

INTERNAL BULLETIN NO.40

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Conference is February 18-19-20. Please make all arrangements  
necessary to ensure that you can arrive for the Friday evening.

Comrades are asked to give a contribution of 20p per bulletin  
if possible towards the cost of producing and mailing IBs.

Further contributions for the IB should be sent to the centre,  
if possible typed A4 on Roneo stencils.

## IN SUPPORT OF FUSION WITH THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Mellor, Paul, Tyldesley,

Comrades will have seen in IB 30 that the Socialist League (formerly the IMG) have proposed discussions on the question of fusion between our two organisations. This proposal accompanies their turn towards increasing their work in the MP, including a suggested campaign around the election that comrades will have seen reported in issue 118 of our paper.

The signatories of this statement believe that we should respond favourably to their proposal; that the question of fusion should be seriously discussed at our coming conference; and that at our conference we ought to take a decision in principle in favour of fusion with them.

### The Reasons for Fusion

1. Both the pre-1981 fusion organisations, the ICL and the old WSL, had been approached at least once by the IMG over the question of unity, and had rejected the idea. The ICL was last approached in 1978 when the IMG launched their ridiculous 'Socialist Unity' election campaign, and quite correctly refused to have anything to do with their campaign.

But this proposal of fusion is made in very different circumstances, and now, in these circumstances, a decision in favour of fusion would be the correct one.

The changes that have taken place that argue for fusion are -

i) their turn towards work in the TUs and in the MP.

ii) the developing crisis in the USFI.

iii) the change in the relative sizes of our organisations due to our 1981 fusion and their decline in membership.

2. About three years ago the IMG decided to turn towards doing more work in the MP, in which they already had a small number of members. Since then, we have increasingly found that they have been arguing a line very similar to, or identical to, our on the important issues that have arisen within the MP, and often - whether we like it or not - we have worked very closely with them. On a national level, this has happened with the 'deputy leadership' election campaign, the campaign against the witchhunt; on a local level, we have been in left caucuses with them on e.g. the issue of rates, rents, cuts, and local councils.

This has been because they have been moving towards the political approach that many in the WSL have been espousing and practising for years: they have been forced by events to realise that in 1978 their 'Soc. Unity' campaign was wrong and that we were working at least in the right direction.

We are also increasingly working with them in the TUs, particularly in Broad Lefts; we also worked with them to a limited extent in BL.

Both the IMG/SL and us are trying to draw non-aligned left reformists in the MP, and militants in the TUs, into 'united front' work. One result of this is that there is a large overlap between the peripheries of our two organisations. There are many potential recruits to the WSL who are very willing to work with both us and the IMG/SL, who would seriously consider joining a fused organisation - but wouldn't join either one beforehand.

With the decision of the SL, at their conference last December, to turn their whole organisation towards the MP, the convergence in political work between us and them will speed up; if we don't fuse with them, we will find more and more that they are turning up to the same meetings as us, to say the same things to the same people,

of course, the reasons why the IMG/SL are in the MP are not our reasons; they regard the MP left in the same way as they regarded the ANL youth, and numerous other movements in the past - as an arena to recruit in by combining revolutionary politics in the abstract with opportunist politics on day-to-day issues. However, we believe that it would be more productive to argue over this inside a fused organisation than as one organisation to another.

3. At the NC (resolution printed in IB30), cd. Kinnell argued that unity with the IMG/SL would lead to "our political self-liquidation". This may have been the result five or ten years ago; now, by contrast, it is very possible that, on British perspectives, our politics could predominate in a fused organisation. Firstly, we would be about one third of the fused organisation at the start; and, probably the largest

coherent tendency within it. Even at this stage, we could be winning the discussions over British Labour movement work. This is very different to the situation if, for instance, the IGL had agreed to fuse with the IMG in 1978, when we would have been only about one-eighth or one-tenth of the fused organisation.

Secondly, they are trying to move into a political arena where we have been working for several years, and which we understand far better than they do. They are trying to develop a political approach that some of us have been practising since the S\*\*\*. Probably, therefore, our cds. in a fused organisation would become the de facto leaders of that organisation's work in the LM.

Thirdly, the recruitment after a fusion would be mainly of people who want to do serious work in the MP and TUs, and who are closer to our politics than to the IGL's on this; our weight within the fused organisation would correspondingly increase.

Fourthly, we would not have to sacrifice any of the work we are

doing in the IM in order to fuse. This is a very significant difference to previous occasions when unity has been proposed.

4. Whilst, therefore, we would lose little by fusing with the IMG/SL, the potential gains are considerable. The resulting organisation would have at least five hundred members; the possibilities for recruiting following a fusion mean that it could by the end of this year have many more. Such an organisation, with something like our British perspectives, would become a significant force within the MP and have much more impact in the TUs than either of our organisations singly. The possible (not inevitable) gains are great; we shouldn't lightly turn down such an opportunity.

5. The situation in the USFI. The departure of the Marencoites, and the possible split of the SWP(US) and co-thinkers, means that the USFI is in its most serious crisis in its history. Both the pre-1981 fusion WSL and the ICL recognised the need for regeneration of the FI, and for open discussions amongst those forces in the world who consider themselves Trotskyist. The developing disintegration of the USFI is making our perspective all the more necessary. By entering into the USFI, we could put our politics over to a whole new, and possibly receptive, audience within the national sections of the USFI.

#### The Arguments used Against Fusion.

To assist us to have a serious, considered, discussion on the fusion proposal, at conference, this section will take up some of the arguments used against the proposal.

##### 1. The IMG are centrists.

This may be true, but it is not in itself an argument against fusion. Trotskyists have, in the past, entered into quite justified fusions with centrist groupings: for instance, the predecessors of the ICL entered the IS(now SWE) in the late '60s and formed a Tendency there. The important question is: will a fusion help the process of building a revolutionary party?

##### 2. We have had bad experiences of trying to work with them in the past.

Where we have tried to do joint work - e.g. in the IGL with the two broad womens' papers and the discussions over uniting them - they have been un-cooperative and factional, and their proposals for joint work have proved to be manoeuvres rather than serious approaches.

But, firstly, entering into a fused, democratic centralist organisation with them is different to doing joint work, and different rules would apply. Secondly, some of the most aggressive of their recent attacks on

us have been launched not because of political differences, but as an attempt to magnify small differences to cover over the major similarities in the work that our two organisations are doing.

3. We would sacrifice our politics by fusing.

Not so, The large measure of agreement on immediate British perspectives means that we would be able to continue with the important work we are doing in the LM. Over international issues, particularly our attitude to the petty-bourgeois nationalist movements in central America and the Carribean, we would be giving up our public criticisms of these movements : in order to take those criticisms into a new arena. Clearly we could not reach agreement with the IMG/SL over these questions, but that should not be used as a barrier to fusion.

4. We have not consolidated our own fusion sufficiently to take on another, and much less amicable, fusion.

This is perhaps the most serious of the objections raised. Comrades who argue this should take their own argument seriously. What proposals do they have for reinforcing our fusion? Have they been arguing in favour of more discussion of the areas of difference left by our 1961 fusion, and against the postponements of these discussions? If comrades would support going into the IMG/SL but for this problem, then surely they would support a decision to go for fusion in, say, six months, with an intensive discussion of the differences within the League in the meantime.

Furthermore, how long do those comrades who put this argument think it will take to consolidate the fusion, at the current rate of progress? These differences which prevent us from fusing with the IMG/SL must surely be holding back our work in the class generally; the class struggle won't wait for us to sort out our own problems.

The WSL has a right to expect that comrades who use this argument against what would be agreed by everyone to be in the abstract desirable unification of two Trotskyist organisations- do so after giving it serious thought.

### In Conclusion

We put to the WSL -

- 1) That a proper discussion of the IMG's proposal be held at our conference.
- 2) That the WSL should adopt the proposal put by cd, Gunther at the 8-9 Jan NC. (IB30; Gunther's resolution, from "The EC should therefor" to "joint work in the TUs and LP").

CRITIQUE TO DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO CF CONFERENCE (ON WOMEN) AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR WORK AMONGST YOUNG WOMEN. - Brown

As the most oppressed section of the working class, young women are also the least organised in the formal labour movement, i.e. MP & TUs. To involve them in the class struggle we have to look beyond these organisations to the institutions and aspects of capitalism which specifically oppress young women - to where young women will be taking up the struggle.

#### Education

Education is necessarily sexist as one of the main socialising agents of capitalism. The role of schools is to ensure that school leavers are prepared for their role in the workplace, or as housewife, and to ensure that they believe in maintaining the status quo.

As the present crisis deepens the school's role of training workers is becoming less important for capitalism. With youth's oppression increased through unemployment, its role of socialising will be the main thing for the same reasons sexism in schools will grow, girls will learn that it is 'unfair' for them to take men's jobs, and so they must be housewives.

Bringing youth into CF will lead to them organising in their schools. The NUSS is now virtually defunct and fascists are in most schools. An alternative must be shown. Total opposition to all education cuts. Expansion of women's opportunities, not their erosion. No platform for fascists.

The choices for young women leaving school are rapidly diminishing - low paid jobs, government training schemes, unemployment, marriage, prostitution.

#### Women in Paid Labour

Unskilled women's choice of jobs have never been good, but are now decreasing further, Textile factories - traditional employers of women - are closing down, one after another, and public sector jobs are going with the cuts.

The TUC's concept of men earning a family wage is hardly an alternative with over 5 million wage earners on low pay, and the continuing acceptance of minimal pay rises.

Women need to work, not for pin money, but for a decent living, and this necessity drives them into accepting low paid, bad conditioned jobs, This usually means government training schemes for young women.

Women are always accused of not wanting to fight for better pay and conditions by the bureaucracy, when in reality this is only an excuse for a sell-out, and due to women being excluded from union activity through the nature of the TUs. The obvious examples of this are NUPE, USDAW, NUTGVI, where a vast majority of membership of women is virtually unrepresented amongst the officials.

We should be organising women through struggle to take on the bureaucrats, not just because they are men, but because, in their privileged position, they have no relationship to the rank and file. For this reason they must be challenged and exposed as such.

Replacing male officials by female officials will not make them any better. We must take up the question of democracy and accountability, demanding that officials represent the membership in all aspects, e.g. skill level, income, sex, race, etc.

#### Unemployment

Young women, as well as being more frequently unemployed than men, also experience it as a harder burden.

They are expected to take on responsibilities in the home, helping other female members, like cooking, looking after brothers and sisters, etc.

They also have to tackle the propaganda about women taking men's jobs. This propaganda should be vigorously opposed and the demand for a woman's right to work kept up. This should be put into practice by supporting women threatened

## Critique ... Women/2

with losing their jobs, i.e. those occupying their workplaces such as Lee Jeans and those striking against cuts such as school meals and NHS staff.

Young women as single parents are being attacked vigorously by the Tory government at present with new laws to prevent them claiming social security (UB 671, availability testing).

The Tories attack the weaker sections of the working class in an attempt to "divide and rule". For example, they have recently implemented the training schemes for youth, and monitoring of ethnic minorities as well as the attacks on women. We should take consideration of this when organising unemployed women, involving them in issues taken up by Unemployed Groups. But to do this the unemployed groups should take up aspects of benefits etc. specifically affecting women and not leave this to the women's campaign.

Working in women's unemployed groups we should show the reasons for the way the Tories carry out their attacks and link up with other groups in the area.

The fight against unemployment must be co-ordinated and not left so that each little group is fighting for its own little bit against other unemployed people.

### Prostitution

Some women, stuck in the poverty trap, try to escape through prostitution. There is no doubt that this increases in times of high unemployment.

Unemployment and the pressure of YOPS, with no opposition from the TU leadership, has created a situation where employers are able to drive down young people's wages to a level just above the YOP wage of £25, rather than a TU rate. For young women this position restricts their ability to earn an independent living wage and into seeing marriage or prostitution as a way out of boring low-paid jobs.

Prostitutes are treated as sub-humans. When they are beaten up, raped, etc., it is seen as less tragic than if such a thing happens to other women. Yet by capitalism's corrupt morality their clients, most of whom have well-paid 'respectable' jobs are considered to legitimately need an outlet for their sexual tensions.

The hypocrisy goes further when women are condemned for selling their bodies to a man for one night, but praised for doing so for a lifetime through marriage.

### Family

The family is a necessary part of capitalism in the economical and ideological role it plays and it is the bourgeoisie who have the most to gain by its maintenance.

Women provide a cheap labour force in the family, they feed and clothe male workers for free, keeping them fit and healthy, preparing them for the next day at work. In addition to this they are rearing tomorrow's workers in the same way. This is a totally wasteful and uneconomical way of performing domestic work, with each household doing its own cooking, washing, etc., in small units. Yet for the capitalist it means that they have a larger market on which to sell their commodities. It also gives them the labour that performs these tasks for FREE.

The Tory government is slashing the domestic services that it does provide such as school meals, NHS, etc. - thus increasing women's burden. We must organise women against these attacks and be on the offensive, demanding more services. Initiating and being involved in Nursery Campaigns and occupations, school meals strikes, NHS occupations and strikes.

Women's second role in the family is that of emotional support for her husband and children. This puts a damper on moves towards militancy, when a man can come home and unload his work tensions onto his wife - it can mean physical violence. "Once he came at me with the kitchen knife saying I was the boss and