

INTERNAL BULLETIN No. 64

More on the WSL and CND

Against a Light-minded attitude towards
our own history

Rebuilding the WSL

.....all by Oliver.

1. On Friday April 1st 1983 at the mass CND Easter Rally at Greenham Common of at least 100,000 people, the WSL was conspicuous - by its absence!

We had no paper that week!! And the one from the week before did not even mention the CND Rally - so that was difficult to sell, even if we had any left. Given that the YM Conference was also at the same Easter weekend, why did we not have a paper and who made the decision?

At the Oxford Service Station where all coaches from the Midlands and the West stopped, there was every conceivable Left paper being sold - outside the cafe and up and down the queues for the toilets. With one exception. Even "The Militant" and "The Spartacist" were being peddled, and along the route too. The SWP were everywhere. Some groups indulged in mass leafleting - like the Greens and the CP (ML)

I was actually stopped and asked for our paper by some people I know off one of the Birmingham coaches. They were amazed when I told them there wasn't one. There were six full coaches from Coventry - over 300 people - and I am well known for my CND work on the West Midlands County Council. The Northampton comrades organized buses for 200 people - many of them new to politics - only to see the SWP selling papers to them. The same must have applied to all of our comrades involved in CND. Why was there no paper?

2. All sorts of badges and pamphlets were being sold. A friend of mine sold 150 badges at 20p. each in 20 minutes, i.e. £30., for his group. The WSL has an actual badge-making machine, donated by some Coventry comrades. What happened to it? Where were our badges? The 'Classfighter' pamphlet "Class War not Nuclear War" was supposed to have been updated and re-printed. What happened to it, given the CND Rally and the YM Conference?

3. This debate is of course a re-run of the paper's response to the women's demo at Greenham Common of December 11th (see my brilliant IB on the issue - so brilliant it has been totally ignored). Not only that but it is also in direct opposition to item 7 of the immediate task's document passed at the WSL's first Conference in Coventry in February. Comrades will perhaps recall that this was passed as an immediate task precisely because of the need to mobilise for the impending Easter CND demos and the YCND May Festival. Why did the EC of the WSL not carry out one of the immediate tasks with which it was charged by the Conference?

4. From a political point of view our absence was even worse. In my view, if we are internationalists, we should have had comrades going to demonstrations in Europe, particularly to West Germany to give out leaflets and make contacts, let alone to Aldermaston. Comrades, the Peace Movement has become a mass movement over the last two years. Its demands are "transitional demands" by any understanding I have of Trotskyism. Why has it been neglected by the Left and by ourselves in particular? At the 2nd END Convention in Berlin in May 1983 with 3,000 delegates from all over the world, the influence of Trotskyism was minimal. It need not have been so. The Peace Movement is growing as the arms race escalates and Cruise and Pershing missiles are due in Western Europe in 1983. The political direction of the Movement is unclear - it is quite scandalous that we have made little or no intervention.

The only explanation for our failure can be sectarianism on the part of the WSL. As I have pointed out elsewhere, in its early non-sectarian period, the SLL intervened in CND with good effect and gained influence and membership. Even from an opportunist point of view, like the CP, a turn to CND should be obvious as a recruitment ground.

5. Perhaps there are those in the WSL who do not believe a nuclear war is possible, who accept albeit tacitly the Tory notion that nobody in their right mind would start a nuclear war. Let them look again at the history of the twentieth century and the Marxist logic of the class struggle. The capitalist class in its death agonies will inevitably try to take others with it, as it has done already. The only way it can be stopped is by the mass power of the working class.

/Cont...

There may be those who do not like the growth of the Peace Movement when many other problems face the working class, or who do not like what they think is the class composition of the Peace Movement. But as a small group, we are not in a position to determine where or how mass movements or campaigns develop. We have to involve ourselves in the class struggle as it exists, make the links, draw out the lessons, recruit the vanguard. To ignore struggles because they are not fully-fledged and revolutionary, or because we do not like what we imagine to be the class composition of that struggle would be utter folly.

6. Perhaps the most amazing aspect of these events is the silence of the WSL membership - many of whom must have been directly affected. In our T.U. and O. Branches we would be asking for heads to roll in similar circumstances. It can only be that they have given up trying to have a say in the organization - they shrug their shoulders once again and get on with the job. I myself wrote a document on CND in advance of the NC discussion for the February Conference. It has never been discussed. I proposed the additional item 7 to the immediate tasks taken at the February Conference referred to above - the only item that came from the Conference itself. It has been totally ignored. Immediately after the April 1st demo, I wrote in a motion for the NC and Conference censuring the EC for failing to carry out Conference decisions. This has never been taken or commented upon. At the same time, I urged the EC to make preparations for the END Conference in Berlin in May i.e. to try to get comrades to become delegates, to prepare leaflets and pamphlets etc. In the event I was the only WSL delegate. I went with no leaflets, nothing - yet added to my report in the paper went the smug headline, "This is the message our comrade took". What a nerve!!

What does one have to do to get a hearing in this organization? Where is the democratic centralism?

1. Cde. EVINGTON

Cde. Evington in the debate on the Labour Party used the Healyites selling of "Tribune" in the mid-50s as an example of liquidationism. He made the remark that they sold "Tribune" because there were no "Briefings" at the time, a humorous touch to reinforce his point and to amuse the sectarians.

The astonishing thing about Cde. Evington's use of this historical reference is that in fact it proves precisely the opposite of what he was trying to show. If the Healyites had disappeared into the O never to be seen again after selling "Tribune" as for example did the "Pabloite" Lawrence Group earlier in the 50's, then his point would be made. In fact during the brief period when they sold "Tribune" the Healyites won several important recruits notably a whole section of ex-CP intellectuals who left the CP after the invasion of Hungary in 1956 - for example Peter Fryer, Tom Kemp and Cliff Slaughter. Note they did this without a party press. They also had several comrades as Councillors. The Healyites started "The Newsletter" and an excellent magazine "Labour Review"; they formed the SLL. When the YU was formed after the 1959 General Election they formed "Keep Left" and using the process of "Wiganization" they took over the YU within 4 years, managing to organize a demonstration of 8,000 against their expulsion at the O Blackpool Conference in 1964. This is a strange form of liquidationism.

It is also a fact that if the Healyites had liquidated themselves in the middle 50's as Cde Evington suggested, there would now be no WSL for him to be part of a faction of, since most of the leading comrades (including the leading comrades in the faction) came to Trotskyism via the SLL during the 1960's.

It shows very scant regard for the history of our movement to light-mindedly throw in an incident without any reference to overall development - rather like somebody as Dr. Johnson once remarked, who, when selling a house, brought along a brick as a sample. It is my opinion that the Healyites were quite correct to sell "Tribune" as they did - in no way was it liquidationist as later events proved. It is also my opinion that the SLL were quite wrong to leave the O in 1964 and this was a signal for a serious sectarian degeneration of that organization.

I say this is my opinion since I have thought about it and read about it: I am not dogmatic about it. But it is my experience since I was connected with the SLL from 1959 to 1966 and I get angry when comrades are not prepared to discuss and learn from what actually happened.

2. Cde JONES

Worse than Cde. Evington's remarks were the historical inaccuracies of Cde. Jones in his contribution to the Youth debate - worse since Cde. Jones claims to have actually been there and to have indulged in "Wiganization". He claimed in backing up Cde. Hunt that since "Wiganization" was to bring working class youth into the YS there could not have been any there in the first place - a nice 'logical' argument. He is wrong on every single count. I was a delegate to the First National Conference of the YM in 1960 at St. Pancras Town Hall. The YU was set up because the U had just lost a General Election in 1959. There were 4 separate political strands in the YU at that Conference, reflected on the NC.

The official YU newspaper was 'New Advance', very right wing in character - its editor was Roger Protz, later edktor of 'Keep Left' and later still of 'Socialist Worker'. The largest unofficial section was 'Keep Left', the youth paper of the SLL. There were also several supporters of the later SWP (John Palmer and Roger Resewall being prominent) and of 'Militant' - both sections united later around a newspaper called 'Young Guard'. But by far the majority of delegates to this Conference were non-affiliated working class. They were also very much influenced by CND which was growing at the time.

In other words, the YU in 1960 was not a shell as Cde. Jones would have it, but a left milieu with parallels to the present O.

The way in which 'Keep Left' proceeded to take over the NC of the YU was not simply as Cde. Jones stated to draw working class youth into the YU via "Wiganization". The first thing they did was to relate to the left milieu - to the non-affiliated YU branches, to YCND and to students. Cde. Jones has told me privately that what I have said about this move in articles on 'Wiganization' and "Greenham Common" is wrong. Well, I was actually connected with the SLL from 1959 to 1966. I was a member of 3 SLL branches from 1959 to 1963 in Leeds, Leicester and Coventry. In every case the YU was built by first going to the students and to YCND. My best friend was David Ashby, who was General Secretary of the YU during the expulsion in 1964 and until he had a nervous breakdown from the SLL. He was recruited as a student at Leeds University and from YCND. The YM/NC member from the East Midlands was Barrie Evans who was also a student from Leeds University and from YCND. The YU/NC member for the West Midlands and later for the North West, until he too had a nervous breakdown, was Paul Levy, who also was a student and from YCND. The Leicester branch of the SLL was formed in 1962 by 3 ex-Leeds University students - our first gains were from some non-affiliated YU members all working class, some students from Leicester University via a Marxist Society we ran, and virtually the whole of the Leicester YCND.

In Coventry, the YU ran a jazz club for the local YCND. Cde. _____ was a YCL member at the time and reports that the YCL had pep talks on Trotskyism to prepare them for the "faction fight" between the YCL and "Keep Left" in the local YCND. In 1962 the "Keep Left" banner actually led the Aldermaston March into Trafalgar Square and we were welcomed by Canon Collins. Indeed 4 members of the later SLL marched on the first Aldermaston March in 1957.

The Leeds SLL branch was recruited mainly from the University, where Cliff Slaughter and Alasdair McIntyre were lecturers. Cliff Slaughter by the way was also a Leeds Labour City Councillor during the late 50's. The left milieu in the University was very large - 500 members of CND society, 300 of the Labour Club, 100 in the Communist Society. Edward Thompson and other "New Left" lecturers were also there. The Union President in 1961 was Royston Bull, later 'Newsline' reporter, but then leader of the Communist Society and reading Russian.

The SLL had a policy of building Marxist Societies separate from Labour Clubs in Universities to recruit students. They ran a student magazine called 'The Marxist'.

It must be stressed that the SLL was very different from the WRP described in the "Battle for Trotskyism". It was very non-sectarian during this period and took up issues concerning youth. In Notting Hill and elsewhere the YU took on racists in the streets. "Keep Left" campaigned against youth unemployment and built large demonstrations. They were involved in YCND, they entered into debates with other groups. Meanwhile the proto-IS recruited on a narrow sectarian basis - of state capitalism and anti-Bolshevism.

One week the Leicester SLL branch sent back all copies of "The Newsletter" because they did not agree with the front page article. It caused a rumpus, but nobody was expelled - imagine that 5 or 10 years later, or now!

It is in this context that "Wiganization" has to be seen. The "Keep Left" leadership were mainly students and petty bourgeois. The drive out of the Party rooms on to the Council Estates appealed to the best non-sectarian activist elements in the existing left milieu. The "Keep Left" campaigns on issues also appealed to these people.

The youth that were recruited on the Council Estates were as often as not lumpen elements. Although they were very sincere and good fighters on issues in the short term, they did not last long in "Keep Left". Thus most of the youth on the demonstrations and rallied organized by "Keep Left" - and they were large demos in the main because of the efforts made by the SLL centrally - were fresh youth. That is the "working class youth" personnel tended to change from demo to demo whereas the cadre force remained stable - and this cadre force I repeat was made up of students, YCNDers and originally non-affiliated YU members, deliberately cultivated by the SLL in the first place.

The YU took up a lot of time of the SLL branch. It would be nothing for 2 comrades to run a YU branch of 25 or more in a Council Estate - meaning a disco, a meeting, contact work every week. By 2 comrades I mean, if necessary comrades over 30 years old. Thus you might have an SLL branch of say 10 in a city running 3 or 4 flourishing YU branches in the Council Estates. In the more successful areas, comrades might leave the city for 2 or 3 nights a week to go to smaller towns in their area to build branches to support their Regional NC member. Leicester SLL branch for example built YU branches in Northampton, Corby, Loughborough, Rugby and Hinckley.

I am not in any way criticising the youth by calling them "lumpen", but stating things as they were in general. The SLL pandered to these youth and patronised them, as IS did later with their shop steward recruits. They did very little educational work with them. One reason for this was the SLL millennialist politics, the revolution was nigh, so we had to build quick, there was no time for education. An example of this from my own experience is when I was about to get married. I was hauled up before Harry Finch, an SLL Central Committee member and told to "ditch that bird" because my future wife was a Roman Catholic. "What are you going to do about the children and schools?" he demanded. My reply was devastating: "It will be at least 5 years before that problem arises. By then according to "The Newsletter" the revolution will have started - so your question is academic." He had no reply. The sad thing is I believed it at the time, it was not a joke.

I have written at length on this issue, not to get at Cde. Jones who I understand was not in the SLL during the first period; but to try to give comrades a flavour of what actually happened, at least as I experienced it, so that certain lessons for the WSL can be drawn out. Some of these are as follows as I see it:

- a) "Wiganization" does not mean neglecting the existing Left milieu - on the contrary it means taking the best of them with you.
- b) It is not difficult to do in itself. I built a YU branch on my own, just by booking a room then going around with leaflets and papers into the parks, the cafes, the pubs in that particular area, seeking out the youth.
- c) "Wiganization" does not have to refer to youth - it could take place with any section or issue.
- d) It does need direction and control from the centre.

3. The Ex-ICL Leadership

A telling point on our own history was made by Cde. Hunt in the Youth Debate. He criticised the ex ICL leadership for using the slogan "turn the O out" as a stick to beat 'Militant' with - at the same time as in practice we ourselves have never turned the O out. Hence in 1973 we had 11 delegates to YU Conference, in 1983 we had 18 delegates. Compare this to the SLL who in 4 years took over the organization. In our case it has been TALK, directed often at the sectarians in our own midst. Perhaps if we actually did it, the sectarians would either be convinced or go away. We might even surprise ourselves.

The same with confronting 'Militant'. Anybody who has been to a YU Conference cannot help but be horrified at the lifeless and boring politics on show. Any red-blooded working class youth would not stand it for five minutes. But we have failed to build mass working class branches to confront 'Militant' with. Year after year we have failed to build or even plan for the YU Conference. In fact when it comes to campaigns, many 'Militant' branches are far more energetic than we are, as indeed are many Labour Lefts. Of course the Faction youth are correct to avoid useless, dead-end fights in 'Militant' dominated YU branches. Far better to campaign directly on issues that oppress youth and draw the youth towards us.

The ex-ICL leadership, as on many issues, have learnt the lessons of the past mistakes of Left Groups and this is very valuable. But we only know how to swim in theory, as yet we have not jumped in.

Bolshevism and Factionalism

1. The history of British Trotskyism since the War is characterised by chronic sectarianism - as defined in "The Transitional Programme" i.e. briefly a refusal to fight for partial and transitional demands. This is not to denigrate honest and often heroic effort but to state a fact. Other deviations, e.g. opportunism, liquidationism, syndicalism, do not feature noticeably in our history.
2. A corollary of this chronic sectarianism is that the internal regimes of Left Groups can be characterised as bureaucratic centralists. The "leaderships" form small elites and cliques living in worlds constructed entirely by themselves sealed off from everyday life. Their representatives in the areas are party hacks who seek out only acolytes and echoes. The necessary oxygen of democracy is missing; genuine discussion is verboten; a new idea is seen as a threat. All this is of course a million miles away from the democratic centralism of Bolshevism where the principles and traditions of the movement stand firm but are integrated with the living experience of the working class.
3. We can understand with sympathy the various forces which have made these mutations occur in our movement. Nevertheless we have to state things as they are. We also have to recognise that both original components of the WSL were not immune from the sectarianism and bureaucratic centralism endemic on the Left. This is not an insult but an inevitability in which we are all involved. The fusion was a significant step to break the mould, significant internationally as well as nationally.. We have been and are being watched by the whole of the Left. A hesitant step forward to complete the fusion could make us a tremendous force - a step backwards, a retrenchment of troops, which is the logic of the present factionalism, would mean a real setback for the Trotskyist movement in this country from which it is difficult to see it recovering in the medium term.
4. In my view the factionalism in the WSL is not due to the need to clarify political differences but is due to a) a failure to turn the WSL outwards for new recruits to build a new WSL loyalty as opposed to the old friendships, and b) personal conflicts among the leadership and different styles and norms of behaviour. In other words we have the worst elements of sectarianism and bureaucratic centralism from the old groups operating - the best elements of a desire to build a mass working class party have been dissipated.

BREAK FROM SECTARIANISM

1. Only the SLL in the early 60s and IS in the late 60s/early 70s broke from this pattern of chronic sectarianism and bureaucratic centralism - the SLL in approaching working class youth; the IS in relating to the growing shop stewards' movement. They did this by the process known as "Wiganization". Since these have been the only successful attempts, it is important that the WSL learns and understands why and how these moves took place and why both the SLL and IS reverted back to type instead of consolidating on the gains made.

The old WSL leadership just do not understand this process at all - witness Cde. Jones' awful contribution to the Youth debate and my reply to it in this IB. If the ex-CL leadership understand it, they have never implemented it; I frankly doubt whether these Cdes. actually know or want to know how to set about it.

2. Let me make clear as always, that 'Wiganization' has nothing necessarily to do with youth and discos. Tony Cliff and IS quite consciously copied the SLL tactic and method, only they used it to directly approach shop stewards and rank and file Trade Unionists - with great success. There is no reason at all why we should not use the same method to approach any section of the working class we choose.

3. Another point that needs stressing time and again is that both the SLL and IS first recruited the best of the radical petty bourgeois elements of their day (e.g. students, members of CND/VSC) and then turned them towards the working class, to swamp the group with workers.

I am aware that this manoeuvre is very tricky (much more tricky than some of the factional manoeuvres we have seen in the WSL over the past 2 years!) and somewhat risky. For example the old WSL cdes. are rightly suspicious of "middle class intellectuals" dominating the movement. There is no reason, however, why some conditions of membership, e.g. to recruit workers should not be made - as with the American SWP in the 1930s. The point is to monitor the situation and to learn as we go. In turning our face outwards and opening the Group up, we may lose control of situations at times, but such a process is exciting - it is not at the moment! It is the only known way to break from sectarianism and the small Group ghetto.

4. Important radical movements have grown up in the 70s and 80s, separate from the Left Groups, though influenced by Marxist and Trotskyist ideology. Examples of such movements are the Left in the O, the feminist movement, the Peace movement - there are others. Some characteristics of these movements are:

a) Their basic demands are transitional demands (as defined in 'The Transitional Programme'). On that basis alone we should support them and involve ourselves in their struggles.

b) Their membership is of a petty bourgeois nature - though not entirely so. But then so is that of the Left Groups. The problems they address are equally as important to the working class and have an impact on the working class.

c) Many of their members have "been through" Left Groups and are hostile to "Left Groups" - sometimes with good reasons, a reaction to sectarianism and bureaucratic centralism which they equate with Bolshevism - often with bad reasons.

d) The WSL have things to learn from their campaigning methods and also from their theoretical work. I am talking of an interchange here, not a one way process either way.

e) It is a very unusual period - at other times the CP or some Left Group has been dominant in radical campaigns - this is not the case at the moment. The direction of their politics is unclear and can therefore be influenced. In my view, unless the WSL involves itself and directs these movements towards the working class, some sort of Green Party will emerge.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WIGANIZATION

1. There is a clear distinction between "Wiganization" and "turning the O out" as we frequently talk about in the WSL. By the latter is usually meant waiting for an issue to arise or a campaign to start and then drive a branch out to organize around it. By the former, taking the SLL and IS as examples, is meant a centralized front by the Group on a target section of the working class, e.g. youth, shop stewards, women and then driving members out of the Party rooms and pubs into the Council Estates to build groups and create campaigns.

2. There are objectively many problems facing the working class - unemployment, particularly among youth, bad housing, cuts in services like the NHS and education, racism, to name but a few. There is as yet no organized mass fightback by the working class on any of these issues. Objectively these problems exist and objectively the class must fight. It follows therefore that if (I am not actually suggesting this) we were to pick on only one of these issues, say the NHS, and created well-organized campaigns on that issue alone, we would be successful in the medium term. The RCP for example stick to Ireland anti-racism and have recruited members as a result. The problems are that to stick to one issue is too narrowing for a Group, whereas to try to cope with all issues is to spread resources too thinly and risk the "blue-arsed fly syndrome."

3. There is another way. To copy the SLL and IS, we need to turn the best elements in the existing radical campaigns towards the working class. We need to listen and learn from the radical movements, open the pages of our paper and magazine. When we put our point of view, we must do it in a civil and courteous manner, no hectoring, no sneers. We need to pay particular attention to youth - the YCND, the student youth. We need to make the links between the issues themselves concerning these radical movements, e.g. the links between feminism, Peace, the the fight in the O.

At the same time as doing this, we must plan a programme of "Wiganization" to put down roots in working class areas, based on the needs and experience of workers. We need to make the links again between the concerns of the radical campaigns and the objective problems of the working class. There are numerous ways in which this could be done - "jobs not Bombs" is one obvious example. Whether we should stick to one campaign (e.g. CND) and one target group (e.g. unemployed youth), or try a whole range of campaigns is not clear to me. Whichever way, we need to decide nationally, organize centrally and monitor progress centrally.

BREAK FROM BUREAUCRATIC CENTRALISM

1. We need to turn outwards using the process of "Wiganization" to take the fusion forward to break the mould of sectarianism. If we do not, the fusion will collapse. Another account we need to settle is that of bureaucratic centralism. I am not competent at this instant to analyse in detail the various forms this took in the ex-ICL and ex-WSL but I have no doubt that it was there in both cases and needs to be dealt with.

2. The most obvious aspect of bureaucratic centralism in the present WSL is the lack of accountability of the leadership. If we compare our normal practice with that of the O which we are trying to democratise, we can see a distinct lack in ourselves. For example, at my local O Branch which has roughly the same number of members as the WSL, comrades expect regular meeting times, a required number of days notice of meetings, minutes of the last meeting, written reports and resolutions in advance. At the AGM we expect detailed reports for chairperson, secretary, treasurer on membership, the year's activities, what we did right, what we did wrong. The members expect to have their say on these reports and to be critical of their officers. Nothing like this formality and democracy exists in the WSL. Take our Annual Conference(s) as an example. Where are the reports of membership and accounts of expenditure? One reason for a poor response to the Fund is that cdes. do not know or understand where the money goes. Where are the detailed assessments of our response to important events, e.g. the fusion itself, Cowley, the Broad Groups, the growth of CND? One searches in vain throughout the mountain of IBs for actual concrete examples from the experience of WSL branches as to what leading cdes. are talking about - it is all in the air and abstract. Which branches are flourishing and why, which branches are not? The membership do not know and they have a right to know. Do the leadership actually know? One wonders.

3. This lack of accountability means that leading cdes. decide on the time and the agenda of meetings, including the Conference, and also what documents and materials are produced, with reference only to what they see as "the key questions". Very little comes from below, from the membership themselves, even from the decisions of past NC's and Conferences (see by IB article on CND). There is also a double standard of discipline of the "Do as I say, not as I do" variety. The extraordinary thing is that the membership put up with a state of affairs which in their O or TU branches would create an uproar. Perhaps cdes. think the leadership is overworked and underpaid and would have a fit and leave if called to account. Perhaps it is so, perhaps not, who knows? All one can say is that the present situation has little in common with democratic centralism.

4. A result of lack of formal structure giving information to the membership is the growth of informal telephone networks, gossip, cliques, leading to suspicion, paranoia, hysteria A result of this has been the calls on past friendships and loyalties irrespective of the issues under discussion and accusations of "factional manoeuvring" if one puts a new proposal or asks an innocent question. I myself have been called

/Cont...

variously "a mere Carolan loyalist" by one side and "part of the most unprincipled factionism seen on the Left in 25 years" by the other side. In my view this factionalism stems mainly from personal antagonisms and misunderstandings amongst the leadership and not from any deep-rooted political disagreements. It is also fostered by the lack of proper information and hence integration/fusion at branch level.

5. An uninformed membership is also an uneducated membership and more easily manipulated. The attitude towards political education in the WSL is appalling. The magazine is a joke. It could have been used as a means of discussing theoretical disputes during the fusion, to put some of the lengthier and weightier pieces from the paper, as a pole of attraction to independent Trotskyists internationally. Instead it has appeared irregularly and has been used then for factional purposes. The question is whether this neglect is deliberate or a matter of organizational incompetence. Either way the Group would have sufficient grounds for expelling the whole E.B. and the E.C. for that matter, if we took democratic centralism seriously.

There is no systematic education for new contacts and comrades, to say nothing of cadre schools. The 1983 International Summer School was sabotaged again either deliberately or by incompetence. The proposals in "Building the WSL", while useful in themselves, tend towards an idealist view of education which in turn tends towards sectarianism and vice versa. This view stresses an hierarchical structure with education coming from the top down. At one time thw I-CL, borrowing IO (France) methods tried a "one to one" educational system very much along these lines. This assumes of course that those at the top have "the truth" to be passed down the line - an idealist view. A dialectical approach would not deny the role of expertise but would start from the actual experience of the new comrade and their interests. It would also assume that new comrades had something to teach and contribute to the Party. The relationship of course is not an equal one between Party and individual as it is not for example between teacher and student. But neither is it one way traffic, top down - after all who educates the educators?

The "idealist" method is used in all cults and sects, e.g. the Sparts, the WRP, 'Militant' and other semi-religious groups. The search is for fellow sheep not self-sufficient Bolsheviks. It has no place in a democratic centralist organization but unfortunately tends to creep into the document "Building the WSL" and its "pull up your socks" proposals.

6. Bureaucratic centralism - lack of leadership accountability, lack of proper information, lack of proper education - result, members can be manipulated and/or intimidated. It has all happened before. Comrades may say I exaggerate in comparison to other Left Groups. My aim is not to be disloyal but to highlight problems in our own organization, the bad side, which threaten to blow us apart - that is how much I exaggerate. Unless the membership makes its voice heard and asserts the needs of the organization over the power of individuals then once again the fusion will fail. So far both sides of the leadership have failed to come to terms with these problems, for different reasons based on the history of both old Groups. They must be made to see this and be self-critical rather than retrenching into the old ways.