but that both must be carried through on an honest, principled and exclusively political basis. Thus we reject absolutely raids, the sending into other organisations of spies, 'moles' etc - provocative manoeuvres that characterise the IST and are counterproductive of political clarification and regroupment. Sects and cults can be built in this way not communist organisations. We pledge and promise a politically loyal discussion and wherever possible practical united action with the WRP. We believe that the WRP must effect a complete political split with Realyism and together with Workers Power work out a principled basis for fusion. We submit to you the key planks of a programme for regroupment in a summarised form. These planks will, of course, have to be developed in discussion: //

1. Defence of the independence of the working class in all spheres of the class struggle. We oppose all alliances that subordinate the working class in any way. We fight all forms of class collaboration. We reject all reformist strategies for the achievement of socialism.
2. Recognition that the Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party which is, in essence, a counter-revolutionary instrument of the bourgeoisie within the workers' movement. A recognition that the bureaucratic caste who dominate the unions are, likewise a counter-revolutionary caste. We refuse to preach reliance on any section of the Labour leadership or the union bureaucracy by the working class since we recognise that the left within the LP and unions, while they reflect the pressure of the advancing masses, are also, in Trotsky's phrase, a 'brake' upon the masses.
3. Recognition that Stalinism is a counter-revolutionary, reformist trend within the workers' movement. Stalinism is not simply an expression of the Soviet bureaucracy. Parties can break



with the soviet bureaucracy and remain stalinist as the experience of Yugoslavia and China demonstrates. This indicates that Stalinism has, as Trotsky predicted, broken up along social patriotic lines as a result of the reactionary theory of 'socialism in one country'.

4. Flowing from the fact that social-democratic and stalinist reformism dominate most of the world's labour movements, the revolutionary use of the united front tactic is a necessary element of the fight to win communist leadership and to break the influence of reformism through struggle. The united front is not the uncritical bloc that the principal centrist tendencies pretend it is. It is unity in action in the interests of the working class and full freedom of criticism within the united front.
5. In Britain today against the majority of the centrists we deny that total entry into the Labour Party is the necessary and permanent form of the united front. Likewise we condemn the abstentionism of the SMP and the RCP with regard to the LP. We argue for fraction work in the LP on the model of the early CPGO. The aim of this work is to build a revolutionary tendency on a full revolutionary programme which can wage a fight with the Labour leaders with the objective of winning Labour's base to communism. At the same time the revolutionary fraction will be obliged to undertake a series of united fronts against the right, without ever liquidating itself into centrist or left-reformist groupings.
6. We regard struggle in the unions and workplaces as the key focus for revolutionaries. They, far more than Labour Party wards, are at the sharp end of the class struggle. In the unions we seek to build communist fractions around industry-appropriate bulletins. At the same time we recognise that militants who are not yet communists are prepared to fight both the bureaucrats and the capitalists. To unite in struggle with these militants we seek to build anti-capitalist, anti-bureaucratic rank and file movements. While we fight for communist political leadership in such movements we do not seek to make them the organisational property of the party. Our aim in the unions is to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments of struggle.
7. We give full support to the struggles of all oppressed groups in capitalist society. We fight for the full liberation of women, but we reject the feminist notion that women can be sexually liberated under capitalism or separately from the struggle against capitalism. We fight to build a working class women's movement and seek to win communist leadership of it. We apply variants of this tactic to other sections of the oppressed - blacks, youth, gays and lesbians - in order to give their struggle against oppression a working class content that links it integrally with the struggle against capitalist exploitation. The fact that such struggles have been or are led by white-collar or petit-bourgeois elements should in no way lead communists to neglect these struggles or adapt to backward elements in the consciousness of workers within capitalist society (workerism).
8. We recognise that imperialism has divided the world into oppressed and oppressor nations. We unconditionally support the struggle of oppressed nations against imperialism (Argentina against Britain, Nicaragua against the US etc.). We give unconditional support for all genuine national liberation movements (IRA, PLO etc.) even where they are not led by the proletariat. In the imperialist countries we apply the principle of unconditional but critical support to such movements. We apply the tactic of the anti-imperialist united front with such forces in the colonies and semi-colonies themselves. That is we unite with them in struggle against imperialism but at the same time we defend the independence of the working class. We are for the building of revolutionary parties in the colonies and semi-colonies based on the programme of permanent revolution. That is we recognise that democratic tasks can only be finally resolved via the proletarian revolution.

While we defend bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalist regimes in the imperialised countries against imperialism (regardless of their political nature) we do not extend them our political support. To do so would be to abandon the independence of the working class and its struggle for power in these countries.
9. We regard the USSR as a degenerated workers' state, requiring a political revolution led by a Trotskyist party to facilitate the transition to socialism. We regard all of the the Stalinist states in Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba as workers' states which were degenerate from birth and, like the USSR, cannot progress to socialism without political revolutions led by new revolutionary parties. In East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 we stood four square with the workers against the Soviet tanks. In Poland in 1980/81 we stood with Solidarnosc against the bureaucracy and against Jaruzelski. We unconditionally defend

all the workers' states against attacks from imperialism.

10. We, together with groups in the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) with whom we have fraternal relations - Arbeiter Standpunkt (Austria), Irish Workers Group, Pouvoir Ouvrier (France), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (West Germany) and comrades in exile from Chile believe that the Fourth International no longer exists as a revolutionary international. Its major fragments, the USEC, the Lambertists, the International Workers League of Moreno, the International Committee etc, are centrist caricatures of Trotsky's revolutionary international. They are the products of the FI's death agony which led to its total collapse into centrism at the 1951 World Congress which abandoned the programme of political revolution with regard to Yugoslavia. At that point the continuity of Trotskyism was shattered. It must be re-established through the re-founding of a Leninist-Trotskyist International. To this end the MRCI, through collective discussion is seeking to accumulate common programmatic positions which alone can lay the basis for international democratic centralism and a re-founded International.
11. The party in Britain and internationally that we seek to build will be based on the principles of scientific socialism laid down by Marx, Engels, the struggles waged by the Bolshevik Party for a revolutionary course in the Second International, the first four congresses of the revolutionary Comintern and the Transitional Programme of the FI. But we recognise that the programmatic collapse of the FI obliges us to re-elaborate the programme, to encompass new developments (the expansion of Stalinism etc) and to rescue its demands from the distortions they have suffered at the hands of the centrists. However, we stand for the re-elaboration of the Transitional Programme on the firm basis of the revolutionary method enshrined in that programme itself.

These eleven points are a summary of our programme. We are willing to supply you with documents that substantiate and develop each of these points. They are the points around which agreement needs to be established if a principled fusion is to take place.

HOW SHOULD WE PROCEED?

To facilitate a process of regroupment we propose the following:

- * That we be allowed to have observer status at the WRP's forthcoming conference.
- * The establishing of regular formal discussions between our leading committees.
- * The establishing of links between our branches/union fractions etc, for both political and educational discussions and the carrying out of united work in the labour movement.
- * An exchange of key documents, to be decided upon by a meeting of the leading committees and the establishment of a joint discussion bulletin open to contributions from any member of either of our tendencies.
- * The holding in the spring of a joint membership meeting on the history of the SLL, Stalinism and the FI, open to participation from other invited groups.
- * The production by both organisations of balance sheets of the discussions held, in the late spring to ascertain whether or not fusion proceedings can commence.
- * Congresses of the respective organisations to vote on whether or not fusion is possible following this discussion process.

We submit this letter and these proposals to the WRP for your consideration.

Yours fraternally,

WORKERS POWER Political Committee.
February 16th, 1956.

