

Stephen Frank Rayner.

The Classification and Dynamics of Sectarian  
Forms of Organisation: Grid/Group Perspectives  
on the Far-Left in Britain.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a new perspective for the classification of sectarian forms of organisation and the study of their dynamics. It is not intended as a definitive study of any particular group, or of the British far-left as a whole.

Existing typologies of sectarianism in the sociology of religion are subjected to a critique on two grounds:

- 1) They often have a theological character, based on the content of the belief systems of sects rather than on the social structure.
- 2) Their roots lie in an 'essentialist' tradition of static hierarchical classifications of dynamic phenomena.

One of the reasons for studying political groups in this context is that they have not been subjected to these classificatory assumptions, and can be approached more objectively in the development of new perspectives.

The argument proceeds to the exposition of grid and group, both as a 'polythetic' system of classification and as one based on a matrix rather than a hierarchy. This provides us with a potentially dynamic classificatory approach.

In order to test and advance the model two themes are selected, for special attention in terms of grid and group, from an historical review of the far-left since the second world war. These are the schismatic character of the groups and their tendency toward utopianism which are examined in selected groups over the decade that followed their watershed of 1968.

Utopianism is discussed in the framework of the relationship, posited by grid and group, between spatial and temporal aspects of the cosmology and the social structure. It is argued that this approach is more informative than traditional general notions of relative deprivation. Splits and alliances are examined in terms of the organisational dynamics and mode of exercise of power in sectarian forms; and conclusions are drawn about the patterns of relative stability which emerge as groups are distributed across the grid/group matrix.

Finally, the distribution of power within the selected groups is compared with the perceptions of the members of how power is exercised.

The implications of the 'false-consciousness' of sectarians about their own organisational forms, leads to an examination of the potential for their cosmologies to conceal certain aspects of the world, such as the source of political power, at the same time as making the world comprehensible.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

On the modern scene we find the dynamics of sectarianism at work in places far from religion proper - in politics, art, literature and even within the sacred precincts of science itself. It is not too much to say that in a deepening analysis of sectarianism, its structure and dynamics, the sociology of religion may make a formidable contribution to the general effort of the social sciences to understand the inner forces of our society. (Peter Berger 1954:467)

### Specification and Justification of Topic

In entering social anthropology I was impressed by two developments in the subject. The first is the movement away from studying 'primitive' people and towards the application of anthropological techniques and theories to our own society. The second, closely related to the first, is the development of the sociology of knowledge. As a philosopher and theologian by training, I have been concerned for some time with the tendency to legitimate moral and political ideas by appeals to particular theories of knowledge and corresponding ontological beliefs. What philosophy lacks is precise study of the social mechanisms by which this occurs.

The movement away from concentrating on 'primitive' societies is undoubtedly linked to the development of an 'anti-imperialist consciousness' in the post-war years, led by the former colonial countries themselves. However, this shift is not only due to the increasing nationalism of the third world but also to a more general crisis of confidence in the assumptions of the western world about the superiority of its own culture and thought. This has manifested itself in the recognition of the existence of comparable social structures in both 'primitive' and 'advanced' societies to such an extent that these very terms have become unfashionable. This thesis looks at a political phenomenon in Britain which has been bound up with many of the issues which have fed our post-war disillusion, such as: nuclear disarmament; the failure of Soviet Socialism as a credible alternative to war and capitalism; the Suez crisis; and the Vietnam war. I refer to the small political groups of the far-left whose world has been dominated by these issues even more than British society as a whole.

In anthropology, an important aspect of the shift away from concentrating on the 'primitive' has been the development of an

emphasis on the sociology of knowledge, which has affected our perceptions of both the content and method of anthropology. The rediscovery of the concept of ideology in American thought was even more dramatic and can be dated to the publication of two works by R.K. Merton in 1949. These were The Sociology of Knowledge, and Karl Mannheim, in which Merton recognised Marxism as the 'storm-centre' of the sociology of knowledge. However, both the sociology of knowledge and the concept of ideology pre-date Marx. As George Lichtheim tells us in his essay on The Concept of Ideology (1967) it was that group of savants entrusted by the Convention of 1795 with founding a centre of French revolutionary thought which originated the term ideology in both of its accepted but logically contradictory applications:

- 1) As the relation between history and thought.
- 2) In contrast with certain ideas which would be true irrespective of social context.

In this thesis I investigate the first of these applications with relation to organisations of the British far-left which have a sectarian structure.

Since Marx and his French predecessors there have, of course, been significant contributions to the sociology of knowledge from a variety of sources. Stuart Hall (1977) has brilliantly reviewed the work of Weber, Durkheim and Mauss, Lukacs, Mannheim and Merton, Schutz, Evans-Pritchard, Levi-Strauss, Althusser, Garfinkel, Berger and Luckman, Bathes and others. Gramsci, Cicourel, Bernstein and Douglas should also be added to the list. Of these, it is Douglas (1970,1978) who has taken up the challenge of the comparative study of social environments and belief systems and has, for the purpose, developed the typificatory technique of grid and group on which I have based my study of the far-left.

The political groups of the British far-left have been relatively unknown to the general public, until the recent emergence of the Socialist Workers' Party in the context of its violent confrontations with the National Front and the furore about the infiltration of the Revolutionary Socialist League into the Labour Party which was raised by Reg Prentice and his new found colleagues during the 1979 general election. In the same election the appearance of a broadcast on behalf of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, whose members had already made the major headlines during the Observer libel case of 1978, also put the far-left in the public eye. I have prepared a list of all of the far-left groups which I have reason to believe to be extant in Britain at the present time. This runs to over thirty listings representing groups

of many different, often antagonistic, views from which I have chosen four groups for detailed grid/group analysis.

Although these ~~sects~~ organisations cover all shades of left-wing politics such as; Anarchism, Trotskyism, Stalinism, Maoism, and a number of far more obscure -isms, they share a number of features many of which have been commonly associated with religious sects.

Firstly, they are all to the left of the Labour and Communist Parties and are very much smaller. The membership of the largest, the Socialist Workers' Party, varies between two and three thousand, whilst Socialist Current, a Trotskyist fragment within the Labour Party, boasts of having only five or six members. The factor of size, however, is not determinate of sectarian character. All of the groups listed share to a varying extent a number of features which Brian Wilson (1969: Ch1) points out as characteristics of religious sects: absoluteness of ideology; lack of the flexibility which resides in political parties, trades unions, etc ; the degree of separateness maintained by the sect; hostile attitudes to apostasy; and the negative relation of the value system to that of the external world.

The challenge I seek to take up is to devise a single typology for the study of sectarian behaviour in both secular and religious contexts. The central problem is that of discerning the structural similarities and dissimilarities between religious and political sectarianism. Religious sectarianism is established as a legitimate area of anthropological enquiry. Whatever apparently obvious similarities may be shared by religious and political sects, a structural analysis of the latter, which is a pre-condition of comparison, has not been made until now.

Another factor in my decision to study far-left groups rather than religious sects was that my knowledge of the 'sacred' texts and 'holy' figures of the Marxist 'pantheon' is more extensive than my familiarity with those of Christian sects, my theological studies having concentrated on non-Christian traditions. However, this is not primarily intended to be a study of political theory - Marxist or otherwise. My concern in the present work is to present an organisational study and an examination of the structural dynamics of political groups, rather than to attempt a definitive political history of any single organisation, or of the field as a whole. This apparently apolitical approach would undoubtedly

disappoint many of those described in the following pages, but one does not have to look very far afield to witness the distorting effect that organisational issues can have on the translation into practice of the most carefully prepared theoretical position. Readers unfamiliar with this phenomenon, or unwilling to recognise it in their own behaviour, will find plenty of sobering examples in the following chapters. If there is any moral in this study for those who appear in it, it must be that the order of priority in the famous Leninist dictum that "Without correct theory there can be no correct practice", could be validly reversed. Theoretical interpretations all too often serve to justify the administrative actions of the leadership or the challenge of a rising star to the established authority.

The study of sectarianism in a political context can facilitate the investigation of the specifically sociological forces at work in sectarian forms of organisation. This is because we are covering ground which is less cluttered by the theological assumptions which characterise previous work on sects, whilst at the same time allowing cross reference to existing perspectives on religious sectarianism. Furthermore, the study of non-religious sects should be able to establish the extent to which variation within sectarian forms depends on the social environment, rather than on the specific content of the belief system emphasised by Berger (1954) and Wilson (1967, 1970, 1975). It is the relationship between the structure of the social environment provided by sectarianism, and the structures of religious and political outlook respectively, that is crucial. Despite the emphasis of sociologists on studies of religious sects, there is no reason to regard sectarianism as a characteristically religious phenomenon.

### Theoretical Perspectives

With the exception of Douglas' brief reference in Natural Symbols (1973:18) descriptions and explanations of student revolt and of the far-left have been couched either in terms of some variant of the relative deprivation thesis, or in crude behaviourist terms which ignore important social variations and the role of consciousness in human behaviour (Thayer 1966, Goode 1974). Such approaches are clearly unsatisfactory from an anthropological point of view.

We are faced with the problem of how to define sectarian behaviour

and the type of social environment in which we expect to find it. It was with this project in mind that I approached the material already available on religious sects and on utopianism. In both cases, the work available was characterised by massive empirical studies with little or no analysis. Indeed, I felt that little progress had been made in this respect since Berger wrote in 1954:

"The study of sectarianism has been characterised like so much else in the scientific approach to religion, by a mass of empirical data with little or no theoretical orientation." (467)

What little theoretical orientation does exist seems to be based on typificatory problems in the study of sects and on the relative deprivation thesis in the study of utopianism. My priority has consequently not been the production of yet more empirical data on hitherto unstudied groups, but to use my knowledge of such groups to develop a theoretical basis for sectarian studies. Relative deprivation theories and existing classificatory schemes are the obvious starting point.

My criticism of existing classificatory schemes for religious sects is twofold. On the general level of their validity as sociological classifications, they are characterised by what I describe as 'essentialism'. Originating from Aristotle, essentialism is the doctrine which has dominated classification in the natural and social sciences up until very recently. The modern form of this doctrine requires the isolation of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in a category, which can be stated as its essence. The essence of something according to this viewpoint is the quality which makes it what it is and not some other thing. I have briefly criticised this approach to classification elsewhere (1977A), but I have elaborated my objections to essentialism in the second chapter of this thesis. I see the essentialist tradition as a major obstacle to the comparative project of social anthropology, and in chapter 3 I describe an epistemological foundation for alternative classificatory modes which, I maintain, have greater heuristic potential than essentialism.

The major objections to the use of essentialist categories for the study of religious sects are that they enforce static representations of dynamic phenomena and that the number of categories may be expanded indefinitely as some new factor is isolated to designate another class. As specifically sectarian typologies, these general faults are compounded by the fact that their authors have frequently chosen orientations of the belief system of sects as the defining essence.

By being over conscious of the specifically religious dimensions of their subjects, writers such as Berger (1954), Fernandez (1964), Aberle (1966) and Wilson (1967, 1970, 1973), have produced purposive theological taxonomies rather than sociological categories.

All of these theological schemes hang both sectarianism and utopianism on the 'ideology of the disinherited'. This relative deprivation thesis does not provide any general explanation of why some sects, such as the early Jehovah's Witnesses, should experience a millenarian response, whilst others, like the Zar cults of the Sudan, should turn to ecstatic enthusiasms (Lewis 1971 : 75-9). What is more, it does not stand the test of the negative case where deprivation has failed to produce any sectarian response at all. This is especially so when relative deprivation is defined so widely as "a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectation and actuality" (Aberle 1962: 209), which is sufficiently broad as to include every manifestation of sectarianism and millenarianism which does occur. All of the far-left organisations examined in the following chapters are disposed towards some degree of utopianism, and the relationship between the shrunken world of the leftist sect and this utopian world outlook is specifically discussed in the light of grid and group classification in chapter 5.

My own research into political sectarianism has been designed to contribute to the development of classificatory ideas in social anthropology which, not being rooted in essentialism, should enable us to take account of a much wider range of causal explanations of specific variations in sectarian behaviour than is allowed for by the framework of the relative deprivation thesis.

There are two basic tests for any typology: the first is to ascertain that it rests upon a sound epistemological basis; the second is to see how informative it is in practice. Hence, the following chapters deal with both the epistemological status of grid and group and the heuristic value of the technique as a typological tool for studying the far-left. The former concern forms the theoretical opening to this study, which is an intrinsic part of the project. However, the greater part of the thesis is concerned with the problems of making grid and group operational in the study of far-left sectarianism and with investigating what kind of information grid/group analysis can give us which is not so readily available from other classificatory devices

with claims to heuristic value.

### Gathering and Presentation of Data

My personal acquaintance with the British far-left dates from 1971. I have therefore been in contact with three of the four groups studied in detail, throughout seven years of the ten year period for which the grid/group analysis is applied to them. However, most of the data which was specifically gathered for this project was obtained through archival research, interviews, and participant observation, conducted in the years 1976-8. All of the material on the fourth group was obtained through participant observation during this period.

There is very little published material specifically on the history of British far-left groups. The only academic study of organisations to the left of the Communist Party, is an inaccurate chapter in George Thayer's The British Political Fringe (1966: 119-155). There is a short but partisan account of the main groupings in Tariq Ali's book The Coming British Revolution (1972: 110-48), whilst The Left in Britain by David Widgery (1976) contains useful documentary material from the same period. The only official history produced for open publication by any of the groups is The History of IS by Ian Birchall (1975 A&S). There are also a number of informative pamphlets covering the period from the viewpoints of various groups; these are included in the bibliography. None of this published material covers the whole period, or all of the groups which it is intended to cover in the present study.

Much of the archival work was therefore conducted in my personal collection of far-left documents, publications, and handbills, and in the collections of friends and informants. It must be emphasised that it is not the normal practice of far-left groups to permit non-members to have access to internal publications, although selections of historical internal material and correspondence from the 1950s and '60s, are published by both the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (through the SWP USA) and the International Committee of the Fourth International (through the WRP). However, these are mainly concerned with international affairs. Where I have quoted from an unpublished internal document, I have not given a specific reference for a number of reasons. The first is to protect the confidence of informants who have given me access to restricted material and may be liable to

disciplinary action by their respective organisations. In other cases I have not given a specific reference because there is simply no publication data which would constitute an adequate or useful reference. I have always made it clear from which organisation such a document originates, and the year of publication.

As I am interested in developing a typology of sectarianism with dynamic potential, I clearly require an historical perspective on the far-left. Given the poverty of published historical sources and the contradictory nature of their various accounts of the far-left, I have been obliged to piece together the history of the phenomenon as a whole, and of the individual groups, by supplementing written sources with verbal accounts from those involved. Some of these accounts were given as interviews by individuals who were prepared to help me in my research. Others were obtained in the course of conversation with group members who were not aware that I was writing a thesis on the subject, and would almost certainly not have co-operated with a 'bourgeois sociologist'.

I have not identified any of my informants for two reasons. Firstly, most of them are still members of or sympathisers with one or other of the groups studied and I would not like them to be held responsible by their comrades for the interpretations of events given in this thesis, for which I take sole responsibility. Secondly, the historical account which I have constructed of each organisation is deliberately chronological, whereas the interviews and conversations were usually thematic. Therefore, each of the historical descriptions given here has been put together from diverse sources during the course of my research, and it would be impossible to attribute each detail to an individual source with any accuracy. Wherever I make an assertion of fact in the history of any group without giving a reference then the reader should assume that it was obtained in the course of fieldwork. I make this point explicitly because whereas verbal historical accounts from exotic fieldwork locations are easily accepted by anthropologists, my experience has been that readers are in the habit of expecting references to textual sources in historical accounts of our own society.

I have said that in certain cases, the external boundary around a group and its suspicion of outsiders precluded the possibility of being able to conduct open interviews with current members. This was particularly the case with the Workers' Revolutionary Party and the



Workers' Institute. This situation forced me to rely on getting involved in political debates with members at the end of public meetings or demonstrations, or in bars, and gleaning as much information as possible. In these circumstances it was obviously not possible to take written notes at the time, and useful information had to be written up in rather piecemeal fashion after the event. This method of obtaining data, which was the only one open to me in some cases, has inevitably left gaps in the accounts, and has possibly overemphasised the actual significance of certain events, simply because more people happened to talk about them. There seems to be no way of rectifying this problem in the present study, we can only be aware of it in the light of the difficulty of obtaining any accurate data on the subject at all.

One possible solution might have been intensive participant observation in each group. However, this would have required a team of researchers if I was still to carry out a comparative study of a number of groups rather than an historical account of a single group. This is because I was only too well aware, in my fieldwork on the fringes of the various groups, that I could not afford to vary my stance as an independent sympathiser and become too closely identified with any particular organisation, or else doors would be closed to me among the other groups. The world of the far-left is a small one, and word would soon have got around. The only partial exception to this was the Workers' Institute, the tiny millenarian sect described in chapter 5, whose own insularity protected me from being seen by them in the company of other organisations, and from being seen by others in their company. This was fortunate because there is no other information available on the Workers' Institute, apart from that which I obtained through fieldwork during 1977. However, even in this case I did not take up membership or residence in their communal centre. Because of the total community control of time and space in this group it would have been impossible to write any field notes and keep any account of the developments in other organisations through my personal contacts, without arousing hostile suspicions about the nature of my activities. Had they been aware that I was conducting any kind of study, I would have been identified by the Institute as a "time wasting bourgeois sociologist" at best, or at worst as a "police agent of the fascist bourgeoisie". Other organisations were not so hostile, and a few individuals from these were very helpful, but all my work with the WRP and the WI was conducted under conditions of

clandestinity which made the collection of data very difficult.

In the chapters where I present this data I have tried to avoid separating empirical material and theoretical development. To do so would have two drawbacks in my estimation. One is that such a separation promotes the impression that the data is objective in the sense that it is free of theoretical considerations in its selection. I am not alone in regarding this kind of objectivity as erroneous (cf. chapter 2). I believe that the best we can do is to make the basis for our selective process as explicit as possible in order that others may judge our decisions on the most informed terms. Secondly, to separate theoretical development from the empirical data runs counter to my main concern, which is not to present a definitive study of the far-left, or of any particular group, but is to develop a theoretical basis for such studies. My data and interpretations of it are therefore provisional and subject to correction in the light of further detailed research which may in future be conducted into the individual groups along the lines developed here.

Following a theoretical discussion of grid and group and its heuristic advantages as a typological tool, I have selected two themes from the post-war history of the British far-left for particular attention. The first of these is a clear tendency towards utopianism which is discussed with particular reference to the millenarians of the Workers' Institute. The framework for this discussion is the relationship posited by grid and group between social structure and the spatial and temporal aspects of a cosmology. It is argued in chapter 5 that this is a more informative approach than traditional accounts of millenarianism in terms of generalised notions of relative deprivation. The second theme is the schismatic tendency of far-left groups. The anatomy of one split in the Workers' Revolutionary Party is dealt with in terms of the organisational dynamics and the mode of exercise of power as described by grid and group analysis. This is followed by a comparative account of the Socialist Workers' Party and the International Marxist Group over the period 1968-78, in order to elucidate the relationship between the two organisations' divergent responses to similar political pressures throughout the decade, and their organisational structures as described in terms of grid and group.

Finally, general inferences are drawn that there are coherent patterns

of relative stability which emerge as groups are distributed across the grid/group matrix. This pattern is related to the distribution of power within the selected groups compared with perceptions of members of the way in which power is exercised. The implications of a 'false-consciousness' of sectarians about their own organisational forms, leads to the conclusion that cosmologies may conceal certain aspects of the world, such as the source of political power, at the same time as making the world intelligible. In the case of the far-left, we see how organisations with an explicit ideology of equality can be dominated by cliques or by individuals who are able to appropriate control of the boundary.

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This work would not have been possible without the help of many people including those members and ex-members of far-left groups who assisted me in my fieldwork, and those of my fellow students at University College who have given me a sympathetic hearing in seminars and discussions.

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## Chapter Two

### The Essentialist Tradition of Social Classification, and Typological Perspectives in the Sociology of Religion

We should notice one presupposition which Aristotle and Kant share, which is, I believe, unreflectingly shared by a number of contemporary philosophers. Namely, it was supposed that there exists a finite catalogue of categories .... (Gilbert Ryle 1971:179)

### The Typological Tradition in Scientific Common-Sense

It is one of the aims of this thesis to address itself to a specific problem of classification in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology and the sociology of religion. At the outset we must bear in mind that the classification of a certain type of human activity as distinctively scientific, and the assignment of the issues addressed in this thesis to anthropology, philosophy, psychology, or any other discipline, depends on our ability to handle categories.

Classification has long been established as an important area of concern in anthropology, although the emphasis has been on folk and kinship classifications. I am concerned with the construction and use of typologies by anthropologists for the comparison of social units. These typologies have been specifically based on factors such as personality types (Benedict 1934), kinship (Murdock 1949), or on mode of production (Hindess & Hirst 1975). Some leading anthropologists have even maintained that studies of social systems would have to be fitted into a general morphology of social types (Radcliffe-Brown 1952), but this suggestion has met with much resistance because of the difficulty encountered in finding a likely epistemological basis for such a typology (Leach 1976). Among British anthropologists of the last two decades, Leach (1961, 1976) and Needham (1972, 1974, 1975), have been prominent in addressing themselves specifically to epistemological problems inherent in the classifications made by anthropologists.

Despite the extent of this established concern and the criticisms of Leach and Needham, most anthropologists have not been authorities on the principles of scientific classification. Instead we have tended to

operate within a framework of received assumptions about classification which might be described as the 'common-sense' of typology. It is to this body of well established ideas to which we now direct our attention.

A common-sense account of the methodological significance of typological classification which might find ready acceptance amongst those who have remained outside of the most recent philosophical and scientific debates would probably include most of the following elements:

- 1) Since science as a human activity assumes that we can apprehend significant regularities in both the natural and social worlds, classification should represent the codification of knowledge within any sphere of enquiry.
- 2) Classification is a pre-requisite for comparison of phenomena. Only by observing phenomena of the same ontological order can we move to the further stage of scientific enquiry, that of justifiable prediction.
- 3) The categories of a typology are inductively arrived at in order to represent the most general features of a cluster of empirical individuals which make up a finite and discrete 'natural' grouping. The 'type' is thus a representation of the shared 'essence' of the cluster, stripped of the historically accidental features which cause individuals to deviate from the ideal form.
- 4) The categories of any typology should be mutually exclusive so that a member of any one category may not be equally validly assigned to another category in the same typology.
- 5) The members of a category should in principle be mutually substitutable. That is to say "whatever we know of one object in a class we also know of the other objects, so far as identity has been detected between them." (Jevons 1874, 2:345).
- 6) Classifying phenomena permits us to seek and predict relations between them which may not appear obvious, and it allows us to exclude apparent relationships which are not consistently co-occurring.
- 7) The categories of a typology should be arranged in a hierarchy of inclusion moving from the most specific to the most general class.

- 8) In all of the foregoing respects, a typology goes beyond a simple phenomenological description, but does not go so far as to represent a causal explanation. To give classification the methodological status of being a first cause would be to introduce stereotyping as a mode of scientific explanation.

I am not suggesting that every traditional typology puts equal stress on all of these features; the foregoing is itself an ideal typical account of the tradition such as may be found in the Encyclopedia of Social Science and undergraduate philosophy courses. Such an account of the significance of classificatory procedures is the outcome of a long tradition of western thought which has been characterised by the tidy-minded production of totalitarian taxonomies. I call them totalitarian for three reasons:

Firstly, because the principle of substitution amounts to the assumption that a class must be defined by the invariable presence of a common property or single set of necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in a natural kind. In the following pages I shall refer to this assumption as the doctrine of essentialism.

The second reason for describing traditional views of classificatory procedure as totalitarian, is the common tendency of its practitioners to reify their categories through the methodological assumption that the particular finite pattern into which science organises human experience at any particular time is the only true way of organising the world. Reification transforms relations between phenomena into a collection of discrete things, rendering possible a detailed knowledge of parts of society and nature at the price of the ability to master the whole. Thus traditional empiricism provides us with bundles of knowledge. To achieve an overview of the totality it should be possible to arrange the bundles like the pieces of a jigsaw (Leach 1976:5). However, when we try this we find ourselves facing contradictions which cannot be resolved within the received framework of knowledge. The bundles overlap, inconveniently competing for the same conceptual space, or else leave embarrassing gaps (Leach 1976:17). Despite this fact, there is a great temptation amongst typology makers to regard their own particular arrangement of the bundles as configurations of 'real' types, which the classifier merely tidies up into formal categories.

Finally, the typology makers' patterns have frequently taken hierarchical forms. The methodological rationale for this is that the categories of a typology ascend from the specific to the general in transitive steps. This has two drawbacks. Methodologically it encourages a static view of phenomena and can only deal with change through the multiplication of ad hoc transitional categories. The hierarchical arrangement of categories in this way also takes on an ubiquitous evaluative aspect.

This characterisation of the traditional approach to typology led me to seek for alternative classificatory procedures within social anthropology. This thesis is an attempt to investigate ways of organising anthropological data on sectarianism in a manner which avoids the trap of totalitarianism whilst still allowing us to carry on a comparative project. In attempting this task of developing a new approach to classification of sectarian organisations I shall draw out in chapter 3 certain features of Douglas' grid/group technique, and attempt to show how they contribute to making the technique operational in the study of sectarian organisations. Although it was not explicitly developed as a subversive tool, grid and group has far reaching implications which may decisively undermine our traditional views of the value and scope of typological classification. For this reason, it is worthwhile expanding the critique of traditional approaches to typologising and their use in the sociology of religion before embarking on an account of grid and group, its subversive aspects, and its application to our particular task in anthropology.

The traditions of social and scientific classification have never been entirely separate. They both originate in classical thought, diverge with the parting of western science and theology, and merge once more in modern sociology. In this process, certain elements have recurred. I have selected four themes as being particularly relevant to a critique of traditional typological approaches as they occur in the sociology of religion. These are:

- 1) Classification by appearances.
- 2) The doctrine of essentialism.
- 3) The hierarchical arrangement of categories.
- 4) The correlation of personality types and social condition.



In discussing each of these themes, I have tried to exemplify it with the arguments of the figure who did most to establish it as part of the common-sense of western thought. My purpose here is not to present a scholarly treatise on what Plato or Aristotle really did or did not mean; that is the province of pure philosophy. I am more concerned to indicate what the influence of such celebrated figures in the history of our ideas has been in the common-sense of the scientific community. The use of these examples rather than ones taken from current philosophical debates also serves to illustrate that the themes I am concerned with have figured in western thought throughout its history.

### 1) Classification by appearances

This theme consists of two elements - the correlation of external attributes with an internal condition and the creation of categories by idealising empirical individuals.

One of the oldest examples of the typological tradition in western scientific thought can be traced back to Hippocrates (467-377BC) who saw illness as pathological deviation from the normal healthy state of the body. He identified ectomorphism and endomorphism as deviations from the ideal physique, which predispose an individual to certain deviations from the healthy state. Thus Hippocrates established at a very early stage the rationale behind all classification in what was to become the Aristotelian tradition, namely the correlation of external attributes with an internal condition. Such a correlation is clear in Linnaean taxonomy (1758), which identifies members of a species according to immediately observable features such as: living on land, having a skeleton, breathing through lungs, suckling young, etc.. These are the sorts of factors which constitute the set of necessary and sufficient conditions for an individual to be assigned to a class of creatures which in some fundamental but unobservable sense are considered to be essentially similar.

In contrast to classification by external features, modern gene-pool theory classifies by what is hidden from direct observation and constitutes its categories according to the packages of genetic material an individual possesses. Using this method, a species is constituted not as an aggregate of individuals with common features but as an aggregate of

individuals which are able to mate and produce fertile offspring (Twinkle 1978). Thus, gene-pool theory defines a species as all creatures which share a common pool of genes and are therefore capable of reproducing themselves. It defines the visible by means of what is concealed, rather than vice versa. The contrast between gene-pool theory and Linnaean classification raises many wide-ranging and complex issues which are **beyond** the scope of this thesis, but there is one issue which we must keep in mind because of the light it may throw on what constitutes social structure, and how we should classify it. Is social structure observable as a morphological appearance (Radcliffe-Brown 1952), or is it an abstract notion like the gene-pool concept of a species?

It is only the idea of a species that is unambiguous. By definition members of one species do not interbreed with members of any other species. But definition is not discovery. A species is a rational construct, not a 'real concrete phenomenon'. (Leach 1976:17)

Whilst a species may be a rational construct, the genes of individual creatures are real concrete phenomena through which the morphological stability of what we define as a species is maintained (Rayner 1977 A). There is thus an explicit account of the link between the abstract concept of a species, the actual packages of genetic material which determine the characteristics of an individual and the visible features of the individual itself. When classifications are made solely on the basis of descriptions of external features, the link between them and the supposed internal condition is limited to that of correlation, or co-occurrence. Whilst this may be a step towards seeing what must be explained, it has limited heuristic value when we attempt to move towards explanation. Unless an explicit theoretical account can be given of the link between internal condition and external appearance, classification according to the latter must retain a significant degree of arbitrariness in the selection of the features which are chosen as the basis of classification. This arbitrariness may be compounded by the fact that a single external symptom (or set of features) may indicate a number of quite different internal conditions. If this were not the case, the diagnostic task of physicians would be made very much easier.

Another problem raised by the practice of classification by external features is that of circularity. Since every act of recognition presupposes theoretical assumptions of a more or less developed sort (including more

or less implicit classifications) classification by appearances can do little more than rename what is already known. This can have serious implications for the use of types in anthropology. For example, Edmund Leach has noted the circularity of the use of the 'matrilineal' type in Audrey Richards' essay Some Types of Family Structure Among the Central Bantu (1950). Richards asserts that the central problem of matrilineal societies is combining recognition of descent through women with exogamy and classifies a number of matrilineal societies according to the way the problem is solved.

...because Dr. Richards' own special knowledge lay with the Bemba, a matrilineal society, she decided to restrict her comparative observations to matrilineal systems. Then having selected a group of societies which have nothing in common except that they are matrilineal, she is naturally led to conclude that matrilineal descent is the major factor to which all other items of cultural behaviour she describes are functionally adjusted.

Her argument I am afraid is a tautology; her system of classification already implies the truth of what she claims to be demonstrating. (Leach 1961:4)

Leach identifies this approach as mere 'butterfly collecting' and claims to be concerned with generalisation rather than comparison. He says that generalisation differs from Richards' approach in that it is inductive; it consists in perceiving possible general laws in the circumstances of special cases. Unfortunately, Leach fails to recognise that circularity is a feature of induction. Generally any argument may be called inductive if it proceeds from the premise that certain members of a class satisfy a certain description to the conclusion that all of the members of the class, or certain members of the class as yet unexamined, satisfy the description as well (Rayner 1977A). The principle of induction as traditionally applied to typological classification amounts to the principle of substitution. If classification by appearances is a tautological process of renaming, then the main heuristic value of such classifications must depend on the principle of substitution. If that principle can be shown not to hold, as I intend to show when we examine the doctrine of essentialism, then the heuristic value of any classification which rests purely on inductive procedures is severely undermined.

The idealisation of types from empirical individuals by which Hippocrates derived his endomorphic and ectomorphic types also figured

in Plato's philosophy. Plato (427-347BC) originated typificatory schemes in two realms, natural science and social philosophy. Both are important landmarks in the development of typificatory concepts. Although both may be justly described as systems of ideal types, they seem to be derived quite differently. I want to stress their divergences because the typology of natural phenomena consists of idealisations derived from empirical entities, whilst the social typology is more of a logical construction of the range of formally possible types of society to which any particular society may be assigned.

It is well known that in the realm of natural phenomena Plato identified individual members of a class as being imperfect manifestations of the perfect form of their type (Republic XI). For example, a bed is such because it resembles a certain ideal bed, 'the bed' which was created by God and exists in the eternal world of forms. 'The bed' is real and unchanging, whilst actual beds are transient, subject to decay, and only apparent. Hence we can see that Plato abstracted an idealised notion of what it is to be a bed from the appearance of actual beds, and then set up his abstraction as the reality from which those appearances were derived. This circular procedure is particularly important because Aristotle's dissatisfaction with it stimulated his own concepts of universals and substances which firmly established the doctrine of essences in western thought (Russell 1946:175-179).

In the realm of social phenomena, Plato created a utopia, The Republic, the political organisation of which is defined by the existence of three classes, the guardians, the soldiers, and the common people, each contributing to the state according to its optimal abilities (Republic:I-IV) Plato compares his ideal state with four other forms of social organisation which represent deviations from the ideal of the Republic. These are timarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. Although each of these were based to some extent on contemporary states, for example timarchy is based on Plato's idea of Sparta, the categories are specified as a range of logical permutations of possible deviations from the ideal Republic, rather than as metaphysical forms of the kind described in his natural taxonomy (Republic:VII-IX)

The difference in the ways in which Plato arrived at his natural and social typologies is instructive when we turn to the use of ideal

types in modern sociology. It is well known that ideal typical constructs were explicitly introduced into sociology by Max Weber, although as Freund points out, the ideal type is largely a logical development of the established practice of historians (1968:109). Watkins (1973) points out that Weber in fact held two successive conceptions of the construction and use of ideal types, possibly without realising what important differences lay between them.

Weber's earlier conception of the ideal type, which Watkins calls 'holistic', is contained in an article written in 1904 called Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy (1949:ch2). The holistic type is an idealisation of the outstanding features of a social system or institution, shorn of its historically specific characteristics. Whilst no-one would suggest that Weber subscribed to a world of forms, it seems to me that, in his early version, ideal types are derived in a manner closely resembling Plato's idealisation of natural entities shorn of their individual accidental qualities. Both Plato's natural typology and this version of Weber's types depend on the abstraction and idealisation of certain aspects of the appearance of an aggregate of individuals, rather than on the formal specification of a range of logical permutations of possible states of affairs, which is the hallmark of Plato's social typology.

Watkins contrasts the holistic version of Weber's ideal types with the account he gives in The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation (1947), which Watkins calls, somewhat misleadingly, 'individualistic' types. Unlike the holistic types, Weber's later types are not constructed by withdrawing from the detail of social life, but by formalising the results of a close analysis of some of its significant features considered in isolation.

An individualistic ideal type places hypothetical actors in some simplified situation. Its premises are: the form (but not the specific content) of the actors' dispositions, the state of their information, and their relationships. And the deductive consequences of these premisses demonstrate some principle of social behaviour, eg. oligopolistic behaviour. The ideality of this kind of ideal type lies: (i) in the simplification of the initial situation and in its isolation from disturbing factors; (ii) in the abstract and formal, and yet explicit and precise character of the actors' schemes of preferences and states of information; and (iii) in the actors' rational behaviour in the light of (ii). It is not claimed that a principle of social behaviour demonstrated by an individualistic ideal type will often have an exact empirical counterpart. (Watkins 1973:84)

This is an account of ideal types built up from elements of behaviour within the social unit, formally combined into logically possible combinations. This process is strongly reminiscent of Plato's logical deductions of different sorts of imperfect nality, in the last two books of The Republic. I suggest that the strength of Plato's social typology and Weber's later version of ideal types, lies in their strongly deductive elements. The weakness of Plato's natural typology and the early version of ideal types lies in their inductive character and their characteristic of idealising types from the appearance of aggregates of empirical individuals. Whilst Plato's presentation of the world of forms gives the impression that his natural types were deduced, we must remember that the principle of induction as we understand it had not been enunciated at this time, and deductive forms of argument from first principles were the norm. However, we know that Plato's concept of a type can only have been arrived at through an implicit process of induction. The notion of 'the bed' must have derived from the observation of certain apparent beds, and of course the argument is circular. Beds exist because there is a bed in the world of forms, we know that there is a bed in the world of forms because we experience imperfect beds in the everyday world. On the other hand, the deductive creation of formal categories by the hypothetical combination of chosen elements of social life, avoids circularity. Categories may be created for which there is no empirical counterpart. Deductive typology does not rely on the idealisation of types from the appearance of phenomena, which characterises Plato's natural typology and Weber's early types. We must be aware of these methodological differences in approaching typology when we examine existing typologies in the sociology of religion, and in developing our own typology of sectarianism.

Finally, an important distinction which must be made between Platonic and Weberian ideal types is that Plato believed that ideal types existed ontologically in the world of forms, whereas Weber held that they were simply heuristic abstractions created by the researcher for the purpose of analysis and comparison. These two positions have long been established in western thought and are known respectively as 'realism' and 'nominalism'. The debate between them is whether types are logical constructs of the human mind (nominalism), or have an existence independently of human cognition (realism). The importance of these two positions was first stressed by Porphyry (233-304) in his Introduction to the Categories (of Aristotle), and must be considered when we examine the Aristotelian

doctrine of essentialism.

## 2) The doctrine of essentialism

Like Plato, Aristotle (384-322BC) devised both a typology of social character and of natural phenomena. We will leave aside his typology of character for consideration in 4 below.

Aristotle advanced a number of criticisms of Plato's ontology, the best known of which is that of the 'third man'. If a man is a man because he resembles the ideal man in the world of forms, then there must be a still more ideal man to whom both the actual man and the ideal man correspond. Thus Aristotle makes it clear that a number of individuals sharing a predicate do not do so in virtue of a relation to something of the same kind as themselves but more ideal. The susceptibility of Platonism to this sort of argument led Aristotle to develop the concepts of substances and universals.

Plato's circular process of abstraction of forms from aggregates of individuals and representation of the form as the reality behind the appearance of individuals, stemmed from a simple error in understanding the nature of language. Aristotle avoided this error by distinguishing between what is signified by a proper name such as 'Socrates' or 'Snoopy', and what is signified by an adjective such as 'white' or a class-name such as 'dog'. The former he called a substance, the latter he called a universal (On Interpretation:17a). In this way Aristotle neatly removed the source of the problem of the 'third man', which was due to Plato's failure to understand the syntactic difference between reference to men in general, and reference to particular men.

Thus Aristotle had no need of a separate world of ideal entities. However, in rejecting it he was left with the problem of the source of the defining characteristics of both substances and universals, if substances were not projections of universals as in the Platonic conception. The answer he provided was that both substances and universals are identified by the discovery of their essences. An essence is that particular quality which is unique to something and makes it what it is and not some other thing. Thus, Socrates has an essence which identifies him as Socrates and not as Plato. It is of the essence of both that they are men, and the definition of a species such as 'man' consists in uncovering its essence. Hence Aristotle's classification of natural

phenomena is based on a process of abstracting the essence of a thing from our knowledge of its existence (Posterior Analytics 73a).

As Russell points out (1946:210) Aristotle's idea of essences is somewhat confused, particularly as to whether essences have an existence independently of human cognition. My own impression is that he thought they did, and Zeller (1962,1:204) has certainly noted Aristotle's tendency to transform ideas from a logical product of human thought into an object of a super-sensible world. The argument over this aspect of Aristotle's thought has continued in western thought since Boethius' Latin translation of Porphyry's Introduction in the sixth century. What is significant for us is that the notion of an essence has survived up until the present century. For those who have rejected the claim that essences have an ontological existence, the notion of an essence has been employed to signify a finite set of necessary and sufficient conditions which must be fulfilled for a phenomenon to be assigned to a class.

The problem with constituting a class in this way is that it tends to take on an absolute character. Even in its nominalist form the notion of an essence of a category implies that there is only one true and valid way of classifying phenomena, and that is according to whether they share the characteristics which the classifier designates as essential for membership of a particular class. Durkheim and Mauss credited Aristotle with being the first to proclaim "the existence and reality of specific differences ... and that there was no direct passage from one genus to another," (1970:5) but it was precisely this view which presented traditional typologies with dilemmas about what to do with anomalies.

Traditional typological techniques have used three strategies to deal with the problem of anomalies. They have been squeezed into the rigid boundaries of an existing category in violation of the rules which constitute that category, thus doing violence to the variety of nature or social life. An example would be the classification of the platypus as a mammal, despite the fact that it violates one of the traditional principles of the category by laying eggs rather than giving live birth. An alternative solution is to vary the conditions of membership of the various classes of the typology.

Linnaeus constantly revised his differentiae when the characters of newly discovered species showed that a character of a previously known taxon was no longer exclusive to that taxon. (Mayr 1969:82)



If they are sufficiently numerous, anomalies may even merit the introduction of further categories. Hence, there has been a long controversy over whether fungi are anomalous plants which obtain their nutrition by breaking down complex proteins like animals, or whether their method of nutrition disallows their inclusion in the category of plants, thus necessitating the creation of a kingdom of fungi in addition to the traditional bipartite division of the natural world into plant and animal kingdoms.

We can see that there is a twofold danger here of damaging typological claims to heuristic value. We might be over narrow in the range of categories employed, thus distorting our data, or we might find ourselves infinitely multiplying categories and losing any heuristic value the typology may have had. Since there can only be pragmatic considerations for deciding on the number of categories which would be heuristically useful in a taxonomy of the traditional sort, the pretensions of essentialism to a monopoly of truth can be seen to be ill founded. This fact has been explicitly recognised by some of its practitioners. Social scientists, such as Bryan Wilson, who are sensitive to the complexity of their material (but lean towards traditional typological principles in the absence of viable alternatives) frequently urge great caution on us not to take their classifications as anything but provisional, despite the apparently definitive mode of their presentation (Wilson 1975:10).

Generally, the imposition of hard and fast dividing lines between categories which were seen as unchanging, has been the legacy of Aristotle's Metaphysics. This legacy has historically distorted western scientific thought by emphasising discontinuity in a world of process and change. If Engelsian dialectics (1894, 1925) had no other merit, they were useful as a polemic against the typological totalitarianism of Aristotelian metaphysics. The common sense of the twentieth century is of a world of change, and few people would defend a world view characterised by clear cut, once-and-for-all categories. However, Aristotelian essentialism, at least of the nominalist kind, continues to exert its influence on the social sciences, particularly in the study of religion. Thus the American phenomenologist Joseph D. Bettis wrote in an article on Merleau-Ponty as recently as 1969:

Phenomenology is not a description of particular things, but of essences. By essence the phenomenologist means what one refers

to when he uses a general term such as 'chair' or 'man' to refer not to one particular individual, but to a genus or type. Essence is what one is concerned with when he considers 'mankind', or 'humaness', or 'chairness' rather than when he considers this particular chair or this particular man. (1969:9)

The criticisms of essentialism which I have offered so far are significant methodologically but have not decisively undermined the principle of essentialist classification. Classification according to essences depends on the principle of substitution. If Socrates and Plato are both men because they both share the essence of 'manness', then in that respect they may be said to be identical, and so far as the category is concerned they are in principle mutually substitutable. This is the principal heuristic claim of essentialism. But the principle of substitution has been refuted both formally in the work of the later Wittgenstein and experimentally in psychology.

Wittgenstein attacked the principle of substitution in the Philosophical Investigations in which he examines the question, "what is a game?" The traditional response to such a question would be to seek the necessary and sufficient conditions for a game, or the inherent properties of all games, but Wittgenstein clearly demonstrates the impossibility of this approach:

For if you look at them (games), you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. (1958:31<sup>e</sup>.66)

For example, let us try to derive the essence of a game from the list of cricket, football, chess, and solitaire. Football and cricket are both played on a field by two teams of eleven players with a ball, but the constitutive rules, aims, and strategies are different. The only similarity that this pair has with chess is that they are all competitive, but solitaire is not. Solitaire does have in common with chess that it is played on a board. So there is a series of links which connect football, cricket, chess, and solitaire, but there is no single feature or set of necessary and sufficient conditions which is characteristic of, and common to all. It may be objected that solitaire is a puzzle, but since we have failed to detect an essence of games, any attempt to distinguish puzzles as anything but a set of close relatives in the wider family resemblance category of games would seem to be fruitless.

Wittgenstein described this state of affairs by the celebrated analogy of a thread which does not take its strength from any single strand running the whole length, but from the overlapping of many strands (1958:32<sup>e</sup>.67). The category of games is an open concept in Wittgenstein. We can recognise games as a form of characteristic human activity and it can be shown that individual games are similar sorts of things, but no single universal feature or essence can be stated. Wittgenstein claimed that there were many concepts similar to the category of games in this respect. Indeed he sometimes seems to imply that all categories are like this, and it is this hard version of the theory that I wish to uphold in this thesis. For even if we do discover a single strand running the whole length of the thread, we would not be justified in regarding this to be the source of the thread's strength. Similarly, the occurrence of a single feature in every member of a category is not sufficient to justify any claim that this is the essence of the category. For example, the fact that all games are goal oriented activities (beating the opposition, solving the puzzle, or completing a number of rounds) cannot establish goal orientation as an essence since it is also a consistent feature of activities which are not games.

Needham (1975:350) has pointed out that Wittgenstein's thread simile is comparable to the analogy of the chain employed by Vygotsky, the Soviet psychologist who empirically demonstrated that the principle of substitution does not correspond with the mental processes of human classification. Vygotsky showed that classificatory concepts are not formed by children in the manner supposed by traditional taxonomic principles. Rather than creating hierarchies of increasing abstraction, children form classes by means of what Vygotsky called a 'chain complex' in which the definitive attribute of classification changes from one link to another. There need be no consistency in the type of bond, and the variable meaning is carried over from one item in a class to the next, with no conceptual nucleus of central significance to the whole chain (Vygotsky 1962:ch5). This approach has been developed in the work of psychologists such as Eleanor Rosch in the United States (1975) and James Hampton in Britain (1980 In Press). Their experiments have indicated that classes are built up, without the abstraction of an essence, from a series of chains emanating from a concrete individual object of the classifiers' experience, which serves as a prototype of the class.

Thus, the common feature definition of a class has been demonstrated to be both empirically and formally defective. The principle of substitution does not hold as a universal principle of classification since the members of a class cannot be assumed to be identical in any respect, and it cannot be said that what is true of one member of a class is therefore known of other members. We must therefore look for an epistemological basis for our intended typology of sectarianism, which does not rely on the doctrine of essentialism for either its formal properties or its heuristic claims.

### 3) The Hierarchical arrangement of categories

A common methodological feature of typologies since Aristotle has been the arrangement of categories into hierarchies. This is not an accidental feature of Aristotle's thought but an integral methodological aspect of his world view which stressed the fixity of creation and the inviolability of classificatory boundaries. The correspondence between Aristotle's view of creation and his fixed category system was a natural concomitant of his epistemological realism. However, nominalists who have followed in the essentialist tradition whilst rejecting the notion that their categories have any necessary connection with the arrangement of phenomena in the world, have still constructed their typologies according to hierarchical patterns. In itself this is merely a methodological consideration of moving from the most general categories to the most specific. Although the hierarchical arrangement of categories may not be made explicit in the work of anthropologists, the methodological assumption can often be shown to be present:

For example, according to Radcliffe-Brown's principles we ought to think of Trobriand society as a society of a particular type. The classification might proceed thus:

Main Type:	societies composed of unilineal descent groups.
Sub-type:	societies composed of matrilineal descent groups.
Sub-sub-type:	societies composed of matrilineal descent groups in which the married males of the matrilineage live together in one place and apart from the females of the matrilineage,

and so on.

In this procedure each class is a sub-type of the class immediately preceding it in the tabulation.

Now I agree that analysis of this kind has its uses, but it has very serious limitations. One major defect is that it has no logical limits. Ultimately every known society can be discriminated

in this way as a sub-type distinct from any other, and since anthropologists are notably vague about just what they mean by 'a society', this will lead them to distinguish more and more societies, almost ad infinitum. (Leach 1961:2-3)

Leach is here criticising the implicit hierarchy of categories in Radcliffe-Brown's principles on the same basis of the potentially infinite multiplication of categories, which we have examined in the doctrine of essences. He goes on to extend this criticism to Goody and, by implication, others. What Leach does not consider is that the methodological weakness of classificatory hierarchies is compounded by a ubiquitous evaluative aspect, even in the natural sciences. Thus Linnaeus (1758) constructed a hierarchical typology of both the plant and animal kingdoms. Within the latter, the races of mankind are assigned to higher and lower positions. Thus, the hierarchical model of typologising, combined with Linnaeus' view of the fixity of species, appeared to give scientific support to a popular ideological prejudice of the day. Echoes of this unfortunate viewpoint may be found in certain recent race and IQ studies (Jensen 1969. Eysenck 1971, 1973).

Although it has often been associated with a fixed ontology, the use of hierarchical categories does not depend on a view of the natural or social worlds as unchanging. Darwin demonstrated the falsity of Aristotle's view that there is no direct passage from one genus to another by showing how a species might change its morphological form over time (1859). Thus the descendants of one particular species would have to be assigned to a different general category from that of its ancestors. However, although the impact of evolutionary theory changed the basis of biological classification from morphological similarity to descent, Darwin continued to utilise a hierarchical typological framework. It can be argued that this served to confirm rather than undermine popular prejudices about the different orders of mankind by showing the route by which one species had attained a higher position than another in the natural hierarchy. This view naturally suited the climate of Victorian thought which applauded enterprise and achievement whilst continuing to stress social rank. Although Darwin rejected the ontological rigidity of the Linnaean doctrine of the eternal fixity of species, he retained the traditional methodological hierarchies which posit a range of categories and sub-categories moving from the general to the particular. These seem to have retained an evaluative aspect regardless of the maker's ontology.

According to Durkheim and Mauss, the primary aspect of hierarchical taxonomies is the evaluative one from which the methodological aspect was derived:

Thus logical hierarchy is only another aspect of social hierarchy, and the unity of knowledge is nothing else than the very unity of the collectivity, extended to the universe.  
(1970:83-4)

Whilst I would not want to deny a social basis for classificatory practice and would certainly not argue for any concept of the natural or social sciences which did not recognise the social mediation of their categories (Rayner 1977B), the employment of typologies, in science, directly derived from a hierarchical model of society seems to me to be inappropriate for a modern social science.

In any case, the hierarchical arrangement of classes does not correspond to everyday classificatory practice. The methodological justification of hierarchies depends on the transitivity of categories. That is to say, if category B is a member of a more general category A, and if category C is a sub-category of B, then the principle of transitivity, which is assumed in hierarchical taxonomy, requires that all Cs should be As. However, recent experiments in the psychology of classification, such as those of James Hampton (personal communication), have shown that the principle is frequently violated. For example, if all chairs are furniture and a car-seat is a chair, then a car-seat should also be classified as furniture. This has been shown not to be typical practice of experimental subjects. The car-seat is seldom classed as furniture. Therefore the principle of transitivity does not necessarily express everyday classificatory practice, and the hierarchical model of typologising may be opened up to a further challenge.

An important task facing social scientists who would defend the notion that typologising is of heuristic value in comparing social phenomena is to develop alternatives to hierarchical techniques of relating categories to each other.

An established alternative tradition in social science has been the establishment of what Ostrander (Douglas & Ostrander forthcoming) calls 'grand dichotomies'. These are those schemes which divide the social universe into two mutually exclusive polarities. By way of illustration,

Ostrander cites Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity occurs when a society integrates its members by exploiting their commonality, whilst organic solidarity characterises those societies which promote their own cohesion by emphasising the interdependence of differentiated roles within the society. This relation of categories along a bi-polar dimension goes back to Hippocrates' typology of human physiques. However, the value judgements are different. Whereas Hippocrates utilised the doctrine of the golden mean between two extremes to determine the desirable state, Durkheim (1933) presented his polarities of mechanical and organic solidarity in unidirectional evolutionary terms. He suggested that mechanical solidarity was typical of small, homogenous, primitive societies and gave way to organic solidarity as size and division of labour increased.

A broader view of ethnography than was available to Durkheim makes the evolutionary nature of his scheme untenable. Highland New Guinea for example offers hundreds of examples of primitive societies predicated on the individuality, competition, and economic exchange characteristic of organic solidarity (Ostrander forthcoming).

Thus Ostrander argues that the evolutionary aspect of Durkheim's scheme has not been justified. But its inclusion in Durkheim's argument illustrates the strength of the evaluative element in the typological tradition. Durkheim's is one among many bi-polar typologies which have retained an evaluative evolutionary structure even though they have dispensed with the traditional hierarchical form. Further examples include Tönnies' categories of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as evolutionary poles congruent with Maine's earlier categories of status and contract. *Gemeinschaft* is society governed by ties of kinship, friendship, and local tradition, whilst *Gesellschaft* is governed by individualism, competition, and contract (Tönnies 1887). Both Maine and Tönnies cast aside the golden mean principle of determining the relative merits of a pair of polar opposites in favour of a straightforward evolutionary scheme. (It should perhaps be borne in mind that Darwin's Origin of Species had been published in 1859.) However, their evaluation of the development of human society differed. Maine regarded the shift from status to contract as logically irreversible and definitely progressive (Maine 1861), whilst Tönnies saw the comparable evolution of *Gesellschaft* as a dehumanisation of society.

It may be a feature of one dimensional typologies, whether hierarchical or of the bi-polar kind, that they lend themselves to evolutionary evaluation of this sort. It may be that the use of a straight line of inclusion running through the stages of a logical hierarchy, or between polar opposites, invites the classifier to speculate on possible evolutionary movements along it. These developmental assumptions may not be a necessary logical feature of the typology. After all, Durkheim's notions of mechanical and organic solidarity can still be useful to us as ideal types, even though any evolutionary link between them has been firmly discredited. I am not qualified to do more than speculate on this possibility, but it does seem that two dimensional typologies do not attract the same sort of unidirectional evolutionary assumptions. We will be examining two dimensional typologies from the sociology of religion in the appropriate section of this chapter, and in chapter 3 we will see that it is from this typological stable that grid and group has emerged.

#### 4) The correlation of personality types and social condition

As David Ostrander (forthcoming) points out almost all social classifications make a connection between the symbolic structure and the social structure, even if only implicitly. Indeed, the correlation of types of personal cognition and social condition has a long and distinguished history.

In his description of various sorts of polity (Republic VII-IX), Plato describes corresponding dominant personality types for each social system. The various types of polity and corresponding personality are ranged along an axis of decreasing rationality of social organisation and subsequent level of general good, as they deviate from the structure of The Republic. Plato's utopia is ruled by the enlightened philosopher kings, the guardians, who are dedicated to pursuing the general good. Timarchy is dominated by seekers of honour, whilst oligarchy is subject to the motivations of seekers of wealth. Democracy comes a poor fourth, being ruled by the masses who are wholly unfit for the task, whilst the worst state is tyranny, rule by one man subjecting the state to his own self interest in the pursuit of his base appetites. Thus Plato was possibly the first to develop an articulated typology of social structure and correlated personality types.



Aristotle's typology of social character is less clearly articulated to the social structure but is worth noting because it was he who introduced the doctrine of the golden mean into social typology. Aristotle uses the same doctrine of the golden mean as Hippocrates to construct types of individual in accordance with a range of motivations. For each motivation, Aristotle proposes three types, two of which are polar deviations from the ideal (Ethics: 3-5). Thus, we have prodigal and stingy types as alternative polar deviations from the liberal man of whom Aristotle wishes us to approve. Another example would be rash and cowardly types as polar deviations from the brave man.

Thus, Plato and Aristotle laid the foundations of studies of human values in terms of motivational responses, including Dilthey's investigation (1962) of types of Weltanschauungen, and Mannheim's treatment (1936) of fundamental types of political thought in relation to motivational attitudes such as 'utopian' and 'ideological'. The connection between personality and social structure is also implicit in some of the examples of typologies which we mentioned in the preceding section. Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* is characterised by ties of friendship and local tradition, whilst *Gesellschaft* substitutes individualism and competition. Corresponding differences in personality type are also implicit in Maine's Ancient Law and later, in Weber's dichotomy between traditional and rational societies or institutions (1947). The influence of the correlation of personality type and society in the typological tradition is clear in Benedict's Patterns of Culture (1938). Benedict borrows Nietzsche's famous dichotomy of Apollonian and Dionysian cultural personalities, and adds a further type of her own. The result is a deliberately unstructured typology of Dionysian ideals of conflict, personal ecstasy and aggrandisement, Apollonian ideals of structure and social harmony, and the treacherous, conflict ridden paranoia exemplified by her interpretation of the Dobuans.

In each of these cases, the correlation of personality types and social condition amounts to a special case of the more general correlation of external appearance and internal condition. The assumption is either that society takes on a particular form because of the ideas and motives of the dominant personality types within it, or that the individual personality is determined by the social environment to the extent that individual psychological variations may be safely ignored in cultural studies. Whilst my own prejudices tend toward the latter

formulation, it must be said that the nature of the link between the individual and culture is seldom made explicit where it is assumed within the tradition of social typology. Where it is left implicit it usually amounts to the reduction of either personality or culture to the other.

Psychological determinism reduces cultural phenomena characteristic of a particular social condition to individual responses to psychological factors. For example, in a crude psychoanalytic typology a group of heavy drinkers and smokers might be classed as essentially oral-erotic types. The converse reduction is represented in the work of Benedict (1934, 1946) and Mead (1953) respectively, who view individual personality as a part of culture. They reject psychological determinism as distorting the basic equivalence of personality and culture, both of which are viewed as aspects of human behaviour manifested and caused by individuals, but characteristic of a group. Hence, Benedict's picture of Dobuans as conflict ridden paranoids was based on the equation of a social situation of intense competition and double dealing with an individual mental state of irrational suspicion of others. In this kind of scheme there is no account taken of the formative and expressive aspects of culture, and questions of the origins and transmission of cultural values and forms are reduced to the study of child rearing practices (Benedict 1949, Mead 1954). Social classification on a reductionist basis asks us to abandon explanation of the link between culture and individual behaviour in favour of simply appreciating cultural diversity.

In place of reductionist formulations of the connection between personality types and social condition, we require a classificatory device for social systems which is capable of elucidating an explicit connection between the formative pressures exerted by a social environment, and the culture creative responses of individuals to those pressures.

\* \* \*

In conclusion to this brief review of four controversial recurring themes in established typological practice, we can say that traditional typologies have tended to proceed by inductively abstracting the essence of a category from the appearances of an aggregate of empirical individuals, and the location of the category in a hierarchy of types or along an evolutionary continuum. We have seen that there are a number

of problems with this approach which suggest that it may not be the best way to proceed if we wish to maximise the heuristic value of classifications within anthropology.

Firstly, the mode of abstraction of an essence is seldom made explicit but always depends on a proto-theory, or existing assumptions, about which features common to an aggregate of empirical individuals are the important ones in constituting an essence. But the chosen features may vary drastically within the same typology, indicating an unstressed arbitrary element. Thus, in natural taxonomy, colour is of fundamental importance in the traditional classification of algae (chlorophyceae, rhodophyceae, etc.), but is relatively unimportant in the classification of mammals.

The assumption which justifies this approach is that of a correlation between external appearance and internal condition. In social typologies, the essence of a social unit is usually taken to correspond with the essence of the dominant personality type within it, but the nature of this correlation is seldom made explicit. This can lead to two sorts of errors: Firstly, false classifications may be made in the event of two different internal conditions presenting similar external symptoms. (This is also a basic problem in medical diagnosis.) Secondly, it may lead to reductionism. The match between culture and personality is usually assumed, with little attention to theoretical justification. The result is a reduction of the social order to psychologistic explanations of individual motivations. This does little to benefit either anthropology or psychology. Social scientists who are concerned with such problems as the relation between personality types and social condition, or human values and motivations, must make classifications which explicitly account for the linkage between ideas and the social environment. This is part of the task we must take up in developing a grid/group typology of sectarian behaviour.

Essentialism is often prone to the assumption that there is only one way of classifying a phenomenon which gives us true and valid information about its place in the world, that is according to its essence. Classification according to criteria other than those which have been chosen to constitute the essence of an individual or a category is regarded as being, at best, uninformative. Not only does essentialism claim a monopoly of truth, but its practitioners are prone to arrange the world into a hierarchy

of categories, or along an evolutionary continuum. The hierarchical arrangement is itself a methodological totalitarianism which may not be justified in the light of psychological experiments which have shown that classificatory practice does not depend upon a hierarchy of transitive categories. This methodological fault is compounded by a frequent moral evaluation of phenomena thus classified on the basis of their being assigned to the higher or lower orders of the hierarchy.

We have seen that circularity is a hallmark of essentialist categories. Because they are based on abstractions from the appearance of phenomena, and because every act of recognition depends on at least some sort of implicit theoretical assumptions, such classification is likely to do little more than rename and codify what is already known. For the social sciences, perhaps even more than for the natural sciences which can resort to a wider variety of techniques, it is the heuristic value of classification in the discovery of new facts and regularities which is of paramount importance.

Finally, not only is the process of abstraction of essences circular but the categories created by this process are static. We have seen how Darwin was forced to retain hard and fast dividing lines between categories, despite the fact that the world he was describing was a world of process. Having seen how typologising has been limited in its heuristic value by its traditional totalitarianism and its circularity, we see that it has the further demerit of failing to give an adequate account of process. This is not to argue that typology should seek to provide causal explanation; indeed I would emphasise that causation is always the province of specific historical account. It is rather to introduce a new heuristic requirement of a good typology, namely that it should be able to facilitate historical explanation by being constructed in a manner which can continuously encompass a phenomenon whilst it undergoes change. It should do so without recourse to such secondary devices as the creation of separate transitional categories, or the continuous revision of differentiae.

The requirement that a typology should be constructed to converge with an account of process may seem a tall order, especially as we are used to seeing typology being counterposed to process. But, this must be part of any project which seeks to rescue from essentialist shortcomings

some sort of worthwhile claim for the heuristic value of typologising in the pursuit of comparative study.

### Classificatory Perspectives in the Sociology of Religion

We now turn our attention to the specialist typologies which have been produced in the sociology of religion for the study of sectarian forms of organisation. Our tasks here are firstly to judge the extent to which the existing typologies conform to the general pattern of the essentialist tradition; and secondly, to see what perspectives have been brought to bear on religious sectarianism which may be useful for our own study of political groups.

Religious studies have always been an important source for the typological tradition in western thought. Saint Augustine of Hippo for example, saw history in terms of two types of social organisation, the city of God, and the city of man (De Civitate Dei 15-18). This dualism was the principal intellectual precursor of much of western religious thought, including the sacred and profane distinctions of Durkheim (1915), Malinowski (1954), and Eliade (1961). The Durkheimian concept of the sacred is in turn of particular importance in the sectarian classifications of Peter Berger (1954), as we shall shortly see.

From its origins in classical and medieval thought, typology as a specific discipline first arose in the context of theology. It emerged from the study of symbols relating Old and New Testaments, which saw prototypes of New Testament events in the Old Testament. For example, Jonah's three days in the belly of the denizen was interpreted as a prototype of Christ's descent into hell. The links between typology and the study of religion are strong and longstanding. We should not be surprised therefore that the classic typological studies in sociology have come from the sociology of religion. The 'ideal type' of Max Weber was developed first and foremost in the field of religious organisation and was a formative influence on the work of Weber's friend Ernst Troeltsch (1931), who in turn stimulated Niebuhr's outstanding analysis of American denominationalism (1929), which was admired by the leading exponent of the typological approach to the study of religion, Joachim Wach (1944:4). It would be tedious to rehearse all of these connections which are expounded in considerable detail in the works of Wach (1944) and Wilson (1975:chl) respectively. But there are important points which

need to be drawn out of the typological tradition without indulging in a comprehensive exercise in ancestor worship.

### The Church / Sect Dichotomy

One of the longest standing discussions in the modern literature of religious sects has been concerned with the grand dichotomy of church and sect. Weber described the church as a political institution with a normative order, maintained by the hierarchy through the threat of withholding sacraments. The church is also theoretically universal and 'charisma' is attached not to individuals but to office. The sect on the other hand is a voluntary association which uses no force over a sustained period, and makes no effort to exert universal control within a certain sphere of power. 'Charisma' in the sect is attached to individual leaders and not to offices (1947). However, more recent ethnography reports that there are heavily bureaucratised sects, such as the modern Jehovah's Witnesses, whose hierarchy maintains normative order through the exercise of various sanctions (Wilson 1967:33-5). In far-left organisations, the equivalent sanction to withholding sacraments would be expulsion, since both acts place an individual outside the boundary of the community. The concept of the boundary which seems to be fundamental to modern accounts of sectarian behaviour is subjugated in Weber to the notions of voluntary membership and charisma. A further breach in the Weberian dichotomy is made by the fact that we do know of sects which attempt to control all people within a certain sphere of power; these would include all those organisations which aim for total change at the supra-individual level of society. For example; transformative, revolutionist, and millenarian movements would fall into this category.

It is important to note the emphasis on voluntarist sect membership in Weber's account (1947:157). The idea that one is born into a church but joins a sect is central to his distinction, but it is plainly inadequate in the case of the hereditary communities of the Hutterites (Peters 1963) or of the Amish Mennonites (Hostetler 1963). Weber's emphasis on voluntary membership of sects has further significance in that he saw a tendency in sects to become churches after the passing of first generation and its charismatic leader through the bringing up of children in the community, and the routinisation of charisma, that is its transfer from individuals to offices (1947:373). Berger writes:

Weber's most valuable contribution is not his definition of the sect, but his discovery of the process of routinisation in the development of the sect. The validity of this concept appears unquestionable and of fundamental importance in understanding sectarianism. (Berger 1954:470)

But as Worsley has pointed out (1970:274-80), Weber's concepts of charisma and routinisation are rooted in his dichotomy of rational and irrational action. The followers of a charismatic leader in a cargo cult are only acting irrationally in relation to information which is not available to them. The charisma concept also fails to match up with ethnographic cases of sects with a collective leadership, or sects in which the prophet or charismatic holder of the gift of grace is organisationally less important than other political leaders who remain relatively hidden from the public eye. Until the adolescent guru Maharaj Ji asserted his own will with increasing maturity and brought about a split in the Divine Light Mission, Maharaj Ji's mother and elder brother had dominated the running of the sect (Clark, personal communication). The assertion by Maharaj Ji of his own leadership amounted to a deroutinisation of the organisation which was contrary to Weber's implication that routinisation is a unidirectional process.

The use of routinisation as the basis of church / sect distinctions is not justified because it assumes that the transference of charisma, or of power, from individuals to offices automatically results in a weakening of group boundaries. Yet it is precisely when these roles have hardened that admission may become more difficult than in the heady days of initial enthusiasm for a new prophet. As I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, there is no reason why a sect may not undergo a transformation of its internal structure without taking on the openness or flexibility of a church or a political party. We will also find further examples of de-routinising movements taking place within sects.

Weber's concepts of church and sect are based on Anglo-Saxon Christianity, and as such they do not have universal validity. Berger (1954:470) points out that to adopt his viewpoint would force us to consider present day Baptists as a sect simply because of their emphasis on voluntary adult baptism as a means of recruitment, whilst some sects, like the Christian Community - the cultic offshoot of the Anthropologists - have hierocratic organisation and sacramental acts which would qualify them as denominations.

Ernst Troeltsch (1931) developed Weber's distinction into one whereby the concept of the church is based on an idea of grace administered to an organisation of the masses, whilst that of the sect is based on an idea of the law governing the holy community. Niebuhr (1929) substantially accepts Weber and Troeltsch, but stresses the latter's point that sects represent the religion of the disinherited. Thus all of these writers have attempted to distinguish between church and sect by characterising the latter as a response to relative deprivation. Once again, whilst these observations may be true of the growth of many of the sects of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, to which these authors looked, they are by no means universal. Indeed the major sects of Islam cannot be contrasted with a church structure, for Islam has never recognised a separate institution such as the church within the community of believers. Even Joachim Wach, one of the early synthesisers of theological and anthropological studies in the Sociology of Religion (1962:186-205), saw the sect as a form of religious protest expressing itself in secession from a church.

There are difficulties with most of the existing alternatives to the Weberian tradition in distinguishing church and sect. If theological criteria are admitted the situation soon becomes very muddled. As Berger points out:

Thus according to Catholic theology all protestant church bodies are sects, being outside the true Church of Christ; on the other hand, a case could be made from the viewpoint of Lutheran orthodoxy, that the Catholic Church is itself a sect, since it does not possess the notae ecclesiae as understood by Lutherans. (1954:473)

He also rejects a semantic approach which would derive the definitions from common usage. An example of the manifold problems with this proposal is that the term 'sect' may mean anything in the United States from the designation 'non-sectarian' for a Jewish school for juvenile delinquents which also accepts non-Jewish cases, to 'sectarian' as a term of opprobrium used by a northern against a southern Baptist.

Berger promises a new theoretical orientation derived from Durkheim's observation of the quasi-geographical character of the spirit in 'primitive' religion, and more importantly his identification of the community itself as the object of its own religious activity. Thus religious based social groupings can be understood as forming themselves around the location of the sacred. Berger suggests a diagrammatic typology consisting of concentric circles, the centre of which would designate the location of the spirit,



Figure 1

Berger's Sect and Church types in Relation to the Location of the Sacred.  
(1954)

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the inner circle that of the sect, the next that of the church, and the outermost designating the rest of the world. (Fig. 1). The church merges with the world, but the church does not include the sect. Rather the sect fills the space in the middle which the church fears to enter because it sees the spirit as remote, possibly dangerous, and having to be brought near only through the ecclesiastical apparatus of mediation. The church sees the sect as an irreverent trespasser in the forbidden territory around the spirit.

Unfortunately Berger (1954:474) detracts from his own insight by dichotomising the social structure and the belief system. He claims that his diagram is a map of "the inner meaning of the belief system" of church and sect, not of the "historical accidents of their social structure". Berger would have made a considerable theoretical advance if he had allowed his diagram to represent both the cosmology of church and sect, and the social maintenance of the boundaries each maintains around itself. As it stands this is a theological metaphor, albeit a good one, masquerading as a sociological typology. The latter should be concerned with the social structure of the sect and the church, in relation to the structure of their respective belief systems. Certainly the implication that the structure of the belief system and the social structure of the church or sect are merely co-occurring through historical accident is a curious one.

Brian Wilson (1967:chl, 1975:chl&2), who more than any other British sociologist has achieved a contemporary reputation in this field, has produced masses of empirical data and strongly empirical ideal types. He distinguishes sects from denominations by stressing the more clearly defined and total commitment of the members of the former, in addition to a more clearly crystallised ideology - the behavioural correlates of which maintain the sect's separation from the world. Within the sect, Wilson (1967:24) sees the characterisation of individuals as being more distinct than in the denomination. The sect, he claims, exercises a totalitarian rather than a segmental hold over its individual members, dictating the ideological orientation to secular society, or vigorously specifying standards of moral rectitude, or compelling members' participation in group activity. The attitude of sects to heretics is quite distinctive in that they will willingly exel miscreants, and even small faults may be seen as betrayals.

Wilson's denominations on the other hand, are formally voluntary associations (a reversal of Weber's distinction!) with a less intensive level of individual commitment than the sect. Membership is accepted through purely formalised procedures of admission, and worship takes place in formal services. Having an unclear self-conception, and relatively unstressed doctrinal positions, denominations exercise breadth and tolerance, rarely expelling individuals, and are usually content to be one movement among others (another inversion of Weber's distinction). The denomination accepts the attitude of the prevailing culture and the conventional morality. It emphasises the education of the young rather than evangelising outsiders and has a trained professional ministry (Wilson 1967:25).

Most of the features of Wilson's ideal types of church and sect correspond well with the existing data in the sociology of religion and certainly fit with my own experience of sectarian forms in both religion and politics. However, as unstructured clusters of empirical features, these types do not represent a taxonomy of the sort we are looking for. Wilson's dichotomous categories of church and sect are purely descriptive and are not connected by an explicit theoretical framework which, we have argued, is necessary to maximise the heuristic value of sociological classifications. Wilson has given us succinct rules of thumb for making a distinction between two forms of religious organisation, but he does not justify any principle for viewing the particular combinations of features he describes, as distinct types. Most of the differences are ones of degree. For example, the ideology of the sect is more clearly crystallised, while denominations are usually content to be one movement among others. This has the merit of avoiding the abstraction of a set of necessary conditions which one might be tempted to interpret as an essence of either category. Indeed, Wilson's sect and church types can be viewed as a set of Wittgensteinian family resemblances. Unfortunately, Wilson does not attempt to use a continuum or a matrix to codify these quantitative distinctions into a working taxonomy which would enable the relative strength of sectarian and denominational characteristics of actual organisations to be assessed.

Wilson's reluctance (1975:31) to relate the categories of church and sect may have been influenced by his recognition that widespread acceptance of the Troeltschean dichotomy has led to sects from non-Christian traditions being perceived in terms of Christian theological

assumptions. Indeed, he insists that:

In particular, it is important to divest ourselves of theological conceptions of religious protest: 'the sect', if we continue so to call such movements, is no longer to be understood by direct contrast with 'the church'. (Wilson 1975:12)

Yet divested of their Christian nomenclature, Wilson's description of church and sect could be applied not only to other religions but also to distinctions between secular organisations such as political sects and parties. A typology built on the basis of a continuum between these ideal types would be capable of encompassing all of the organisations reviewed in Patterns of Sectarianism (1967), including the Humanist Societies, which their ethnographer excludes from Wilson's category system because they correspond with neither the sect nor church type. Budd (1967:379-80) says that Humanist Societies are like sects in that they:

- 1) Reject or oppose wider society, especially insofar as it embodies Christian values.
- 2) Are composed of converts.
- 3) Emphasise equality of members.
- 4) Have an extreme concern for high moral standards.

They are like denominations in that:

- 1) Members leave and enter freely.
- 2) They are undogmatic and value personal opinion.
- 3) They claim only sentimental allegiance.
- 4) They do not reject worldly esteem.

Budd claims that while Humanists attempt to supplant religion, they do not fit the usual categories of sect or church but have features of both. She further points out that in spite of their position in what would appear to be a transitional category between sect and denomination, no Humanist Society has made the transition from one to the other. Budd seems to have taken up an anti-typological approach because the structure of Wilson's typology retains the traditional assumptions about social classifications. The bundles of sect and church features are presented as being discrete, finite sets which really do hang together in the empirical world, even if somewhat untidily. The possibility of unidirectional evolution from one to the other is hinted at in the idea of transitional categories, but Budd is unhappy about these because the Humanists do not seem to carry the transformation through.

Wilson was right to say that we should no longer define the sect in contradistinction to the Christian church, but he failed to carry into his theory the empirical observation that real sects and actual churches, and non-Christian organisations (religious and political), all share various features of both his ideal types in some degree. Had he done so he might have produced a single typology covering the whole range of religious and ethical movements. Instead, as we shall shortly see, Wilson bases his various ideal sect types on different criteria from those of his sect/church dichotomy.

### Sect Typologies

The history of sect types is somewhat shorter, though probably more varied, than that of the church/sect dichotomy. It has been distinguished by a strong tendency to create dichotomous types, and by the fact that the criteria used to distinguish one sect from another have often been quite different from the sort of criteria used to distinguish sects from churches.

One prominent dichotomy is that between syncretism and nativism. Syncretism may be defined as a movement to bring about a harmony of different or opposing world views. As a concept it is first found in Plutarch of Athens (fifth Century AD) in connection with the Neo-Platonic effort to unify various pagan religions in the second and fourth centuries, and again in the seventeenth century with regard to a proposed union of Lutheran and other protestant bodies (Runes 1962:308). The most obvious application of this concept has been to the independent Christian churches in Africa, which have split from the missions to set up their own organisations, whilst retaining elements of mission Christianity. An example of one such is the Church of the Lord, Aladura, which flourishes in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This combines a formal episcopalian hierarchy, a protestant evangelical hymnology, and a Roman-type liturgy, with a preoccupation with revelations, healings, fertility, the elimination of witches, and neutralising harmful magic (Peel 1968).

The concept of nativism was refined by Linton as recently as 1943. Nativism, the other side of the syncretist coin, is defined by Linton as "any conscious, organised attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture" (1943:230).

Edmundson later described it as "the self-conscious, overt manifestation of ethnocentrism in one of its most sharply defined and exclusive or divisive aspects" (1960:184). An example of a Nativistic movement is the Peyote religion of the North American Indians. Peyotism was taken up by a minority in a number of tribes following the failure of the Ghost Dance millenarian cult in 1890. Although in itself it was an innovation, it was introduced as a continuance of traditional culture, which was being virtually destroyed under European influence. (Aberle 1966)

Wallace (1956:264) attempted to widen Linton's concept of nativism to cover any "deliberate, organised, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture". This he described as revitalisation. Wilson summarises Wallace's effort in rather unflattering terms, but I am forced to concur with his basic criticism.

Those concerned must see their culture as a system and the process involves both the attempts to change individual cognitive orientations and social reality. He offers Gai'wiio', the Wesleyan revival, Sudanese Fahdi-ism, the T'ai-p'ing rebellion, the Ghost Dance, and Christianity itself as examples. Nativistic movements and cargo cults he regards as sub-classes, and millennial and messianic movements as special types: while most denominations and sects are also to be called revitalisation movements. All organised religion may be regarded as relics of old revitalisation movements - devitalised revitalisation movements it seems! (Wilson 1975:487)

Wallace's is more of a theory of the origins of religion than a contribution to sectarian typology. The problem with all of these categories is that they tend to reiterate certain broad truths, at the same time as overlooking important differences in the movements. They are predominantly goal orientated types and therefore run into similar problems in determining explicit goals and latent goals to those which have arisen in organisation theory (Etzioni 1964:6-8). Each has a strong subjective element - what is a more satisfying culture for example? Why should the wish to create one be considered characteristic of sectarian movements when the established political parties and churches would both make the same claim?

From the point of view of the kind of study specified for this thesis, a major problem is that most of the anthropological categories in the sociology of religion are only relevant in culture contact situations, such as in the case of the American Indians for which the categories we have looked at so far were devised. In all of these cases there is a non-

native element in the culture which has displaced that which is being revived. Furthermore, we can safely say that there will always be a nativist element in movements which arise in culture contact situations, even when the main concern, as in cargo movements, is to acquire the goods of the newcomer. Experience tells us that every religious movement will retain some traditional assumptions about the means to attain its goals, as we have seen with the Aladura Church. Finally, these goal orientated typologies tell us nothing systematic about the social structure of the organisations and movements they classify. They deal systematically with belief systems but pragmatically and empirically with the distribution and exercise of power within the sects. This is the basis of my contention that classification in the sociology of religion has displayed a strongly theological bias at the expense of sociological understanding.

There are many other examples of the use of dichotomies to distinguish different kinds of sects. Acculturation and accommodation are close counterparts of nativism and syncretism, used in the study of American Indians (Voget 1951, 1956). Marty (1960) approaches a sociological distinction by dividing sects and cults into positively and negatively orientated movements, but this dichotomy is too broad and too grossly evaluative to help us in the search for a sociological rather than a theological typology. Other writers such as David Martin (1962) have proposed a whole range of polar dichotomies: communist or anarchist, revolutionist or quietist, nudist or uniformed, ascetic or licentious, completely sacramental or non-sacramental, wild worshippers or silent contemplative worshippers. But it is simply not true that all sects fall into one extreme or the other of any of these types, and it certainly does not help us to pre-judge them in this way.

In constructing a typology of sects, Peter Berger abandons his quasi-geographical distinction between church and sect in relation to the location of the sacred. Instead of relying on a dichotomy, he overtly imports into sociology the concept of the religious motif from the Lund School of theology (1954). Central to this typology is the attitude towards the world which Berger claims determines the social structure of the sect (Figure 2). However, Berger acknowledges the haphazard nature of this determination, which in my opinion means that the systematic aspect of his typology remains basically theological.

Figure 2.

Berger's Sect Typology Based on the Concept of the Religious Motif.  
(1954:478)

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In its social structure the sect so constitutes itself as to make possible the carrying out of the mission it believes it has in the world. Thus the enthusiastic type may have a wide variety of social structures corresponding to the variety of its attitudes toward the world. The prophetic type, however, with its militant attitude will generally have strong leadership and organisation. And the gnostic type, to which the world is irrelevant, almost universally takes the social form of the circle of initiates, those who possess the secret and guard it against outsiders. (Berger 1954: 479)

Berger is asking us to share an assumption here which is by no means uncontroversial and which certainly would not be accepted by organisation theorists - that a group will structure itself so as to be able to carry out its explicit formal purpose. This theme will be taken up in later chapters where it will be argued that the social structure of the Workers' Revolutionary Party inhibits the pursuance of its formal goal of building a mass revolutionary opposition to capitalism. Even if we do share Berger's assumption here, there is little consistency in the social structures he correlates with each type. He does not tell us whether the gnostic circle of initiates is likely to have a strong hierarchy or to be fervently egalitarian, for example. We learn little about the relations of sectarians with outsiders from this scheme, although this does receive some systematic attention under the heading of 'attitude toward world'. But once again, Berger bases his scheme on the 'inner meaning' of the belief system stripped of its 'ephemeral elements'. This clearly locates Berger's concepts alongside those of that school of theology known as Phenomenology of Religion, which defines its task as searching for the defining essence of religious phenomena:

Essence is not to be found by referring to some pre-conceived notion of what is really real about an event, but is to be found through the method of reduction whereby the phenomenologist brackets out the questions of origin or status so that the phenomenon may present itself. He is seeking the meaning or essence rather than cause or truth. (Gettis 1969:10)

Berger's overriding concern with 'inner meaning' and the belief system, locates his scheme firmly in the tradition of essentialist theology, and as such it can have little relevance for the sort of social structural analysis of sectarianism which is envisaged in the introduction to this thesis.

Bryan Wilson also bases his typology on the response of the sect to the world, along with another variable, the circumstances of origin.

Fortunately Wilson's concept of response to the world was not directly inspired by Berger's (Wilson 1967:26fn). Response to the world is intended by Wilson to suggest more than the self-conception of the sect and its explicit aims. It may be manifested in many activities and not only in activities, but in life-style, association, and ideology. It is a much less purposive concept than Berger's and is more sensitive in distinguishing the probable action patterns of sectarians.

The concept of response to the world hinges on the fact that sectarian movements always exist in a state of some degree of tension with outsiders. It is the way in which this tension is manifested, and contained or maintained, which characterises different sectarian responses in Wilson's typology. In his early versions, Wilson used the term mission rather than response but later rejected it as he shifted from straightforward empirical classifications of groups based on observation, towards ideal types based on the range of possible orientations that deviant religious groups could take. In so doing he allowed for the fact that there might be no empirical counterpart for each type. The specification of a range of logical possibilities in this way corresponds to Watkins' (cf.25) view of the later version of Weber's types. As such it is not conducive to basing categories on such overall purposive concepts of mission, although they may have been sufficient for the specification of Weber's earlier holistic types.

The problem is that the seven categories of sectarian response which Wilson specifies in Magic and the Millennium remain strongly empirical in character. They are specified as logically coherent clusters of behavioural and ideological features, and each such pattern is given an appropriate name, viz: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian, (Wilson 1975: 22-26). But, Wilson provides no final theoretical justification for why there should be seven logical possibilities, and not just four as he specified in his original empirical typology in Patterns of Sectarianism, viz: conversionist, adventist, introversionist, and gnostic. Certainly, Wilson (1975:23) is able to justify breaking down the earlier gnostic type into manipulationist and thaumaturgical. By the same token he could justify two categories instead of revolutionism, viz. passive adventism, and militant revolutionism. Yet he does not choose to do so except as sub-categories of a logical hierarchy. In the absence of some theoretically limiting factor to the number of categories available, or

the number or type of features specified as a family resemblance category, ideal types of this sort remain positivistic and thus infinitely multiviable. To this extent, Wilson has failed to break with the essentialist tradition of classification. Although he claims that whatever range of sect types he specifies is intended to encompass the logical possibilities of sectarian response, his categories remain strongly empirically derived from the attributes of particular sects. These empirically derived clusters are then given names which are intended to convey the primary orientation of the sect to the world. Actual sects are then relocated in these categories according to whether they are essentially, or at least predominantly, conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, or utopian. We have earlier identified this sort of circularity as characteristic of essentialist classification.

The system is further weakened when we are told that despite the fact that they are the most energetic and successful proselytisers, the Jehovah's Witnesses are not conversionist, but are revolutionists because their explicit orientation is towards the establishment of the Christian millennium (1970:238, 1975:23fn). There does not seem to be any a priori justification for emphasising the formal commitment of the Jehovah's Witnesses to the advent, rather than the immense concentration of their resources on evangelism, in assigning them to the category of revolutionists. It is simply that Wilson has chosen to use response to the world, in the limited sense of the way in which a sect perceives the source of ultimate salvation, as the determinant variable in his classifications.

It is particularly unfortunate that Wilson should fall foul of these criticisms, because the quality and range of his empirical material is a model of scholarship. He has also displayed an acute sensitivity to his material and to the limitations of his own classificatory system. He has warned against seeing any typology as definitive (1975:10), and has argued that typologies should be capable of encompassing social change (1975:35). The problem which confronts us in assessing Wilson's contribution is that his strongly empirical bias seems to have prevented him from making a more radical break with the form of traditional typologies and that his justifiable suspicion of the widespread applicability of Troeltschean categories led him to reject any sort of typology based on the organisational structure of sects.

While this last type of categorization may be of interest in tracing the dynamics of certain sectarian movements over time in certain circumstances of western society, it cannot be shown to have universal validity or to be suitable for universal application. (Wilson 1975:16)

As a criticism of the traditional Christocentric church/sect dichotomy I would find little to quarrel with in this pronouncement. However, it is precisely my aim to construct a typology of sectarian organisational structures of sufficient generality that the same principles could be employed in the study of all forms of secular and religious sectarianism in any cultural context.

I have argued that in order to avoid the unlimited multiplication of positivist categories, we require a theoretical limitation on the range of categories or variables or some other device to define the shape or form of the typology. One way of doing this would be to employ a two dimensional matrix such as that devised by Fernandez (1964) for the analysis of the dynamics of African religious movements.

Fernandez specifically rejects traditional essentialist categories for the analysis of African religious movements, such as prophetic, messianic, separatist, nativist, Ethiopian, Zionist, and so on. Instead, he uses two variables to construct a 2x2 matrix. The first variable is based on the nativist/syncretist dichotomy, conceived as a continuum between movements which primarily exploit their own tradition, and those which by acculturation have become largely committed to the symbols of a contact culture. The continuum thus lies between a traditional and acculturated symbolism. The second variable is based on how the symbols are used, whether instrumentally or expressively. This distinction is derived from the work of Talcott Parsons (1951:348), who distinguishes the expressive concern from the instrumental in terms of the primacy of acting out the symbolic disposition rather than manipulating the symbols to achieve a goal outside of the immediate situation. Combination of these two variables gives rise to a four-fold table of separatist, messianic, nativist, and reformative movements, (Fig. 3).

There are a number of criticisms that can be raised against this scheme. It is narrowly conceived only to apply to Christian inspired movements in Africa. The categories of separatist, messianic, reformative, and nativist sound disconcertingly like essentialist categories. However,

Figure 3.

Fernandez' Dynamic Typology of African Religious Movements.(1964:537)

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despite these and other objections, Fernandez achieves a notable advance over his predecessors by employing continuous variables to create a fourfold model of logical possibilities of types in terms of two chosen variables. At this point I am not concerned whether or not these were the best variables he could have chosen but to emphasise the advantages of a matrix model over traditional hierarchical and one-dimensional dichotomous typologies. The categories are logically derived from the combination of specified dimensions, with no a priori assumption that any category will have an empirical counterpart. This is quite different from an ideal type derived by stripping the ephemeral from the essential features of an empirical cluster of phenomena. It does not embody the assumption that types are in any sense naturally occurring clusters which merely need tidying up by typologists. At the other extreme, it does not allow the infinite multiplication of types. It sets a clear logical limitation on the range of differentiae explicitly built into its structure, bringing with it the heuristic advantage of a controllable range of types, but without any pretensions that the limitation on the number of types is a constraint of the empirical world. Perhaps the greatest advantage of all that a matrix form confers on a typology is that it is capable of explicitly showing the dynamics of movements located on it, as they change their character over time (Fernandez 1964:545).

Another, more general attempt at producing a matrix typology is that of David Aberle in his book The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho (1966: 315ff). This scheme is based on two simple variables, that of the locus of change sought by a movement, and that of the amount of change sought. The combination of these variables gives rise to the four celled matrix in Fig. 4.

The advance represented by Aberle's typology is that it is intended to embrace all social movements, from the Bolshevik Party to the Family Planning Association, and from the Peyote Religion to Women's Suffrage. It is based therefore not on the symbolic orientation of the movements so much as upon their activity orientation. It also recognises the fact, largely ignored by Wilson's typology, that religious sects are always political organisations, if not in a narrow sense then at least insofar as they have an internal politics of their own. The sect's political character is more than a peripheral function of its response to the world, as Wilson implies, and may even provide a more general basis for classific-

Figure 4.

Aberle's Typology of Social Movements. (1966)

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- Transformative: Aim for total change in the supra-individual system.  
(Ghost Dance, Millenarianism, Bolshevik Party)
- Reformative: Aim for partial change in the supra-individual system.  
(Women's Suffrage Movement, Rebellions)
- Redemptive: Aim for total change in individuals - seeking a state  
of grace. (Peyotism)
- Alterative: Aim for partial change in individuals.  
(Family Planning Association)

ation on a cross cultural scale, and in non-religious contexts.

In these pages, I have attempted to indicate that there is an extensive concern in the literature of religious sectarianism with typology making. This is plainly due to the need to create a viable basis for comparison, and comparative study is after all seen as a characteristic of the anthropological approach.

Unfortunately, the religious typologies and sect characterisations which we have looked at here tend to define their categories in terms of the ideological orientation of the sect - specifically its response to the world and the extent or level of change it is seeking. Important though these questions are, as typological criteria they tend to generate theological rather than sociological schemes. Even Fernandez' typology is based on whether the group is orientated towards eclectic or traditional symbols and whether it manipulates these expressively or instrumentally, while Aberle's is based on the extent and level of social change which is desired by the group, irrespective of its organisational structure.

Typologies based in the first instance on types of goals have only limited comparative or explanatory value to the anthropologist. If we are not going to base a typology of sectarianism on these sorts of criteria, we must seek a taxonomic basis which enables us to encompass all instances of sect organisation, in such a way that they can be compared with each other and with non-sectarian organisations, with respect to the same criteria. Furthermore, we require a typological technique which links both the social and ideological spheres on something better than the pragmatic basis we have seen in the perspectives examined here. It is my contention, therefore, that the anthropological framework most useful for the study of far-left groups will not be one which has so far been used to study religious sects but one which has been developed to examine political and organisational structures in a far wider context. That is the grid and group typology of Mary Douglas which we will elucidate in the following chapter. I do not say this because I have abandoned the idea of a unified typology for secular and religious sectarianism but because I have formed the impression from studying the existing perspectives for the latter, that the political approach is capable of telling us more about religious sects as well. It has the merit of drawing attention to the lack of emphasis placed on the



political dynamics of small-group organisation in recent studies of religious sects. Perhaps most important of all, from the standpoint taken in the first section of this chapter, is that grid and group does not rest on the assumptions of essentialist classification for its methodological validity.

## Chapter Three.

### Grid and Group as a Polythetic Alternative to Essentialism.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. (Karl Marx (1852) 1934:10)

### The Grid/Group Typology.

In the last chapter, we began to consider some of the potential advantages of employing a matrix form for social typologies, in preference to hierarchies or one dimensional dichotomies. Perhaps the most extensively developed general social typology of this sort is the grid/group typology originated by Mary Douglas (1970,1978).

At the centre of Douglas' typology is the negotiating individual, actively interpreting, challenging, accepting, and recreating his environment (1978:5). In doing so, he has recourse to a limited range of arguments and justifications for actions taken within that social environment which will be consistent with its constitutive premises. Thus, operating on a broadly Durkheimian principle that the structure of the symbolic order is determined by the structure of social life, grid and group is designed to be a typology of both the material and ideological pressures which an individual experiences as his social environment. I should like to emphasise from the outset that it is the anthropologist's comparative assessment of these pressures, and not merely the individual's subjective description of his experience, which determines the grid/group classification of a social environment.

David Ostrander (forthcoming) calls our attention to two important implications in eliminating whole societies in favour of social environments as the objects of classification. The first is the recognition of the fact that the symbolic order exists and articulates with the social order only through the minds and actions of individuals within the framework of their own experiences. The second is that even the simplest of societies may have a variety of social environments, each generating different symbolic associations. Social environments are at a second order of abstraction from the multi-dimensional complexity of whole

societies and can be classified by the relatively few dimensions of sociality itself.

In modern Western thought the dimensions of sociality have been most passionately discussed in the work of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and other Enlightenment philosophers. For these thinkers, the very existence of social order was a problem to be explained. Individual human beings were products of nature - of observable physical processes. The aggregation of individuals into groups, and the subordination of individual wills to a group will was not a natural process, and (they argued) had to arise out of some mutual interest, be it profit or survival. The Enlightenment philosophers agreed in underscoring the idea that sociality involves the subordination of individuals to a supra-individual pattern of interaction, and therefore limits freedom of individual action. (Ostrander forthcoming)

Ostrander goes on to say that the two most general spheres of action limited by social order are with whom one interacts, and how one interacts with them. The grid/group typology consists of two dimensions derived from this traditional dichotomy in sociological thought between group behaviour and individualism (Douglas 1978:7). However, rather than representing these as poles of a single continuum, Douglas separates them and establishes each one as an independent axis in order to create a two dimensional typology of the individual's experience of social control. Douglas refers to these dimensions as group and grid respectively.

Group is the axis of with whom one interacts, represented by the horizontal line in figure 5. This is the dimension which indicates the degree to which individuals are limited from interacting outside of a specific group. At weak group, the individual is relatively free from claims which others may make upon his allegiance in the name of a particular group. The individual located at this end of the group dimension will not be interacting frequently with the same people, either as a member of an informal association, or of an organisation. Rather he will exercise choice in transacting with a range of other individuals on the basis of an ego centered personal network. It follows that the weak group individual will not rely on any single group for support in the whole range of his dealings with others but will be able to call on a choice of specialists according to his particular needs. As the individual moves to the right along the group dimension, the frequency of face to face interaction with the same

Figure 5.

Douglas' Grid and Group Typology. (1978)

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people increases, the group boundary tightens, and the individual increasingly comes under the control of others exerting control in the name of the group. At the same time, the individual acquires the ability to make claims for support from the group in his dealings with others.

Grid is the axis of how one interacts, represented by the vertical line on the diagram. This dimension may be most generally defined as the pressures upon the individual, exerted by insulating social classifications, which prevent him from competing or transacting freely with others. At strong grid, the individual is strongly regulated in his interactions according to factors such as age, sex, social class, occupation, colour, nationality, religion, etc. Everyone's role is clearly defined. At weak grid, the individual is relatively free from explicit classificatory social controls, for they are rejected in the name of equality. However, the individual might find himself subject to implicit screening according to his success in the competitive social free-for-all which develops in the absence of the regulative restrictions characteristic of strong grid.

Simply for heuristic purposes of exposition, Douglas bisects each dimension to give four characteristic social environments. These are ideal types deductively constructed from the definitions of the axes and their respective two states of variance<sup>a</sup>. This procedure corresponds very closely with Watkins' description (1973) of the principles behind Weber's individualistic ideal types. Formally Douglas refers to each of these types by a letter. However Ostrander (forthcoming) proposes descriptive names which are useful mnemonics, provided it is remembered that these four types are merely the ideal archetypes of the four corners of the diagram. The fourfold distinction is made purely for ease of presentation, and it is expected that actual social environments will be found spread across the diagram between the four extremes.

Square A, the bottom left of the diagram is the social environment characterised by weak grid and weak group constraints on the individual, hence Ostrander designates this social environment as Individualism. Here the negotiating individual maintains relatively flexible sets of personal contacts and behavioural strategies. We would expect to find all manner of entrepreneurial activities in this setting, ranging from those of the classic capitalist to the Melanesian big-man.

Square B, the top left of the diagram is the strong grid/weak group

environment. Here, individuals have few group ties and resources, and at the same time experience strong institutional and customary restrictions on their behavioural options. Hence this environment is designated as Atomised Subordination. Those who are exploited by the inhabitants of square A will be amongst those we would expect to find here. The lumpen proletarian and the Melanesian rubbishman are two examples.

Square C, at the top right of the diagram, is the social environment defined as strong grid and strong group. This is an environment which places quite rigid constraints on both the mode of interaction of individuals and on the extent of their group contacts. These limitations presume the existence of some sort of closed hierarchical structure, such as a feudal or caste system. Ostrander proposes the term Ascribed Hierarchy for this kind of social environment.

Finally, square D is the bottom right hand segment of the picture, characterised by few constraints on the nature of individuals' interactions with each other and strong restrictions on the range of individuals' activities to a specified group. The relative absence of institutional restrictions on the individuals' internal activities is likely to lead to competition within the group, resulting in factionalism and a high rate of schism. This state of affairs is designated Factionalism and is exemplified by various forms of sectarian organisation, such as those which we have set out to examine in this thesis.

h x  
Grid and group is intended to do more than simply describe possible permutations of the institutional behaviour of individuals in terms of rules and social classifications and their material concomitants such as: separate railway carriages, segregated office space, railed altars, and the like. Douglas' central hypothesis (1978:8-13) is that an individual's system of symbolic beliefs - the cosmology which embodies his understanding of the natural and social order - is in a continuous interaction with his social environment. A person will fail to make any sense of his world unless he can find some principles to guide him through the constraints which define his daily experience. Thus, we expect that each of the four ideal types just described will have its own distinctive cosmology. This is because the premises involved in defining each social environment will place different constraints on the structure of the beliefs which can be used to evaluate or legitimate actions taken within it.

If we define the social environment as the manifestation of social

constraints and the cosmology as the beliefs which arise from and sustain those constraints, then one would not expect the inhabitants of a weak grid environment to refuse someone employment on the basis of sex or colour. To do so would violate the ideology of equality which legitimates this competitive environment, unless some non-classificatory justification for refusal can be given. For example, the candidate may be said to have had inadequate experience. At strong grid, however, we would not be at all surprised to hear the argument that it is unnatural for women to vie with men in the labour market or that black people cannot be trusted with positions of responsibility.

The group dimension also constrains the value system. In a strong group environment we might expect to find a heavy emphasis on promotion of the continuity and solidarity of the group, with accepted ideas of the obligations of mutual aid, and possibly group songs, uniforms, and so forth. At the weak group end of the dimension, we anticipate Darwinian notions of natural selection and 'every man for himself'. The distribution of constraints placed on the cosmology by the social environment is summarised in figure 5.

The aim of this framework is to produce a typology which will reflect the logical possibilities of different structures of thought and behaviour characteristic of a social system according to the relative strength of a number of factors which constitute its grid and group dimensions. There are some cautionary notes which must be made, even at this early stage of our exegesis.

Firstly, we must be careful not to exaggerate the stability of the behaviour patterns of individuals which may be expressed in institutions and formal ideologies at any particular time. To do so would be to underestimate the capacities of people to transform their social environments. Douglas (1978) provides us with the example of the turkey farmer who refused to accept his bank manager's decision to decline him overdraft facilities, impressed the bank's directors with his entrepreneurial talents and obtained his loan. Within twelve months he had repaid the loan and gone on to expand his business. Here was a case of an individual refusing to accept the bank manager's strong grid rules which initially gave him a bad credit rating:

We forced on his sources of credit his vision of what should be done and proposed a different calculus of risk. Disregarding

the visible controls and definitions he got past the counter, through the swing doors, into the carpet-covered rooms where directors chat each other up in a world of invisible controls. (Douglas 1978:13-14)

Of course not everybody who finds himself subject to up-grid pressures has the determination or the resources to resist by adopting this sort of strategy of direct confrontation. But there are always possible routes from one kind of social environment to another, and a single individual may pass through several of these over a period of time.

Secondly, the grid/group classification does not explain why a social environment changes, or why an individual shifts from one environment to another. These questions of first causes can only be answered by concrete historical descriptions of actual cases. What grid and group can do is demonstrate the route by which such changes occur and indicate what kinds of strategies are available to the inhabitants of any particular social environment in their search for another. We can even go so far as to say that the pressures of a particular grid/group environment will tend to push individuals towards one strategy or another. But these are all purely heuristic claims that the typology can help us to understand how certain changes occur; it can never tell us why.

Thirdly, since grid and group classifies social environments, none but the least complex social system is likely to occupy only one grid/group quadrant. The same is true of institutions such as the Catholic Church which span a number of varied societies. There are important problems of scale here which must be tackled if grid and group is to be made operational. However, even assuming that the problems of scale are successfully dealt with, grid and group will remain a relative and not an absolute tool. We do not anticipate comparing social environments along any but an ordinal scale of grid and group, and it must be remembered that since the dimensions are continuous, the division of the diagram into four quadrants is solely heuristic and does not represent four discrete types.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the typology has gone through a number of important changes in the course of its development from the proposals which Douglas originally put forward in Natural Symbols (1970 & 1973). Certain features of the account of the device which I have given here differ significantly from Douglas' early version.



In chapter two of Natural Symbols the grid and group dimensions are derived quite directly from an earlier form of bi-variate analysis developed by Basil Bernstein to describe the constraints which the interaction of language and family structure place on the socialisation of children. Bernstein (1973:ch7) distinguishes two sorts of linguistic code, an elaborated code, in which the speaker selects from a wide range of flexibly organised syntactic alternatives, and a more rigidly organised restricted code, which consists of a much narrower range of syntactic alternatives. The restricted code fulfils the dual role of conveying information and, perhaps more importantly, of expressing and reinforcing the social structure. The primary function of the elaborated code is to organise abstract thought processes and, in its developed form, it may be so much disengaged from the role of enforcing the social structure that the social group has to be structured around the speech, as in a university lecture.

It is essential to realise that the elaborated code is a product of the division of labour. The more highly differentiated the social system, the more specialised the decision making roles - then the more the pressure for explicit channels of communication concerning a wide range of policies and their consequences. (Douglas 1973:44)

The continuum between the two speech codes forms one dimension of Bernstein's typological device (1973:ch8). The other dimension runs between two types of family system. In the positional family, authority is expressed explicitly in terms of classificatory roles, eg. "Boys don't play with dolls!", "Do it because I say so!", "Don't behave like that on the bus!". In contrast, the personal family does not enforce its discipline through a fixed pattern of status roles but by sensitising the child to the personal feelings of others by encouraging introspection of his own feelings. The parent or educator in this context will elaborate justifications for his commands. Whereas the positional parent will tell a child to be quiet, "because I say so!", the personal parent will justify the command, "because I have a headache". The four celled typology which results from combining the speech code dichotomy with that of the positional and personal family is shown as it appears in Bernstein (1973: 190) in figure 6. By the time this appears in Natural Symbols (1973:50), Douglas and Bernstein suggest that a number of cosmological configurations may be expected from the combination of the two dimensions. This typology is the forerunner of the early version of grid and group (figure 7).

Figure 6.

Bernstein's Typology of Linguistic Codes and Family Controls. (1973:190)

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Figure 7.

Douglas' Elaboration of Cosmologies Correlated with Bernstein's Types  
of Linguistic Code and Family Control. (Douglas 1973:50)

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The early version of the grid/group typology consists largely of an attempt to find more general dimensions for a social typology with the same structure as Bernstein's, but valid cross-culturally in the study of attitudes to ritual. The basic premise of a match between cosmology and social environment was already present at this stage. Douglas writes of the search for such a pair of dimensions:

The task can be made much easier if we remember what it is essentially that (Bernstein) is doing. He is deriving cosmology from control systems, or rather showing how cosmology is a part of the social bond, according to the following principles. First, any control system, since it has to be made reasonable (be justified, validated, or legitimated as Weber put it), must appeal to ultimate principles about the nature of man and the cosmos. This applies even at the family level. Second, that the control system interacts with the media of control (speech, ritual). Third, that certain consistencies hold between the coding of the medium and the character of the control system. That they should match is a long-run prediction. In a short run the transition process might obscure the match. Our task starts therefore by identifying the control aspects of the cosmology. (Douglas 1973:80)

Douglas goes on to announce her intention to produce a comparison of control systems which would contrast an entirely personal form of relationships, relatively unstructured by fixed rules of status, with a system of constraints equivalent to those of Bernstein's positional family. To do this she isolates two social dimensions:

One is order, classification, the symbolic system. The other is pressure, the experience of having no option but to consent to the overwhelming demands of other people. (Douglas 1973:81)

The dimension of social classification is the original definition of grid as it appears in the diagram reproduced in figure 8. However, in this arrangement, grid is quite a sharp dichotomy between a publicly accepted system of classification rising above the horizontal dimension and an increasingly coherent but private system of classification pointing downwards. The horizontal axis of group pressure is similarly sharply dichotomous. At zero, the individual is alone and experiences as little pressure as he exerts over others. As he moves to the right, he comes under the control of others, and moving to the left he begins to exert pressure on others.

Figure 8.

The Grid and Group Typology, 1970 (Douglas 1973:84)

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By comparison with the later and more developed account of grid and group given in Cultural Bias (1978), and in this thesis, the early version of the typology is very restricted in its scope. The main disadvantages from which it suffers in this respect are fourfold.

Firstly, the dimensions are very narrowly and simplistically defined. Grid is simply equated with a dichotomy of public and private classification, and group is restricted to whether an individual exerts or experiences social pressure in respect of others. The later definition, of grid as the mode of interaction, and group as the range of interaction, is much richer. In the developed typology, grid not only includes social classification but its material concomitants. Group is not concerned simply with the exertion of pressure which forces an individual to act in accordance with the will of others but is defined by a whole range of factors affecting the range and regularity of social interactions. This point about the later definition of the axes will be developed shortly. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that in the early version, each of the dimensions consists of a single equivalent factor, i.e. classification or social pressure. This is an essentialist definition which lacks the subtlety and range of application of the later version.

Secondly, the dimensions of the early version are strongly dichotomous, and stress a fixed point of qualitative change at zero. The quadrant form here enforces absolute judgements as to whether the classificatory system is public or private and whether an individual is experiencing or exerting social pressure. It is particularly inappropriate to pose such strict alternatives in the case of group, as we have argued with respect to the later version of the theory that the individual who experiences strong group constraints may, by the same token, be able to call on the group for support. This possibility seems to be specifically excluded by the earlier dichotomy. In contrast to these absolute dichotomies, the quadrant of the developed version of grid and group is simply a heuristic overlay to illustrate the interaction of each of the dimensions in two states of relative, rather than absolute, variation.

Thirdly, the definition of the grid dimension simply in terms of public or private classification is ambiguous with respect to whether we mean the classificatory system of the individual we are seeking to locate on the typology, or that system which is operated by those he encounters.

In the developed version it is quite clear that the operative concern with classification in determining an individual's social environment is with status categories which may be used by others in deciding how to relate with him. This usage does not lend itself to a public/private dichotomy.

Fourthly, the early version explicitly assigns the symbolic system to the grid dimension and concrete social constraints to the group axis. In the later version, the symbolic system is not equated primarily with either one of the dimensions. It is seen as being in continuous interaction with the social environment created by both dimensions and forming part of a mutually sustaining system. Furthermore, the early description of group implies a direct experience of the distribution of power. In the later version there are no assumptions of the location of power built into either dimension, and the typology restricts itself to differentiating the experience of power and the options for social interaction in a particular social environment. The distribution of power is too specific to be incorporated into either of the grid or group dimensions, and in the later version, it is consigned to the realm of why questions and concrete historical explanation.

Despite these criticisms, even the early undeveloped form of the grid/group typology had an advantage over most other social typologies which it has retained whilst attempting to cope with the foregoing problems. The advantage is that by adopting a two dimensional format, like that of Fernandez and Aberle, we have a device which can consider social change as a dynamic process. This is because the dimensions from which the typology is constructed are continuous variables. Hence, greater or lesser changes in the grid/group structure of a social unit located on the diagram may be accommodated as they occur, without recourse to transitional categories and without doing violence to the principles upon which the typology was constructed. Instead of creating a hierarchical taxonomy of discrete categories which emphasise unduly the discontinuity between one type and another, we have a typology which, in its developed form, calls our attention to similarity as well as dissimilarity. As such it can explicitly display the route by which a social unit of one type, eg. weak grid/strong group, may change into another type, eg. strong grid/strong group. In this respect grid and group holds out great promise of fulfilling our heuristic requirement of a good typology - that it should be able to facilitate historical account

by being constructed in a manner which can continuously encompass a phenomenon whilst it undergoes change. In this respect, grid and group is like a number of bi-variate analyses which have been produced for the study of social life, including Guy Swanson's typology of political organisation (1969) and that of McKim Marriott in his account of Hindu transactional strategies (1976).

What distinguishes grid and group from these other two-dimensional typologies is the generality of its dimensions. It represents an attempt to produce a social typology which is not limited in its applicability to one particular phenomenon, such as politics, or to one ethnographic context, such as African religion or Hindu transactionalism. If grid and group is successful in its attempt to encompass a wide variation of social change, it is due in part to its organisation as a rationalist typology. Grid and group does not constitute its categories by idealising empirically observable individuals. It derives them deductively from the general dimensions of sociality, in order to encompass the widest range of logical possibilities of social environment, defined according to the relative strength of those dimensions. The actual typology is therefore deductive, but of course the empirical social units which we study are placed on the diagram according to an empirical investigation of the way in which they satisfy the stated criteria. In this respect, grid and group traverses the rationalist/empiricist dichotomy which has beset earlier classificatory attempts in anthropology (Rayner 1977A). It also provides a viable alternative to the inductive abstraction of essences from empirical particulars, which gives rise to hierarchical arrangements of discontinuous categories or to unidirectional evolutionary dichotomies, characteristic of traditional typologising.

Having rejected the simplistic definition of the early version of grid and group, there is often some confusion amongst newcomers to the technique as to what actually constitutes the grid and group dimensions when they are employed in the study of concrete cases. This confusion has not been lessened by the fact that those employing the technique seem to interpret what actually counts as grid and as group in a variety of different ways, without providing an explicit justification for their various interpretations. It is my contention that all of these diverse interpretations may be validly considered to constitute the dimensions because each one is polythetically constituted on a relational basis.



## Grid and Group as a Polythetic Technique.

In 1977 I called Mary Douglas' attention to the fact that the developed form of her grid and group typology conformed, in a number of important respects, to Needham's description of polythetic classification in his article Polythetic Classification: Convergence and Consequences (1975). This connection was subsequently acknowledged in Cultural Bias (Douglas 1978:15), but it has not been developed.

Polythetic classification is an approach which does not rely upon the abstraction of essences, or the principle of substitution. It may be defined as the formation of classes according to a number of characteristics, of which no single characteristic has to be present in every member of the class. In this respect, Wittgenstein's family resemblance categories, which we described in chapter two, may be instanced as an example of polythetic classification. This is among a number of examples of the polythetic approach surveyed by Needham.

There is no well established polythetic school of classification comparable to the essentialist tradition. The basic principles have been enunciated in the works of two of this century's leading philosophers, that is Gilbert Ryle (1951 A&B) as well as Wittgenstein (1953). In the natural sciences, the development of this sort of approach has been mainly in biology where the contradiction between apparently 'natural' categories and anomalies has been a pervasive concern.

Needham reports that the proto-theory of polythetic classification in biology was mooted as early as 1763 by the French botanist Michel Adanson (1763,1:cliv sqq), who proposed that a member of a class need not possess all of the defining features of the class and that a deviant specimen need not be assigned to a separate class as Linnaeus had done. Adanson rather advocated that creatures should be grouped together on the basis of the greatest number of features in common (Needham 1975:353). However, Adanson's viewpoint was not taken up for almost a century, when in accordance with evolutionary theory the definition of a class changed from that of the logicians - individuals sharing common characteristics - to a definition based on descent from a common ancestor (Mayr 1969:83). Thus there was no longer any basis for the stipulation that all members of a class should possess all of the definitive features of that class, because there is no guarantee that any given characteristic of an ancestor will persist in all of its descendants.

However, as I have suggested, we may exaggerate the effects of the ontological revolution of Darwinism on the actual structure of typologies. Descent from a common ancestor was still decided by the possession of certain common core features constituting the essence of descent, and the arrangement of categories remained hierarchical. So, although Adanson's principle may have been vindicated a century ago, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the concept came to fruition.

The first clear enunciation of Adansonian classification in recent times was in 1959. The American biologist Morton Beckner (1959:21-25) coined the terms polytypic and monotypic. Monotypic classification is the traditional essentialist approach, "defined by reference to a property which is necessary and sufficient for membership in its extension". A polytypic class is defined according to the principle that to assign a group of individuals to a class in terms of a set of properties, we should seek an aggregation of individuals for which it could be said:

- 1) Each individual possesses a large but unspecified number of the chosen properties.
- 2) Each property in the set occurs in a large number of the individuals.
- 3) No property in the set occurs in every individual in the aggregate.

By the terms of condition 3, no particular property is necessary for membership of the class, therefore there is no possibility of an essence. Beckner defines a class as polytypic if the first two conditions are met, and 'fully' polytypic if condition 3 is also fulfilled. Hence, in a large group of individuals constituted as a class on the basis of a large number of features, the members at each end of the class may hardly resemble each other at all, as in the example of the class of games examined in the previous chapter. Indeed, the polytypic class will look very much like the 'thread' of Wittgenstein's family resemblances, or like Vygotsky's 'chain complex', for in a fully polytypic class no characteristic is universally distributed.

Needham describes how these ideas have been taken up and developed in standard works on biological classification such as that of Simpson (1961:42), who emphasises the chain-like character of polytypic classes by grouping six individuals (1-6) according to seven attributes (a-g) into two species as shown in figure 9. In species I each member has at least one of the attributes c,d, neither of which occurs in species II,

and in species II each member has at least one of the attributes e,f,g, none of which occurs in species I. In species I each member does have feature b in common, but this is not to be regarded as an essence as there is no feature in common throughout species II. Furthermore, we see that features a,b, occur in both species, but each species is composed of individuals with the most features in common. Indeed Simpson points out that although the two species are clearly related, they do not share any scholastic or Linnaean genus for which we could find an essence.

The terminology of this kind of classification was changed by Peter Sneath (1962) because monotypic and polytypic already had established meanings in systematics. Hence Sneath (1962:291-2) proposed the preferred terms monothetic and polythetic. Whilst acknowledging polythetic classification as the fruition of Adanson's suggestions two centuries earlier, Sneath claims that these ideas could only be operationally realised with the advent of modern computers capable of handling very large numbers of variables. However, this aspect of numerical natural taxonomy should not be allowed to deter our interest in polythetic principles. At this point we are concerned to establish the epistemological basis of polythetic classification, not to import wholesale into anthropology a particular technique which has been developed in the natural sciences.

It is unfortunate in the foregoing respect that Needham's review concentrates on the contributions to the field of polythetic classifications made by biologists, at least in the post-Wittgenstein and Vygotsky period. This gives the unfortunate impression that polythetic categories are highly technical developments within natural science. However, this is not the case. Polythetic concepts have been developed within social science quite independently of these biological developments. Needham's own work is just one example.

Needham (~~1975:350-1~~) claims a remarkable convergence between his own work on kinship systems (1974:ch1) and polythetic classification in biology. He proposes the replacement of the concept of descent by a range of formal criteria that represent logical possibilities. In this way he produces six elementary modes in which rights may be transmitted from one generation to another. Thus, he contends that an insufficiently discriminative taxonomic concept is replaced by a set of criteria which might be matched only sporadically, and in varying combinations, by the institutions of actual societies. Conceiving descent in this way, we need not presume that there is a common feature, or essence, which defines it

Figure 9.

Polytypic Grouping (Simpson 1961:42)

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Figure 10.

Serial Likenesses Among Descent Systems (Needham 1974:47)

Image removed due to third party copyright

in every case we wish to examine. This approach is illustrated in figure 10 by the simple comparison of three hypothetical societies A,B,C, each constituted by 3 out of a series of 7 features p-v. If features r and t are each a type of right transmitted in a given formal mode (eg. the mode might be male to male) then there is a resemblance, r, between societies A and B, and another, t, between B and C, but none between A and C. Yet in conventional anthropological practice all three societies would be classed as patrilineal.

A crucial misdirection can thus be given to our thought by the uncritical employment of the received idea as to what a class is. (Needham 1974:47)

These ideas do have a significant resemblance to the principles of polythetic classification enunciated by biologists. I do not intend to detract from the achievements of either when I say that Needham need not have gone so far afield to find examples of classificatory thought convergent with his own. Whilst Needham was developing his ideas on kinship, psychologists in Britain and the United States were working on the everyday classificatory practice of subjects. They have produced evidence that many concepts are polythetic, and that in experiments on spontaneous classification, subjects use polythetic principles quite freely (Neisser 1967, Hampton et al 1973, Rosch 1975). Psychologists often employ the term polymorphous to describe the same type of classification that Needham (following the biologists) calls polythetic. Polymorphous concepts were identified and christened by Gilbert Ryle (1951~~B~~) who includes activities such as thinking and working, the action of which provide no characteristic necessary or sufficient condition to define the activity referred to by either verb (Urmson 1971). Even closer to anthropology, Solheim II (1976) has pointed out that American archaeologists have been using a polythetic approach to classifying or defining archaeological cultures since the 1960s.

This brief review indicates that polythetic classification promises to satisfy most of our requirements for a typology which does not founder on the criticisms we have made of the essentialist tradition. It has been shown in all of the foregoing examples that it is possible to formulate valid classificatory systems which do not rely on the empirically unreliable principle of substitution. Instead of requiring that any property is present in every member of a class, we require only that a majority, or even a large number, of the definitive features be present. Polythetic definition of classes avoids a priori

commitment to the necessarily arbitrary definition of a class before a theoretically adequate definition can be found. Hence we are able to avoid one of the faults in traditional typologies, that they depend on the arbitrary selection of external features to constitute their categories. But they do not give any theoretically adequate account of why those aspects of the external appearance should be the decisive factors in establishing the category system.

With regard to the question of anomalies, we can see that polythetic classification is justified, if only on the grounds that new knowledge can be utilised in applying polythetic concepts without the necessity of modifying their definitions and redrawing the boundaries of a class each time an anomaly arises. This is because polythetic classification need not impose a range of categories derived from a finite range of idealised empirical particulars. Indeed, polythetic categories may overlap, which makes them inconvenient for building hierarchical taxonomies. While Needham sees this as a drawback (1975:357), it seems to me to be advantageous in that it may introduce greater caution in pursuing this aspect of traditional classification and act as a stimulus to the development of alternative configurations of categories. Furthermore, polythetic classification leaves the classifier free to choose, from a wide range of variables, the particular combination of elements he is interested in to construct a typology for whatever project he may have in hand. No particular polythetic category can thus be said to be the definitive, or the most natural, classification of its members. This is a useful safeguard against the reification of categories. The fact that polythetic categories contain more explicit information than essentialist categories makes them eminently suitable for the construction of typologies based on the explicit special interests of the classifier.

Against these advantages, we have to weigh the possible drawback that we cannot claim to be sure with polythetic classes that any particular feature may be present in every member of the category. But we do know that, despite its claims, traditional classification can never guarantee the principle of substitution anyway. Instead of justifying its categories by claiming that each member of a class shares a common element, polythetic classification relies on the chain links between the members. The problem which we do have to face is how to decide where to draw the boundaries around a polythetic category (Needham 1975:362).

In the biological sciences, the application of computer techniques

to the polythetic classification of bacteria has been carried out by testing samples for a wide-ranging series of variables like sensitivity to chemicals, shape, habitat, etc. The categories which emerged from this procedure were based on the individuals with the greatest number of variables in common. Interestingly, these procedures have not produced any major revision of the existing classifications. There seems to be an empirical tendency for features to cluster, due to the factor of common descent (Lockhart & Hartman 1963).

We might therefore sum up the situation in the natural sciences by saying that, as ~~intrinsic~~ features of the materials under comparison, common descent composes natural classes while natural selection variegates the members of such classes. (Needham 1975:359)

Hence, a natural taxon would not be at all likely to be fully polythetic, since there would usually be some features which are identical in all of the members of a taxon. However, we must regard any category as being potentially fully polythetic, since we can never be sure that we have observed any characteristics which are common to all members (Sokal & Sneath 1963:14). Furthermore, we would not be justified in assuming that because all of the observed members of a class share some common features, that any of these constitute an essence, or the defining features of the class.

Needham rightly points out that social sciences depend on ontologically different orders of determinants from those of biology. Anthropologists cannot use common ancestry as the starting point for building up their polythetic categories (Needham 1975:359). Common ancestry cannot provide us with the same expectation of features to cluster which is justified in biology. Therefore we cannot take it for granted that scoring a large number of features over a wide sample of societies will give rise to theoretically significant groupings.

A numerical taxonomy, therefore, leaves the anthropologist in much the same definitional quandary as when he is faced with the question what is to count as an instance of a given institution. For example in a reassessment of marriage Riviere has concluded that "we mislead ourselves by describing with a single term relationships which in different societies have no single feature in common other than that they are concerned with the conceptual roles of male and female". That is to say, 'marriage' is ~~what~~ Wittgenstein called an 'odd-job' word, ...or as we might better say now, it is a polythetic concept. No statistical method or computer programme can decide what is to count as marriage. Concomitantly, to identify a particular social relationship as an instance of

marriage, by polythetic definition, will not demand the presence of any specific feature by which it is possible to decide that it is to count as marriage. (Needham 1975:362-3)

The numerical taxonomic techniques characteristic of polythetic classification in biology can therefore have little direct application in social anthropology. This is because no matter how we define a polythetic class, the polythetic principle does not tell us how to draw a line between categories. We cannot rely on genetic factors to justify our decisions in imitation of the biologists.

However, there is a level of abstraction at which we can describe both social and biological phenomena, and that is the level of systems analysis. If we examine systems rather than species, then there is little difference between the methodological assumptions underlying biological and social classifications. This is because we are operating at a level which requires a formal relational terminology. Indeed, Needham rightly observes that it is at the level of formal analysis of social systems that polythetic principles are justified in anthropology.

Here we have formal properties which can be defined in purely formal terms, eg, in the notation of ~~symbolic logic~~, without reference to any classes of entities, however the classes may be composed, or to the characteristic empirical features of their members. (Needham 1975:365)

Traditional social classifications are based on essentialist procedures of directly deriving categories from the empirical appearance of phenomena. But the reference of categories such as endogamous, patri-local, Omaha, etc, is clearly polythetic (Needham 1974). Comparative propositions about members of these kinds of categories are continually frustrated by the fact that the principle of substitution does not apply to them. However, these failings of traditional terminologies do not arise with formal relational concepts such as symmetry, transitivity, complementarity, etc, which may be chosen by the classifier as being appropriate for expressing the relationships under consideration but are not directly derived from their empirical appearance. This kind of formal abstraction avoids the misleading problems which we have come across in traditional taxonomies.

It has been argued (Campbell 1965) that family resemblances (polythetic classification) alone are not enough to solve the problems of universals (categories). This is important because the rejection of the



notion of an essence raises the question of how we justify the limits of any category. Campbell argues that there must be basic predicates of polythetic categories. Rather than circumscribing the boundary of a category, basic predicates provide an anchoring point from which family resemblance chains may radiate so far as the classifier allows.

In biological classifications the concept of common descent may provide the anchoring point for the classification of species, and may be said to be a basic predicate of natural taxonomy. In the formation of everyday classifications the basic predicate of a category may be the concept of a prototype from which other members of the class are seen to deviate whilst retaining sufficiently recognisable family resemblances to be included (Hampton in press). For example, the prototype chair may be a dining chair, to which armchairs, thrones, and car-seats may be compared by the classifier to see whether they merit inclusion in the category of chairs.

In the case of biological classification the basic predicate of the classes is the concept of descent, while the everyday classifications rely on the idea of a prototype. But neither descent nor prototype provides us with an essence of any class of phenomena. A basic predicate is not the same as an essence. One might want to argue that kinship has a basic predicate in biology without wanting to accept that the essence of kinship is biological. The difference is that essentialism represents the distinguishing factor of a category as a property shared by particular individuals, whereas a basic predicate is merely a formal condition for the definition of a category and is therefore not a feature necessarily shared by every empirical case assigned to it. Needham suggests (1975:365) that formal relational concepts provide the basic predicates of polythetic categories in anthropology.

We can thus return to my contention that grid and group concepts are polythetically constituted. The formal definitions of each dimension are sufficiently wide to allow a very wide range of empirical phenomena to be appropriated as indicators of either grid or group. But just as importantly, the definitions suggest a number of basic predicates which allow us to evaluate the relevance of any particular empirical factor for determining the relative strength of each dimension in any social environment. I will discuss the basic predicates of both grid and group and then discuss the kinds of factors which we can use as empirical indices in order to show how both levels of each dimension articulate.

## Basic Predicates of Grid.

Douglas and Hampton (Douglas 1978:16) have constructed the grid dimension with what they describe as four components: Insulation; Autonomy; Control; and Competition. In the light of the foregoing discussion it seems reasonable to regard these as basic predicates of grid. None of these components is decisive alone in determining the relative strength of the grid constraints acting upon an individual, not least because the significance of some of the measures varies according to the point on the dimension we are dealing with. The strength of the grid is determined by the aggregate strength of the four components.

In constructing the grid dimension deductively we are seeking to establish a logical scale on which the social environment experienced by individuals can be related according to how strongly it restricts their actions through social classification. Strong grid, defined in this way, corresponds to the component of insulation. Unfortunately, we have to anticipate problems which may arise in discriminating relative grid scores when the insulation component is weak. With reduced insulation other possibilities for social interaction open up. One of these is the experience of autonomy. Whereas insulation designates specialised division of labour, or social stratification, autonomy is a measure of personal choice. A high score for this predicate generally indicates a weak grid environment, but it is possible to be strongly insulated whilst retaining a high degree of personal autonomy within one's own well defined social niche. A high score for both insulation and autonomy would therefore cancel out to give a middle grid location.

Douglas (1978:16) characterises autonomy, control, and competition as three types of 'individual freedom' made possible by the relative absence of insulation. Whilst this may be more or less true of autonomy, I prefer to treat control and competition in a slightly different way. Douglas uses control to designate the opportunities at weak grid for individual entrepreneurs to exert constraints upon others. But this does not seem to be consistent with the definition of the grid dimension as constraints upon the individual arising from social classifications. Nor does it square with Douglas' admission (1978:17) that grid does not account for the source and distribution of power, but only the mode of social control. As Douglas says on the same page, "Control over others is at issue, a sign for power". Hence I prefer to see control as the

individual's experience of being manipulated through rules and classifications. In this scheme, control increases as grid grows stronger and displaces autonomy as the fine discriminator at the strong end of the grid dimension. This restores consistency with the definition of grid as constraints arising from social classifications. Autonomy and control are treated not as separate elements but as polarities of a single dimension of social experience. The distribution of power through a system will be dealt with separately and empirically in a later chapter.

However, there is a component which could replace Douglas' use of control over others as a basic predicate of grid. This is reciprocity of transactions. Asymmetrical reciprocity fits very nicely with our conception of strong grid. Here exchange of goods, services, or obligations between individuals is unequal, and the social environment consists of givers and takers of ranked status. On the other hand, transactions at weak grid would be characterised by competitive exchanges between partners, each of whom is attempting to maximise profit or status at the same time as maintain an overall equivalence of exchanges. Although there may be temporary imbalances, if these should harden into permanent roles of giver and receiver, the system would have to be considered as exhibiting stronger grid constraints. The advantage of using reciprocity as a grid component is that where it is asymmetrical there is no a priori assumption built into the model about the direction of advantage. Thus the concept continues to act as an indication of the mode of control rather than of the location of power.

Competition is also viewed here as a constraint rather than as an unqualified freedom. The freedom of weak grid is relative freedom from classificatory constraints upon individual transactions and interactions with others. However, the fair comparison rules which maintain this egalitarian environment, and the competitive social pressures arising from the social free-for-all characteristic of weak insulation, constrain the individual just as surely as the classificatory restrictions of strong grid. Thus, both ends of the grid dimension are defined by constraints upon action arising from the relative strength or weakness of the four relational concepts which we have identified as the basic predicates of grid: Insulation; Autonomy/Control; Reciprocity; Competition. Both ends of the grid dimension will cherish their different kinds of freedom accordingly, and we can recognise that Douglas is speaking from the ethnocentric viewpoint of the weak grid entrepreneur in counterposing insulation and freedom in her definitions.

## Basic Predicates of Group.

It is unfortunate that Douglas has not brought out the polythetic character of the group dimension as she has done with grid. Also, her discussion of group is conducted in terms of the empirical indices of the dimension, rather than the basic predicates she uses in her discussion of grid. Grid and group both have formal predicates, such as those which we have just elucidated for grid, and empirical indices derived directly from observable phenomena, such as Douglas uses in her explanation of group. For example, she cites living in a commune as an indication of a strong group environment (Douglas 1978:16). But this is not a condition of the same order of abstraction as the formal concepts of insulation, etc. Whilst I do not dispute the validity of the group indices Douglas uses, it is clearer to distinguish the basic predicates of group and subsequently to discuss the empirical indices of both grid and group.

Group is defined as the constraints upon an individual arising from incorporation in an aggregate of individuals - irrespective of whether that aggregate has explicit criteria of membership. I have isolated four basic predicates of the group dimension: Frequency; Transitivity; Boundary; and Scope. All of these are deemed to strengthen as we move to the right along the group dimension.

The group dimension describes the extent and nature of the individual's social network. In this context, frequency represents the regularity of contact with members of the network. The more face-to-face contact with the same people, the stronger the group dimension is deemed to be.

However, frequency alone is not enough, for it does not distinguish between frequent interaction ~~between one individual~~ and a string of otherwise disparate, unconnected people, and relations within a mutually interconnecting network. This is the distinction between intransitive and transitive social networks respectively. Transitivity is a factor of strong group, an interconnecting network. Intransitivity indicates a weak group environment in which an individual's network is not shared by its other members.

A further factor of strong group arises if the transitive social network meets collectively, for this gives rise to a collective identity, with a boundary around the group, and a corresponding sense of inclusion

and exclusion. This factor increases in strength if the group has a special meeting place of its own and is liable to be strongest where the group is co-resident.

The factor of co-residence brings us on to the last of our four basic predicates. Scope is the range of activities, or the areas of social life, which fall under the aegis of the group. A member of a co-residential commune will clearly be placing more aspects of his life under group control than an individual apartment dweller. However, the communitarian will be able to make stronger claims over widespread areas of the lives of his companions. The wider the scope of the group's claims over the individual, the stronger the group dimension must be rated.

\* \* \*

Thus far we have constructed polythetic definitions of grid and group from formal relational components. The two dimensions are therefore not derived from unmediated empirical observation but are based upon a range of combinations of selected general features of social organisation. Of course these have not been plucked out of the air at random. They are abstractions from anthropologists' observations of a wide range of societies. The methodology is that of rationally abstracting the most general dimensions of social existence and then working back to the concrete from the abstract. The path back to the concrete consists in the fact that for any particular combination of these various abstract components in a complex structured whole, we expect certain empirical features to cluster accordingly along the grid and group dimensions - these constitute the empirical indices of the relative strength of each dimension.

The challenge of making the typology operational is chiefly a question of finding the appropriate cluster of empirical features from which we can abstract and compare the relative strength of the components of grid and group respectively. From these we determine the overall structure of the empirical social environment in terms of the formal classification of grid and group. The resulting typology is not a hierarchy of types but a map upon which the interconnections as well as the distinctions between the various types of social environment can be traced.

## Empirical Indices.

We have presented each of the grid and group dimensions as being polythetically constituted by the interaction of at least four basic predicates. There is of course no a priori reason for having four in either case - these just seem to have emerged as the relevant factors in the work so far done in the development of the typology.

We can use the polythetic approach in turn to identify any number of appropriate empirical indices of these predicates. For example, indices of group may be such factors as cohabitation, membership of clubs or churches, etc, whilst indices of grid might be colour bars, executive washrooms, or first-class railcars. Each of these indices may tell us about the relative strength of one or more than one of the grid or group predicates. For example, the index of co-residence tells us something about at least three of the group predicates. If people live in a commune, it is reasonable to suppose that they will see each other often (frequency), that all of the members are known to each other (transitivity), that they will meet collectively to make decisions about their common interests and will be aware of who is and is not a member. Finally, we would expect the communards to have a wide range of life support interests in common such as catering, property maintenance, pets, and social activities (scope). On the other hand, an index such as frequency of formal meetings only really tells us something about the frequency of face-to-face contact of members of a group and indicates that the network is a transitive one. It tells us nothing of the strength of the group boundary or the range of group activities.

Unlike the basic predicates, the empirical indices are inductively derived from the actual social units which we study and therefore cannot be universal. The basic predicates of grid and group are derived deductively from their general definitions which purport to be general dimensions of sociality and therefore should be of universal relevance. It is important to emphasise the specificity of empirical indices because the general definitions of grid and group are clearly not operational concepts which can be directly observed in fieldwork. In making them operational, the basic predicates mediate between the general concepts of grid or group and the relevant characteristics of a social environment by providing a theoretical anchor for specific features of the family resemblance categories corresponding to the definitions of each dimension.

For example, there is a variety of context-specific empirical indices appropriate to the basic predicate of insulation. In one society an age grade system might indicate the presence of strong insulation, whilst in another, age may be a less important index than the presence of an aristocratic hierarchy, or a stratified bureaucracy. Given that the social units we are studying might be culturally diverse in many other respects, such as technological complexity or response to natural environment, a feature of one social unit which appears to be a reliable index of insulation may prove to be wholly inappropriate in another. Discrimination against blacks, which is an index of insulation in some contexts, is not much use if everyone, or no one, is black. The same applies to all of the empirical indices of both grid and group.

The burden is on the ethnographer to find the appropriate empirical indices for scoring the grid and group dimensions in the context of the units he is studying. Provided that the indices are carefully chosen with close reference to the basic predicates, and their usefulness in scoring the relative strength of the basic predicates is justified at the outset, then the social units may be discriminated on the grid and group dimensions according to those indices. In other words, the indices of grid and group used in the study of religious sects may differ from those used in the study of office environments, but in both cases the indices share the same basic predicates and can therefore be said to constitute part of the same family resemblance concept of grid and of group respectively.

In principle there is nothing to prevent a religious sect and a business office from being directly compared on a grid/group matrix - provided that scale parity is maintained. Before moving on to a general description of the far-left, from which we can select some appropriate indices for determining the relative grid/group classifications of those organisations we want to look at in more detail, we need to say something about the problems of scale in making grid/group analysis operational.

### Scale.

Scale is an important factor in grid/group analysis. The grid/group matrix may be applied over a wide range of more or less complex and extensive social units. In this sense it is like the objective lens of a microscope which gives different powers of magnification according to the kind of detail required. As with a microscope image, a major increase

in detail necessarily means a loss in overall picture. There are three levels at which grid and group can be made operational. We can refer to these as the Individual, Micro, and Macro Scales.

The individual scale is quite straightforward. Because Douglas has built the dimensions around the concept of a negotiating individual charting his own course through the grid/group constraints of his social environment, the most detailed operational level (the strongest objective lens on our microscope) is the level at which excuses are required from individuals and made by them, and where moral judgements materialise into pressures from other persons to act in certain ways. At the individual social accounting level, individuals may be compared on a chart according to the relative strength of the grid/group constraints which each experiences. From his location in any particular quadrant, we can then proceed to make projections as to the structure of the ideological beliefs which the individual is most likely to find tenable within the constraints of the quadrant.

The micro scale is based on the location of each of the members of a particular empirical social unit on a grid/group chart. If we find individuals scattered over more than one quadrant, we may project that there will be diverse structural interpretations of ideological beliefs, even though the content of the ideology may be shared. (They may all be Christians but may interpret the significance of various aspects of Christian doctrine differently.) The social unit as a whole will be classified according to the line which can be drawn around all of the members of the unit as they are placed on the chart, and by the density of the population so enclosed which is to be found in any particular quadrant. This level is ideal for dealing with small populations where each individual may be carefully assessed. There is very little loss of detail in moving from the individual level to the micro level, although in generalising about the social unit as a whole one is likely to emphasise the features characteristic of the part of the diagram in which most of the members of the unit are located, rather than those parts which contain relatively few members.

The macro scale is designed for use where the population which we wish to examine is too large for worthwhile micro analysis, or where micro analysis is not possible because the ethnographer does not have adequate access to the same individuals over time in order to accurately determine their relative grid/group positions. The macro scale is also



that which should be employed in determining the grid/group structure of a social unit for which we have no individuals at all, but only written records and laws. (Obviously individual biographies are exceptions to this, and they may be assessed on the individual scale.) The macro scale assesses the aggregate grid/group pressures distributed throughout a particular social unit, on the basis of the rules and norms of that unit as they are seen by the ethnographer to apply in general to individual members of the population. Although we may place such a population in a particular quadrant, we realise that there may well be members who would be differently placed if assessed on the individual scale. This loss of accurate detail is the price we have to pay for a larger overall picture, but this will be the case with any generalisation which goes beyond phenomenological individualism.

The grid/group rating of a social unit assessed on the macro scale will be that of a typical member - an animal which we know does not empirically exist. However, this does not matter provided certain limits are observed in placing a large population in the same place on the grid/group diagram:

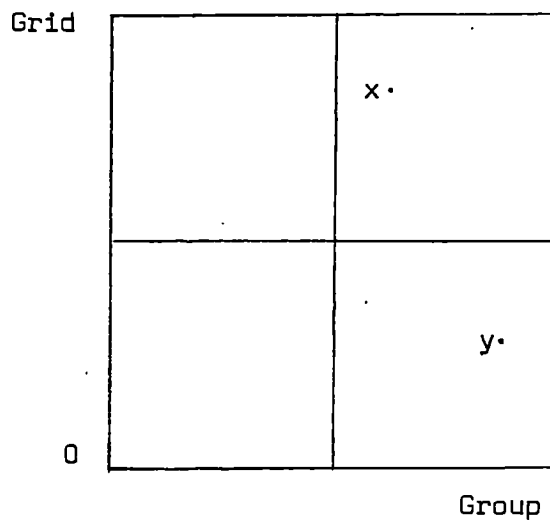
...though the group may be ever so big so that all the members cannot possibly know each other well, there would have to be in all parts of it a pressure from face to face situations to draw the same boundaries and accept the alignment of insiders and outsiders. (Douglas 1978:15)

So, although units such as England and the Catholic Church are too varied to be placed in a single quadrant, different institutions within large units of this sort could be located in different parts of the diagram, and an overall picture of the types of social environment within each whole could be obtained. At this level we are interested in the dynamic tendencies of whole systems to develop in a particular way according to the interaction of their grid/group characteristics.

In discriminating these three levels of applicability we may note that grid and group does not reduce either culture or individual personality to the other, but represents the individual between two aspects of a system. On each scale we are concerned with the pressures of the social environment acting on individuals within it. The individual is credited with the creation of his own cosmology within these constraints. This process of interaction may be expected to produce tendencies for systems located in different parts of the typology to develop particular organisational tendencies according to the relative strength of its grid/group

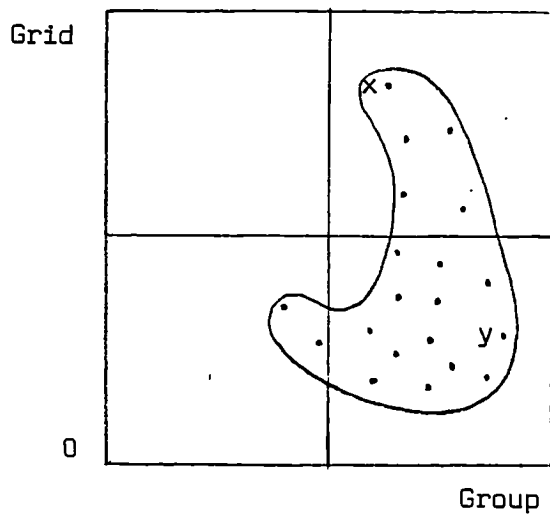
Figure 11.

Three Different Scales of Grid/Group Analysis.



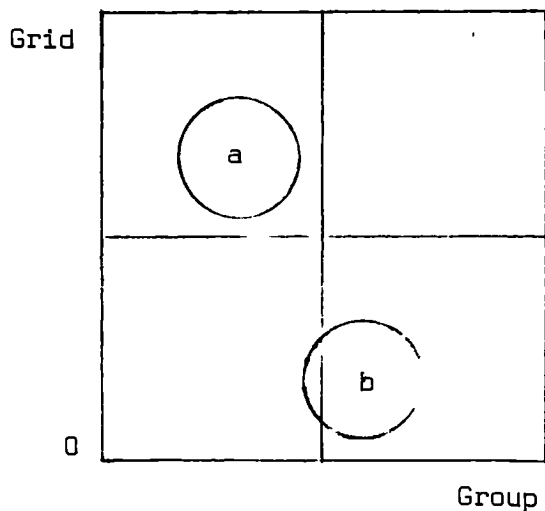
Individual Scale

Relative grid/group rating of two individuals x and y



Micro Scale

A social unit rated on the basis of individual studies of all twenty members, including x and y from above



Macro Scale

Two social units rated on the basis of the relative aggregate strengths of grid/group constraints in each

pressures. It is these behavioural tendencies which we will be looking at in the far-left groups described in the following chapters.

The differences of scale may appear confusing at first, but provided the ethnographer is careful to state on which scale he is rating his samples and is explicit about the limitations on comparing samples rated according to different scales where scale parity cannot be maintained, the fact that different scales can be employed within the same epistemological framework should prove to be a gain rather than a drawback. It must be emphasised that whatever scale is being employed, there are no absolute quantifiable measures of grid and group. The technique depends on qualitative evaluation of the relative strength of the various components of each dimension. This is a well established approach in content analysis (Berelson 1952), and provided its limitations are explicitly recognised, there is no reason why it should not prove to be adequate for our purposes.

It is my intention to adopt the macro scale for the study of small scale political groups. This is because I am interested primarily in the organisational dynamics of the groups, and in the use of grid and group to create a taxonomy of whole social units. This means that I am looking for the organisational and cosmological tendencies in environments where individuals share the same sorts of grid/group pressures. I do not require to establish the detailed match of cosmology and social environment for every individual member which would be produced on the finer scales. I want an overall picture, comparing a number of groups, rather than a detailed study of the individuals in a single group or section thereof.

In any case, owing to the closed organisational structure of these groups, it would not be possible to use the individual scale in this project without pretending to 'greater accuracy than my data gathering capacities allowed.' For example, much detailed individual interviewing and the use of questionnaires were not possible. Some of the fieldwork was covert because it would have been regarded by the groups studied as 'bourgeois sociology' and dismissed as a time wasting irrelevance. Furthermore, it was not possible (particularly as an outsider and working alone) to obtain a sufficiently complete picture of the home life and working life, in addition to the political life, of a worthwhile sample of group members.

The overall size of the organisations studied here varies. In one case it is sometimes as many as 3,000 members, although there are seldom more than forty members in one branch of any of the groups. At the macro level we may permit ourselves to assume that within certain limits (which will be made empirically explicit) the pressures from face-to-face interactions will be similar from branch to branch.

Having determined the level at which we intend to apply grid and group to organisations of the far-left, the next step must be to select suitable empirical indices on which to base our assessments of their relative grid/group strengths. It is evident that the point has come when we must introduce the far-left into our discussion in order to determine suitable characteristics as variables for closer analysis of selected groupings.

## Chapter Four.

### The Origins of Trotskyism and Maoism in Britain.

You have to have at least three members to form a propaganda group, and if you get four you can form a party, but if you have five members you will have a faction whilst six will guarantee a split. (Ex-member of the International Socialists)

The remaining chapters are intended as an application of the grid/group technique to the study of sectarian organisations in order to test and develop the model. My purpose in this chapter is to introduce the groups of the far-left, to say why we can treat them as sects, and to select appropriate empirical indices to show how they can be understood in terms of grid and group. All of the groups discussed herein are small far-left wing organisations varying in size from a handful of members to no more than 3,000. The smallest groups, such as the various Maoist sects like the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong thought, are extremely localised. Although the larger ones, such as the Socialist Workers' Party and the Workers' Revolutionary Party, are national organisations, their main strength also tends to be concentrated in a few geographical areas.

All of the groups discussed are constitutionally committed to Democratic Centralism in some form or another. This mode of organisation requires all of the members of an organisation to adhere to the official policy of the group in their public political activity, whilst retaining the right, at least in principle, to change policy through internal political activity. Although the principle is differently interpreted and applied in the various groups we are concerned with, it requires a high level of personal discipline and individual commitment. Thus all of these groups share formal and practical strong group characteristics. They constitute sects in the sociological meaning of the term as described by Wilson and others.

It should hardly be contentious to claim that the behaviour of sectarians is primarily constrained by the external boundary which the group maintains around itself. It is one of the concerns of this thesis to determine the relative positions of a number of such organisations along the group dimension. It is also hoped that we can show how the grid position of groups of sectarians can alter in either direction

over a relatively short period of time, particularly when major internal disputes arise. This part of the argument sees Weber's notion of routinisation in terms of a movement to strong grid. However, in contrast to Weber, I hope to show that a shift towards the creation of institution-alised insulations may be neither permanent nor irreversible. I also hope to be able to draw some general conclusions about the nature of leadership and dispute settlement in relation to the grid/group position of sectarian organisations. However, before we can locate the relative positions of a sample of far-left groups on the grid/group matrix, we have to assess the far-left in general terms in order to determine the kind of empirical indices which might prove most informative.

By 1968 the tendency of small left-wing groups to proliferate was already well advanced. During the following decade the process has continued and the list provided must be treated with caution. The total number of individuals involved over the years must be considerable. The vast majority of groups, however, are tiny and likely to continue their process of splitting and regrouping, even working secretly inside each other, and conducting long and obscure doctrinal disputes in their journals.

The most numerous organisations are those with Trotskyist origins which also include the most important ones in terms of influence and membership. These are the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the International Marxist Group, (the British sections of the two major international organisations claiming the title of the Fourth International) and the Socialist Workers' Party (formerly the International Socialists and presently undergoing a transformation from Marxist sect to populist party). However, we have much to gain from also looking at some of the smaller and less politically important organisations, for example, some of the tiny Maoist organisations which are established on a local basis in various parts of major cities. These are renowned for their intense hostility to members of other organisations who are characterised as 'revisionists' of one sort or another, 'enemies of the people', or, most damning, 'agents of the British fascist bourgeoisie and Soviet social imperialism'.

It is not always easy to explain the differences between the various groups in political terms. Organisational issues, such as internal democracy and threats to established dominance, often play a large part in splits. Sometimes the pretext of magnifying any small difference is taken

for organisational ends. For example, of the twenty or so British Trotskyist groups, at least half come from splits in which internal democracy was a key issue.

Another occasion for schism is international events. This is particularly true of groups loosely designated as 'Maoist'. Many of these are in fact hostile to Mao and identify with various opposition figures such as Lin Piao or Liu Shao Chi (eg. Marxist-Leninist Association of Britain). Most fascinating here is the ability of organisations such as the tiny Brixton based Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought to follow faultlessly the convoluted and often contradictory paths of Chinese foreign and domestic policy. Its self-estimation is out of all proportion to its actual size and influence and serves to support my contention, in chapter five, that sectarians live in a shrunken world.

A challenging problem is that of how far-left sects legitimate themselves. Religious sects can discount smallness by invoking notions of the 'elect' and the conviction that God will find a way. These notions are paralleled among the far-left by notions of the role of the 'vanguard party' which will usher in the new order and the characteristic faith in the proletariat once it has been purged of the pollution of bourgeois ideology and saved from incorrect, or at worst, traitorous leadership. Hence sections of the far-left would seem to identify 'God' with society, or at least a part of it, even more literally than Durkheim!

The history of the various British Maoist sects is of course much shorter than that of the Trotskyist movement. However, there are certain superficial parallels in their origins. The British Trotskyist movement of the 1930s originated in piecemeal fashion as small localised grouplets with little formal organisation of their own. Many of these groups began life as internal opposition fragments of the Communist Party of Great Britain and had been expelled because their criticisms of both the Party and the Third International were identified with those made by the International Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky. Although in fact, the dissidents' conscious alignment with Trotsky often followed their own negative evaluation of the Party bureaucracy (Groves 1974:49). Other Trotskyist fragments emerged from amongst the supporters of the Independent Labour Party, and some developed amongst independent-minded socialists who had not found a political home amongst the existing organisations of the labour movement. In 1938 all of these Trotskyist groups, with the exception

of the largest (Workers' International League), fused to form the British Section of the Fourth International.

The various Maoist groups which emerged some thirty years later also formed either by splintering away from the Communist Party or through the voluntary association of unaligned socialists and political militants, often of a libertarian persuasion, who had been unable or unwilling to situate their activity within the framework of existing left groups. These individuals looked upon the emergence of the People's Republic of China as a leading independent revolutionary force on the international scene as a rallying point for their own militant anti-bureaucratic politics. Examples of such localised associations might include the Finsbury Communist Association and some of the autonomous groups described in the following pages, such as the Association of Communist Workers, the Marxist-Leninist Workers' Association, etc.

Particularly attractive to independents and to Communist Party dissidents alike was the anti-bureaucratism of the Communist Party of China, which had started with the Hundred Flowers movement in 1956. This reached a climax in the notion of the continuous character of the revolutionary process exemplified in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which plunged China into ferment between 1966 and 1968. The national chauvinism of the Chinese, and their commitment to Stalin's formula of 'Socialism in One Country', often went unstressed by Western supporters of Mao, who rallied to Chinese calls for 'Proletarian Internationalism' in the face of Soviet degeneration into 'Social Imperialism'. This anti-bureaucratic internationalist approach held a very similar appeal to that of Trotsky's critique of Stalin's bureaucracy and the theory of 'Permanent Revolution'. This was certainly so in the youth radicalisation boom which followed the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the late 1960s.

However, the development of the British Maoists in the late 'sixties differed from that of the Trotskyists of thirty years earlier in a number of important respects. The Maoists lacked an international organisation comparable to the Fourth International through which they would be able to maintain links with other like-minded people on a worldwide basis. The Maoists have maintained their internationalism through a direct orientation to the People's Republic of China, whose international links may be appropriated by individual sects for their own. So far the Maoists have been relatively unsuccessful in bringing together a significant



number of grouplets under a single umbrella, as the Fourth International did in 1938.

In practice, the Maoist groups are often extremely parochial in their activities, just as they are universal in the claims they make for the validity of their analyses. This characteristic is best exemplified in the case of the Workers' Institute, whose self-proclaimed internationalism consists in "building a stable revolutionary base in and around Brixton". It should also be noted that some of the groups generally designated as Maoist were hostile to Mao's later policies and certainly oppose the present leadership of the Communist Party of China. It is also true that many of the Trotskyist groups have moved a long way from the ideas of Trotsky. These categories are principally genetic and denote only the main Marxist tendency from which a variety of groups originated.

Perhaps one of the most significant differences between the British Trotskyists of the 'thirties and the modern far-left, is that the founders of the former were principally working class militants rather than youth and students. In the 1960s, the Trotskyists and the emergent Maoists both developed an orientation which suited the upsurge of youth protest at the time. For the former, this influx of new blood followed twenty years in the political wilderness for such old hands as Healy, Grant, and Cliff whose origins and experience were very different from those of the middle class youth who now flocked to their organisations. Many recruits to the Maoists were impressed by the anti-bureaucratic, youth orientated China of the Cultural Revolution, and even the Young Liberals at this time supported its own self-styled Red Guard which was responsible for the resignation of more than one Liberal prospective parliamentary candidate.

#### The Origins of British Maoism.

##### 1) Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity (CDRCU).

Many of the criticisms of the Communist Party made by its Maoist dissidents in the 1960s were based on the 'deproletarianisation' of the Party, and its acceptance of 'bourgeois' political norms. Ironically, those amongst the Party's ranks who embraced Maoism in an attempt to reassert proletarian revolutionary socialism were often those whose first hand experience of the working class was most limited, and consequently romantic. The most notable of these figures was Michael

McCreery, the old Etonian founder of the earliest Maoist splinter group in the CP. This was the Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity, which in the early 'sixties was an illicit faction in the CP. (In fact all factions are illicit in the Party, although some are tolerated provided that they are not too overt in flouting the rules.) The demands of the CDRCU were based on the reassertion of the classical Marxist theory of the state, a return to the organisation of the Party in factory rather than local branches, approval for Scottish and Welsh Nationalism, and support for China in its post 1956 split with the USSR. In November 1963 McCreery and his associates A.H.Evans, Ken Houlison, and others issued an Appeal to All Communists from Members of the CPGB, and on this basis were promptly expelled from the Party. The group never exceeded fifty members, most, if not all, of whom considered themselves to be middle class intellectuals, even if from working class origins. Very few worked on the factory floor.

From February 1964 until McCreery's untimely death from cancer the following year, the group published the journal Vanguard which was sustained entirely out of McCreery's private wealth. After his death the remnants of McCreery's group soon went their own ways. In England they became the Working People's Party of England, whilst their Scottish comrades, under the leadership of Houlison, formed the Working People's Party of Scotland, whose members were convicted of bank robbery in 1972. Half a dozen of McCreery's associates went to Ireland where they set up the Irish Communist Organisation in 1965. This developed as a strict Stalinist organisation rather than Maoist, changed its name to the British and Irish Communist Organisation, and in 1969 adopted the Two Nations Theory of Ireland.

## 2) Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist (CPB M-L).

However, not all of the Communist Party's Maoist sympathisers were McCreery supporters by any means. By far the largest grouping, estimated by sympathetic sources as being as many as 2,000 (although this seems likely to be an exaggeration), was led out of the CP by Reg Birch, a veteran engineering militant, AUEW official, and member of the executive committee of the Party. He was expelled in 1967 for being in correspondence with foreign Maoist leaders, and launched the Communist Party of Britain shortly after a visit to China in that same year. Although Birch enjoyed the support of some of his engineering comrades in North London, many of his followers were drawn from the Young Communist League and from Communist Students.

Until the recent developments in China which led to the break with Albania, the CPB M-L was the British group most favoured by the People's Republic. However, after the death of Chairman Mao, they joined with Enver Hoxa of Albania in criticising the new regime and lost their favoured status to the Communist League of Britain Marxist-Leninist, who continue to uncritically uphold the Chinese line.

### 3) Revolutionary Communist League of Britain Marxist-Leninist (RCLB M-L).

The Revolutionary Communist League of Britain Marxist-Leninist is the descendent<sup>a</sup> of those Maoists who did not leave the Communist Party with McCreery or Birch. Throughout the mid 'sixties, a group known as the Selfmanites published an 'anti-revisionist' journal called Forum inside the Communist Party. This group's leader, Peter Selfman, was himself a target for extensive criticism by the CDRCU. Other local groupings of Maoists were expelled or left the CP throughout the 'sixties. A number of these which had set themselves up as autonomous groups in Camden, Bristol, Coventry, and Glasgow, rejected both McCreery's organisational forms and the setting up of the CPB M-L, which in 1967 they regarded as being premature. Instead, these local sects formed the Joint Committee of Communists, which in 1969 became the Communist Federation of Britain. In 1977, the Federation joined with another Maoist group with a few dozen members, the Communist Unity Association, to form the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain M-L, which has displaced the CPB M-L as the British group receiving fullest recognition from Peking. The Communist Unity Association was itself the result of an earlier merger between the Communist Workers' Unity Association, a tiny London-based fragment, and the even tinier Marxist-Leninist Workers' Association, whose origins are shrouded in insignificance. The RCLB M-L is also presently pursuing other Maoist grouplets with a view to eventual unification, these probably include the Association of Communist Workers which is renowned only for its prolific production of extensive mimeographs, often reprints of Stalin's classic works.

### 4) Communist Party of England Marxist-Leninist (CPE M-L).

The last strand which we must examine in the development of British Maoism is that of the Communist Party of England Marxist-Leninist, the fraternal party of the Communist Party of Ireland M-L and the Communist Party of Canada M-L. All three organisations form a tiny internationalist network under the leadership of Canadian guru Hardail Baines. The Communist

Party of England M-L has its roots in a Maoist grouplet of the late 'sixties called the Internationalists, becoming in turn, the English Communist Movement M-L, and in 1973 the CPE M-L.

This small sect of religious Maoists are renowned for having more front organisations than any other group on the far-left, for publishing unreadable journals, and for engaging in lunatic confrontations with the police. In 1974, the CPE M-L achieved publicity by standing for a number of candidates in the October general election. They were also involved in the violent breaking-up of lectures by the controversial psychologist H.J.Eysenck. The CPE M-L is the organisation from which Balakrishnan and Brome seceded in 1975 in order to start their own group in Brixton, the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought, not far from the CPE M-L's headquarters in Battersea. The Workers' Institute characterises Hardail Baines, Alan Evans of the CPI M-L, CPE M-L leader Carol Reakes, and the 'Worker Aristocrat' Reg Birch as the West's own Gang of Four!

\* \* \*

The Maoist phenomenon in Britain was very much a part of the coincidence of the Sino-Soviet split and the youth protest boom of the late 'sixties. The Trotskyists also benefited from this youth radicalisation, but unlike the Maoists, the Trotskyists appear to have been able to build on the bases they obtained in this period, whilst the last decade has seen British Maoism in decline. Militancy on its own is not enough to sustain an organisation of any size, and the constant turnabouts in Chinese domestic policy accompanied by their support for reactionary movements in Chile and Angola (including the affection the Chinese have displayed towards Richard Nixon and British Conservatives) have disillusioned many erstwhile supporters. Because of the absence of an independent Maoist International and the direct orientation of Maoist groups to the CPC, there has been little scope for dissident groups to maintain their internationalism through independent contacts.

The present membership of the Maoist left consists of a mixture of veterans from the 1960s, who however only remain in significant numbers in the CPB M-L, and discontented but politically unsophisticated young people. The smaller grouplets have a lower working class membership than Birch's group which has retained some support in the engineering industry in North London, though not much in the traditional industrial centres.

The grouplets, furthermore, tend to have a high immigrant membership from third-world countries where Maoism has retained more of its appeal as a focus for anti-imperialist movements. In all cases the most significant section of the membership consists of students or ex-students.

### The History of the Fourth Internationals.

The short history of the British far-left, particularly the organisations of the various Fourth Internationals, is one of a protracted process of schism and occasional attempts at reunification. There are presently in existence eight international Trotskyist organisations, four of which claim the title of Fourth International, which was the name taken by the organisation of the International Left Opposition founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.

To many people not acquainted with the politics of Britain's extra-parliamentary left, the distinctions between even the largest and the best known organisations are obscure and insignificant. The Socialist Workers' Party, Workers' Revolutionary Party, and International Marxist Group may all be written off under the general heading of Communists, along with the tiny Maoist sects and the very much larger and significant Communist Party of Great Britain. However, there are very real differences in the nature of the political activities, aims, and theoretical perspectives of all these groups. The problem of making political distinctions in such an emotionally charged sphere is exacerbated in the case of the many smaller Maoist and Trotskyist groups, most of which are too obscure to be differentiated by outsiders. In this case 'outsiders' include most members of the more orthodox Marxist left. Many of these tiny groups do not involve themselves in the politics of the larger society, even at a local level, but live out their lives in the paper world of abstruse theoretical debates in the pages of their obscure journals.

Even with some of the larger groups, it is not always easy to explain the differences between them in political rather than organisational terms. This should come as no surprise to anyone with even a superficial acquaintance with their history. Organisational issues, such as internal democracy and threats to established dominance, often play a large part in the debates which precede a split. At least eight of the seventeen or so extant British Trotskyist groups originated from splits in which internal democracy was a key issue, whilst minor political issues may be inflated, either by the leaders of a majority faction in order to expel

dissidents (rivals for the leadership) or by the leaders of a minority faction as the basis of a challenge to established leadership, or to justify withdrawal from the larger group.

In order to assist the newcomer to the plethora of far-left organisations, to relate the various Trotskyist groups to be discussed in the British context, it is relevant to present a brief historical survey of the major international divisions within the Trotskyist left since its inception forty years ago. It is also important for the reader to have some idea of the origins of the various Trotskyist Internationals, as most of the British organisations justify both their origins and present form in relation to one or another of the international Trotskyist tendencies.

The founding conference of the Fourth International was held 'somewhere in Switzerland', in September 1938, and its charter was Trotsky's The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, more usually known as the Transitional Programme (Trotsky 1975). As the full title of the work implies, Trotsky argued that capitalism was in its final crisis and that the objective conditions existed for proletarian revolution. The principle obstacle to revolution, so Trotsky argued, was the crisis-ridden leadership of the working class, particularly that of the Communist Parties, who were 'damming the revolutionary stream'.

The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. (Trotsky 1975:11)

The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty-bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony. (18)

The crisis of leadership provided the rationale for the launching of the Fourth International without any mass support. The role of the Fourth International was to resolve this crisis by providing a new leadership. Emphasis on the development of 'correct' leadership as a precondition of mass political activity has therefore been a feature of Trotskyist organisations from their very inception. The debate about whether the revolutionary cadre is strong enough to take the correct line into the heart of the working class and form The Revolutionary Party has been the sticking point in a number of splits.

The formation of the British Section of the Fourth International in 1938 brought together all of the main Trotskyist groupings except the Workers' International League. The new organisation was known as the Revolutionary Socialist League. Another six years and a world war were to pass before these groups merged to form a single British organisation, the Revolutionary Communist Party. However, this unity was to be short lived as fundamental disagreements broke out within the Fourth International

The protracted process of fission and fusion in the Trotskyist movement was prompted by the post-war recovery of capitalism and the upheavals in the international Communist movement, which exposed the inadequacies of the analysis of the Transitional Programme to many Trotskyists who saw an urgent need to re-evaluate both its political and organisational proposals. This inevitably led to a number of major divergencies in the Fourth International. These are described below and summarised in figure 12.

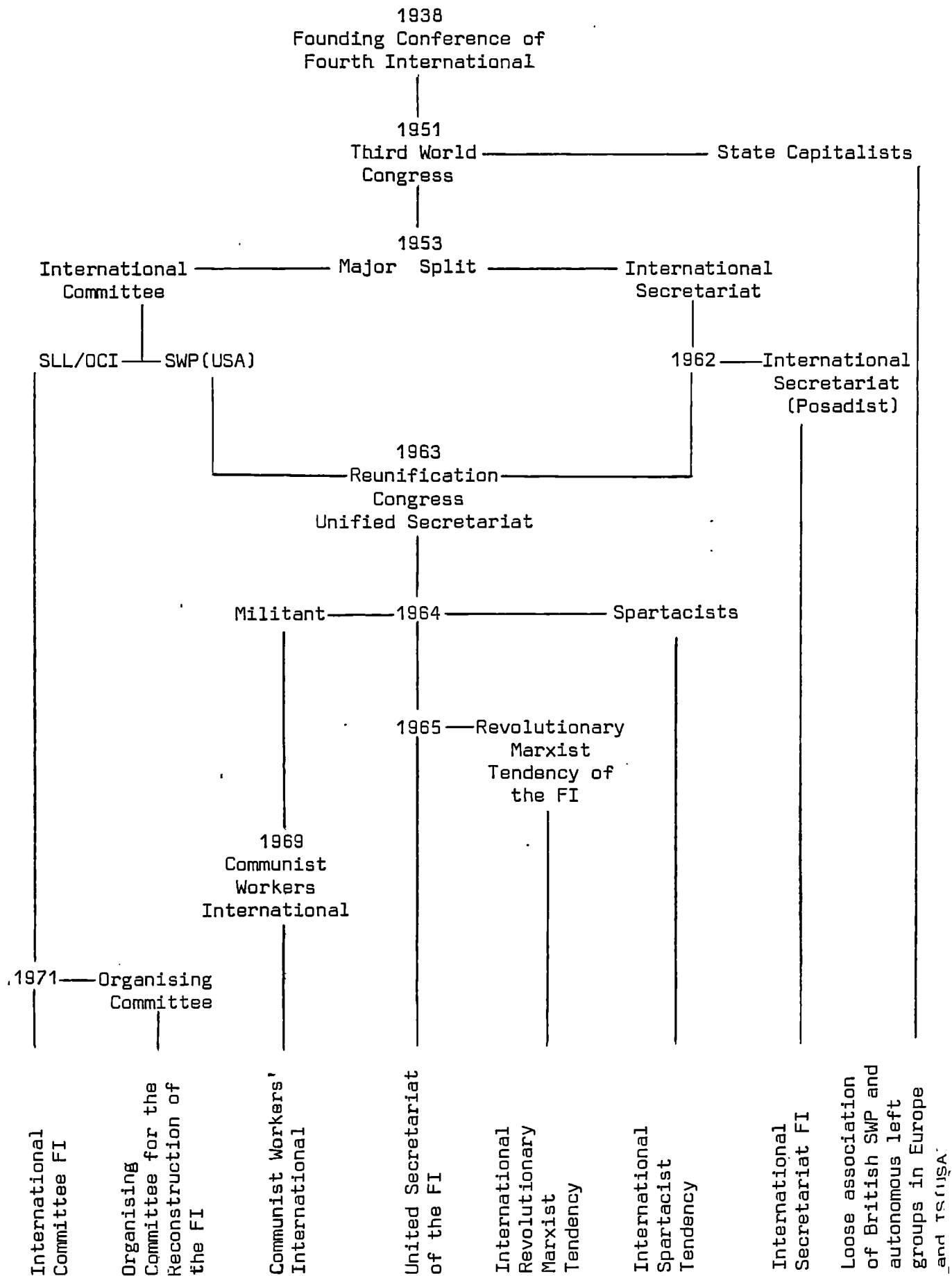
#### 1) State Capitalism.

Between 1948 and 1951, the Fourth International held that the Eastern European states were 'transitional economies'. At the Third World Congress in 1951, the Fourth International declared that these countries were 'deformed workers' states', neither socialist nor, in the absence of private appropriation of surplus value, could they be capitalist. The Soviet Union was declared to be a 'degenerated workers' state'. However, a large section of the Fourth International, including Trotsky's widow Natalia Sedova, did not accept this position. They held that a Stalinist counter-revolution had overthrown the initial advances gained by the October Revolution and that Eastern Europe remained capitalist, with the surplus value being appropriated by the state. The State Capitalist tendency gained added momentum from the sharpening of the cold war when it was the only section of the Marxist left that was able to totally repudiate the Eastern European regimes as having no connection with socialism.

The State Capitalist tendency developed in a number of ways, but its chief adherents in Britain, the Socialist Workers' Party (formerly the International Socialists) have remained close to orthodox Trotskyism. Although during his life Trotsky had not seen such views as a barrier to membership of the Fourth International, they have been unacceptable to all sections of the Fourth International since the adoption of the 'deformed workers' state' policy in 1951.

Figure 12.

The Genealogy of the Major Trotskyist Internationals.





## 2) New World Realities versus Orthodoxy.

The second split followed within two years of the first. Under the leadership of Michael Pablo, who was elected Secretary of the Fourth International at the 1951 World Congress, a 'war-revolution' theory was developed which argued that a third world war was imminent. As this left very little time for the Fourth International to develop a revolutionary party, Pablo argued that Trotskyists should enter the Communist Parties. This policy of 'liquidationism' was rejected by some sections as a total negation of the Transitional Programme, which had identified the Communist Parties as counter-revolutionary organisations. In 1952, the majority of the French Section was expelled from the Fourth International by Pablo, with the backing of the British Trotskyist leader Gerry Healy. In the following year, Healy himself withdrew his supporters, and along with the Socialist Workers' Party of America, the French *Partie Communiste Internationaliste* (later the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste*) formed the orthodox International Committee of the Fourth International in opposition to Pablo. Pablo's own supporters (including most of the European leadership) were grouped under the title of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. (Both Internationals have published collections of documents from this period under the titles Trotskyism Versus Revisionism and International Secretariat Documents respectively.)

The next ten years saw a number of internal disagreements within both Fourth Internationals. The International Secretariat saw the upsurge of anti-imperialist struggles of the period as a shift in the focus of world revolution to the third world. This led to even less independent Trotskyist activity in Europe than before. Whilst pursuing third world struggles, Pablo was jailed in Belgium for arms dealing on behalf of the Algerian FLN and for forging passports. He lost his position as secretary, and the 'war-revolution' theory was dropped.

In 1962, however, the Latin American Section of the International Secretariat broke away under the leadership of J.Posadas. Retaining the name of the International Secretariat, they continued to argue for the 'war-revolution' theory. The British Section of the International Secretariat (Posadist) is the tiny Revolutionary Workers' Party, which publishes the journal Red Flag in which all of the articles are signed 'J.Posadas'.

### 3) The United Secretariat.

A number of differences between the American Socialist Workers' Party and the International Secretariat were resolved. The SWP (USA) led most of the International Committee back into the fold of the International Secretariat, which took on the new title of Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International, later to become the United Secretariat. This move left Posadas with the title of the old International Secretariat, and left the Healy and OCI-Lambert rump with a few minority tendencies from other national sections of the Fourth International operating under the banner of the International Committee.

Opposition to the reunification of the International Secretariat and the SWP (USA) had existed openly within the latter organisation since the formation in 1961 of the Revolutionary Tendency, 'to stem the tide of revisionism' which was leading the party away from the orthodox International Committee. This internal tendency itself split acrimoniously in the following year. One group, led by Tim Wohlforth, was approved by the International Committee (which has recently subjected him to an amazingly vituperative campaign of personal vilification - WRP 1977:30-2,38-9). The other faction, whilst still suitably orthodox, did not receive the International Committee's blessing. This group was expelled from the Socialist Workers' Party (USA) and became the Spartacus League in 1964.

In the same year Wohlforth was expelled from the Socialist Workers' Party and formed the American section of the International Committee, which became known as the Workers' League. The political differences between the Workers' League and the Spartacists were not great, but, although the latter initially expressed their political sympathy for the International Committee, they could not accept that it was THE Fourth International, neither could they tolerate Healy's organisational methods. For this rejection of the International Committee, they were condemned by it as a "middle class, nationalistic, radical group... which rejected internationalism and based itself on subjective idealism". The Spartacus League has become the nucleus of the International Spartacist Tendency, which has affiliates in several countries and represents a new orthodoxy in opposition to the International Committee.

Also in 1964, the British Section of the United Secretariat, the Revolutionary Socialist League, was reduced to the same 'sympathising' status as the newly emergent International Marxist Group. The RSL regarded

this action as being tantamount to expulsion and left the United Secretariat, eventually to form their own tiny Communist Workers' International in 1969.

In 1965 the ex-secretary of the old International Secretariat, Michael Pablo, was expelled from the United Secretariat and formed the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International. He and his followers had become closely identified with Ben Bela's Algeria and had developed differences with the United Secretariat on issues such as China and Angola, on which Pablo pursued an uncharacteristically orthodox line. Since 1972 the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency has dropped its claim to the Fourth International title.

Throughout much of the period we will be concentrating on, 1968-78, the United Secretariat was divided into two major factions. These were the International Majority Tendency centered around the Mandel/Frank/Maitan leadership and most of the European sections, and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction under the leadership of the SWP (USA) which for much of the period had taken an orthodox turn. In some countries the United Secretariat recognised two national sections corresponding to this split, each pursuing quite different policies on issues such as the necessity of armed struggle, strategy in Western Europe, China, Vietnam, and the women's movement.

#### 4) The International Committee.

Healy's Socialist Labour League and the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (which had formed the core of the International Committee since the return of the SWP (USA) to the United Secretariat fold in 1963) split in 1971. This was ostensibly on the issue of the Banzer coup and the role of Bolivian Trotskyists in co-operating with the Communist Party and the Torres regime prior to the coup. However, certain long-term differences existed which had become more marked after the European upheavals of 1968. These differences were particularly on the nature of youth work (Cook 1975) and the question of whether the Fourth International, as such, existed [Healy's position] or whether it needed 'reconstructing' (the OCI position). The British Section under Healy's leadership retained the title of the International Committee. The OCI left to form the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Since 1974 the Organising Committee has been in discussion with the United Secretariat, particularly with the SWP (USA) which seems to recognise the Committee as a potential source of support for its own position within the United Secretariat.

In 1976 the International Committee rump launched a vitriolic attack on the SWP (USA) and on other members of the United Secretariat for allegedly collaborating in the murder of Trotsky by Stalin's GPU in 1940 (WRP 1976,1977). The reaction to the accusations was a stunning display of unity by the various international Trotskyist groupings, who paused in their own mutual condemnation for long enough to collectively denounce Healy and the International Committee at a major rally in London on January 14th 1977. This has left the Healyites as the most isolated and embittered of all of the Trotskyist groups.

\* \* \*

The tangles of smaller groups also debate with one another with the ultimate aim of building a new Fourth International. For example, certain neo-orthodox tendencies split from the United Secretariat at the Ninth World Congress in 1969 because they found its emphasis on students and on third world guerilla struggles unacceptable. However, these debates are too convoluted to discuss in this brief sketch.

This short account of the international Trotskyist movement over the last forty years should give the reader some idea of the historical framework within which the disputes between British Trotskyists have to be located. It illustrates the huge emphasis placed on international contacts by the often tiny national organisations of Trotskyists, which might number as few as thirty members and maintain little or no independent political activity. It also indicates the importance attached to the structure and title of Trotsky's Fourth International, which is disputed, debated, and claimed to be adhered to, even amongst those groups which have more or less abandoned the founding charter of the Transitional Programme.

If we are justified in regarding the tendency to frequent schism as a characteristic feature of the social relations at weak grid/strong group (Douglas 1978:20), the history of the Fourth International would certainly seem to indicate such a social environment. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on the importance of the international links maintained between the tiny national sections of the various Internationals can be reasonably interpreted as an indication that the members of these organisations live in a shrunken world which, I shall argue, is characteristic of the cosmology of weak grid/strong group.

## The Origins and Distinguishing Features of Sectarianism.

Brian Wilson, (1967:17), who is responsible for the bulk of recent work on sects, suggests five ways in which sects might originate:

- 1) By a charismatic leader gathering together a group of followers, eg. Mormons.
- 2) By the 'spontaneous' coming together of a group of seekers evolving a group experience, eg. Brethrenism.
- 3) As a consequence of non-denominational revivalism, eg. Pentecostalism.
- 4) Through the internal schism of an existing sect or denomination, eg. Methodists.
- 5) Through attempts to revitalise existing churches, eg. Lutheranism.

In this thesis we will be mainly concerned with two basic processes: fission and fusion, each of which may subsume one or more of the processes which Wilson describes. The attempt to revitalise a church, or a political party such as the Communist Party, is often a preliminary stage leading to internal schism. For example, the International Left Opposition originated in attempts to modify the course of the Comintern, while the Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity was formed in the hope of steering the CPGB towards the Chinese camp. Both, however, ended up as separate organisations. Similarly, the three processes of fusion which Wilson describes may be viewed as stages rather than as separate paths. The 'spontaneous' coming together of seekers does not seem to occur in isolation from a general climate of prophecy or signification of social change, such as the climate of 1968. Furthermore, we can always find some 'charismatic' figure, or group of figures, who have the ability and attraction to get things organised even if no formal criteria of leadership are recognised. This was certainly the case with the Brethren (Wilson 1967: ch9) and also with the autonomous Maoists.

Of course, even the separation of fission and fusion is not absolutely clear cut. It is often the case that a 'charismatic' leader is a refugee from another group with which he became discontented but from which he was unable to detach a faction. This occurrence is illustrated by the Workers' Institute which was founded by only two members of the CPE M-L. Fusion may also occur between existing groups as we have described with the RCLB M-L, but Wilson does not include this in his list of sources of sectarian organisations. However, the dynamics of fission and fusion are an important part of the present project and will be dealt with in some detail in subsequent chapters.

Wilson also points to two generative circumstances which he sees as stimulating individual or social insecurity, differentiated status anxiety, or cultural neglect, which in turn may account for sect emergence in any of the five ways he suggests, depending on the historical circumstances. These generative circumstances are:

- 1) Relative change in the economic position of a social group or other disturbance of social relations - such factors as urbanisation or industrialisation.
- 2) The failure of the social system to accommodate particular age, sex, and status groups.

Whilst it is not my business to provide a comprehensive analysis of the youth movements of the 'sixties, industrial consumerism and the assertiveness of youth were familiar themes of the day. With the conclusion of the test-ban treaty in 1963, the CND which had dominated radical protest throughout the 'fifties and early 'sixties declined. This left a vacuum for those young people whose consciousness of the possibilities for active popular struggle against established authority had developed through their participation in the anti-bomb movement.

Many of those radicalised by their experience in the CND helped to elect the 1964 Labour Government, for the far-left had failed to capitalise on the opportunities which the CND had provided to draw people into their own organisations. But this government was to prove a disappointment to the unilateralists who had supported Wilson in his struggle with George Brown for the Labour leadership. It was also to disappoint those who had enthusiastically cheered Wilson's attacks on the "grouse-moor conception of Tory leadership" during the election campaign. This was the government which mounted what the left perceived as attacks on the trades union movement, enacted racially discriminatory immigration legislation, failed to decisively act against Rhodesia's UDI, and, worst of all in radical eyes, proved to be an ardent supporter of the American role in the Vietnam War.

These specifically British factors fed into the widespread disillusion of European and American youth with the consumerism and bureaucratism of the post-war society created by their parents. Young people were particularly sensitive to the plight of the third world, and industrial consumerism was seen to be the basis of racism, imperialism, and war. There was an emotional internationalism even amongst some groups of non-politicised young people, which took the form of wearing non-European clothing, following Indian religion, and appreciating Indian and Afro-Caribbean forms in pop music.

The political protest of 1968 was one aspect of a wider phenomenon including interest in vegetarianism, cannabis, and 'progressive' music. But it was the protest of politicised British youth which led not to the pop festivals and hippy communes but to the organisations of the far-left. These were not tainted by the establishment politics of the Labour Party or the excesses of Stalinism in the USSR, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia. It was the impetus of this youth movement, largely created around the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which built the basis for the growth of the far-left and to a great extent determined its character for the next decade.

In addition to the generative circumstances, Wilson (1967:32) emphasises two types of external environment which might determine the response of the newly founded sect to these sorts of stimuli. These are:

- 1) Totalitarian or authoritarian persecution.
- 2) Democratic or pluralist society.

The former enforces clandestinity and hostility to the outside world, which occurred with the early Friends and also with many Pietist Sects, the Fifth Monarchy Men, etc. Alternatively, the sect might migrate to more tolerant environments as in the cases of the Rappites, Amish Mennonites, and Hutterites. Probably the most important result from the point of view of Wilson's sect and denomination distinction is that sects are unlikely to make the routinising transition to denomination whilst they are persecuted. Democratic or pluralist societies, according to Wilson, do not push sects into isolation, but they do provide an environment conducive to the emergence of the sorts of sects which proliferate in times of social movement, such as in the USA from 1800 until the present.

The distinction between totalitarian and democratic pluralist societies in this context is, however, a highly subjective one. I am dubious as to its explanatory value when faced with an organisation such as the Workers' Institute which regards every institution and organisation in our own democratic pluralist society as an agency of the 'British Fascist State', and maintains itself in defiant isolation from the labour movement accordingly. For a revolutionist movement which sees its role as struggling against oppression there can be no question of the sect migrating. It must stay and fight. The maintenance of the Workers' Institute's political purity by non-cooperation with other organisations is not seen by its members as withdrawal from the world but as defiance of it. In any case, society may be selective in the extension of its pluralism, the Workers' Institute has experienced quite extensive police harassment. In the case of other far-left groups, persecution seems to reduce their hostility towards one

another and increase the range of their co-operative activities. For example, on issues like the jailing of political militants or other cases in which a threat to one is seen as a threat to all. These varying reactions of far-leftists to persecution and tolerance must be accounted for in terms of our typology of social structure and cosmology, as must the question of routinisation.

Wilson claims that the sect's boundaries and organisation depend on two variables: its circumstances of origin and its response to the world (Wilson 1967:ch1,1975:ch1). Boundaries may be local as in the case of rural religious sects and some of the tiny Maoist organisations which sprang up in the late 'sixties. In the case of rural sects, the religious organisation may be subsumed in the community structure and may even maintain 'ethnic' boundaries, as with the Amish Mennonites. This sort of boundary maintenance is however not possible in the case of urban Maoist groups because, although they are constituted on the strength of a locality, they operate within a social structure which is dominated by outsiders. What does occur on a wide scale amongst far-left sectarians is a high level of co-residence. This may be informal, merely flat-sharing by members and sympathisers of the same organisation, or it may be a formal principle of the group's organisation, as in the case of the Communist Collective operated by the Workers' Institute in Brixton.

Where residential factors do not provide the structure for boundary maintenance, sects have to rely on their own organisational activity structure, as did the Presbyterians in the late eighteenth century, or on subscription to a well defined creed as did the Congregationalists of the same period, or on both as did the Plymouth Brethren. The emphasis on boundary maintenance is one of the most distinctive features of sect organisation, and central to this must be the maintenance of commitment. Sectarian religious commitment is mainly normative and is stronger than one would expect to find in limited-interest associations. Monetary sacrifice may be seen as an important manifestation of commitment. Calley (1965) points out the prevalence of tithing among West Indian Pentacostalists, whilst some of the political groups I am studying levy their subscriptions on the basis of income. Residents in the Workers' Institute's commune contribute their entire income to the communal chest, but contributions from outsiders are refused. The point is that these various means of maintaining the integrity of the group are not alternatives but are cumulative factors, which may or may not be present to varying degrees. It is these kinds of factors which will form the bases on which we decide



the relative group strength of the various far-left organisations which we wish to place on our typology.

Wilson (1967:33) tells us that the internal structure of the modern religious sect seems to be tending towards some sort of centralised structure, however minimal, in responding to the need for communication between the dispersed communities of the sect, the increased social mobility of its members, and the growing impact of legislation. But the process of centralisation among religious sects is not necessarily a denominational tendency and may in fact be designed specifically to stop such trends, as in the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses (Stroup 1945, Pike 1954). As we shall see, this can also be the case with political groups. The International Marxist Group maintains a strong centrally legitimated system of factions, whose relationship to one another, and to the central leadership, is designed to maintain fair competition for internal political differences. The important index of denomination, a strong grid condition, is the admission of special training for, and the growth of, professional public functionaries.

We can certainly expect to find in any political organisation that elites will arise at a local and a national level, and that there will be a strong tendency of responsibility and power towards central authorities which may become self-perpetuating. This can be variously interpreted as an iron law of oligarchy, a process of routinisation, or a move to stronger grid. The advantage of the latter perspective is that in applying it to the dynamics of political groups it is neither fatalistic, nor unidirectional, as is the interpretation of Michels in his famous study of European socialist parties and trades unions in the early years of this century (Michels 1959). Michels describes how the leadership of these organisations developed interests in maintaining their offices, since loss of position would necessitate a return to manual labour, with consequent loss of prestige, income, and psychological gratification of leadership. Through their control over information and by absorbing into the leadership, or purging, potential rivals, the leaders developed a customary right to the office (Michels 1959:45-9) which inevitably hardened into a firmly entrenched oligarchy.

Irrespective of how far advanced or retarded the oligarchical tendency of a sect, there are three functions of management which must be fulfilled within any formal organisation. These are the co-ordination of sub-structures, the resolution of conflicts, and the co-ordination of external requirements with organisational resources and needs. Wilson (1967:14) points out that

agencies must exist within the sect for the following ends:

- 1) to determine the place and form of meetings, and to convene and preside over them,
- 2) to make administrative decisions about property, finance, etc,
- 3) to maintain essential agreement on belief and practice,
- 4) to accept new members and socialise them,
- 5) to discipline transgressors and deviants,
- 6) to regulate relations with external authorities.

These agencies seem to be common to both religious and political organisations which require the maintenance of a high degree of behavioural and ideological conformity. The point for our analysis is the degree of specialisation of these roles, their distribution and accessibility within the organisation, and whether special training is given for them. These are the sorts of factors which will determine our grid assessments.

Related to the process of centralisation, the rise of elites, and the maintenance of the internal status system is the factor of schism, which is far more pronounced amongst sects than amongst parties or denominations. Wilson (1967:35) notes that sects with well defined hierarchical and centralised structures are less liable to split than those which resist strongly institutionalised forms of organisation. We hope to pin down the aspects of a social environment which are conducive to schism with the aid of grid/group analysis.

The status system of the outside world is usually rejected by sects. They prefer instead to measure status by internal references, although there are notable exceptions to this in the Humanist Societies (Budd 1967) and the so-called gnostic sects, like the Christian Scientists. Certainly, the groups of the far-left reject, to a varying extent, conventional, or bourgeois norms and virtues, such as respectability, wealth, style, conspicuous consumption, etc, in favour of more sterling revolutionary virtues like commitment, political education, experience, organisational ability, etc.

Douglas (1973:168) has commented that individuals who experience pressures towards strong grid without substantial relations with any group are likely to shift towards millenarianism as a way of resisting that pressure. Such individuals might include people whose occupations are furthest from the everyday pressures of industrial society such as actors, who abound in the WRP, and students, who have constituted the bulk of the SWP and IMG throughout the decade following 1968. These may all

be occupations in which individuals start out by experiencing few grid constraints in their daily life relative to industrial workers, but they also have difficulty in achieving status unless they are among the lucky few who make it to the top. It will be our contention that such individuals, if they are not simply going to allow themselves to be pushed up grid, are likely to be those who will graduate to strong group sects and thus locate themselves in the lower right hand corner of the diagram. This is the province of witchcraft beliefs, intrigue, and small sectarian groups wary of the external threat of sinister powers operated by other people.

The genuine case of millenarianism on the far-left is an extreme one illustrated, as we shall shortly see, by the Workers' Institute. However, the utopian strain is present throughout the far-left, embodied even among the most realistic, such as the IMG, in the notion that the door to socialist revolution remains locked principally because the key, correct leadership, has not yet arrived. The Trotskyist conception of the present epoch as that of worldwide proletarian revolution is also recognisably utopian. We require to differentiate these qualitatively different degrees of utopianism and to account for their relation to their social structure and dynamics within the framework of our grid/group typology. But in general, the far-left seem to correspond closely to our formal expectations of the weak grid/strong group environment, characterised by its factionalism and tendency to frequent schism.

#### Making Grid and Group Operational for Studies of the Far-Left.

The fundamental prerequisite of a comparative grid/group analysis of small left-wing groups is to determine a range of empirical indices which is sensitive enough to discriminate between the groups, without pretending to an accuracy which is greater than we are capable of. Firstly, we have to decide how much of the diagram we need. If we can justifiably expect all of the groups of the far-left to cluster in one or another corner of the diagram, with respect to British society at large, then we can dispense with the other quadrants, and concentrate on finding empirical indices which will discriminate between the groups in the cluster, and spread them across the diagram.

All of the groups just described subscribe to the Leninist norms of party organisation - Democratic Centralism. The main feature of this principle is that the whole membership of the organisation has the right and responsibility to participate in the formulation of policy, but once

the line has been decided, every member is duty bound to support that position outside of the group, even though he may reserve the right to oppose it internally. This organisational structure indicates the existence of a clear boundary around the group and a corresponding constraint upon the individual to discriminate between inside and outside.

The groups are all revolutionary organisations requiring a high level of commitment in terms of both time and money. They differ from the established political parties, including the Communist Party, in that they have little use for paper membership. Attendance at meetings is required, and meetings are held frequently. These are empirical indices of frequent transitive social interactions, indicative once again of strong group.

The scope of the organisations is wide. They seek revolutionary change at both the supra-individual and individual levels. Revolution is seen by members of these organisations, not merely in terms of changing the economic base, or the mode of government of a society, but also in terms of the politics of the personal. For example, racial and sexual discrimination may be treated as disciplinary offences in some groups and would certainly provoke some sort of outrage in all of them. In Aberle's terms (1966:315ff) the groups are both transformative and redemptive. All of these factors combined point to a high group score, almost certainly stronger than we would expect to find in British society as a whole.

Grid is more difficult to summarily assess at the outset. Most of the organisations have some sort of bureaucratic structure, but the extent of it and ease of access to positions in it vary markedly. However, in no case does access to bureaucratic office depend on ascribed characteristics such as race, sex, or age. Members of varied class origins are free to mingle together, and there is a strong ideology of equality in all of the groups. These factors point to a low level of classificatory insulations and a low level of control emanating from such distinctions.

Personal interaction outside of the organisation is more or less restricted by the wide scope of the group dimension. But inside the groups members are free in principle to make and oppose policy and to participate in the life of the organisation with the same rights and duties as any other member. The social relations are therefore basically symmetrical.

Internal competition varies, and to some extent is constrained by the requirements of solidarity emanating from the group boundary. However,

when channelled into political disagreement, competition can be a matter of political life and death, hence the many organisational splits characteristic of much of the far-left. This tendency towards a high rate of schism is predicted by grid/group theory in the strong group/weak grid quadrant of the diagram, hence Ostrander's mnemonic (forthcoming) Factionalism for this sort of environment. All of the indications point to a relatively weak grid condition among the far-left. Combined with our preliminary evaluation of group, we would seem to be justified in concentrating our attention on looking for empirical indices to discriminate social units at weak grid/strong group and adjusting our diagram accordingly by dispensing, at least provisionally, with the quadrants we are unlikely to use (figure 13).

Having decided to concentrate on this part of the typology, empirical indices can be selected for the analysis of small scale political groups. Each index has to be chosen with respect to both:

- 1) the observable behaviour of the groups, ie. we must know from experience that the relevant features are there to be examined and compared, and
- 2) the relative strength of the basic predicates of grid and group which define weak grid/strong group.

Each empirical index may refer to between one and four basic predicates, and this fact is taken into account in weighting the grid/group scores of each organisation.

In this application of the typology each of the dimensions is broken down into three sections rather than into two (figure 14). The employment of a 3x3 matrix gives rise to a nine celled diagram, which gives us a greater spread across the diagram than is possible with only four cells. We are thus not restricted to considering all possible social environments in terms of configurations characteristic of the four corners. Instead we can use the centre of the diagram without pretending to an increase in accuracy of scoring each dimension any greater than that of replacing weak/strong distinctions by weak/medium/strong discriminations. The three sections of each dimension are scored from 0 to 2, according to whether an index is judged to be weak, medium, or strong. Thus, each empirical index may be assigned a numerical score:

strong.....2,  
medium.....1,  
weak.....0.

The numerical score assigned to each index is then multiplied by

Figure 13.

Quadrant D (weak grid/strong group) is the section of the diagram used for the comparison of far-left sects.

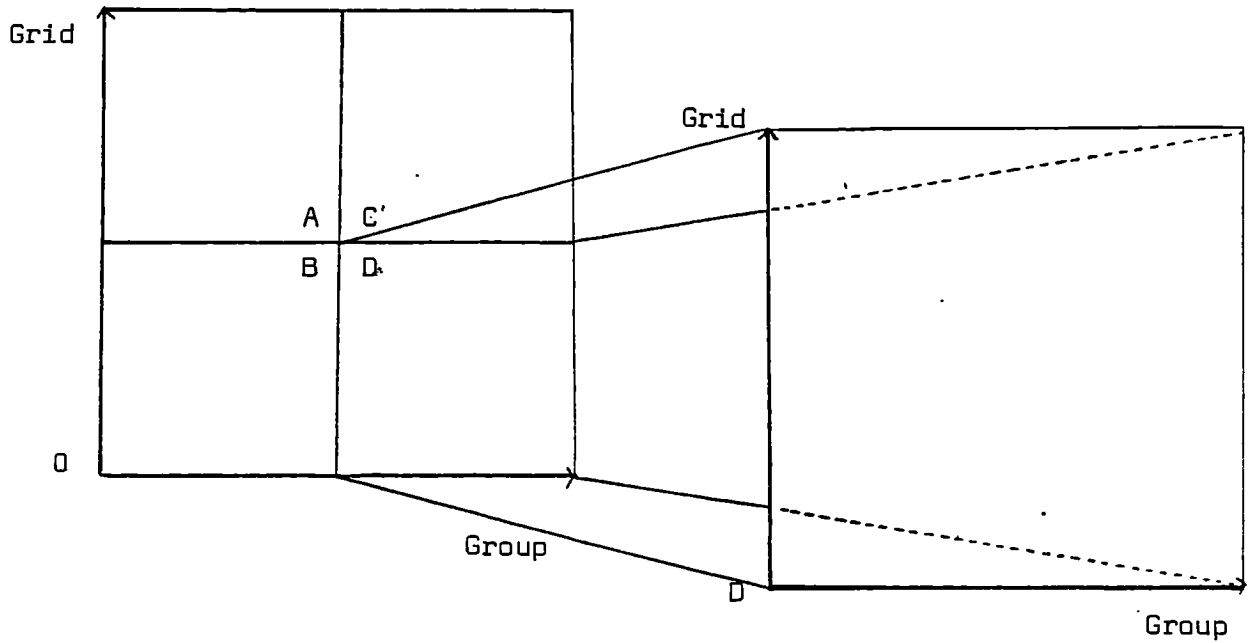
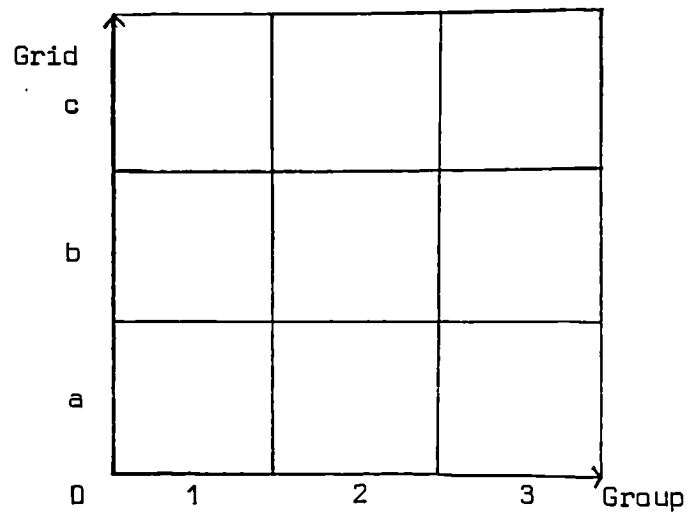


Figure 14.

Grid/group diagram based on a 3x3 matrix thrown across quadrant D.



a number between 1 and 4, depending on the number of basic predicates to which it refers. This gives us a weighted score for each index, to allow for the fact that the empirical indices are not all going to be of equal significance in determining the grid/group rating of a social environment. For example, one of the empirical indices chosen for rating grid is the extent to which policies are negotiated within an organisation. If negotiation is minimal, then the organisation is rated 2 for this index, if negotiation is extensive a score of 0 is given, and a score of 1 is awarded for a state of affairs in between. But because negotiation refers to all of the four basic predicates the score is multiplied by that number to give a weighted score of 0, 4, or 8. However, another index, that of whether an organisation has an explicit or implicit hierarchy, tells us nothing about the rate of turnover of officers and other aspects of competition within the structure. So the index of hierarchy only refers to three of the basic predicates. Whatever the score we assign to an organisation on the basis of this index is therefore multiplied by 3 to give a weighted score of 0, 3, or 6.

The weighted scores for each index are added together, and the total weighted score for each dimension is compared to the total possible score. A social environment is rated as weak on either dimension if it scores less than a third of the possible total; it is rated as medium if it scores between one and two thirds. It receives a strong rating if it scores over two thirds.

The nine celled diagram is illustrated in figure 14, showing the three grid strata labelled a, b, and c according to increasing strength, and the three group strata are likewise labelled 1, 2, and 3. It is henceforth possible to refer to any segment of the weak grid/strong group diagram according to the notation; major quadrant, grid score, group score, eg. Da1, Db2, etc.

Ten empirical indices of grid are used in the following chapters. These are as follows.

1) The negotiation of policy. If this is widespread throughout the organisation, it may be taken to indicate symmetrical transactions in which equals exchange viewpoints, an absence of insulation which might exclude certain categories of members from participating in debate, a high level of competition between rival viewpoints, and a high level of individual autonomy in deciding the relative merits of such viewpoints. Extensive negotiation may be taken as an index of

weak grid on all four counts. But where decisions are handed down by the leadership the transaction is not symmetrical. Certain categories of members are excluded from the decision making process and are thus subject to insulations. Here, competition between rival views is restricted to well established leaders and dominant factions, and the individual may have little autonomy in deciding which viewpoint to back. Hence restricted negotiation of policy may be taken to indicate strong grid constraints with respect to all four basic predicates.

2) The allocation of adjudicating rights in disputes. This is a special case of negotiation, and therefore also acts as an index of all four predicates. However, it is dealt with apart from negotiation of policy because of its importance in disciplinary procedures. Where the right to adjudicate in a dispute and to discipline wrongdoers is renegotiated on each occasion, we may assign a low score to an organisation. Where the motions of negotiation are gone through, but the outcome is always that the same individual or faction always wins, then we may give it a medium rating. But where negotiating rights are firmly entrenched in a recognised individual, faction, or committee, then the organisation must be rated as displaying strong grid characteristics.

3) The legitimation of decisions. In a social environment characterised by strong insulations, individuals will be highly classified and bound by rules of bearing and conduct. The individual is clearly experiencing control by others. In this context, decisions on matters of policy or of discipline may be legitimated by reference to established rules and norms. However, this sort of legitimation is not available for the decisions taken in the competitive environment of weak grid, where insulations are denied and the individual does not recognise classificatory controls over his behaviour. Here important decisions are legitimated not by rules, but by oracles and the competitive interpretation of founding charters and sacred texts. This index does not however tell us anything very reliable about symmetry of transactions, so we must only score it on the three bases to which we have related it, that is, insulation, competition, and control.

4) Sanctions. The kinds of sanctions which may be applied against dissenters and wrongdoers, in the quadrant we are looking at, are dependent upon the relative presence or absence of insulations. Where there is classificatory discrimination between members of a group, or even functional differentiation; a dissenter may be threatened with demotion or transfer to another task. However, where there are few such distinctions between individuals, the only effective sanctions for serious offenders are suspension from the organisation, or even



expulsion. However, these alternative courses of action against wrongdoers tell us nothing directly about who is applying the sanctions or about whether they are being applied against the loser of a well balanced contest, or the perennial underdog, so we weight this index only in respect of insulation.

5) Duplication of function. This is at its lowest where the division of labour is highly developed, along with concomitant social insulations and reduced competition and personal autonomy. Where insulations are few and everyone is free of controls over what particular tasks they should perform, there is competition for pleasant duties and a tendency for everyone to join in with the most pressing task of the moment irrespective of aptitude. Duplication of function is indicative of low scores for insulation, competition, and control by others, but it does not tell us anything very reliable about symmetry of transactions since it does not tell us about the quantity or quality of tasks performed by any individual. Hence this index receives a weighting of three.

6) Hierarchy. Where hierarchy is explicit we must expect classificatory insulations between its levels and an asymmetrical pattern of transactions. Whilst individuals may be allowed a degree of autonomy in organising their own role at the level they find themselves, they will always be experiencing control directly from above and less directly from their responsibilities to the lower levels. However, the existence of a hierarchy does not tell us whether its levels are filled through competition or ascribed status. So we must exclude the factor of competition from the weighting of this index so that scores here are multiplied by three.

7) Leadership. Ascribed leadership necessarily implies the existence of classificatory distinctions insulating the category of leaders from competition for leadership roles. Achieved leadership is the prize in an open contest from which no member may be barred in principle on the basis of ascribed characteristics. Hence these leadership variables may be used to indicate the state of competition and insulation in an organisation. However, they do not distinguish the extent to which transactions between leaders and followers are symmetrical because the status or wealth gap between leaders and followers does not depend on whether leadership is achieved or ascribed. Similarly, there is no consistent predictable relationship between ascribed or achieved leadership and the degree of autonomy which followers enjoy.

8) Turnover of offices. This is also an indication of competition and insulation, but whereas the question of ascription of leadership is primarily based on the presence or absence of classificatory insulation,

this index is mainly determined by the fierceness of competition for leadership roles. This is an important supplement to the index of leadership, since that measure does not tell us how much people do compete for achieved positions, only that they are able to do so. High turnover of offices may be indicative of weak grid on two counts. It does not tell us the degree of autonomy which office holders experience in relation to non-officers, nor does it tell us whether transactions in this environment are going to be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

9) Accountability. This is principally an index of autonomy and, to a slightly lesser extent, of competition. If the membership of an organisation has to answer to its leaders for its actions, then the leaders may enjoy a degree of autonomy denied to the followers who experience control. However, if the leaders are genuinely answerable to the membership, then the autonomy of the leadership is considerably reduced and that of the membership increases. Where the leadership is forced to continually court the approval of the membership, we may reasonably expect a higher level of competition between rival views attempting to achieve a dominant position. The fact that a leader is accountable does not tell us whether or not he had to fulfill classificatory requirements to obtain his post, but it probably indicates that his transactions with his followers are going to be more finely balanced than those of the unaccountable leader who can simply hand out orders. Hence we weight this index with respect to three of the basic predicates of grid.

10) Access to space. Control over who is allowed to go where is an efficient means of enforcing insulation and reducing the opportunities for competition. Examples of this include restrictions on who is allowed to enter buildings and offices, ease of access to equipment, such as duplicators and telephones, and rules forbidding members from different localities to meet together unofficially, which reduces the opportunities for opposition to crystallise into organised factions. Hence, a social environment in which access to space is strictly limited by rules would receive a high score for grid on the basis of three of its formal predicates, but access to space tells us nothing reliable about the balance of social transactions.

These empirical indices and the basic predicates of grid to which each refers are summarised in table 1. Nine empirical indices of group have been used. Like the indices of grid, they have been selected in order to reflect, as accurately as we dare, the differences between the organisations

Table 1.

The Basic Predicates and Empirical Indices of Grid.

The definition of grid,

Weak \_\_\_\_\_ Grid \_\_\_\_\_ Strong

consists of at least four basic predicates:

Symmetrical \_\_\_\_\_ A Transaction \_\_\_\_\_ Asymmetrical

Weak \_\_\_\_\_ B Insulation \_\_\_\_\_ Strong

Strong \_\_\_\_\_ C Competition \_\_\_\_\_ Weak

Autonomous \_\_\_\_\_ D Autonomy \_\_\_\_\_ Controlled.

These formal relations can be abstracted from the following empirical indices:

Extensive \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiation of policy \_\_\_\_\_ Restricted  
A/B/C/D

Negotiated \_\_\_\_\_ Adjudicating rights in disputes \_\_\_\_\_ Entrenched  
A/B/C/D

Oracles/texts \_\_\_\_\_ Legitimation of decisions \_\_\_\_\_ Rules/norms  
B/C/D

Suspension/ \_\_\_\_\_ Sanctions \_\_\_\_\_ Demotion/  
expulsion \_\_\_\_\_ B Transfer

Extensive \_\_\_\_\_ Duplication of function \_\_\_\_\_ Limited  
B/C/D

Implicit \_\_\_\_\_ Hierarchy \_\_\_\_\_ Explicit  
A/B/D

Achieved \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership \_\_\_\_\_ Ascribed  
B/C

Rapid \_\_\_\_\_ Turnover of officers \_\_\_\_\_ Slow  
B/C

Leaders to \_\_\_\_\_ Accountability \_\_\_\_\_ Members to  
members \_\_\_\_\_ A/C/D leaders

Unrestricted \_\_\_\_\_ Access to space \_\_\_\_\_ Restricted  
B/C/D

Each index is assigned a score from 0 to 2, which is weighted by the number of basic predicates to which the index relates. The total possible score is 56.

Weak grid (Da) scores ..... 0 - 18

Medium grid (Db) scores .....19 - 37

Strong grid (Dc) scores .....38 - 56

in question, since the general indications are that they are all strong group. The group indices, summarised in table 2, are the following.

1) Frequency of formal activities. These may be meetings, demonstrations, or educational which are officially convened by the group or are participated in by the group as a corporate body. Frequent transitive interactions are a feature of organisations which maintain a high level of such activities. However, members may also be active in other organisations with different concerns, so we cannot make any reliable judgements about boundary and scope from this index.

2) Informal contact between members. This is primarily an index of scope. Members of a political association who also take their leisure together widen the range of activities shared by their original network. They will also meet more frequently than those who only attend formal activities. However, we cannot judge how extensive this transitive network is in relation to members' total interactions. Hence, we cannot score transitivity on this index. Boundary also cannot be scored on this basis since members may belong to more than one kind of organisation

3) Co-residence. This is an extension of informal contact and can be used to score group on the basis of frequency and scope, since the latter includes domestic activity in the case of co-residence. However, it also reduces the opportunities for individuals to extend their personal networks beyond the group, so we can also weight this variable on the basis of transitivity, though not of boundary since the individual may retain the freedom to participate extensively in activities outside of the residence.

4) Financial commitment. The extent and nature of the financial support which an organisation expects from its members gives an indication of the strength of its boundary and of its scope. Payment of a formal subscription is a clear discrimination between members and non-members. An organisation which demands earnings-related contributions must have a stronger hold over its members than one which can only exact a fixed sum which must be affordable by all. Extensive expenditure on the organisation limits a member's resources for doing things outside of the group. Hence, heavy financial commitment is likely to mean that a wide range of activities will take place within the shared network of the group. However, we cannot base assumptions about frequency of interaction or transitivity of members' networks on this index.

5) Involvement in alliances. Groups which are hostile to one another, particularly those which are hostile to all possible rivals, have to maintain their boundaries. Alliances between organisations reduce the rigidity of their boundaries and open up hitherto transitive networks

within a single group to new contacts which might not be shared by all the members of the original group network. As it is likely that groups entering alliances will be those which share a similar range of activities, we cannot discriminate scope on this index. Also there is no reason to suppose that alliances necessarily alter the frequency of interaction between members of any one of the organisations involved.

6) Internal integration. This is an application of the considerations bearing on alliances to the internal structure of organisations. In the sense it is used here, the extent to which a group is said to be integrated depends on where it falls on a continuum between a federal and a monolithic structure. Care must be taken not to confuse this with a grid distinction. It is based on non-classificatory boundaries which may exist within an association. For example, an umbrella organisation may link local groupings, or a single organisation may contain sub-groups or factions which organise internally. Provided that membership of a faction is open to any member of the overall organisation who agrees with the aims of the sub-group, then we may use the existence of a federal structure to indicate a weak group score because the organisation may in many respects act like an alliance. The frequency of transitive interaction within the group as a whole is likely to diminish as members meet in their sub-groups, and the overall boundary will be less immediately constraining than in a fully integrated monolithic organisation.

7) Membership of different sorts of organisations. Where individuals belong to a diverse range of organisations, it is reasonable to suppose that the scope of any one of them is quite limited. If all of a person's major interests are satisfied by membership of a single group, then scope may be presumed to be wider. Membership of different sorts of group may also indicate the state of the boundary, since organisations may discourage membership of other types of groups in case it diverts resources from its own activities. However, this index cannot be used to obtain reliable information about the relative frequency or transitivity of interactions in the various groups.

8) Activity in established labour movement structures. This index is very specific to the political context of the present study. But comparable ones could be found for studies of other forms of sect—for example, the activity of a sect in the ecumenical movement or in interdenominational revivalism. Where an organisation participates in the work of trades unions and orientates itself to the Labour Party with a view to reforming or controlling their structures, the relations

Table 2.

The Basic Predicates and Empirical Indices of Group.

The definition of group,

Weak \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_ Strong

consists of at least four basic predicates:

Low \_\_\_\_\_ A Frequency \_\_\_\_\_ High

Intransitive \_\_\_\_\_ B Transitivity \_\_\_\_\_ Transitive

Weak \_\_\_\_\_ C Boundary \_\_\_\_\_ Strong

Narrow \_\_\_\_\_ D Scope \_\_\_\_\_ Wide

These formal relations can be abstracted from the following empirical indices:

Infrequent \_\_\_\_\_ Formal activities \_\_\_\_\_ Frequent

A/B

Limited \_\_\_\_\_ Informal contacts \_\_\_\_\_ Extensive

A/D

Uncommon \_\_\_\_\_ Co-residence \_\_\_\_\_ Common

A/B/D

Limited \_\_\_\_\_ Financial commitment \_\_\_\_\_ Extensive

C/D

Sympathetic \_\_\_\_\_ Attitude to alliances \_\_\_\_\_ Hostile

B/C

Federal \_\_\_\_\_ Internal integration \_\_\_\_\_ Monolithic

A/B/C

Common \_\_\_\_\_ Membership of different organisations \_\_\_\_\_ Uncommon

C/D

Reformative \_\_\_\_\_ Activity in established structures \_\_\_\_\_ Oppositional

B/C/D

Weak \_\_\_\_\_ Requirement to witness \_\_\_\_\_ Strong

C/D

Each index is assigned a score from 0 to 2, which is weighted by the number of basic predicates to which the index relates. The total possible score is 42.

Weak group (D1)..... 0 - 13

Medium group (D2)..... 14 - 28

Strong group (D3)..... 29 - 42

between group members and non-members will open their networks of interaction, and their boundaries will be more flexible. Organisations which oppose themselves to the existing structures of the labour movement and attempt to supplant them by their own, are extending the scope of their activities beyond that of those who try to reform or even subvert existing structures. They will also be more restricted by the boundary around their group. We cannot make any useful predictions about frequency on the basis of this index.

9) Requirement to witness. This is an index of boundary and scope which can be observed when members are outside the context of their organisation. The more often, and the wider the variety of contexts in which, a member publicly relates himself to his organisation in speech or action, the stronger the field effects of its boundary may be said to be. The wider the scope of his organisation, the more opportunities the member will have to introduce it into conversation. However, it is difficult to see how we could base any assumptions about frequency or transitivity on this index.

We are now equipped with an operational device for ascertaining the relative strength of grid and group in far-left organisations and placing them across a nine celled diagram accordingly. We can therefore turn to the tasks, outlined in the introduction, of investigating the possible usefulness of grid and group in understanding two characteristics of far-left organisations. These are their propensity to utopian and catastrophist visions of imminent socialist transformation of society and their tendency to repeated schism and regroupment.

## Chapter Five

### The Shrunken World of the Sectarian.

All men have stood for freedom...and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment... Freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he hath enemies... True freedom lies in the community in spirit and community in the earthly treasury, and this is Christ the true manchild spread abroad in the creation, restoring all things unto himself. (Gerrard Winstanley 1649)

Attempts at providing a general explanation of millenarianism have hitherto addressed themselves to the question: Why does millenarianism occur? The answers offered to this question almost invariably amount to relative deprivation theories which have many shortcomings. This chapter rests on the contention that the question why millenarianism occurs can only be answered by a specific historical account. Such an account may well include instances of relative deprivation, but that is not sufficient justification to raise this one aspect of the phenomenon to the level of a general explanation.

The argument in this chapter is that the interesting question at the level of general explanation must be: How is millenarianism possible? The answer offered exploits the prediction made by grid and group classification that each social environment must have its own distinctive cosmology. We argue that it is only possible to collectively maintain millenarian beliefs in a social environment in which it is possible to collectively foreshorten historical time and compress geographical space. (These are seen as logical conditions of millenarianism.) In terms of grid and group, these conditions can only exist within a strong group boundary and increase in likelihood as the grid weakens and provides fewer points of historical and spatial differentiation.

### Millenarianism and Utopianism

Although the term millenarianism originally designated belief in the biblical prophecy of the thousand year reign of Christ on Earth (Revelations 20), it has come to be indiscriminately applied to any ideology which envisages a collective Earthly salvation. Thus, orthodox Marxism-Leninism is sometimes described as millenarian because of its



declared aim of creating a classless society (Cohn 1957, Ling 1967).

This is casting the net too wide. If every optimistic political and religious viewpoint is designated as millenarian, then the term ceases to tell us very much about the movements it is applied to. I prefer to reserve the term millenarian to describe movements which organise their activity around the belief that the world will be turned upside down by the imminent intervention of an external agency, which will exalt the weak and humble the powerful.

In the sense that it is used in this essay, millenarianism is distinguished from other sorts of utopian prophecy, including the prophecy of the millenium as it is accepted by the orthodox Christian denominations. The point is that while Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, etc. may accept the prophecy as more or less significant, they do not expect its fulfillment at any particular date, let alone do they act on the belief that it is imminent.

Similarly, one would be hard pressed to find a Communist Party member today who will hazard to guess the date of the triumph of world socialism. Marxism like Christianity is an optimistic ideology, and like Christianity it contains millenarian movements, one of which - The Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought - will be examined in this essay. However, neither Marxism nor Christianity in their established forms would be considered to be millenarian by the standards of the present paper. I am clearly at odds with Cohn (1957: 309-11) on this point, for he equates twentieth century Nazism and Communism with medieval millenarianism.

There seem to be three basic predicates for the definition of millenarianism adopted here. They are respectively temporal, spatial and ethical in character:

- 1) The conviction that the present epoch is finite and known to be ending shortly.
- 2) The conviction that the new epoch will be established by the external intervention of some powerful agency.
- 3) The conviction that all men ought to be recognised as moral equals.

These three themes have consistently occurred in the history of

European millenarianism. Early Christians, like the Jehovah's Witnesses of the nineteenth century, looked for the imminent second coming of Christ. But in both cases the failure of the advent led to a reluctance to fix a specific date and eventually to its long term postponement. The Jehovah's Witnesses have variously specified 1847 and 1914 respectively as dates for the second advent. They no longer commit themselves to dates, although 1925 and 1975 have been unofficial favourites (Wilson 1970: 110-17).

In Britain, the belief in the imminence of the second advent of Christ became most widespread during the social upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century and affected all classes of society. Christopher Hill (1975: 97) reports the concern expressed by a Bristol Baptist in 1654 upon hearing that two Frenchmen had predicted the end of the world for 1656. John Tillinghast declared in 1654 that "This generation shall not pass until the millenium has arrived" (Generation Work quoted in Hill 1975: 97). Alas he died the following year and was not able to hear John Bunyan confirm in 1658 that, "the judgement day is at hand" (Works III quoted in Hill 1975: 97).

The theme of moral equality was at the forefront of the Diggers movement. Their leader, Gerrard Winstanley, was convinced that the old dispensation was, "running up like parchment in the fire", and preached that "the Earth is a common treasury to all". Norman Cohn (1957: 316) has described Winstanley's vision as a "primitivist millenium in which private property, class distinction, and human authority would have no place". The Diggers' preparations for the advent took the form of co-operative farming on common land at St. George's Hill in Surrey in the hope that their example would lead mankind back into a 'virgin state', ready for Christ's return. Alas, not all millenarians have confined themselves to such preparations by example. At various times elsewhere in Europe they have attempted to achieve a state of equality by the physical annihilation of the powerful, the wealthy, and any other usurpers of true spirituality (especially priests) who might oppose them. This was certainly the path followed by the sixteenth century Anabaptists of Munster under the leadership of John of Leyden (Cohn 1957:283ff)

The modern heirs to the millenarian tradition in Britain include the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought, a tiny political sect which predicted the liberation of the world from tyranny by the end of 1977.

In the United States, millenarianism reached its zenith in the nineteenth century. William Miller, who predicted the coming of Christ by March 1844, received widespread support until the postponed date of October 1844 (an adjustment to the Jewish calendar) failed to yield results (Wilson 1970: 97-9). Those who did not give up adventism in the face of this disappointment formed such sects as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, and Seventh Day Adventists.

Possibly the most dramatic instances of millenarianism in the anthropologists' catalogue are the Melanesian cargo cults. In these cases, all of the three basic themes of our definition are clearly present. Cargo movements are characterised by the abandonment of productive activity (and in many cases the destruction of the traditional means of production) in favour of the co-operative construction of an airstrip or jetty to receive the cargo which is expected to imminently arrive from the ancestors. To the participants in cargo movements, the arrival of such a cargo consisting of the commodities enjoyed by Europeans would place the black man on an equal moral basis with the white man, who presently exerts his moral superiority (in defiance of the fierce egalitarianism of the Melanesians) through his control over cargo (Burridge 1960).

All of the movements I have described in this introduction exhibit the temporal, spatial, and ethical features which I have identified as basic predicates of millenarianism. These features have been observed by most commentators. However, in formulating general explanations of millenarianism, they have concentrated on the ethical theme (in the form of relative deprivation theories) to the virtual exclusion of the temporal and spatial themes. This chapter is intended as a first step in restoring these themes to a central position in our understanding of millenarian phenomena.

In the context of this thesis, utopianism is distinguished from millenarianism by the relative weakness of the temporal and spatial themes. The epoch may be known to be finite, but dates are not fixed for its immediate end. And although the means of salvation may not be seen as coming from outside, there is still likely to be a strong spatial element identifying the interests of different parts of the world, as manifested in the internationalist emphasis of Trotskyism.

## Relative Deprivation Theories

In their most tangible form, relative deprivation theories have been concerned with cathartic responses to social tension arising out of the unequal distribution of material resources. Peter Worsley's study of cargo cults in The Trumpet Shall Sound (1957) is one of the best examples of this version of the theory.

Worsley points out the drastic impact of colonisation on Melanesian society, the consequent economic disruption, and the overthrow of traditional normative and political systems. He describes how the suppression of indigenous culture by missionaries of various denominations gave rise to a syncretist mythology based on Christian eschatology and the Melanesian tradition of the return of the ancestors. The picture emerges of cargo cults as a means of adapting to alienation under colonialism. Loss of tribal lands, fluctuating copra prices, and the consequent insecurity of the labour market, were all seen by the native population as aspects of an irrational economic system. Successive changes in governing colonial powers and different religious denominations, compounded the appalling conditions and dispossession of the indigenes, whilst the message of Christianity appeared inconsistent with the behaviour of the colonists.

According to Worsley, the upshot of all this is a conflicting desire for the end of foreign rule and for ownership of the white man's cargo, which is seen as rightfully belonging to the ancestors. Seen in this light, cargo cults serve a rational integrative function by overcoming contradictory aspirations through the destruction of traditional culture and by pulling people into a nationalist phase in which the catharsis of millenarian activity (in the form of the replacing of the traditional productive process of individual gardeners by collective preparation for the arrival of cargo) compensates for the natives' actual inability to control their world.

Worsley's account is detailed and coherent, its major fault is that there is nothing in it to explain why relative deprivation in this case, or in general, should produce a specifically millenarian response rather than any other form of revolutionary activity, or even a non-revolutionary response such as a nativist cult, like the Navaho Peyote Religion which David Aberle (1966) attributes to relative deprivation.

There have been attempts to come to grips with the problem of theoretical analysis of millenarianism through an expanded notion of relative deprivation. Aberle (1962) has suggested expanding the concept to cover any negative discrepancy between legitimate expectation and reality, whilst Burridge says in New Heaven: New Earth (1971) that by enlarging the traditional definition of religion to include all concerns with human redemption and by, in effect, expanding the concept of relative deprivation from concerns with mere material disadvantage to cover any denial, or supposed denial of access to the means of salvation, we have the basis of a general explanation of millenarian activity.

These examples raise the question of whether we are stretching the explanatory concepts (religion and relative deprivation) beyond the point where they are really meaningful. For example, the tiny Brixton based political sect, The Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought, would have to be included as a religious organisation according to Burridge's wider definition. Although we might speak of political convictions being held with religious fervour, I doubt if many of us would be happy to push this usage far beyond the metaphorical. Politics and religion may both be concerned with human redemption, but as sociological categories they must be allowed to refer to different areas of activity, though they be polythetically defined. In any case, I hope to show by the example of the Workers' Institute that millenarianism need not be considered as a primarily religious phenomenon, but may occur in a wholly secular context.

However, the real point is that the net of relative deprivation is being cast so wide as to render it logically vacuous as a general explanation of millenarianism. The scope of its many definitions is such that it is hardly possible to conceive of a society which does not experience it according to one or another of these definitions. Relative deprivation does not stand the test of the negative case where it exists without producing millenarian activity. In this case, relative deprivation may produce a variety of non-millenarian responses such as the revitalisation movements discussed by Wallace (1956), those movements which Linton (1924) described as nativist or ecstatic cults such as the Zar cults of the northern Sudan which Lewis (1971) ascribes to the exclusion of women from mainstream Islam. On the other hand, relative deprivation may produce no coherent movement at all, whilst some forms of utopian activity may appeal to members of a society who cannot be usefully or

sympathetically described as relatively deprived in any distinct sense. One such was Thomas Muntzer, an egalitarian millenialist of the sixteenth century who "appears neither as a victim nor as an enemy of social injustice but rather as an 'eternal student', extraordinarily learned and intensely intellectual " (Cohn 1957:251).

Relative deprivation theories attempt to trace a direct route from the social experience of deprivation to the construction of a millenarian world view. But the route is too direct to be theoretically informative. The theory accounts for millenarianism in terms of compensation for lack of political or economic justice, but it does not explain why any particular response to relative deprivation should be specifically millenarian. The most that can be said is that relative deprivation is frequently a factor in the historical accounts of a variety of cults of revolt or withdrawal. But this tells us nothing specifically about millenarianism because the role of relative deprivation cannot be understood independently of a different sort of question: What kind of social environment enables people to maintain millenarian beliefs? Or more specifically: What are the social conditions which give rise to the following basic temporal and spatial predicates of a millenarian world view?

- 1) The conviction that the present epoch is finite and known to be ending shortly.
- 2) The conviction that the new epoch will be established by the external intervention of some powerful agency.

It is only in this context that we can examine what role relative deprivation might play in creating the sort of environment which supports millenarian beliefs. If we are to avoid reducing the concrete histories of movements to special pleas for relative deprivation theory, then we are required to locate the social environment characteristic of millenialists in a general typology of social relations and corresponding structures of world outlook.

The approach which I am proposing here would achieve what Kaminsky (1962) sought in what he called "an analytical approach to the problem of explaining millenarianism". That is, one that takes the evidence of the movement itself as grounds for inference about the relationship of the movement to society. Kaminsky has suggested relating the movement to the society in which it has its being, by constructing a typology of alienation and withdrawal. Unfortunately, Kaminsky himself was unable

to make this approach workable because of his concept of what such a typology would be. For example, he offers as one type, "...the man so neurotic that he cannot find adequate pleasure in the ordinary sources of delight. Another might be a man belonging to a persecuted race or religion." In other words, Kaminsky's concept of a typology is an essentialist one, and the result is that his explanations are simply circular.

...it must be conceded that analysis of movements cannot by itself tell us why particular movements erupt into being ... except in circular terms: the movement includes or presupposes X; therefore when we find a movement we can be sure of the presence of X. (Kaminsky 1962: 209)

A further criticism of Kaminsky's view of a social typology is that he constructs his categories in terms of individual psychology rather than in terms of social structure. What we require is an analytic typology which relates the ideological and social structural aspects of millenarian groups to the society in which they have their being, without forcing us into mere circularity. Grid and group offers us just such a typology. The Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought offers us a test case.

The reader will recall that grid/group analysis claims that individuals and social units located in different parts of this typology of social experience will develop different cosmologies (types of ideology), because the premises involved in defining the social environment in terms of grid and group place certain distinctive constraints on the structure of the beliefs which can be used to legitimate actions taken within it. Thus the typology reflects the logical possibilities of different structures of thought and behaviour characteristic of a social system according to the relative strengths of its grid and group. Our first task is to identify which of these logical possibilities most nearly represents the type of social environment and corresponding cosmology characteristic of millenarian movements. Fortunately, the three basic predicates of our definition of millenarianism provide a strong lead.

Theme number three is the egalitarian ethical imperative which is translated into action within the boundaries of the group by, for example, the abolition of money in Munster by Jan Matthys (Cohn 1957: 28), the renunciation of private property by the Diggers and Levellers (Hill 1967: Ch 4), and the destruction of traditional capital in cargo cults (Wilson

1975: 199-206). This theme therefore points to a weak grid condition.

The second theme is the spatial theme of external intervention. This points to an experience of clear distinctions between inside and outside, a characteristic of strong group. The first theme is the imminent end of the present epoch.

The short future envisaged by the temporal theme of an imminently ending finite epoch, reinforces the second and third themes, for as Douglas (1978: 29) points out, the experience of the past at weak grid/strong group is relatively undifferentiated. "Correspondingly the perception of the future is also less discriminated. This means that the sudden arrival of the millenium is more credible here..."

It should be clear from our definition of millenarianism, that such movements exhibit at least some of both the social structural and cosmological characteristics of a weak grid/strong group condition. So let us look more closely at the constraints which the social relations of such an environment will place on the cosmology of individuals located within it, and then see how our chosen example matches up.

At weak grid/strong group, the social experience of the individual is constrained first and foremost by the external boundary maintained by the group against outsiders. Individual behaviour will be subject to controls exercised in the name of the whole group. The extreme case of strong group would be a monastic type of community in which the total life support of individuals could be derived from the group. There will be few internal divisions and an absence of specialised roles, which will inevitably lead to difficulties in determining who should adjudicate in disputes. Adjudicating roles will therefore remain implicit. The only sanctions available to the group will be expulsion, and when major disagreements arise they will result in fission. Hence the short life expectancy of groups located here. However, as a rule disagreement will be driven underground and, if the group is large enough, covert factions might develop. There will be few constraints from a publicly received system of classification of the sort present at strong grid. Buffered by the strong group boundary, a social unit located at weak grid/strong group will be able to maintain its own order of the universe independently of any contradiction between its views and the received views of the outside world.



## The Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought

So far we have dealt only with the formal requirements for a social unit to be located at weak grid/strong group, and the constraints which the social environment can be expected to exert upon its cosmology. It behoves us to look in some detail at a far-left organisation to see if it fulfills our expectations. The clearest case of far-left millenarianism which I have encountered is that of the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought. This is a tiny Maoist sect with about 25 members, located in the Brixton area of south-west London. In 1977, they confidently predicted that the world would be liberated from capitalist oppression by the Chinese People's Liberation Army before the end of the year.

The Institute was founded in 1974 by a minute faction led out of the tiny Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) by a Malaysian called Balakrishnan. The breakaway group claimed that the CPE (M-L) leadership had renounced the leadership of the 'great glorious, and correct Communist Party of China', and had joined the service of the 'International Fascist Bourgeoisie'. The CPE (M-L) itself had only been formed in 1972 out of the English Communist Movement (M-L), which was itself the successor to the Internationalists grouping of the late nineteen sixties.

The central core of the Workers' Institute is a 'communist collective', numbering about thirteen people, who live at the Mao Xedong Memorial Centre in Brixton. Those who do not live in the Centre live in co-resident groups in the vicinity and meet with the residents every day at the Centre, which is the focus for the activity of the whole group. Non-residents are expected to contribute their earnings, surplus to subsistence requirements, to the work of the organisation. Some members of the collective also have jobs outside of the group and give all their earnings to support the Centre and those members of the Institute who devote themselves to full time political activity. The group is fiercely self-supporting and refuses any contributions to its funds from outsiders. These factors indicate very high scores of 2 for co-residence, financial commitment, and informal contacts.

The frequency of formal activities is also very high, with daily meetings, leafletings, and duties such as looking after the bookshop in the Centre. All of these activities are oriented towards the main political task of the group, which is seen as "building a stable revo-

Table 3.

Group Score Sheet for the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism  
Mao Xedong Thought.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Formal Activities	2	2	4
2) Informal Contacts	2	2	4
3) Co-Residence	3	2	6
4) Financial Commitment	2	2	4
5) Involvement in Alliances	2	2	4
6) Internal Integration	3	2	6
7) Membership of different sorts of organisations	2	2	4
8) Activity in established Labour Movement	3	2	6
9) Requirement to Witness	2	2	4
<u>Total weighted score for group.....</u>			<u>42</u>
Total possible score for group.....			42
Weak group (D1) scores.....			0 - 13
Medium group (D2) scores.....			14 - 28
Strong group (D3) scores.....			29 - 42

lutionary base in and around Brixton". This part of London was chosen for the Institute's location, "because it is the worst place in the world".

Political co-operation with other groups is rejected. The Institute is extraordinarily hostile to other left-wing organisations, most of which they see as agents provocateurs for the state. Even the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (M-L) which receives a certain amount of sympathetic treatment in the official Peking Review, is eschewed by the Institute for "not upholding the line of the Communist Party of China". Similarly, work in the trades unions is rejected by the Institute because all established Labour movement structures are simply "organs of Fascism". This rejection of similar interest associations is extended to all sorts of organisations of a non-political nature, whose activities are regarded by Institute members as frivolous diversions from revolutionary struggle. Thus on the basis of alliances, membership of different sorts of organisations, activity in established structures, the Institute must score maximum points for group.

The Workers' Institute claims an absolute monopoly of truth as the only correct upholder of the line of the Communist Party of China in the Imperialist Heartlands. The members are required to witness to their beliefs at all times. They talk of little else and are rarely to be seen without their prominent Mao badges. Although the Institute appears to have an irregular periphery of 'supporters' who turn up for occasional meetings and 'revolutionary socials', they are not subject to the strict discipline of the members, and they do not regularly attend the Centre's prized Political Evening School. However, the members themselves are highly integrated, even allowing for the differences in residential patterns. There are no branches or sub-groups, and factions are not permitted in any shape or form.

The Workers' Institute appears to conform to all of our criteria of very strong group, with its periphery of supporters acting as part of the buffer between the group proper and the outside world. It emerges as a paradigm case of extreme, strong group, scoring 2 on each empirical index (table 3). Therefore it may be firmly located in group band D3.

In respect of grid factors, two things strike the visitor to the Centre. Firstly, all aspects of the group's analysis of world affairs are widely discussed by the entire membership, both in formal meetings

such as the Political Evening School and in conversation. Secondly, the Centre is as far as possible designed on an open plan, with easy access to all facilities. These initial indications of a weak grid state are borne out by closer examination.

Negotiation of policy, and of the group's collective wisdom, is a continuous process of accommodation. There is thus a lack of overt disagreement between members which would require someone to adopt an adjudicating role. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Political Evening School where 'discussion' is an extensive but stilted procedure in which each member in turn will reiterate an aspect of the collective wisdom of the group, with strong reference to the classic texts of Mao and the latest pronouncements of the Communist Party of China. There is no formal adjudication of the contributions. The lecturer taking charge of the meeting makes no comment on the discussion but nods dispassionately at various points in each contribution. At the end, he makes no attempt to summate the contributions or expose any possible controversy which might force him to adopt an adjudicating role. Disagreement is not merely driven underground but actually goes unrecognised in the interests of group solidarity and an extreme ideology of equality.

Members do shift their own positions to accommodate alternative perspectives but without necessarily abandoning their own. This often leads to logically contradictory views being held simultaneously. For example, I was told by one member that the Chinese had nothing to fear from nuclear reprisals by the United States or the Soviet Union, against a major onslaught by the People's Liberation Army. This is because of Chinese secret electronic weaponry which will prevent enemy missiles from taking off. Yet in the same conversation, my informant said of the Chinese nuclear test in September 1977 that China needed to develop nuclear weapons only for self-defence and would never be the first to use them. I suggested that this was inconsistent with the possession of electronic weaponry which would render other powers' nuclear capacity useless but on this, as on other occasions, any attempt by an outsider to expose possible inconsistencies met with total resistance. The outsider simply does not understand because of his failure to 'think dialectically'.

The Workers' Institute scores 0 on the criteria of negotiation, which is extensive, and for legitimation of viewpoints, which is invariably through reference to the oracles of Mao's writings and the official statements of the Communist Party of China. Although adjudication also

seems to rate 0 on the basis of the foregoing, there are further factors which must be taken into consideration. Balakrishnan is the titular secretary of the organisation, and he is formally recognised as leader, although his style of leadership is closer to that of a big man than a chief. On the rare occasions when a dispute does arise and require adjudication, he does not openly assume an automatic right to this function. He goes through the motions of negotiating the right to make the final decision, on the basis of his superior knowledge of the oracles. Needless to say, he always succeeds in this, and we might therefore be tempted to say that adjudicating rights are entrenched, if implicit. Given the implicit nature of possession of these rights, and the general lack of occasion for formal adjudication, it seems reasonable to award the Workers' Institute a medium rating of 1 on this index.

When disciplinary action is taken against any member of the Institute, the sanction is almost invariably expulsion. Balakrishnan has spent several short periods in prison on remand and on minor theft charges. Upon his release from one such period, he initiated expulsions against three of the members who had provided the leadership during his absence from the Centre. These included Eakins Brome who had been one of the original splinter group from the CPE M-L. It seems reasonable to regard these expulsions as measures designed by Balakrishnan to re-establish his hold over the organisation by using the only available effective sanction against his opponents. As we shall shortly see, the Institute has no formal hierarchy in which they could have been downgraded and little division of labour which would have enabled Balakrishnan to transfer their specific responsibilities as a sanction. Therefore, the Institute scores 0 on the criterion of sanctions.

We have suggested that duplication of function is extensive in the Workers' Institute. Everybody does everything, helping to prepare bulletins, staffing the bookshop, leafleting and preparing for formal meetings. The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain offers a description of this aspect of the Workers' Institute in an account of the tiny local Maoist groups which preceded its own formation:

Ultra-democracy or anarchism are also common in the internal life of these circles. A single leader comes to dominate instead of the leadership being formally elected and systematically strengthened through criticism and self-criticism. These local circles often engage in intense local activity, but usually without concentrating it and guiding it by developing policies. Because there are no policies or disciplined organi-

sation, local work cannot be co-ordinated in one area with another. There is little specialisation of work, but as Lenin said in What Is To Be Done? we find 'the primitive democracy of primitive circle in which everybody does everything'. (RCLB M-L 1977:2)

There is thus no hierarchy in the Workers' Institute. This is reflected in the fact that even Balakrishnan does not occupy separate office facilities from the rest of the group. There are no visible controls over the allocation of space within the Centre which reflect either a division of labour or status differentiation. Hence, the Institute scores 0 on the bases of access to space, hierarchy, and duplication of function.

However, the few offices which do exist, such as secretary and chairman, seem to be fairly stable. Balakrishnan has retained office since the group was formed. His leadership is de facto ascribed, although members deny this saying that he is simply the best man for the job and if someone better came along Balakrishnan would step down. However, given that the group is yet young, I am reluctant to over-emphasise these indices in the case of the Workers' Institute, and therefore score 1 for both ascription of offices and turnover of officers.

Finally, on the question of accountability, the necessity for constant negotiation and the primitive organisational structure of the organisation would seem to leave everyone, including Balakrishnan, accountable to the group as a whole. But, the implicit entrenchment of Balakrishnan's leadership and his superior ability to manipulate the oracles gives him a clear edge over anyone else in the group. Hence the Workers' Institute scores 1 on this index also.

We have awarded the Institute a medium score of 1 on four out of ten indices, which when weighted gives a final grid score of 11 out of a possible 56 (table 4). This locates the Institute in the weakest grid band - Da. The final grid/group position of the Workers' Institute is therefore Da3, which enables us to see it as a paradigm case of very weak grid and exceptionally strong group. We have noted that the characteristic absence of explicit adjudicating roles may lead to the formation of covert factions and frequent fission. The Institute does not seem to be large enough for this to have happened yet, although there have been expulsions. But, the fact that the Institute is the product of a series of splits over the last decade seems to confirm our view of its

Table 4.

Grid Score Sheet for the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism  
on Xedong Thought.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
) Negotiation of Policy	4	0	0
) Adjudicating Rights	4	1	4
) Legitimation of Decisions	3	0	0
) Sanctions	1	0	0
) Duplication of Function	3	0	0
) Hierarchy	3	0	0
) Leadership	2	1	2
) Turnover of Officers	2	1	2
) Accountability	3	1	3
) Access to Space	3	0	0

Total weighted score for grid.....11

Total possible score for grid.....56

Weak grid (Da) scores..... 0 - 18

Medium grid (Db) scores.....19 - 37

Strong grid (Dc) scores.....38 - 56

grid/group position.

### Time and Space

The object of this chapter is to establish that perceptions of time and space have a central role to play in millenarian movements. The next step must be to see how the temporal and spatial predicates of millenarianism may be generated by this environment in contrast with time and space perception over the typology as a whole.

Western European thought has traditionally regarded time as an ontological continuum. The first departure from this view in modern times was Kant's (1959). He postulated that our perceptions of time are functions of innate structures of thought which order events according to sequence, duration and spatial location. Kant's view challenged the Newtonian assumption that time existed apart from the ordering of events but is an absolute which flows equably without regard to anything external (Newton 1962). Although Leibniz had argued, against Newton, that time is formed by events and relations among them, constituting the universal order of succession, Kant went further. He said that time only existed in virtue of our experience of the succession of events with regard to duration in space. His view also established that time and space are inextricably related as the primary ordering concepts of human existence.

The grid and group typology suggests that time and space should be considered as socially variable aspects of the cosmology, subject to the same structural constraints from the social environment as other aspects of an individual's world view (Douglas 1978: 25-30). Here I wish to argue that time and space are not merely aspects of the cosmology, but as primary ordering concepts, they may exert their own constraints on the other aspects of the cosmology in turn, thus reinforcing it. For example, time and space may influence ideas about ornamental gardening but gardening (except where it is a means of subsistence) is unlikely to dominate the formation of temporal and spatial concepts in the same way.

### Time 1

In approaching the social mediation of time, anthropologists have cut different slices into the topic. For example; Evans-Pritchard in his celebrated study of the Nuer distinguished between ecological time



and structural time (1940 ch.III); Levi-Strauss has been more interested in what he calls reversible and irreversible time (1966 ch.8); whilst Leach has given us a whole range of time categories to play with, including ritual time, abnormal time and sacred time (1961 ch.6).

The central issue affecting all of these distinctions is the relative strength of social and natural constraints upon time perception. For example, Evans-Pritchard's category of ecological time is determined by seasonal variations etc, whilst structural time is determined purely by social activities.

This distinction is echoed by Maurice Bloch (1977), who reminds us that anthropologists should not lose sight of the fact that there are natural as well as social constraints on human concepts. Bloch claims that societies have two cognitive systems, and therefore two ways of structuring time. One of these is based on natural constraints, and is concerned with the organisation of production, etc, whilst the other is a socially determined 'ritual' time.

I want to make a different sort of distinction between two types of time - historical time and operational time - both of which are subject to both natural and social constraints, forming a single cognitive system.

Historical time is concerned with the ordering of events or periods in the life of an individual or a society, which are of contemporary significance. Historical time is non-repetitive, marked by epochs, and is learned or remembered. An example of this learned historical dimension is the ordering of genealogies among the Nuer, where the lineages are carefully remembered for as far back as they affect the cattle rights of the living, and then may be tagged onto the end of the local legendary ancestral lineage.

Operational time is repetitive, marked by regular intervals concerned with the job in hand and/or repeated operations, and it is experienced rather than learned about. An example of the Nuer use of operational ordering concepts is the phrase, "I shall return at the milking".

Both of these categories overlap with both of Evans-Pritchard's, but unlike his structural and ecological time, both historical and

operational time are socially structured and both link their respective concerns with the appropriate cycles of ecological events which impose natural constraints upon the social structuring of time. Rather than enforcing a dichotomy between knowledge derived from nature and knowledge derived from social life, the distinction between historical and operational time emphasises the social mediation of the categories which we use to organise our knowledge of the natural world and firmly establishes both sorts of time as subject to grid/group constraints.

There is, however, an important distinction between operational time and historical time which clearly emerges from our two Nuer examples. The ecological constraints on historical time are weaker in relation to the social constraints than is the case with operational time. Consequently we may reasonably expect greater variation in the patterns of historical time around the grid/group typology than we may expect to find in patterns of operational time. Epochs of historical time may be of different length in terms of ecological cycles. Certainly, important periods will seem to have been longer than insignificant ones which may be compressed or even missed out altogether. Such was the fate of the generations of Nuer which must have passed between the clan founders and the founder of the minimal lineages (Evans-Pritchard 1940 ch.V).

On the other hand, operational time is a resource in the tasks and affairs of living men. Sleeping, milking, sowing and reaping are ordered by the constancy of factors such as the rotation of the earth, seasonal variation, etc. The social significance of these activities is not likely to vary so greatly from day-to-day as to introduce apparent differences in the duration of successive days on anything like the spectacular scale we can observe between successive epochs of historical time. There may be minor differences, for example if a particular task is difficult or boring, but generally speaking the ecological constraints on operational time will tend to outweigh the social constraints. Operational time is unlikely to be collapsed or extended in the same way as historical time. However, we shall shortly see that the way in which a society divides up its operational time, for example whether it is a collective or an individual resource, will have its own reverberations on other parts of the cosmology.

## Time II

We must now turn to the question of how lack of internal differentiation within a strong group environment constrains the use and perception of operational and historical time, in such a way as to support the basic temporal and spatial predicates of millenarianism.

In this case operational time is not a resource in short supply. The boundaries around the group, which constrain the social experience of individuals within it, will set the limits of its uses, whilst the lack of classificatory insulations within the group means that time should not be compartmentalised. Operational time in such an environment should therefore be a flexible community resource, with no rules about when it is appropriate to promote group concerns or witness to beliefs. There should be no formal separation of work and play, entertainment and politics, business or religion, such as we would expect to find in strong grid environments, where business personnel, friends, political associates, etc. would all be classified into separate compartments, each having a different call on the operational time resources of the individual.

This prognosis from the formal definition of the weak grid/strong group environment seems to be fully borne out by the Workers' Institute, for whom operational time is entirely a community resource. Time spent outside the group working for money is time spent working for the community, since all of the income of the working residents of the Mao Xedong Memorial Centre is channelled into its funds. The Institute's political activity is community activity involving all of its members. The Workers' Institute are scathing of "so-called revolutionaries who spend their time talking in pubs". Whilst heated political discussion over a pie and a pint is commonplace amongst the groups of the British far-left, the Workers' Institute carry this non-separation of leisure and politics much further. Leisure and politics are integrated into 'revolutionary socials' at the Mao Memorial Centre. These may be attended by members of the periphery who are treated to speeches and refreshments. These are strictly community events involving all the members of the Institute, and unlike time spent in a pub, the revolutionary social is a legitimate use of operational time resources.

The strict community control over operational time is clearly a

means by which the Workers' Institute maintains its internal egalitarianism. Individuals do not have the time to have experiences outside of the group which may alter their internal standing; in particular they do not have time for individual learning which might equip them to cause or resolve disputes and thus emerge as potential leaders. Thus, we are able to establish that the characteristic organisation of operational time supports the internal egalitarianism which we have identified as one of the three basic predicates of our definition of millenarianism.

We now turn to examine another of the three themes present in our definition of millenarianism. The reader will recall that the first of our basic predicates is the conviction that the present epoch is finite and known to be ending shortly. This is an expectation of historical time which compresses the past and the future into the present in much the same way as the Nuer compress their entire history into eleven or so generations. The Nuer compress their past in this way at the point where social differentiation of the dead ceases to bear on the living. This is a point around five generations back, at which the clan ancestors take over the mantle of history from the dead of the minor lineage. But, the Nuer are stronger grid than our millenarians. In the Workers' Institute, as we have seen, social differentiation is absent from the present. In an unbounded individualist environment the pressures of competition and consequent scarcity of operational time resources stabilise historical time perception. But where operational time is constrained only by the group boundary, the historical dimension, the past and the future, literally collapse into the present. The group boundary becomes the deciding factor in historical perception. How is this possible?

The historical time dimension in weak grid/strong group will be severely constrained by the group's tendency to frequent fission. The record of its own history from its foundation to the present is liable to be briefer than the history of groups with stronger grid relations, which will provide more points of differentiation. In societies with strong internal social classifications, disputes may be settled by demotion, promotion, or sideways re-classification of individuals. In egalitarian groups, the only solutions to serious disputes are expulsion or fission. The Workers' Institute for example has only been in existence for four years and is the outcome of a series of splits away from larger groups. Thus, it is but a few small steps from the founding

ancestor to the recent schisms that have given rise to the group. For example the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao are as valid today as when they were written, and so far as the Workers' Institute is concerned the world has not changed in any fundamental respect since these writings were first conceived by their authors.

Modelled on the past, the perception of the future is also less differentiated in this kind of social environment than elsewhere in the typology. The political demands of the Workers' Institute are all posed as immediate - with the minimum discrimination between short and long term aspirations. They speak of the old world as already passing away, and the achievement of world socialism is on their immediate agenda. This is in marked contrast with the view expressed by more orthodox groups on the British left who distinguish between the struggle to maintain working class living standards during the present crisis of capitalism and the longer term aim of achieving socialism. I suggest that this distinction is possible because these groups are more internally differentiated and have a weaker group boundary than the Workers' Institute. And indeed, the Communist and Labour Parties, which are relatively strong grid and certainly weaker group than the Trotskyist and Maoist left, are frequently criticised by the latter for losing sight of the long term aim of socialism altogether.

The nearness of the foundation of the weak grid sect and the strength of its external boundary will permit the movement to justify its consequent smallness by reference to its historic importance as the repository of urgent revolutionary truth or of divine revelation in the present epoch. Hence, group members are likely to have a strong sense of the past as a charter for their present activities. The Workers' Institute for example, draws an explicit parallel between the surrender of Peking after the defeat of Tientsin during the Chinese People's War of Liberation and their own millenarian scenario for 1977, according to which the People's Liberation Army of China were to break the back of the United States defence forces in Taiwan. This victory would have left the American mainland defenceless against the Liberation Forces. With the military defeat of the United States (Tientsin), the Soviet Union (Peking) would have collapsed internally, and its peoples embraced the INTERNATIONAL DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT. Finding itself surrounded, European Capitalism was to have almost incidentally capitulated to the new order.

Hence we can see how, based on self consciousness of an historic mission, knowledge of the future in weak grid sects is likely to be as

certain and as immediate as knowledge of the past. This compression of past and future into the present supports the temporal predicate of our definition of millenarianism - the conviction that the present epoch is finite and known to be ending shortly. The arrival of the millenium is consequently more credible here than in any of the other environments defined by grid and group:

1) At weak grid/weak group, competitive pressures on operative time will stabilise the historical dimension. Douglas (1978:30) observes of this social environment "Its future is recognised as full of uncertainty (as indeed it is) but this realistic acceptance of a high-risk short-term future does not make it susceptible to millennial prophecies. Prophets of doom must make good their claims like any other people or ideas."

2) At strong grid/weak group, the insulated individual "has no special selective principle from which to construct its history" (Douglas 1978:30), whilst his experience of operational time will be highly compartmentalised and under the control of others. History here is likely to be a mere continuation of the experience of repetitious operational time, stretching endlessly into both the past and the future. The perception of historical time is therefore extended in this environment and is the opposite of the compressed historical perception of weak grid/strong group. The prospects for imminent radical social change will seem negligible in this environment. The only sources of salvation will be individual, whether in this world or the next.

3) At strong grid/strong group, disputes are less likely to be so destructive as in strongly bounded societies at weak grid. Strong grid/strong group is therefore likely to be a long lived stable society. The careful classification of personnel here will provide a model for chronological segmentation. Just as there will be great men, there will be important historical epochs which will provide charters for present group activities. This sense of differentiated historical time will be inimical to collapsing the past and the future into the present, so millenarian expectations are unlikely to arise here.

## From Time to Space

The concept of the 'epoch' seems to be a feature of strong group. Strong grid/weak group does not have any selective principle according to which the historical dimension could be divided into fixed periods, whilst weak grid/weak group is constantly subjecting the historical dimension to re-evaluation and therefore does not maintain a consistent conception of historical periods because history is being constantly re-defined. On the other hand, history at strong grid/strong group may be organised into a number of epochs of varying significance, whilst at weak grid/strong group, the finite character of the all important present epoch is emphasised.

The conception of history as consisting of epochs is an invitation to compress selected periods of historical time. But the stronger the grid constraints on the perception of historical time, the further back in past history this compression is likely to occur and there is less likelihood of millenarianism occurring.

For example, we know that the Nuer compress historical epochs beyond the fifth ascending generation of their genealogies, and that the time span of their remembered history is limited to about 50 years. The Nuer are certainly strong grid/strong group. They live in discrete wet season villages and concentrate in large dry season cattle camps. They have a strong sense of local community and of bounded social units. The Nuer are certainly stronger grid than the Workers' Institute. Although there are no great individuals of rank exercising political authority, the Nuer are nevertheless strongly classified by their age set system, and their exceptionally complex lineage system, which has more orders of segmentation than, for example, their close neighbours the Dinka. Nuer do compete for cattle, but the movement of cattle is controlled by kinship obligations. The Nuer are therefore subject to classificatory constraints on exogamy, ceremonial, cattle rights, etc., which derive from the kinship system. There is a degree of institutionalised classification which is absent from the Workers' Institute.

We may reasonably suppose that this is a significant factor in determining the point (five generations back) at which the Nuer compress historical epochs. Time cannot be compressed before this point because the classification of living people is determined by their kinship classification of the preceding generations. The classification of the

dead by the living constrains the social life of the living in choice of marriage partners, ceremonial, cattle rights, etc. However, beyond the minimal lineage, only the names of the founders of the important lineage branches need be placed in a determinate order of ascent, from the founder of the minimal lineage to the clan founder, because these are the only individuals from so far back in history who are still important reference points for the living. The generations which passed between these various individuals are ignored, and the history of each of their epochs is collapsed into a single ancestral generation.

It is evident...there has been a telescoping of the agnatic line from the founder of the minimal lineage further up the line of ascent to the founder of the clan. (Evans-Pritchard 1940:199)

What is of especial interest to us is that Nuer are fully conversant with the full range of their genealogical relationships up to a specific point. Beyond this point they reckon kinship solely in terms of lineages because it is necessary to know what lineage a man belongs to in deciding questions of exogamy and ceremonial. But the relation between clan lineages is not determined by straightforward descent. Particular lineages may be reckoned to be closer to each other if they are co-resident in the same community than lineages which may be closely linked by descent, but are not co-resident. Evans-Pritchard comments on the Nuer view of their lineage system:

They see it primarily as actual relations between groups of kinsmen within local communities, rather than as a tree of descent, for the persons after whom the lineages are called do not proceed from a single individual. (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 202)

Outside of certain ritual situations, Nuer evaluate clan and lineage in terms of their local relations. It even happens that genealogical fictions are created by which the founders of the various ascending branches of a lineage are incorporated into the lineage which has given its name to the local community. Hence, where the influence of grid weakens historically and epochs are compressed by the Nuer, their understanding of history is dominated by spatial rather than temporal idioms. To put it another way, group constraints may dominate the understanding of history in strong group societies, when historical epochs are compressed. For the Nuer, grid constraints from the lineage system enforce a chronological



conception of history for five generations back, after which, consciousness of their own bounded group becomes more important in explaining how the past has made them what they are today.

We have seen how the ability of the Nuer to compress historical epochs is confined to specific periods in the past because the classification of the living is dependent upon their classification of particular dead, i.e. the five immediately preceding generations and the founders of the lineage branches. These dead cannot be ignored by the living, but the epochs of other ancestors may be compressed or even omitted altogether. Although the Workers' Institute are also strong group, they are not subject to the internal classificatory constraints which operate among the Nuer. The Institute is therefore not constrained by grid classifications from compressing the past and the future into the present. If the understanding of history when epochs are compressed is dominated by the group boundary and concepts of space derived from it (as we have suggested is the case with the Nuer past), then we should expect spatial constraints to figure largely in the Workers' Institute's understanding of the present epoch.

This brings us to consider the spatial predicate of our definition of millenarianism - the conviction that the new epoch will be established by the external intervention of some powerful agency.

### Space I

In considering space, I want to follow the distinction we have already made between two types of time and look at two types of space; geographical space and operational space. Geographical space is concerned with the ordering of places beyond the daily experience of an individual or a community. It is generally learned or remembered, and also like historical time, geographical distance may be perceived as socially compressed or extended in relation to its ecological limitations. For example, Evans-Pritchard tells us that a Nuer tribe forty miles from another, perceives itself as being structurally closer to it than to a Dinka tribe only twenty miles away.

Operational space is concerned with the ordering of space within which people live out their daily lives. It is directly experienced rather than learned about or remembered, and (as with its counterpart

operational time) the perception of operational distance is subject to more direct constraints from nature than geographical space. The perception of operational distance relative to conventional ecological measurements may vary between societies, depending upon whether or not they possess mechanised transport and upon the ecological constraints of terrain. But operational space will not be selectively variable in the way geographical space is. However, the way a society divides up its operational space, for example whether it is a collective resource with few boundaries, or a fiercely guarded individual resource, is a social variable of critical importance to our grid/group analysis.

Once again, there is a closeness between my categories and Evans-Pritchard's distinction between structural and ecological space. But, as with time concepts, I am anxious to emphasise that there are both natural and social constraints upon the perception of both sorts of space, which are parts of a single cognitive system subject to grid and group constraints.

## Space II

In strong group societies we should expect recursive patterning of the group boundary at all levels, internal and external. The limitations of operational space should coincide with the boundary, whilst geographical space should lie outside it. The degree of internal differentiation significantly alters the expectations we should have of the distribution of recursive boundary patterns.

We can expect the strong classification of operational space to be a logical accompaniment to the strong classification of persons. How better can the social classification of individuals be more visibly enforced at strong grid than by limiting their access to specified areas of rigidly demarcated space? We can recognise such constraints in the forms of first and second class travel, saloon and public bars, separate toilets for managerial and manual workers, etc. Hence at strong grid/strong group we can reasonably expect the rigid division of operational space to follow the recursive patterning of the group boundary which provides a convenient model for internal differentiation of the group. Hierarchies may be represented spatially as a series of concentric circles, representing decreasing status moving from the centre, as well as in linear fashion representing decreasing status moving from top to bottom. Outsiders, and

outside geographical space, will not be so susceptible to a high level of differentiation modelled on the group boundary simply because outsiders are not particularly relevant to the activities of the group. Hence we may expect a predominance of internal recursive patterning of the group boundary from strong grid/strong group environments.

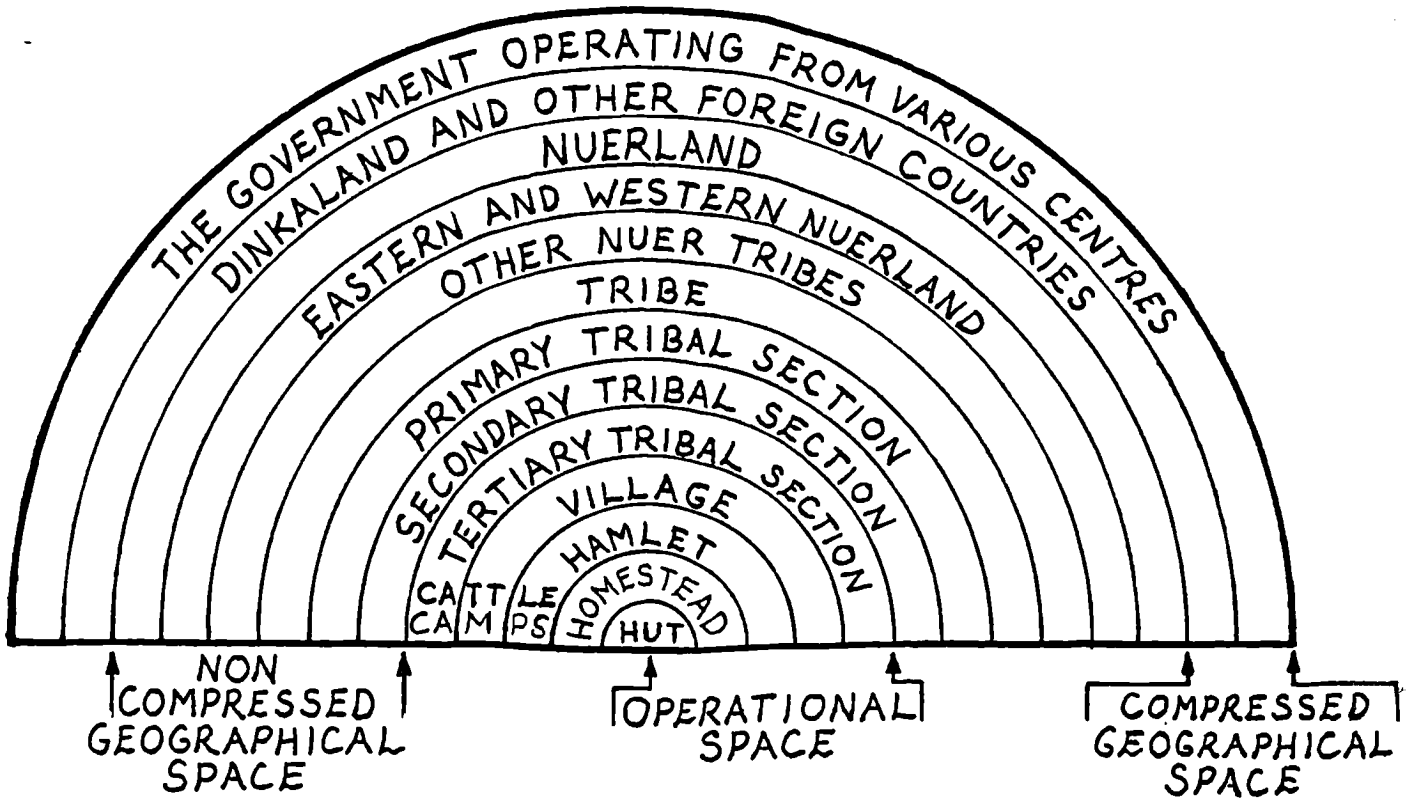
This is in marked contrast to our expectations in respect of weak grid/strong group. Here operational space must be a community resource with few restrictions about who can go where, and use what space, within the boundaries of the group. Operational space, largely within the group boundary, will therefore be relatively undifferentiated by recursive boundary patterns. The creation of internal spatial divisions would threaten the egalitarianism of the group by providing individuals with opportunities to control small units of space and possibly to develop expertise and control over the activity carried on in that area. However, the history of schisms makes the movement susceptible to external threats to the cohesion of the group. It is important to identify and discriminate between a large variety of threatening outsiders. Hence we may expect the group boundary pattern to be frequently repeated externally, dividing geographical space outside of the group, rather than dividing operational space inside.

These formally derived differences between spatial perception at opposite ends of the grid dimension at strong group are well illustrated by comparing the geograms of the socio-spatial categories of the Nuer and the Workers' Institute (figure 15). The Nuer who are relatively strong grid, have a hierarchy of five levels of spatial discrimination within their daily face-to-face communities, (i.e. the cattle camps and smaller units). There are six divisions of Nuer outside of that boundary, but still within range of kinship classifications, and only two categories of unambiguously external geographical space. The Workers' Institute have only two internal distinctions, which depend upon residence. They have a single category of supporters who provide a spatial buffer between themselves and the outside world, which consists of five concentric categories of hostile space, surrounded by a single all embracing socio-spatial category.

The Nuer geogram is Evans-Pritchard's summary of the values Nuer give to spatial distributions. I have constructed the geogram of the Workers' Institute from the spatial categories I have known members to

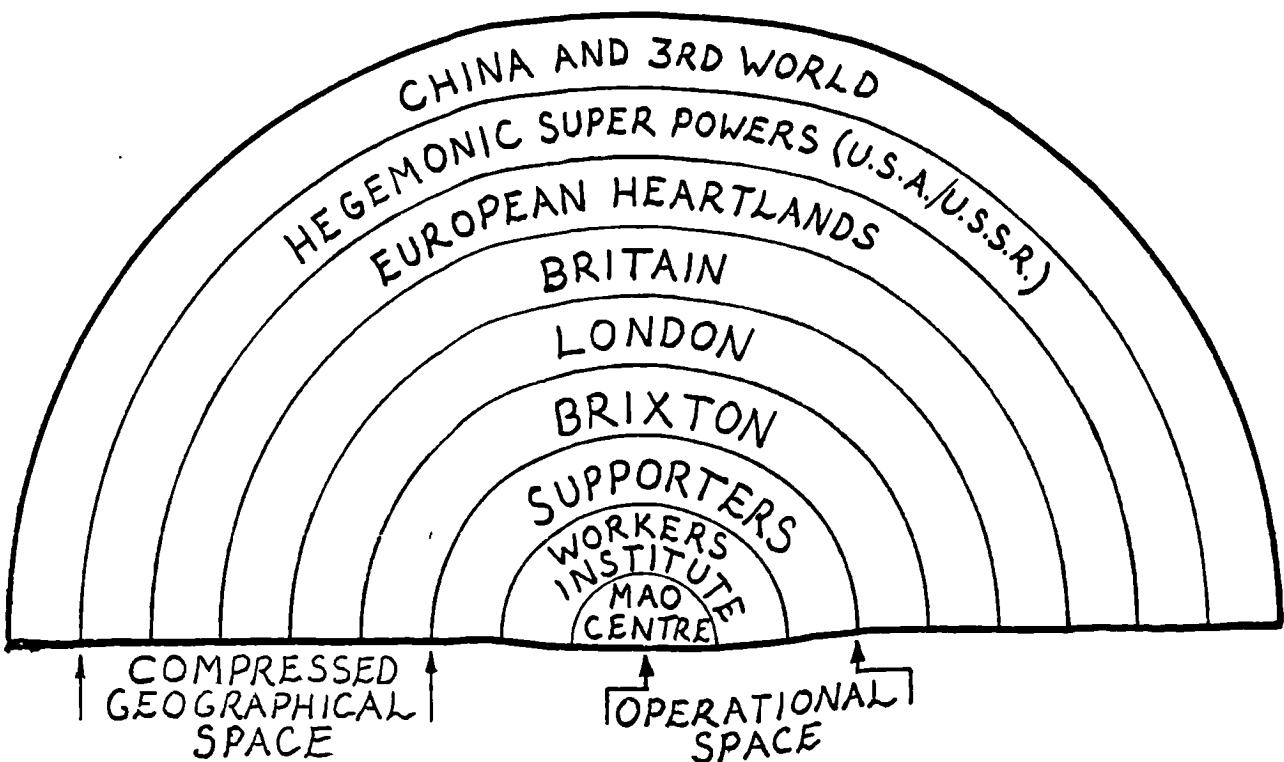
Figure 15.

Geograms.



Nuer Socio-Spatial Categories (above).

Socio-Spatial Categories of the Workers' Institute (below).



use during my fieldwork. The contrast between the two geograms is a crucial clue to the way in which a weak grid/strong group social environment can support the spatial predicate of our definition of millenarianism.

The Nuer maintain six divisions of geographical space between the village, or cattle camp, and the boundary of Nuerland. This is because their local communities are linked by shared grid constraints emanating from the kinship and age set systems. Most relevant spatial discrimination is within Nuerland. Geographical space beyond is relatively undifferentiated. The grid distinctions which Nuer make among themselves are not applied to outsiders because it is not important for Nuer to accurately discriminate between outsiders. We may suppose that the world beyond Nuerland was compressed into a single category (ie. Dinka and other foreigners) before colonialism imposed a further level of discrimination upon the Nuer. As with the compression of historical time, we can see that the existence of strong grid constraints prevent the strong group from compressing geographical space before a point some considerable distance away from the focus of their own daily activities - the village or cattle camp.

On the other hand, the strongly bounded group at weak grid does not see itself sharing the same classificatory constraints as its neighbours; rather it distinguishes itself from its neighbours by the very absence of grid distinctions within its boundary and stands alone against outsiders. This is certainly the case with the Workers' Institute who see themselves as the "sole upholders of chairman Mao's revolutionary banner in the imperialist heartlands". However, the Workers' Institute cannot afford to ignore the world beyond its boundaries because it is this world, dominated by the "International Fascist Bourgeoisie" which both threatens the Institute's existence and provides the rationale for its being. Hence, the Institute discriminates between five categories of potentially dangerous geographical space commencing directly outside the group boundary and a single benign category which encompasses the whole system.

The Workers' Institute is organised in London because "it is the worst place in the world". Its role is not to organise a revolution but to prepare for the period of socialist reconstruction which will follow the liberation of the world by the People's Republic of China - "THE BRIGHT RED BASTION OF WORLD REVOLUTION". The liberation was confidently predicted

to be completed by the end of 1977, and was to have been achieved through the agency of the Three Magic Weapons, which are 1) The People's Liberation Army of China, 2) Invincible Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought, and 3) The Popular Front of Third World Countries Led by People's China. The Institute's justification for fixing the date of the liberation for the end of 1977 relied upon Chairman Hua's address to the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of China, in which he promised that with the defeat of the Gang of Four, 1977 would see that "Order will be brought throughout the land". The Institute interpreted this promise to include Taiwan, and we have seen how the rest of the liberation scenario follows inevitably from the restoration of Taiwan to China. This is strong evidence to suggest that the Workers' Institute do see the Republic of China and its allies as encompassing all other socio-spatial concepts as represented in the geogram.

The Institute's conception of the Three Magic Weapons gives us an indication of the way in which its members perceive the recursive boundaries of geographical space which they discriminate between their own operational space and China, as the source of their millenarian hopes. When challenged about the use of the term "magic", the self styled scientific socialists of the Institute defend the term because they claim that there is no other way to convey to the oppressed masses the speed and invincibility of the liberation. I have been told that the People's Liberation Army will move so quickly that they will be in London and Washington before the Imperialists wake up to what has happened. The same informant compared the liberation to the 1977 New York blackout both in its speed and its dramatic effects. Based on their own limited experience of operational space, we find that members of the Workers' Institute perceive geographical distances as being quite minor obstacles to the path of their liberators. The creation of recursive geographical boundaries, unsupported by strong grid constraints to provide experience of operational boundaries, is an invitation to weak grid/strong group movements like the Workers' Institute to compress geographical space around themselves in much the same way as they compress historical time.

Further evidence for this assumption is that the threat of nuclear reprisals by the United States or the Soviet Union is dismissed by Institute members with the argument that the Chinese have developed electronic weapons which would prevent enemy missiles from even taking off. It is also believed that the Chinese can interfere with the operation of all manner of electronic equipment in the Imperialist Heartlands by remote

control. I have been told that the infamous translation error on President Carter's visit to Poland, which represented the President as "desiring the Poles carnally", was due to the Chinese exercising their remote control weaponry as a warning to the super-powers! The description of the liberator's weapons as magic is more appropriate than the members of the Workers' Institute are aware. Action at a distance, which is the basis of their belief in the capacity of Chinese electronic weaponry, is characteristic of the sort of magical beliefs which are present in millenarianism. It seems that this magical element is supported by the compression of geographical space. All of these beliefs in Chinese electronic weaponry are justified by the historical charter of an article in the Peking Review in which Mao was reported to have expressed a belief in the infinite divisibility of matter in 1955. My informants were adamant that subsequent research had justified Mao's belief and that this in turn justified their own faith in the world leadership of China in the field of electronics.

The use of the Peking-Tientsin campaign as an historical charter for the liberation scenario is not only evidence for the smallness of the steps between the founding ancestor and the present. It has important implications for understanding the Institute's manipulation of socio-spatial categories. The Workers' Institute reproduces the history of the macrocosm in the microcosm. The history of the People's Republic provides a model for the rest of world history. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in their creation of the West's own "Gang of Four in the Imperialist heartlands", consisting of the leaders of the Communist Party of England M-L (from which Balakrishnan broke away in 1974) and of its fraternal parties in Ireland and Canada. Hence, we can see how the Workers' Institute's understanding of the present epoch, in which historical time is compressed into a few short years, is dominated by concepts of geographical space derived from the group's own boundary. For the Workers' Institute, the course of the historical present is understood through historical charters which originate in geographical concepts derived from the group boundary. This is because temporal differentiation of history which is derived from grid constraints is at its minimum in the compressed present epoch. It should come as no surprise to discover that extreme weak grid/strong group societies such as the Workers' Institute live in a shrunken world surrounded by enemies, in which the source of radical social change has to be a benign outsider reaching across a hostile wasteland to the faithful within the movement.

From the definition of the grid and group dimensions, we have logically generated a model of time and space experiences. This is a model of a shrunken world with a foreshortened perception of historical time and compressed geographical space, modelled on the structure of the group itself and buffered from external contradiction by its group boundary. We have seen that the Workers' Institute fulfills our expectations in these respects. The crux of my argument is that the three basic predicates of our definition of millenarianism can all only be supported within a shrunken world of this sort. Hence, weak grid/strong group is a necessary condition of millenarianism. It is not however a sufficient condition. I have not set out to explain why particular groups of people turn to millenarianism. Rather I have confined myself so far to the more modest question of what kind of social environment, defined in terms of grid and group, is capable of supporting millenarian ideas. I believe that we have made worthwhile progress with this approach and have succeeded in restoring the temporal and spatial themes to a central place in the explanation of millenarian phenomena.

#### Relative Deprivation in Grid/Group Perspective

The starting point for our extensive discussion of time and space was the contention that the role of relative deprivation in millenarian movements cannot be understood independently of the question: What kind of social environment enables people to maintain the temporal and spatial concepts which are characteristic of millenarianism? We have established that the weak grid/strong group social environment supports all three basic predicates of our definition of millenarianism:

- 1) The conviction that the present epoch is finite and known to be ending shortly.
- 2) The conviction that the new epoch will be established by the external intervention of some powerful agency.
- 3) The conviction that all men ought to be recognised as moral equals.

We are now in a position to re-examine the role relative deprivation might play in the process by which millenarian movements develop within a weak grid/strong group environment.

In Mambu (1960) Kenelm Burridge suggests that there is evidence that millenarian cults of some sort occurred among the Tangu of New Guinea before the coming of the Europeans and that cargo cults are syncretic versions of traditional revitalisation movements. During the Tangu cults, individual productive activity in the scattered gardens and competitive feasting are abandoned in favour of collective ritual activity, the adoption of white man's dress, and the co-operative construction of temples,



triumphal arches, or storage huts to contain the cargo which is expected to come from the ancestors. Douglas (1973) supports Burridge's suggestion that the origins of this sort of activity pre-date colonial contact because she identifies a contradiction inherent in all weak grid/weak group environments. This is a contradiction between the ideology of equality necessary to maintain open big-man competition and the benefits of scale which will accrue to successful competitors:

One would expect an ego-focused grid system to swing between glorification of successful leaders and the right of the masses to enjoy success. Thus the cargo cult and its prototypes would be cults of revolt against the way the social structure seems to be working, but not of revolution against the traditional structure itself. (Douglas 1973:168)

It might be said that the contradiction in the grid dimension which Douglas points to in the Tangu example is counterposing expected equality to actual inequality and is therefore merely a case of what Aberle calls "a negative discrepancy between an anticipated state of affairs and a less agreeable actuality". If this is so, grid and group has produced yet another version of the relative deprivation thesis. In fact, the presentation of the grid dimension in Natural Symbols would support this view because it does not adequately distinguish between culture and social relations. However, in Cultural Bias, the contradiction is not one between ideology and actuality, but a structural contradiction in the actual social relations, between relations being conducted on the basis of an absence of explicit public social classifications, and the presence of private classificatory filters being operated by those individuals who are seeking to develop benefits of scale in their social transactions. As Marx (1964:84) said of processes of social change such as the abolition of slavery, introduction of a monetary economy, and other upheavals which promise to enlarge the sphere of political and economic competition:

Individuals may appear to be great. But free and full development of individual or society is inconceivable here, for such evolution stands in contradiction to the original relationship.

The periodic crisis which besets the Tangu is one of both the socio-economic and cultural spheres. It is likely to produce real structural conflict in the social relations, both between big-men and between big-men and less successful managers. In the cultural sphere, there is a growing conflict between the traditional egalitarian indices of man and the growing dominance of successful entrepreneurs. In this environment

there is a proliferation of sorcery accusations arising from the pressures of competition between big-men, and from their fear of revenge being taken upon them by the less successful (Burridge 1960:84).

The contradiction between the traditional egalitarian indices of man among the Tangu, and the growing dominance of successful big-men, may well be what Aberle and Burridge are seeking to describe in their extended relative deprivation theses. However, we can see that rather than being the first cause of Tangu cults, their experience of relative deprivation is itself the result of a contradiction in the social structure which produces, in the first instance, sorcery accusations rather than millenarianism.

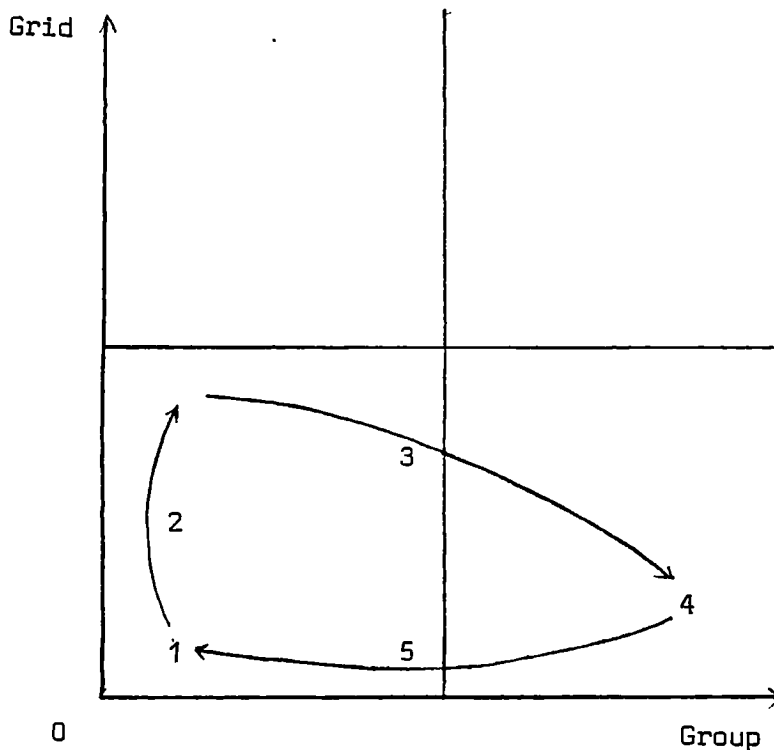
Of course, relative deprivation may be experienced for a variety of other reasons which have nothing to do with the contradiction in the social relations experienced by the Tangu. I am not claiming that this contradiction is a general cause of all instances of relative deprivation. I do hope to show how millenarianism offers a genuine solution to the pressures of competitive inequality and consequent sorcery accusations which may be produced by the contradiction experienced by the Tangu and is not merely a catharsis for lack of power to change the system.

An effective immediate response to the weak grid contradiction would be a movement to form a strong group environment to counter the effects of unrestrained competition. This is an obvious point illustrated by the formation of pressure groups, preservation societies, etc. in opposition to large corporate interests or motorway developments. Such a group will be able to confront the state or a large corporation more effectively than a number of disparate householders who can be filtered out one by one. This response to the weak grid contradiction strengthens group and holds the key to the development of millenarianism.

Burridge tells us that group identifications in Tangu are generally determined by neighbourhood, and rather less by kinship. During this century, both territorial and kinship identifications have been in a state of flux. Whereas warfare used to unite communities within Tangu, the suppression of warfare by colonial governments has brought about a changed situation. Community identity has been lost, leaving Tangu to identify most strongly with small individual households at the local level, and more generally to see themselves as Tangu and as Black Men.

Figure 16.

The Tangu Cycle.



- 1) Highly competitive social environment maintained by fierce egalitarianism. However, successful managers operate implicit filters against less successful individuals.
- 2) As inequality becomes more visible less successful individuals are actually forced up the grid in contravention of the ideology of equality. Recognition of the increasingly unequal basis of competition leads to increasing fears of sorcery being used by competitors.
- 3) In order to counteract the effects of strengthening grid constraints and in pursuance of traditional egalitarian values Tangu adopt a strong group strategy which emphasises communal activity and the abandonment of traditional productive activity.
- 4) At weak grid/strong group the cult's perception of time and space facilitates millenarian beliefs which would be untenable elsewhere.
- 5) The millennium fails to arrive so the members of the cult drift back into traditional competitive individual activities. But each individual has to rebuild his productive capacity more or less from scratch because the gardens have been neglected and capital may have been destroyed in the creation of the weak grid/strong group environment.

Present day Tangu activities provide little opportunity for strengthening the communities which lie between these extremes. Tangu households spend their days working independently in the scattered gardens or hunting further afield. The community rarely gathers as a whole, except for feasting and dancing, when in any case one half of the community will act in competitive reciprocal opposition to the other.

Tangu are egalitarians, aggressively so. Their moral order is characterised by a fierce insistence on equivalent reciprocities and by a minimum of delegated responsibilities. But while much time and energy are spent in coping with and containing expressions of self-willedness and the non-reciprocal in others, there are many who covet that reserve of self-willed and non-reciprocal power which will enable them to assert themselves against their fellows. Highly competitive, Tangu egalitarianism is maintained by competition... (Burridge 1969:xxii)

This classic description of a weak grid/weak group environment is the background to a recurring series of cargo cults which have stressed communal entities to check the competitive division of the community:

In the cult situation no food exchanges take place between one half the community and the other, households become merged in a larger whole and all act together. (Burridge 1954:241)

In Natural Symbols, Douglas speaks of a swing between Tangu glorification of successful leaders and the right of the masses to enjoy success. I suggest replacing the metaphor of the swing with a cyclical one (figure 16). According to this model, the Tangu response to the uncertainties posed by the weak grid contradiction is to develop a strong group environment in pursuance of traditional egalitarian values. The abandonment of individual gardens, and in some cases the wholesale destruction of capital, which is characteristic of cargo cults, occurs in the creation of the weak grid/strong group environment, within which all resources are collectively exploited. It is not only the relatively deprived who participate in these cults. A successful manager might calculate that participation in the cult would reduce the chances of his life being terminated through the sorcery of other individuals whom he has pushed out of the competition in the past. When the grid contradiction becomes too acute, and the whole system of competition is threatened, the creation of a weak grid/strong group environment is a way of redistributing finite resources in preparation for another round of competitive activity. Millenarianism is not the only way in which this could be achieved, for example warfare could fulfill the same ends through

the destruction of capital and the bringing together of local communities for a common purpose. However, the banning of warfare by colonial governments seems to have created a vacuum which can be conveniently be filled by the cargo movements.

The strategy of developing a strong group environment itself ensures the failure of the cult as a revolutionary movement. By choosing this strategy, Tangu place themselves in a position where revolutionary change could only be imposed from the outside, ie. by the actual arrival of the millennium. This will always be the case in an extreme weak grid/strong group environment because the dominant ideology of equality and the strong group constraints will militate against the emergence of a coherent leadership capable of controlling sufficient resources to force through a revolutionary transformation of society, without splitting the group. We have seen how groups such as the Workers' Institute are organised to discourage the emergence of strong leaders. Anyone attempting to exert themselves in such a role will find themselves subject to accusations of being outside infiltrators. Amongst the Tangu, cargo cultists are likely to regard such figures as being sorcerers from the outside competitive environment which they are attempting to remedy. Furthermore, the millenarian sect cannot become an effective revolutionary organisation without obtaining a mass following. In this case, the sect's cosmology, normally buffered against the social classifications of the wider society by its own boundary, would be untenable to people not so protected. The group could only become a viable popular force by shedding both its ideology and its protective boundary. An example of a British political group undergoing such a change is the Socialist Workers' Party.

In an egalitarian sect, revolutionary change could only occur with its transformation, or in the cases of sects which do not transform themselves, with the intervention of some external agency such as the cargo bearing ancestors in the case of the Tangu, or the People's Liberation Army in the case of the Workers' Institute. Tangu cargo cults do not transform themselves, and when the millennium fails to arrive the cult is simply abandoned and Tangu once more pursue personal gain and attempt to compete in much the same way as before. However, the levelling off which has occurred during the millenarian phase allows them to start again as equal competitors without benefits of scale. The cycle thus begins anew.

The strong group strategy is not the only one available to those who

experience the weak grid/weak group contradiction. There are three possible strategies available to an individual in this predicament:

- 1) To renounce his own perspectives, accept the filters that others are operating against him, and move up the grid dimension at weak group, possibly as a long term investment with a view to building up resources which will facilitate later competitive success - for example, the student who accepts his own lack of control over his undergraduate studies in the hope of a PhD place later.
- 2) To move up the grid dimension and shift to strong group, accepting a limited individual role in world affairs, but as part of an historic movement which will prevail over those who pushed him up grid - for example, the small shopkeepers who turned to the Nazis in pre-war Germany.
- 3) To shift into strong groups maintaining an egalitarian world view, independently of the prevailing system of thought about the order of the universe which may be held at strong grid, and buffered by the strong group boundary from the competitive pressures of weak grid/weak group.

The Workers' Institute seems to be composed of individuals who have adopted the third strategy. The membership of the Institute is principally of overseas origin. For example, of the ten cadres at one session of the evening school which I attended at the Centre, three were of European racial origin, one was of West Indian origin, two were of Malay origin, and the remaining four were of Chinese racial origin (although I believe that several of these are Malaysian). With two possible exceptions, all of the members present were also ex-students who had given up their studies in order to "integrate with the working class".

The contradiction between ideal equality and real competitiveness is particularly acute for university students who live in an environment which encourages competition and claims to be training students to think for themselves. The reality, especially in the natural sciences, is that students are denied any real control over the organisation of their studies but are subject to apparently arbitrary limitations of disciplines and the imposition of curricula drawn up by their teachers.

In general, immigrants to the United Kingdom are also likely to experience strong insulation and impersonal controls. Unless located in an established community, they are also likely to have little group reference as individuals. If they are also students, the pressures forcing

them up grid are likely to be even stronger than those acting on indigenous students. The subjective experience of the contradiction between their aspirations to benefits of successful competition, and the implicit filters operating in that environment to push them up grid, is likely to be stronger for students from the third world than is the case with indigenous students. This is all the more likely where the overseas student has already had the experience of being part of an educational or economic elite, whose talents are more in demand and whose status is much higher than students enjoy in Britain. It is therefore hardly surprising that ex-students from overseas make up the backbone of the Workers' Institute, having opted for the weak grid/strong group strategy.

Only a concrete account of the historical circumstances specific to each case can explain which of the three strategies for resolving the weak grid/weak group contradiction will be adopted by an individual or society. Grid and group does not therefore provide us with a causal explanation of why a particular group choose the strategy which leads to millenarianism. However, we have shown that it can do two other things to significantly advance our understanding of millenarian phenomena.

Firstly it enables us to identify the sort of social environment that will support the characteristic spatial, temporal, and ethical predicates of millenarianism as being weak grid/strong group, and enables us to restore the temporal and spatial themes to a central place in the explanation of millenarianism.

Secondly, it shows us why relative deprivation in the form of the grid contradiction can be an important factor in some cases of millenarianism, and not in others, since the grid contradiction is not the only possible explanation of why individuals gather in egalitarian groups behind strong group boundaries. Furthermore, it is important to be clear that there are three possible strategies for dealing with the grid contradiction. This accounts for the fact that there are cases in which the contradiction is perceived as relative deprivation but does not give rise to millenarianism.

#### The Trotskyist Conception of The Epoch

The case of the Workers' Institute is an extreme one. It is almost certainly the only case of genuine millenarianism on the British far-left. Indeed, the only other case to come to my attention of such an extreme

belief among groups calling themselves Marxist has been attributed by informants to certain sections of Posadas' Fourth International in Latin America. These have apparently argued that capitalism is insufficiently rational an economic system to have produced the technology necessary to build flying saucers. Hence the occupants of such craft must be socialists, if not fully developed communists, from another world. Revolutionaries therefore should attempt to intercede with flying saucers and have them wipe out the bourgeois order without delay. I have always been very sceptical of this story, and thought it very likely to be a sectarian joke. However, it was always being related to me as a true story and is so widespread that, in view of our observations on the Workers' Institute, I have come to consider that a millenarian belief of some sort lies at its core.

Although these are extreme cases, it is certainly true that utopian strains, which see revolution as being on the immediate agenda although not being brought from outside, run through the entire far-left, here and abroad. Quite apart from its intrinsic interest, the case of the Workers' Institute gives us a useful paradigm by which we can better understand the fatalistic utopianism of the far-left as a whole, even in those groups which have very much more in common with the mainstream of politics than the Workers' Institute. Chief amongst these are the principal Trotskyist groupings: the Workers' Revolutionary Party, Socialist Workers Party, and the International Marxist Group.

Geoff Hodgson . (1975:12-25) has written an excellent account of the fatalistic utopianism which is prominent in the writings of Leon Trotsky and which has been endemic in the Trotskyist movement throughout the half century of its existence. He argues that Trotsky's conception of the present epoch as one of inevitable capitalist collapse and proletarian revolution, which he held as early as 1914, has continued to constrain the development of the Trotskyist movement up until the present day. In his address to the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921, Trotsky emphasised his view that the collapse of capitalism was both inevitable and imminent:

If the further development of productive forces was conceivable within the framework of bourgeois society, then revolution would generally be impossible. But since the further development of the productive forces within the framework of bourgeois society is inconceivable, the basic premise for the revolution is given.  
(Trotsky 1972 vol 2:4)



Shortly before his death, Trotsky returned to the same themes with an immediacy prompted by the advent of world war. In answer to questions posed by a Daily Herald correspondent, Trotsky wrote:

I do not doubt that the new world war will provoke with absolute inevitability the world revolution and the collapse of the capitalist system. Capitalism is condemned. Nothing will save it from collapse. (Trotsky 1969:27-28)

In the following chapter, we will see how this catastrophic vision of the inevitability of revolution split the British Trotskyist movement after the second world war. The majority of the Revolutionary Communist Party saw the possibilities of a post war boom, while the Healyites remained true to the orthodox vision and entered the Labour Party in anticipation of the collapse of capitalism and social democracy. Healy has preserved his faith in the imminence of the violent death throes of capitalism up to the present day. In 1953, he wrote to the leaders of the American Socialist Workers' Party that, "the war seems to be getting very near" (SWP-USA 1974 vol.2:84). The introduction of the three day week twenty years later was heralded by Healy as the prelude to a military coup which would be the last frenzied attempt of capitalism to stave off its inevitable collapse (Thornett 1976:2).

Although Healy's is the most outstanding catastrophism of British Trotskyism, the other principals have not been immune. In 1977, Healy's rival of many years, Tony Cliff, was addressing meetings with the prediction of a decade of capitalist collapse, with runaway inflation and unemployment. On this basis, he called for the expansion of the Socialist Workers' Party from 3,000 to 40,000 members in order to meet the approaching revolutionary situation. It does not seem to be mere coincidence that the Bolshevik Party had 40,000 members in 1917!

Cliff's group has long claimed that it rejected the deterministic view of capitalism's final crisis in the late 1940s, by the introduction of the permanent arms economy theory. This purports to show how the continual production of new armaments staves off capitalist crisis. However, Hodgson points out that Cliff's supporters have never decisively broken with Trotsky's conception of the epoch:

Even in 1956, M. Kidron, developer of a theory which had allegedly recognised the resilience of the post-war expansion from the early years, was talking about the soon to come fight against redundan-

cies: 'When the present boom conditions give way to slump the struggle for work will become a struggle for the retention of the jobs we have'. T. Cliff's more famous 1957 article on the permanent arms economy is one of the first statements of a theory - rather than a simple recognition of the effects of rearmament or war. But even this article does not emphasise the sustained and rapid growth of the post-war boom. And in the concluding sections it suggests that even arms expenditure might eventually lead to 'increasing pressure towards a slump'. It is still the politics of waiting for the big crash, it only warns us that the wait might be a bit longer. (Hodgson 1975:46)

Even the International Marxist Group, which has developed largely independently from the tradition of the old Revolutionary Communist Party to which Healy and Cliff once belonged, has continued the traditional emphasis on the conception of the epoch. In his book, significantly entitled The Coming British Revolution, Tariq Ali criticises the state capitalists:

Because if Russia is state capitalist, China, Cuba, Korea, and Vietnam are 'petty-bourgeois' states and poor old Lenin and Trotsky were completely wrong in their characterisation of this epoch as one of proletarian revolutions. Then we are entering a new phase of capitalism and a new epoch - the epoch of the petty bourgeoisie! Because if the latter is capable of making bourgeois-democratic or rather bourgeois-nondemocratic revolutions, then the theory of permanent revolution is simply hogwash and the revolution was a noble adventure carried out before its time and doomed to failure. (Ali 1972:132)

For Ali, it is unthinkable that this is not the epoch of proletarian revolutions. Just as to a varying degree, it is for Cliff and Healy. The compression of historical time into the present epoch may be less extreme in these cases than it is in the case of the Workers' Institute, but the same sort of process seems to be at work here. The Trotskyist groups also live in a shrunken world in which the contacts between the tiny national sections of their respective Fourth Internationals enables them to regard themselves as part of a movement with worldwide efficacy. Trotskyists do not share the extreme external interventionist viewpoint of the Workers' Institute, but external support for whatever perspective a national section adopts is considered to be a key factor for any group associated with one of the Fourth Internationals. Obviously, none of these cases is as extreme as the distortions of geographical space in the Workers' Institute. But, variations in the strength of the utopian strain across the far-left may be seen in terms of variations in the relative grid/group positions of the far-left groups located within major quadrant D.

## Chapter Six

### The Politics of Schism

Let Thornett remember this: slander the WRP and you slander Lenin. (Michael Banda 1975:99)

In this chapter, we move on from the examination of far-left utopianism to the second of our chosen themes, the process which perpetuates the creation of the small strongly bounded groups which are capable of sustaining a utopian cosmology. That is the tendency of far-left groups to frequent fission.

The best documented split to have taken place during the last ten years is most certainly the expulsion from the Workers' Revolutionary Party, in 1975, of the group which subsequently became the Workers' Socialist League. We begin our discussion of the politics of schism with the history of the WRP for two reasons. It has the longest direct lineage of any of the British far-left groups, and it has exerted a strong historical influence over the development of the whole of the far-left. We go on to discuss the dynamics of the WSL split because it is well documented, and the issues involved are quite accessible to the reader who may be unfamiliar with some of the more intricate aspects of Trotskyist 'theology'. This split also provides the reader with a good account of the climate which is typical of such events throughout the far-left, including the splits in the Socialist Workers' Party which are discussed in the following chapter.

### The Workers' Revolutionary Party

Of the extant British Trotskyist groups, the WRP has the longest continuous independent lineage. Alan Thornett, the British Leyland shop steward who was expelled from the party in 1974, wrote shortly beforehand:

It might seem that a history of the party is a history revolving around the political development of one man - Comrade Gerry Healy. (1976:26)

There can be little doubt that the comparatively long history of the WRP as an independent organisation (although under a variety of names), the party's extreme hostility to other groups, and the capacity it has occasionally shown for attracting recruits, are in no small way

due to the style of Healy's leadership. It is fitting, therefore, that we should begin our examination of British Trotskyism with the Workers' Revolutionary Party and the history of this one man.

Healy claims that he was expelled from the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1936 because of his differences with the party on issue of whether the Labour Party was social-fascist. However, not only does the Communist Party have no record of Healy's expulsion, but as Thornett (1976:29) points out, by 1936 the Comintern had abandoned the position that social democratic parties were social-fascist in favour of a policy of popular frontism. If Healy had been expelled on this issue in 1936, it must have been because of his support for the social-fascism line, a position which had been consistently rejected by Trotsky.

We have noted in chapter four, that until the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938, Britain's Trotskyists were organised in small, often localised groupings, with little formal organisation. In many cases these groups were founded by a core of people who had been expelled from the Communist Party for their support of the International Left Opposition (Groves 1974), whilst other supporters were drawn from independent militants and the ranks of the Independent Labour Party (Pearce 1966:60). In 1938, the British Section of the Fourth International was formed, uniting all of the main Trotskyist groupings except the Workers' International League under the title of the Revolutionary Socialist League. The WIL, led by Jock Haston and Gerry Healy, was denounced by the founding conference of the FI as a factional and insular organisation. Haston and Healy, on the other hand, were doubtful whether the hastily put together RSL would remain united for long. In the event they were proved to be justified.

The WIL was by far the larger group (according to all accounts except Ali 1972:121), and unlike the RSL, it had opposed entry into the Labour Party in favour of open propaganda work and intervention in strikes. The basis of the RSL's entry tactic virtually disappeared during the war years, because of the coalition policies of the Labour Party and its orientation towards war production and away from industrial militancy. An additional important factor was that the entire younger generation of the party, which might have provided a fertile recruiting ground for the Trotskyists, were fighting in the armed forces. The WIL, as the only organisation except the ILP to advocate strike action during the war, expanded its influence amongst those militants who saw the Communist Party's support for the war

effort as class-collaboration. On the other hand, the RSL declined throughout the war years. By 1944, Haston and Healy felt that they had sufficient strength to gather the RSL and various splinter groups into a new public organisation. Thus the Revolutionary Communist Party was born, with Haston as general secretary and Healy as leading organiser. This was the first, and last, time that Britain's Trotskyists were aligned in a single organisation.

In its first two years, the RCP increased in size to around five hundred members, but the end of the war saw the CPGB resume strike activity and regain from the RCP, the leading role among industrial militants. From this point on, the organisation declined, and in 1947 serious disagreements arose on the question of entry into the Labour Party.

The majority, led by Haston, Ted Grant, and Jimmy Deane, argued that there would be a post-war replacement boom which would provide modest scope for social reforms and increased living standards. However, they also argued that the Labour Party would attack workers and their organisations in the interests of rebuilding British capitalism, whilst the CPGB would continue down the path of class collaboration in the 'spirit of Yalta'. Under these conditions, the majority felt that it would be better for the RCP to continue open work as an independent political party.

The minority, led by Gerry Healy, maintained the orthodox Trotskyist position that any kind of post-war boom was impossible and that the end of the war would mean a return to the slump conditions which followed the First World War. Under these conditions, the Healyites, reversing their previous position in the WIL, argued that revolutionaries should infiltrate the Labour Party, so that when the slump came and the Labour leadership was unable to provide the necessary revolutionary solution, the party would turn to the revolutionaries within its own ranks.

The position was further complicated by the fact that the British minority, the Healyites, were supported by the international majority in the FI. The dispute dragged on until the International Secretariat divided the British section, with the agreement of both groups. Thus in 1948, the Healyites went into the Labour Party, organised around their paper Socialist Outlook. The fortunes of the RCP continued to dwindle in the face of the success of the CPGB in servicing industrial struggles and the nationalisation and reform measures adopted by the Labour Government which

convinced the majority of the working class movement that they were qualitatively different from the Tories. The boom predicted by the RCP majority was not so superficial or short lived as it had anticipated.

By the summer of 1949, the Revolutionary Communist Party was faced with seriously declining membership and the failure of the anticipated left turn of the Labour Party rank and file. Thus they decided also to opt for entry. However, the old minority argued that since their strategy had proven correct, a condition of reuniting would be that they have a majority on the executive bodies of the new organisation. This condition was accepted as a prelude to the establishment of an elected leadership at the forthcoming 1950 Congress. This stop-gap organisation had no name, but was referred to merely as The Club. The 1949-50 period saw the disintegration of the old majority leadership turn into a rout. Many of its leaders, including Grant and Deane, and Tony Cliff, were expelled on a variety of charges but emerge later in our story. Others like Jock Haston drifted out of the Trotskyist movement altogether.

By 1952, therefore, Healy had achieved a position of pre-eminence amongst British Trotskyists and was a notable ally of Pablo in his expulsion of the majority of the French Section of the Fourth International (cf. ch4). At this time, a serious faction fight broke out between Healy and his close associate John Lawrence, editor of The Club's paper Socialist Outlook. The two differed over the questions of entry and relations with Communist Parties raised by Pablo's thesis, The Rise and Fall of Stalinism. This document advocated entry into Communist Parties, a path which had been vigorously opposed by the French Section as 'liquidating' the Trotskyist movement and providing a 'left cover' for Stalinism. Pablo's position was also attacked by the American Socialist Workers' Party, whose leader, James P. Cannon, had been a close associate of Trotsky. It would seem that Healy turned away from Pablo because the latter favoured Lawrence in their internal power struggle, which took the form of a battle for control of Socialist Outlook. Healy won the battle but to little avail, since the paper had been bankrupted by a libel action and the Labour Party had just proscribed it. Up until this point, Healy had defended Pablo against criticism (WRP vol.1:114), although the Healyites have subsequently retold these events to show Healy as an originator of the critique of Pablo. (Thayer 1965:130 accepts this version, told him by Healy.)

The break came in 1953 when the SWP (USA) broke with the International

Secretariat. Healy joined with them, and the French group he had earlier helped to expel from the Secretariat, in condemning Pablo's 'liquidationism' (ie. pursuing a policy of entry into CPs). These three groups founded the International Committee of the Fourth International, whilst the supporters of Lawrence and Pablo in Britain dispersed themselves into the Labour Party. Thus, between 1953 and 1956, there was no section of the International Secretariat in Britain, but we must leave this thread to be taken up in a later chapter.

Following the revelations of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the invasion of Hungary in 1956, there was a mass exodus from the CPGB. Some ex-Communists left politics for good, whilst others drifted into the Labour Party. A small but significant minority sought a new home on the far-left. In recruiting refugees from the CP, Healy had the advantage of having maintained a public face, whilst the supporters of the International Secretariat had liquidated their own public organisations and entered deep into the ranks of the Labour Party. So Healy turned his attention from the Labour Party to the ex-Communists, and in the early part of 1957 managed to double his membership to a total of around four hundred. He also published two journals, The Newsletter which was set up under the editorship of Peter Fryer who had been the Daily Worker correspondent in Hungary at the time of the Soviet intervention, and the weekly Keep Left, which was directed towards Labour Party youth.

It was partly his success at attracting ex-Communists, both intellectuals and industrial activists, which led Healy in 1959 to initiate a new public organisation, the Socialist Labour League. The League applied for affiliation to the Labour Party on the same basis as the Fabians (Thayer 1965:132). However, the Party's response was swift and unequivocal. The League and its publications were immediately proscribed, and Healy began to pull his supporters out of the Labour Party. The SLL was launched without prior discussion amongst the membership (Ali 1972:123), although significantly the rank and file largely accepted the total change in orientation. The reason advanced for leaving the Labour Party was that Newsletter supporters were being subjected to a Party witch-hunt. However, the Labour Party attitude to Trotskyists has usually been one of tolerance towards ill defined, low profile groups. But any application for affiliation, and even the decision to launch a public organisation such as the League, can only be interpreted as a provocation with perfectly predictable consequences.

The significance of the undemocratic basis of the decision to found the SLL soon became apparent. Despite an initial success, particularly with The Newsletter, which under Fryer's editorship was a refreshingly open and flexible left-wing publication, the first two years of its existence was soon marred by a spate of expulsions and resignations. Peter Fryer was among the first to go. The Newsletter of the 5th September 1959 announced that he was too ill to continue as editor. In fact, he had been subjected to extraordinary harrassment because of his misgivings at Healy's autocratic rule. In his open letter to members of the League after his resignation he wrote:

The denial of democracy to members of the organisation is summed up by the general secretary himself in two phrases he has employed recently: 'I am the Party' and - in answer to the question 'How do you see Socialism?' - 'I don't care what happens after we take power. All I am interested in is the movement. (Quoted in Thayer 1965:134)

Ex-Communists, including Brian Behan and Bob Pennington (now national organiser of the IMG), were expelled because they were allegedly unable to develop a healthy attitude to 'discussion' within the League. In other words, they persisted in criticising the Healy clique. When the dust of the accusations and counter accusations settled, it was clear that the SLL was under the total and direct control of Gerry Healy and his immediate associates Mike and Tony Banda (Van der Poorten), whose private wealth and business interests in Sri Lanka<sup>a</sup> have bailed out the organisation on a number of occasions; Cliff Slaughter who lectured at the University of Leeds; and Charles Van Gelderen, a veteran of the founding conference of the FI who has since parted company with Healy.

In addition to these domestic difficulties, the year 1961 brought a serious setback for the International Committee of the Fourth International. The Sixth World Congress of the International Secretariat dropped its Pabloite positions on war and entryism, which paved the way for James P. Cannon to lead the Socialist Workers' Party (USA) out of the International Committee and back into the fold of the International Secretariat under the new banner of the Unified (later United) Secretariat. This isolated Healy internationally as well as on the home front and left him effectively as the leader of the tiny international fragments which remained to constitute the International Committee.



During the early 'sixties, Healy had considerable success in attracting members of the Labour Party's Young Socialists to the SLL through its youth front Keep Left. The Labour Party has never provided political education for its recruits, and when the members of the YS required it, the SLL was initially a focus for the discussion of revolutionary ideas. The SLL also proved very adept at building YS branches through social activities such as dances and picnics, and in this way managed to build up a numerical majority in the YS. Because there were no union block votes in the Young Socialists, as there were in the Labour Party, it was relatively easy for the League to control the YS. This position of manipulative power was reinforced by the high turnover of YS branch membership which was largely based on social convenience rather than political commitment. The means by which the SLL had obtained its majority in the YS was not linked to any internal struggle within the Labour Party, and by 1964 most of its branches were operating independently of their local Labour Parties. The SLL itself had become increasingly hysterical and sectarian in its attitude to the Labour Party, which it accused of bureaucratically persecuting the League. The result was that there was little support for the Young Socialists among the Labour Party rank and file and there was thus little more that could be done with the YS, which was isolated and politically impotent within the Labour Party. In February 1965, the Socialist Labour League launched its own youth wing, also called the Young Socialists, based on two-thirds of the old Labour Party youth organisation. But without any relation to a mass organisation like the Labour Party, even in principle, the impotence and the sectarianism of the SLL became apparent to more of its YS members and the organisation went into rapid decline.

In 1967 a number of Socialist Labour League members who despaired of the degenerating SLL, left that organisation to join with an orthodox tendency from the RSL (which had meanwhile reformed), to form a new group called Workers' Fight. This group produced a duplicated journal in Manchester until it entered the International Socialists as a permanent faction in 1968. 7

Since the beginning of the SLL and its withdrawal from the Labour Party, Healy had been promising his members two things - imminent social catastrophe and revolution, and a daily newspaper. In 1969 he was able to deliver his second pledge, although in 1979 the first is still being postponed because of the 'temporary stabilisation of capitalism'. The

new paper was called Workers' Press, and for five years until its collapse in 1974, it became the focal point of the League's activity. Members were expected to sell a daily quota of papers, which placed a terrific strain on their time and (since they were expected to pay for their whole quota and the paper was virtually unsaleable) also on their pockets.

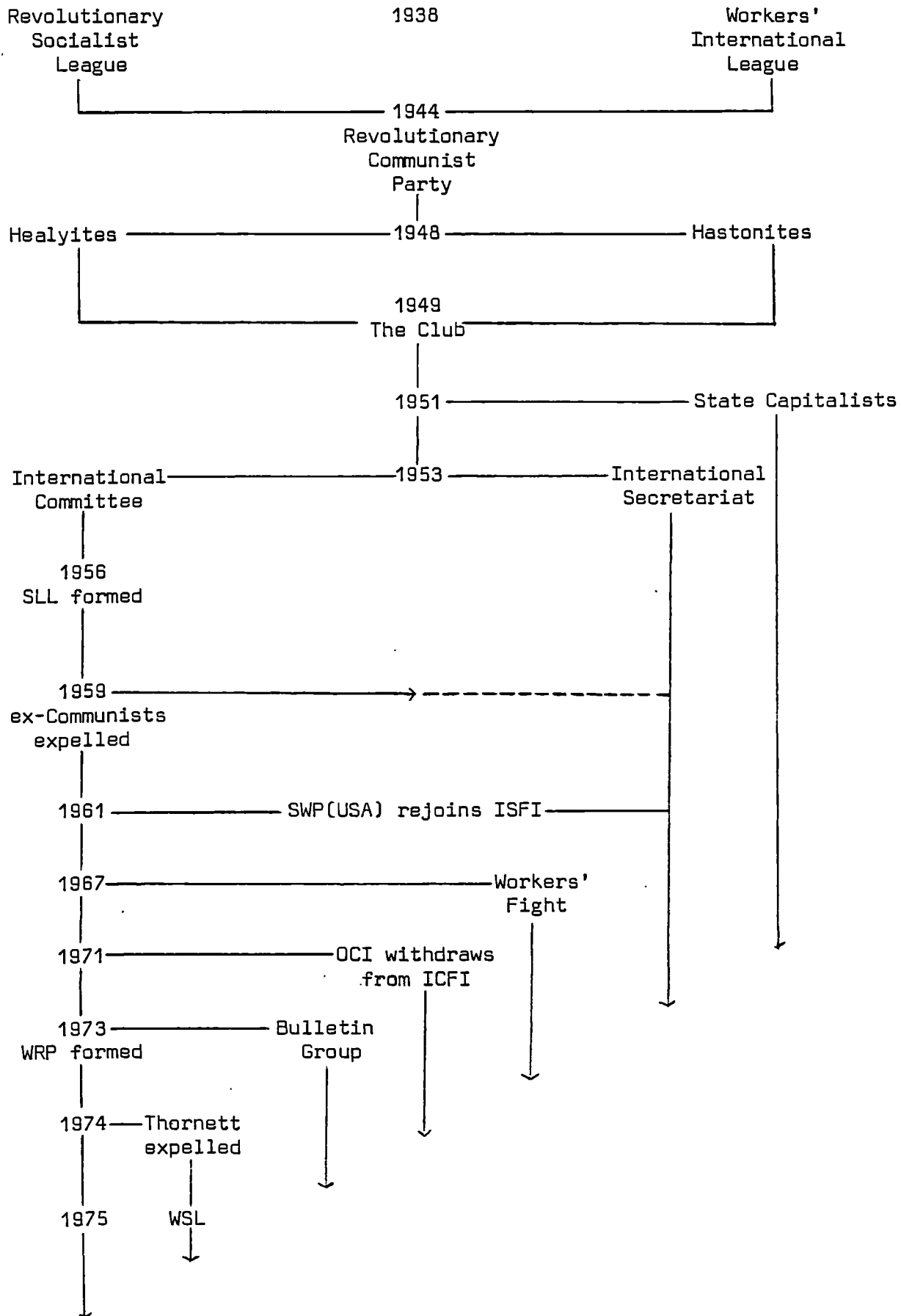
1971 saw the international isolation of Healy completed when the French section, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, withdrew from the International Committee. Thus in 1973, Healy judged the Socialist Labour League to be sufficiently mature to be able to form the new revolutionary party. The preparations began in March 1973 with a rally at the Empire Pool Wembley. A forty-foot picture of Gerry Healy was projected on a screen, and a membership drive was launched which brought the membership up to around 1,000 in time for the official declaration of the Workers' Revolutionary Party in November. On the same day that the WRP was launched, one of the largest demonstrations which London was to see against the military takeover in Chile attracted wide support from every section of the left, from the Young Liberals to the Communist Federation of Britain, but not the WRP. It is indicative of the extent of Healy's sectarianism that this march was only briefly and disparagingly referred to in a Workers' Press given over to celebrating the birth of the new party.

The decision to launch the WRP provoked a number of members of the old SLL to break with Healy and form their own organisation, the Bulletin Group. This group currently practises open entry into the Labour Party, looking back favourably to the work of the SLL in the days when it too had operated in the ranks of the Labour Party. The Bulletin Group is the British affiliate of the French OCI-led, Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Healy has actually forbidden his members to even read Bulletin Group propaganda and has ordered them to send any Bulletin Group material they might receive directly to the WRP's Clapham headquarters.

The formal transformation of the Socialist Labour League into the Workers' Revolutionary Party failed, however, to produce any marked upturn in the group's fortunes, or any change in Healy's organisational methods. On the eve of the first annual conference after the founding of the party, Alan Thornett was expelled, along with two hundred leading members, for voicing serious criticisms of the party's leadership - particularly Gerry

Figure 17.

The Genealogy of the Workers' Revolutionary Party.



Healy. The expelled group formed themselves into the Workers' Socialist League in 1975. 1974 also saw a second major setback for the WRP - the collapse of the Workers' Press.

We enter the most recent chapter of this brief history in 1975, which saw the launching of the WRP's new daily paper, the tabloid Daily Newline, financed, according to varying reports, by the Banda brothers' business interests and the Gaddafi regime. Finally, in May of that year, the WRP set up the grandiosely titled International Committee of Enquiry into Security and the Fourth International. This body, under the direction of Gerry Healy, has published a number of reports (WRP 1976/1977), the aim of which seems to be to vilify all sections of the international Trotskyist movement, except the tiny International Committee, as being accomplices of Stalin's GPU in the assassination of Leon Trotsky. Not surprisingly, the leaders of Healy's one time co-affiliates in the International Committee are singled out for the most vituperative treatment. Novack and Hansen of the American Socialist Workers' Party, and Pierre Lambert of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, are among the victims of these attacks. The response of the entire Trotskyist movement has been an unusual display of unity in the face of Healy's accusations. On 17th January 1977, at the Friends' Meeting House in London, leaders of the International Trotskyist movement who have been implacable opponents for many years appeared together on the platform in a united rejection of Healy's claims.

#### Grid and Group

The history of the WRP and its antecedents, and the International Committee of the Fourth International which is dominated by its British Section, is a history of splits and expulsions which would seem to fulfil our expectations of organisations at weak grid/strong group. It is also clear that the various Healyite organisations have not continuously occupied the same section of the D quadrant. For example, during the brief period of the SLL's success in the late nineteen fifties, the League's publications were broad-based, flexible and open to a variety of standpoints. League members even organised sales of Tribune, an act which would bring about expulsion from the WRP of the mid-1970s. These facts indicate a shift to stronger group since 1958, for we know that this period of openness was short-lived. Since the expulsion of the ex-Communists in 1959, the sectarianism of the Healyites has grown stronger.

However, the changes in the WRP have been far less extensive than those of SWP which will be examined in the next chapter. The current assessment based on the period 1974-78 may be fairly reliably assumed to reflect the structure of the WRP for the preceding decade at least.

### Group

The WRP is hostile to all similar interest groups. It never enters alliances, even of a temporary tactical sort, with other political organisations of the far-left. These groups have all been roundly condemned by the WRP in articles in its daily press and in a series of pamphlets (see bibliography under WRP).

These attacks typically muster quotations from Marx and Engels' Selected Correspondence, CPSU Congress reports of speeches by Lenin and Trotsky, and the history of the Russian Revolutionaries, in order to demonstrate the duplicity of rival parties and groups. Typical of comments by WRP members on the rest of the far-left is the verdict of one informant that; "The Socialist Workers' Party is a ruling-class anti-trotskyist diversion". Tariq Ali sums up the organisational stance of the SLL in his book The Coming British Revolution:

The number of cadres who left revolutionary politics because of their experiences with the SLL must be fairly high. An offshoot of this is that the SLL is scared of united-front activity with other revolutionary tendencies lest its members are forced to enter into real political discussion and become disillusioned even sooner than they would otherwise be. For this reason organisational exclusiveness is a cornerstone of the SLL practice, and the concepts of 'party loyalty' and 'party pride' are forced down the throats of its members. Its very lack of political confidence in its own ideas and its failure to educate its members politically causes the demonology and the paranoia. (Ali 1972:130)

I am confident that we can provide a more substantial explanation for the demonology and paranoia than this. However, Ali's description of the WRP's exclusiveness correctly identifies a strategy of isolating the membership from political activity with other revolutionaries.

The WRP claims a monopoly of revolutionary truth and goes to considerable lengths to prevent this truth from being polluted. For example, members are forbidden to read Bulletin Group publications, and the leadership conducts extensive polemics against the SWP, IMG, and WSL, which are only read by WRP members and PhD students. The language of

such polemics leaves no doubt about the beliefs of the authors in their exclusive access to truth. Mike Banda's polemical pamphlet on the IS (SWP) concludes:

So it was in Russia; so it is today in Britain. Only those who assimilate the theory and practice of Leninism can claim to lead the working class to socialism.

In this scheme of things there is no place for the Cliff group, the successors of English syndicalism and of the 'economists'. It must be exposed, discredited and smashed politically into pulp. (Banda 1972:33)

The strongest opprobrium is reserved for one time members of the SLL or WRP, whose differences with the prevailing Healyite orthodoxy are regarded not as legitimate disagreements, nor even as errors. WRP apostates are regarded as conscious traitors to the party, to Marxism, and to the working class. (Wilson (1967:24) regards this sort of behaviour as characteristic of sectarianism in a religious context.) For example, Banda writes of the WSL in the introduction to the WRP's polemical riposte to Thornett:

The intensity of their hatred of Marxist philosophy and the revolutionary party is matched only by their shameless apologies for and prostration before the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies - the instruments of bourgeois domination over the working class. In capitulating to the bureaucracy, this group assists the counter-revolutionary preparations of the monopolies and their state.

The evolution of this group of anti-Marxists subsequent to its split with and expulsion from the Workers' Revolutionary Party provides irrefutable proof of the correctness of the WRP's struggle to defend and develop the Marxist theory of knowledge.

This struggle is inseparable from the building of the revolutionary party and is the indispensable pre-condition for the seizure of power. (Banda 1975:viii)

This extract displays both the vituperative attitude of the WRP leadership to rivals and ex-members and the exclusive claims to understanding the Marxist theory of knowledge which is "the indispensable pre-condition for the seizure of power". We already have a full enough picture of the WRP to award it a maximum of 2 for its hostile attitude to alliances.

The content and literary style of the above quotation is also typical of the spoken utterances of WRP members, which give the impression to outsiders that they have learned a catechism rather than thought through their political positions individually. The standard

style and party jargon make WRP speakers instantly recognisable in public meetings, and often leads them to be regarded by other members of the far-left as self-parodies of Trotskyists. Their strong sense of witness, their perennial warnings of impending catastrophe, and fierce party pride, may combine to make WRP members objects of fun amongst fellow students or trades' unionists. In turn this may increase their political and social isolation. Thus, the nature and extent of their interactions with fellow members will be relatively greater. WRP members do maintain a high level of informal contact with one another, and they will often drink together. But they are nothing like so exclusive as the Workers' Institute. For example co-residence is not a rule for WRP members, as it is for the WI, although it is not uncommon amongst students, actors, and leading militants. Hence, the WRP receives a medium score of 1 each for informal contact and co-residence, but a high score of 2 for witness, which is almost as strong as in the Institute.

WRP members may be members of different sorts of organisation. Membership of trades unions is encouraged (unlike in the WI, which sees them as extensions of the fascist state), but members have little time for the established leaderships and traditional union practices or for the rival Rank and File organisation which is nurtured by the SWP. The WRP have their own trades union front organisation founded in 1969. The All Trades' Unions Alliance was based on the Oxford Trades' Unions Liaison Committee which had been set up by shop stewards, including Alan Thornett, from the Cowley car plant. Oxford was one of the few industrial bases of the SLL until it became the scene of the Thornett split in 1974. The ATUA has since become largely moribund. Hence, activity in existing labour movement structures is limited among WRP members, but in no way is it excluded in pursuance of the revolutionary aims of the group. This index therefore receives a medium score of 1.

Membership of sports and social clubs is not forbidden to WRP members, although extensive activities outside the party are discouraged if they divert too much of a member's energy in other directions. Thus the WRP scores 1 on the basis of membership of different sorts of organisations. However, the total group score is boosted by the extent of financial commitment which the party requires from its members. WRP members are expected to contribute a substantial percentage of their incomes to party funds and activities. In addition to direct payments of dues, members are expected to purchase large quantities of party literature and to buy

Table 5.

Group Score Sheet for the Workers' Revolutionary Party.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Formal Activities	2	2	4
2) Informal Contacts	2	1	2
3) Co-Residence	3	1	3
4) Financial Commitment	2	2	4
5) Involvement in Alliances	2	2	4
6) Internal Integration	3	2	6
7) Membership of different sorts of organisations	2	1	2
8) Activity in established Labour Movement	3	1	3
9) Requirement to Witness	2	2	4
<u>Total weighted score for group.....</u>			<u>32</u>
Total possible score for group.....			42
Weak group (D1) scores.....			0 - 13
Medium group (D2) scores.....			14 - 28
Strong group (D3) scores.....			29 - 42



copies of the party's daily newspaper for resale. Although the level of financial support is not as extreme as the total commitment of the Workers' Institute residents, it is probably stronger than that expected of members of the International Marxist Group and is certainly greater than is required from Socialist Workers' Party members. We can therefore give the WRP a score of 2 on this index.

The amount of formal activity in the WRP varies around the country according to its strength. In areas where membership figures are healthy and branches active (since the Thornett split these are mainly confined to the London area) there are regular, frequent, formal meetings and activities several times a week. In addition, the WRP, and the SLL before it, has long had a reputation for mobilising large crowds of members and hangers-on for its national rallies, autumn camps, and the demonstrations to which it lends its support, or even organises. Where the membership is more thinly spread, formal meetings may be less frequent. In these cases organisation may depend more on maintaining informal networks whose members crystallise into a formal pattern of activity to impress prospective new members in the face of a campus or an industrial dispute or if ordered to shake up their organisation by the central leadership. However, in general, the level of formal activities is very much higher than in mainstream political parties, such as the Labour or Communist Parties, and tends to be more inward looking than in the IMG or the SWP. Hence the WRP scores 2 for this index.

Finally, the WRP is very strongly integrated into a monolithic structure. It has no federal characteristics and does not tolerate any formal or informal factions, despite the formal provisions for them in the party's constitution. Thornett quotes Healy as saying:

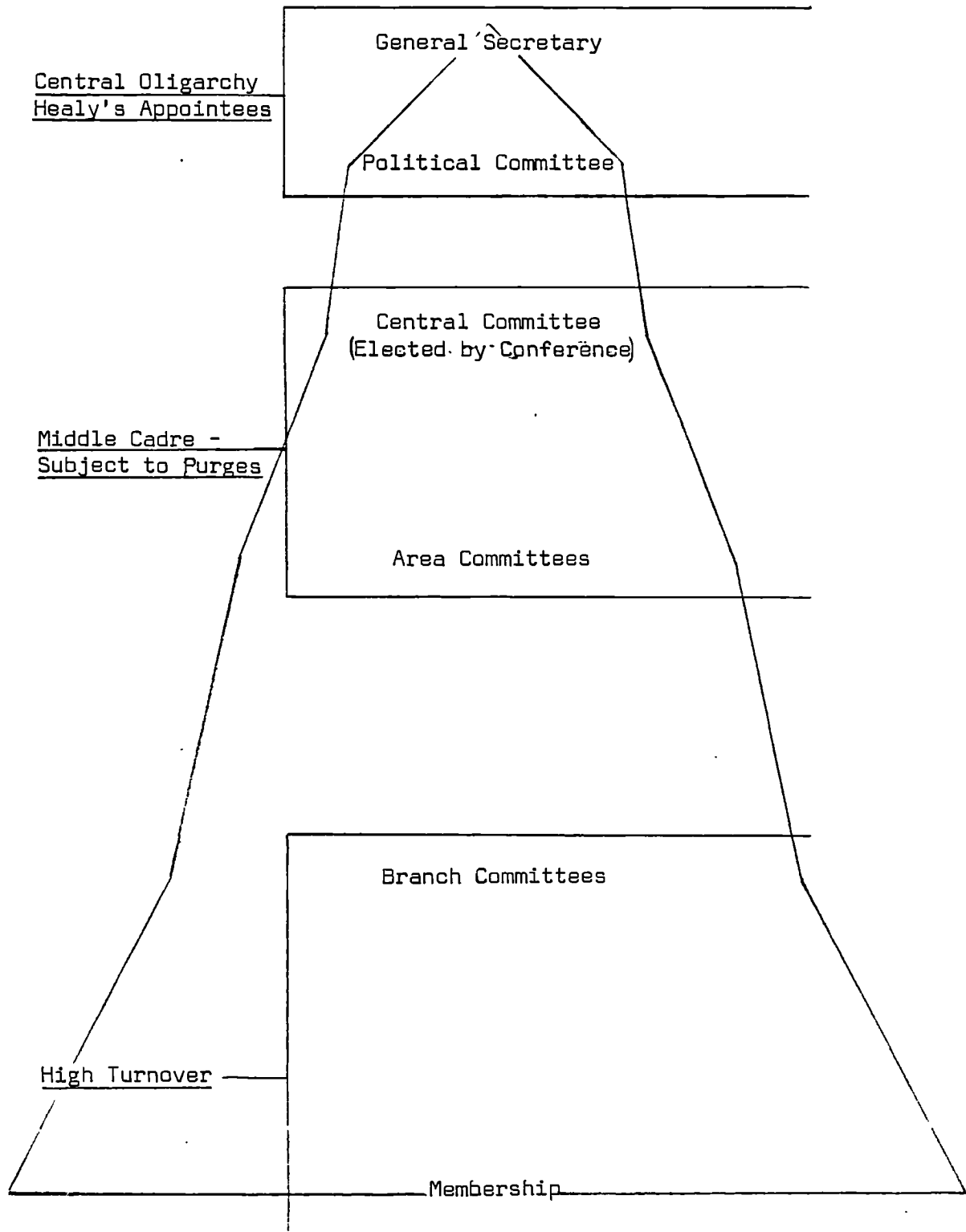
I will not have factions in this party - I will expel anyone who forms a faction in this party. (Thornett 1975:73)

This contrasts strongly with the formally legitimated factionalism of the IMG and the federal origins and informal factionalism of the SWP. Hence we can give the WRP a high score of 2 on this index.

The foregoing description of the WRP indicates a very high group rating. The scores for each index, summarised in table 5, show five high scores and four medium, giving a weighted total of 32. This is lower than

Figure 18.

Hierarchy in the Workers' Revolutionary Party..



the score for the Workers' Institute, but is still strong enough to locate the WRP in group band D3.

### Grid

The Workers' Revolutionary Party is organised on strongly hierarchical principles. The General Secretary is the acknowledged party leader, along with a small Political Committee which is selected from among its own members by the larger Central Committee. The Central Committee is elected each year at the Annual Conference, which is attended by representatives of the party branches and areas. The Central Committee also has the responsibility for establishing special interest committees, such as the Trades' Unions Sub-Committee whose task is to co-ordinate the nation-wide activity of the party in a particular sphere. The WRP scores 2 on the basis of this extensive explicit hierarchy. However, we shall shortly see that this hierarchy tends to be short-circuited in practice. Specialist sub-committees may not be convened and Area Committees become moribund, leaving the hierarchy functioning as a chain of command headed by the General Secretary and his immediate associates on the Political Committee.

The central leadership of the WRP openly commands its membership, with little pretence of serving it:

Healy, as general secretary runs a very militant organisation with himself as absolute leader and with the assistance of perhaps a dozen trusted aides. (Thayer 1965:133)

The imminence of a revolutionary cataclysm is used to reinforce the traditional Trotskyist emphasis on the development of a correct leadership for the working class. However, whereas Trotsky followed Lenin in assigning an elite role to a vanguard revolutionary party, Healy has abrogated this role exclusively to the central leadership of the WRP, whilst the rank and file membership is assigned a purely instrumental role. The rank and file accept this situation, apparently for two reasons - Healy's appeals for the subjugation of internal dissent to the maintenance of the group in the face of imminent social catastrophe and the rapid turnover of membership.

The leadership of the WRP, and the SLL before it, has consistently predicted an imminent breakdown of the present world order. Healy wrote

to the leaders of the SWP(USA) in 1953 that:

Firstly the war seems to be getting very near. Since the end of the last our sections in Western Europe have had a rough time, splits and sharp internal fights have taken a severe toll, both in England and France... Everyone wants to get on with the job, and the nearness of the war adds to their determination... Our movement must not go into war smashed up and divided. (SWP International Secretariat Documents. Vol.2:82)

Twenty years later, the pages of Workers' Press were continuing to stress the imminent possibility of war being waged by the United States in the Middle East in the interests of Zionism and American oil supplies. There was even the suggestion that this would lead inevitably to world-wide nuclear conflict. The theme was revived in Corin Redgrave's election broadcast for the WRP in 1979, when he referred to the possibility of outright war with the Soviet Union. It is clear from Healy's own words in 1953 that the threat of war can be exploited to suppress dissent in the name of unity in the face of a major crisis. Similarly, threats of growing state totalitarianism are used to enforce unanimity and to forestall rival claims to leadership in the party. The introduction of the three day week in 1973 was seen by the WRP as the Tory government's way of crashing the economy and implementing a recession (Workers' Press 31/12/73).

During this period an imminent military coup was predicted by the party and action taken organisationally in preparation. (Thornett 1976:2)

Another opportunity to close the party's ranks was occasioned by the well publicised discovery of six .22 bullets during a police raid on the party's Derbyshire school in 1976. This was naturally interpreted by Healy as a prelude to an intensification of state oppression. He ordered that internal security be stepped up within the WRP and that all members' energies should be directed toward the external enemy. By exploiting the theme of security Healy avoids having to be accountable to his membership.

In an organisation of such small size and of such militancy, the presence of this leadership clique looms large. Since most of the rank and file members are naive, they tend to accept more readily the need for secrecy, and the changing of rules in the interests of 'security'. As a result, an unusual amount of power rests in the hands of the leaders. They dominate the organisation completely with Healy the most dominant of all. (Thayer 1965:134)

Thayer here describes the Healyite rank and file as naive. This points to the second reason why Healy is able to maintain his position. The naivety of WRP members is largely due to the extraordinarily high turnover of members. Thayer estimates the party life of the average SLL members in 1965 as one year. My own contacts with the WRP in the 1970s would indicate that two years might be a reasonable estimate. The intense level of activity demanded of WRP members, and the perennial failure of Healy's catastrophist vision, are clearly two of the factors involved in this rate of turnover. Perhaps most important is the basis on which members are recruited and the inadequacy of the socialisation and political education of recruits. The party's 1974 election campaign opened with an edict from Healy that the party should recruit 3,000 members in 10 days! Clearly the standards of political experience and Marxist education required of such recruits could not be as exacting as the Leninist notion of the vanguard party would seem to require. However, this was not a new development. Ali wrote in 1972:

Confusing the development of their organisation with the building of real support within the workers' movement for revolutionary politics, continuing to recruit non-political youth on a non-political basis to sell newspapers, the SLL today stands out as the best and classic example of a sect as defined by Marx. (Ali 1972:129)

When recruited to the party, members are given only a limited political education. In practical terms it consists mainly of selling newspapers, and in theoretical terms, it is mainly limited to the internalisation of Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks and Healy's own lectures. Despite the extreme emphasis of the WRP on Marxist theory of knowledge, the level of understanding of the subject is confined solely to the orthodoxy of Engels' Dialectics of Nature. Subsequent contributors to Marxist thought (with the limited exceptions of Lenin and Trotsky, who were better organisers than philosophers) are denounced as 'revisionists'. Actual debate on Marxist theory of the sort that is to be found in the pages of Marxism Today or New Left Review is completely absent.

The high level of turnover, and the low level of rank and file political education, have almost entirely precluded the development of a significant middle cadre in the WRP. The one possible exception to this was in the Western Area which formed the basis of the WSL split. The absence of a middle cadre, along with the high turnover of members, would make it very difficult for the best intentioned leadership to be

readily accountable to its rank and file. My own experience of the WRP, and the comments of previous observers, do not lead one to attribute strong democratic motives to the party's leaders:

There is some indication that this policy is a deliberate one in order that the leadership remain intact and unthreatened by a rank and file which might have a few of their own ideas to contribute. (Thayer 1965:135)

The WRP emerges from this discussion as an organisation in which the leadership enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy at the expense of the membership, to which it cannot be held adequately accountable. In fact, the leadership decides the party line, legitimates it by appropriate references to the basic texts of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, and subsequently holds the membership accountable for its unsuccessful implementation:

The (second) damaging generalisation put forward particularly inside the party is that the successful carrying through of the party's programme centres on the work of the individual member, and that if targets are not met, or campaigns not successful, then it is the individual comrade's theoretical weakness which is to blame. (Thornett 1976:41)

On this basis the WRP must score a maximum 2 for accountability. Although a lower score is hinted at on the basis of legitimation through extensive references to oracular texts, we must postpone scoring this index until we have looked a little closer at disciplinary procedures.

In contrast to the high turnover of the membership, the leadership of the WRP remains fairly static. New members readily accept the role of the wise veterans who make up the central clique around Healy. It is these recent converts who are most easily mustered to support the old guard against a challenge from a figure such as Thornett. Leadership in the WRP is ascribed rather than achieved because few new leaders (if any) emerge from the rank and file. This must be partly due to the fact that few ordinary members stay in the organisation long enough to gain sufficient experience and credibility to take on major responsibilities in the party. It is also due to the tremendous gulf between the membership and the leadership clique, which both discourages potential leaders and causes the existing ones to view their emergence as threatening rather than strengthening the organisation. Leadership is therefore ascribed rather than achieved (score 2), because the members find it well estab-

lished upon joining the WRP and leave it equally well entrenched when their time comes to resign or be expelled from the party. Thornett points out this entrenchment of the leadership as a deliberate policy in relation to the recruits made during the period leading up to the transformation of the SLL into the WRP:

It comes out clearly as a method when we contrast the rapid quantitative expansion of national membership of the SLL which took place in the campaigns leading to the launching of the Workers' Revolutionary Party and immediately afterwards with the narrow-based, tightly-knit central leadership of the party, which was and is unable to train and bring forward into a position of national leadership a single new comrade. (Thornett 1976:30)

The central clique is well established and thus strongly respected by the relatively inexperienced rank and file membership. The turnover of ordinary members is so rapid that there is no middle cadre in the WRP to link new members to the leadership and to socialise new recruits. This instability ensures the continuing leadership of the Healy clique, despite the failure of its perennial prophesies of impending doom for the capitalist system and its replacement, through a revolutionary cataclysm, by the new age of socialism. The WRP earns a score of 2 on the index of turnover of officers.

The major decisions within the WRP are made at the centre, and there is seldom any negotiations of such decisions amongst the party membership before they are made. This has long been the case with Healy's groups. We have noted how the decision to pull the SLL out of the Labour Party was made without consultation with the membership. The move to convert the SLL into the WRP emanated from its Clapham headquarters, and the membership were merely invited to approve the change and formally enact it. Thornett comments on the level of internal debate in the WRP:

...cadres are not trained in Marxism. They are trained to repeat formulae of dialectical materialism and given some grounding in principled struggles which are the history of the WRP as a section of the International Committee. But, in living terms, no education takes place, because there is no real discussion or analysis within the party of the party's practice in the class struggle. (Thornett 1976:44)

Usually, debates about policy and administrative issues take place after the event, if at all. For example, we will shortly see how Thornett and the group which subsequently became the Workers' Socialist

League were expelled before they had the opportunity to put their case to the scheduled WRP national conference. The full range of issues involved only became widely known to the WRP rank and file in the course of a public polemic waged between Thornett and Mike Banda during the following year, by which time Thornett was already established in WRP mythology as a renegade Menshevik.

The absence of widespread negotiation of policy decisions leads to a high duplication of function at membership level. Because all important decisions are made centrally, local membership functions are almost entirely instrumental, and there is therefore little scope for individual innovation and specialisation. For much the same reasons, role performance tends to be fairly standardised. If a member attempts to surpass the standard and innovate, he is likely to be regarded as an ambitious individualist. The abilities of individual members tend to be assessed on the basis of how many daily papers they sell, how regularly they attend meetings, and how well they can deliver the standard party line in speeches at union meetings, conferences, etc. However, this duplication of function does not extend right to the top of the leadership, as is the case with the Workers' Institute. Hence we should only score 1 on this index for the WRP.

I have not been able to make any first hand observations of the central leadership, and most rank and file informants were very sketchy about the operation of this central clique. However, Thornett gives us his own critical account of conditions on the central committee from which the following extract is taken:

...the truth is that there has not been any real discussion on the CC for years. Alan Thornett, Tony Richardson and Kate Blakeny have been virtually the only CC members to introduce any kind of questioning of the leadership perspectives. At each meeting CC members struggle to make points they know the leadership expect to hear because they know that the slightest deviant contribution will be held as an anti-party position and attacked as such - predominantly by denigration and invective. (Thornett 1976:85)

Thornett also tells how individual members of the central leadership will abrogate to themselves responsibilities for areas of policy which are supposed to fall under the aegis of specialised sub-committees of the Central Committee. The sub-committees may be ignored, have recommendations reversed, or worse still they may not be convened at all.



At the founding conference of the Workers' Revolutionary Party in November last year a number of workers were brought onto the central Committee from various industries to strengthen the work of the CC. They reflected the new layers which had come into the party in the period of expansion which preceded the conference. (Most of these workers have left or no longer attend the CC for one reason or another.)

At the CC meeting following the conference a trade union sub-committee was elected from the CC to direct the trade union work nationally. This committee met a week later under the direction of comrade Mike Banda to start its work...

In my view a committee must have, whilst working under the direction of the party leadership, authority to function. If its decisions are consistently overruled, without the knowledge of members of the committee, the committee will become ineffective and will die. This happened. From December until August the committee never met.

At the July meeting of the CC the TU committee was reconstituted with a smaller number of members. It met in early August. I again expressed my view that if the committee was to do its job it must have authority to function. I was assured that on this occasion it would...

...After this discussion it was agreed unanimously that we should have a national conference in October. Two weeks later comrade Banda informed me that it had been cancelled. In the event no conferences were held at all. The TU committee has not met since. (Thornett 1976:4-5)

The operation of insulations against non-members of the Healy clique extends to sections of the Central Committee. It appears that the central clique composes the Political Committee, which consists of Healy's nominees elected from the CC. The assignment of instrumental roles to party members applies from branch level, through Area Committees, to the CC itself. So we see that the WRP has an explicit formal hierarchy with an instrumental function, which is in principle open to all. In fact it is dominated by a ruling caucus which is able to manipulate the rules of formal organisation because of its entrenched position within the party. It is clear that both the decision making powers and the right to adjudicate disputes are firmly invested in Healy and his immediate associates. Hence the WRP scores 2 on both of these indices.

The membership figures of the WRP are only known to the General Secretary (Widgery 1976:100) who also has summary rights of expulsion. This sanction is frequently threatened and carried out at all levels of the party against those with the temerity to criticise the leadership:

The other factor which inhibited any kind of critical discussion at CC meetings was the constant threat of removal from the committee or expulsion from the party. Healy never recognised that CC members are elected from conference. Comrade DT from the North East coast, for example, was removed from the CC at the July 1974 meeting because it was said by Healy that his contribution was 'pessimistic'. Healy's normal response to a contribution he doesn't like is 'you should be thrown out'. This method avoids politics and avoids clarification and restricts the development of CC members and of the party; it also restricts the party leadership's ability to assess the development of the movement. (Thornett 1976:86)

Nowhere is the entrenched position of the leadership, and Healy in particular, clearer than in the operation of sanctions against internal opposition. We know that Healy is able to expel without reference to the membership, and without right of appeal. But, whilst he does not shrink from using this prerogative, there are less extreme measures available to him such as suspension from membership or removal from office. Hence the WRP scores 1 for the type of sanctions it operates.

Disciplinary decisions are justified in the first instance by reference to breaches of party rules and discipline. This is evidenced by the letters of expulsion of WRP members published in the appendix to the WSL's collection of Thornett's documents (Thornett 1976:123ff). These cite clauses and sub-sections of the WRP constitution as the basis of a series of disciplinary charges such as failure to attend meetings when summoned, association with persons expelled or suspended from the WRP, etc. However, these failings are later traced to the alleged political degeneration of the miscreant through reference to the appropriate Marxist text. As we shall see in the next section, Banda's response to the WSL's criticisms is peppered with such references to Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky on virtually every page (Banda 1975). Hence the WRP scores 1 for legitimation because its appeals to rules to legitimate decisions is attenuated by reference to oracular texts, both here and in the cases we discussed earlier.

Access to space is not an obviously controlled factor in the WRP. However, it occurs in two contexts which are relevant to our enquiry into the grid character of the WRP. Members of one area are not allowed to address meetings in other areas without the permission of the national leadership. This can be used to contain dissent in a particular area, whilst no such restrictions apply to Healy and the Political Committee in promoting their own interests. In extreme cases, an individual may be

Table 6.

Grid Score Sheet for the Workers' Revolutionary Party.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Negotiation of Policy	4	2	8
2) Adjudicating Rights	4	2	8
3) Legitimation of Decisions	3	1	3
4) Sanctions	1	1	1
5) Duplication of Function	3	1	3
6) Hierarchy	3	2	6
7) Leadership	2	2	4
8) Turnover of Officers	2	2	4
9) Accountability	3	2	4
10) Access to Space	3	1	3

Total weighted score for grid.....46

Total possible score for grid.....56

Weak grid (Da) scores..... 0 - 18

Medium grid (Db) scores.....19 - 37

Strong grid (Dc) scores.....38 - 56

confined to a particular town by the leadership, under threat of expulsion, as was the case with Thornett at one stage in his dispute with Healy (Thornett 1976:109). A further constraint on the membership's access to space stems from rules which prevent members of individual branches from extending their activities into new areas and possibly building up the basis for new branches. This sort of activity is regarded by the Political Committee as their own prerogative, lest it be used by an opposition tendency concentrated in a particular branch to covertly build up a basis of wider support with new recruits to the party. However, these regulations are impossible to effectively enforce around the country, so although they indicate a strong grid score, their limited efficacy means that the WRP only scores 1 on this index.

The internal organisation of the WRP emerges as having a much stronger grid rating than the Workers' Institute. It has seven strong scores, for negotiation of policy, adjudicating rights, sanctions, hierarchy, leadership, turnover of officers, and accountability. The remaining three indices have received medium scores, ie. legitimation, duplication of function, and access to space. The total weighted grid score for the WRP is 46 out of a possible 56 (table 6). This is high enough to locate the organisation as a whole in grid band Dc, although it should be borne in mind that the leadership enjoys a much greater degree of autonomy and is less constrained by insulations than the ordinary membership.

\* \* \*

The overall grid/group position of the WRP is Dc3, the top right hand corner of the whole weak grid/strong group quadrant. In terms of the argument about the relation between egalitarian sectarianism and millenarianism advanced in chapter five, the strength of the grid constraints in the WRP relative to those of the WI would account for the differences in cosmology between these two very strong group organisations. The wholly millenarian perspective of the Workers' Institute is not shared by the WRP. However, the WRP's perennial prophesies of imminent capitalist catastrophe, which Healy claims is only staved off by the perfidy of the Communist Parties and the Bretton Woods monetary agreement, is strongly reminiscent of the cargo cultists belief that the white man is all that stands between himself and his true heritage - the cargo which is his by right. The WRP is of course, still located in quadrant D, and although it deviates from our paradigmatic millenarian case of the

Workers' Institute by having more internal differentiation, it preserves a characteristic egalitarian ideology. Time and space are partially collapsed in Healy's catastrophist vision of socialist revolution and his grandiose attachment to his own tiny Fourth International, but internal differentiation in the WRP reduces the potential for fully developed millenarianism.

Here on the borderline with strong grid, there is an unstable co-existence of the egalitarian principles to which the WRP is supposedly committed as a revolutionary socialist organisation and the exercise of classificatory constraints by an oligarchical clique, fearful of rival leaders and groups in this competitive environment. It is on this tension that I wish to focus in relation to the Thornett expulsions, in the expectation that a grid/group perspective will facilitate our understanding of the organisational dynamics involved in the frequent splits of the far-left.

#### The Expulsion of the Workers' Socialist League

In considering the structure and cosmology of the far-left further, it is instructive to look in some detail at the expulsion of some 200 WRP members in 1974, who subsequently formed themselves into the Workers' Socialist League. This dispute is well documented on both sides; indeed, one gets the impression that the production of documents and counter-documents constitutes the most substantial activity in this, and many other disputes on the Trotskyist left.

The Thornett expulsions occurred in the week preceding the first national conference of the Workers' Revolutionary Party in December 1974. This was Healy's response to two documents which had been prepared for pre-conference discussion by a small group of party members who felt that the degeneration of the party demonstrated a pressing need to return to the principles of the Transitional Programme. The documents were first published internally under the name of Alan Thornett, who was then a member of the Central Committee of the party and a leading cadre in the Western Area. They have been subsequently published in a collection put together by the Workers' Socialist League (Thornett 1976).

The ostensible political purpose of the documents, and the dispute which arose around them, was to warn the membership of the WRP that the

sectarian politics, and the maximum programme (demanding instant socialism) of the leadership, had been liquidating the party, particularly in the trades union movement. By autumn 1974, this degeneration had reached the stage where every region outside of London was in a state of near collapse, except for the Western Area which was expanding until its leadership was expelled for its criticisms of the national leadership, in particular that of Gerry Healy.

The publication of these documents was the watershed of a six months long struggle between Thornett, and the Oxford leadership, and the national leadership of the party. Healy had already paved the way for the expulsion of the Thornett group by administratively isolating them from the rest of the party, and temporarily accommodating their criticisms, whilst changing the constitution to remove the right of appeal to conference against expulsion. In the week preceding conference, Thornett and those who refused to denounce him were summarily expelled from the party. They were further exposed to an extensive campaign of vilification as: subjective idealists; Mensheviks; Kantians; anti-Marxists; etc. The party lost over two hundred members in this split and despite its energetic defence against the Thornett charges, it does not seem to have recovered from the destruction of its only thriving area at a time of general decline.

In examining Thornett's attack on the leadership, and Healy's response, our attention is drawn to the strategies which they each employed in their struggle and to the cosmological bias of the normative themes which each exploited in pursuit of his cause. Both of Thornett's critical documents appealed to the membership of the WRP to 'correct the wrong positions of the party' on the basis of four themes:

- 1) A return to the tenets of the Transitional Programme.
- 2) An attack on party bureaucracy.
- 3) An attack on theoreticism.
- 4) The demand for the right to organise factions.

As we shall see, all of these may be interpreted as appeals characteristic of a weak grid cosmology. However, the implications of his demands for the group dimension are less clear cut. Thornett attributes the growth of bureaucracy and theoretical mystification to the penetration of bourgeois elements into the party and calls for a compensatory strengthening of the group boundary, whilst his fourth theme implies a weakening of group by the creation of factional sub-groups, thus reducing integration.

Each of the four main appeals contained in the Thornett documents takes the form of a well documented indictment of the leadership. Firstly, the leadership is accused of betraying the founding charter of the Fourth International - The Transitional Programme. The crux of Thornett's argument is that by posing demands for instant socialism, a "maximum programme", the party is passively expecting the various economic crises of the seventies to turn the working class towards revolutionary socialism. This he sees as an abandonment of the main argument of the Transitional Programme that it is necessary to build an active leadership for the working class which will enable the masses in their daily activity to find a bridge between present demands and the full socialist programme of revolution:

Instead of this approach, we have predominating the sectarian conception, condemned by Trotsky, that 'revolutionary events inevitably push the workers towards us. This passive expectancy, under a cover of idealistic messianism, has nothing in common with Marxism'. (Thornett 1976:11)

My argument in the previous chapter is that a characteristic of weak grid/strong group cosmologies is an ability to foreshorten historical time, such that the distance between the founding ancestors and the present, is but a short step. The appeal for a return to the founding charter seems to affirm that the relevance of the Transitional Programme is seen as immediate and literal by at least a significant section of Thornett's intended audience. This is despite the fact that the forty years since it was written has seen changes in the world balance of power through the outcome of a world war, post-war economic recovery, rising working class living standards, and many other changes which could not have been envisaged by Trotsky in 1938. For these very reasons, most Trotskyist groups in Britain today do not place a great deal of emphasis on literal interpretation of this text. However, the WRP has always vigorously defended its immediate relevance. Hence Thornett's accusation (1976:58) that the party leaders had relegated the Transitional Programme from its role as a guide to action to being a mere commentary, constituted a serious accusation of betrayal of basic principles. The effectiveness of such a strategy depends on the compression of history in weak grid sects, which enables a charter such as the Transitional Programme to be inflexibly interpreted forty years on. Thornett (1976:1), along with the WRP as a whole, remains wedded to the conception that the world history from the Russian Revolution to the present day is a single epoch of socialist

revolution.

The successful manipulation of the classic texts of Trotskyist Marxism is clearly a key factor in the kind of contest which took place between Thornett and Healy. In this battle over interpretation of oracles, the Transitional Programme was a particularly effective weapon for a challenge to the established leadership of the WRP. This is because of the central concern of the text with the development of correct leadership for the working class. Trotsky claimed that the Stalinist bureaucracy was damming the tide of European revolution. By criticising the Healy leadership for abandoning the Transitional Programme and bureaucratising the WRP, Thornett was turning Trotsky's critique of Stalin directly against Gerry Healy and the central leadership in the WRP (Thornett 1976:26-37). Furthermore, the leadership is accused of falsifying its own historical charters by covering up Healy's initial support for Pablo in 1952 and by selecting documents for publication in the collection Trotskyism Versus Revisionism which exaggerate the role of the Healyites in the struggle against Pablo in the Fourth International during the 1950s.

The attacks on bureaucracy and theoreticism are both criticisms of specialised roles in the party. Bureaucratic specialisation is of course inevitably hierarchical, whilst theoretical specialisation separates the planners from the activists and may reduce the latter to instrumental roles. However, bureaucracy in Marxist parlance refers not merely to the existence of offices and specialised roles but to organisation by officials without widespread discussion amongst the members. Thornett is actually criticising the lack of negotiation, and other features of what we would describe as a relatively strong grid environment, in the WRP. The maintenance of such an environment is in contravention of the democratic principles upon which the Fourth International was supposedly founded in opposition to the undemocratic practices of the Stalinist bureaucracies (Thornett 1976:36). Theoreticism is more than the separation of theorists and activists, it is the development of theories in isolation from political practice and the use of extravagant and often mystifying theoretical exegeses to maintain an entrenched leadership position. It might almost be described as a form of philosophical intimidation by the leadership.

Thornett attributes these twin evils to the penetration of middle class elements into the party, especially during the 'protest boom' of the late



1960s. In particular, the leadership is criticised for its purely organisational attempt at recruiting in 1974, the success of which was assessed by the leadership in purely numerical terms. Such an influx of politically unsophisticated recruits serves, as we have said, to bolster the position of the established leadership. In order to curtail this threat to internal egalitarianism and to the position of dissenters, Thornett advocated strengthening the entry requirements for new recruits.

Any implications this last demand might have for strengthening the group boundary are more than outweighed by the demand for factions which would reduce integration, thus weakening frequency, transitivity, and boundary. The demand to be able to organise factions was the second major prop in Thornett's attack on Healy. He accuses the leadership of banning factions, contrary to the rights of faction embodied in the WRP's Constitution and Trotsky's own pronouncements on the matter:

The Fourth International has never prohibited factions, and has no intention of doing so. (Trotsky 1969:131)

Many informants on the Trotskyist left dated the degeneration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from the suspension of faction rights, which was intended only as a temporary measure in the face of the crisis of March 1921 (10th Congress of the CPSU). The fact that these rights were never restored laid the path for the development of Stalin's bureaucracy, since he could use factionalism as a charge on which to eradicate opposition. The historical charter referred to by those on the far-left demanding rights of faction is located in Lenin's theory of party organisation, which he developed as a model for the Russian Bolsheviks. In fact, Lenin's struggle for faction rights dated back to the early days of the Russian Social Democratic Party (RW Battle of Ideas Supplement 1976), and there can be no doubt that he saw faction rights as an indispensable safeguard in a democratic centralist organisation.

Democratic centralism is the organisational principle to which all of the groups we are looking at subscribe. It has two main features:

- 1) The decisions of higher committees of the party are binding on lower committees - although such decisions should be taken in the light of recommendations from lower committee.
- 2) Once the party line has been decided, all members are obliged to uphold the line in public, whilst retaining the right to attempt

to have the line changed through the internal decision making apparatus of the party.

The point about banning factions is that it restricts the dissenter to working to change the line only in his own branch, and on any higher committees of which he may be a member. When factions are banned, individuals from different branches and committees may not organise against the leadership to win the party over to a new policy line.

By allowing factions, scattered individuals are able to meet and organise in pursuance of a particular line without fear of administrative retribution. But if factions are banned, where a small minority (or single member) in a branch disagrees with the majority position, that minority will always be defeated in any attempt to win its own position in the branch and have that position passed up to a higher committee. In this situation the minority is likely to despair of getting a wide hearing for its position and is liable to become embittered and alienated from the organisation as a whole, unless it has access to like-minded members of other branches.

Where open factions are forbidden in democratic centralist organisations, covert factions are likely to develop in opposition to the majority or the leadership (the two are not always synonymous). Covert factions represent a serious threat to the unity of the organisation as a whole because:

- 1) Their members have usually been driven together by the structural obstacles to successful open opposition within the framework offered by the form of democratic centralism operated by the organisation.
- 2) By forming a faction the minority make themselves into a clear target for administrative action to be taken against them, which will almost certainly result in schism.
- 3) The issues which initially drove the faction together are likely to be multiplied, resulting in the faction putting up an overall oppositional programme to that of the rest of the organisation.

Hence, covert factions produce new group boundaries as faction membership begins to take precedence over party membership. The party is correspondingly reduced to an arena of confrontation with the rest of the membership, and eventually the faction parts company altogether, or is expelled.

On the other hand, by allowing the open formation of factions, controversy is kept in the open, and the expression of a variety of competing

viewpoints is guaranteed. The positive value placed on open competition of ideas is familiar at weak grid/weak group. The suggestion here is that it extends a considerable distance into the strong group section, provided that there are sufficient structural safeguards to allow for strategic federalism or to guarantee rights of faction.

Permitting recognised factions has a further stabilising effect on the organisation as a whole, which must not be overlooked. This is that it removes at least one pretext for expelling opponents - namely that they have formed an illicit faction. A number of Thornett's supporters in the WRP were expelled on just this basis.

The demand for the right to organise factions is based on typically weak grid/weak group appeals to both egalitarianism and the unique value of diverse viewpoints. Factionalism, or strategic (rather than classificatory) federalism, is a strategy for maintaining a diverse range of interpretations of the central tenets of the organisation in the absence of hierarchical controls over disagreement. It is a middle stage between the extreme individualism of weak grid/weak group in which the uniqueness of the individual viewpoint is cherished (Douglas 1978:8) and the refusal to recognise any internal variation of viewpoint, which we found in the Workers' Institute.

Strategic federalism is characteristic of a weaker group environment than factionalism. In the sense it is used here, factionalism denotes relatively unstructured conflict groups whose membership fluctuates according to the issues in dispute, whereas the sub-groups of a federation are likely to be more firmly fixed. This use of the term faction accords with that of Nicholas (1965) and Martin (1968) in emphasising the potentially positive role of factions, which may enable an organisation to continue in existence as a whole in circumstances which would have resulted in schism had they not been permitted. Tolerance of formalised dissent through recognised factions has been recognised in a number of studies of trades unions as an important indication of the existence of democracy (Lipset, Trow and Coleman 1956:13 & Martin 1968:207). This would seem to accord with our analysis of Thornett's demands in the face of Healy's autocracy.

The WRP's reply to Thornett is signed by Michael Banda, Healy's close associate and subsequently chosen successor as General Secretary (Banda 1975).

This document is shrill in tone and so exaggerated in its strongly personal denigration of Healy's opponents that it soon becomes tedious to read:

It comes as no surprise that Thornett's rejection of the dialectical materialist method should lead him to lyingly assert that a 'bureaucratic clique' dominates the leadership of the party. (Banda 1975:37)

Thornett in his infinite ignorance and sublime contempt for the truth, offers two stupidities for the price of one. (Banda 1975:67)

Unable to oppose a principled political alternative to the WRP this political bankrupt and renegade (Thornett) like Don Basilio in the Barber of Seville, cannot but return to his favourite method: 'Calumny, Doctor, Calumny!' ...

This is a cynical subterfuge of Thornett to gain sympathy from backward workers and middle class liberals and to create an atmosphere for an anti-Bolshevik pogrom and Special Branch investigations of the Party. (Banda 1975:101)

These hysterical denunciations of Thornett seem to be designed to portray him as an outsider who deliberately entered the WRP in order to destroy it. Elsewhere he is described as an anti-Marxist, a Menshevik, and a liar. These denunciations are interspersed with even more extensive references to the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky than are to be found in Thornett's own documents. These various charters are extensively interpreted in such a way as to counter Thornett's claims of degeneration of the party. Where Thornett had criticised WRP documents, they are quoted at great length, with a commentary which accuses Thornett and his associates of deliberately distorting their contents by quoting out of context (Banda 1975:11-12). It must also be said that the relevance of Banda's references to 'sacred' texts is often less clear than Thornett's. In Banda's hands, Marxism comes across to the outsider as an esoteric body of knowledge which is obviously clear to initiates of the WRP. His assumption seems to be that if Thornett can be revealed to the membership of the WRP as one who is unable to grasp the basic tenets of Marxist philosophy, or who even deliberately distorts them, then he will be exposed as a hostile outsider whose substantive criticisms of the leadership can be simply dismissed as the fabrications of a saboteur. Hence Banda writes, (in terms which give us a good indication of what is meant by theoreticism):

Thornett's class position, his hatred for the WRP and its method signifies an organic incapacity to grasp the relation of the particular to the universal, the relative to the absolute, the

necessary to the accidental, or the real to the rational. Thus bureaucracy in his eyes is not a contradictory phenomenon itself reflecting the contradictions and interconnections of class society, of a form of matter organised at a very high level of complexity - but rather as a dead non-contradictory abstraction. (Banda 1975:43)

Thornett's strategy in raising the questions of the Transitional Programme, and the right to form factions, may be described as a weak grid/weak group strategy. This consisted in using cosmological appeals to the founding charter in order to attack the leadership for operating bureaucratic controls over the membership. Healy maintained what we would describe as a relatively strong grid environment, which violated the egalitarian ethic of the founding charter. As we shall see in the next chapter, rights of faction may have safeguarded opposition from the sorts of manoeuvres Healy used to force the Thornett group out of the WRP, and have offered some sort of guarantee of the democratic process which was effectively stifled by the party's entrenched leadership.

We may call Healy's response a strong grid/strong group strategy. He isolated dissenters, initially by using rules to insulate Thornett as much as possible from the rest of the party, for example by confining him to the city of Oxford. Meanwhile, Healy was himself able to move around freely, attacking the criticisms which were emanating from the Oxford leadership, using appeals to a range of 'sacred' texts to identify them as outsiders and as sources of ideological pollution in the eyes of the members. In this way, Healy was well prepared to be able to expel Thornett from the party.

However, Thornett's own strategy, based on his work in the Oxford area, attracted sufficient support to enable him to lead a sizeable section of the membership (including most of the WRP's only solid industrial base which was in the Oxford area) out of the party to form his own organisation.

The British Section was not the only organisation of the International Committee to suffer from expulsions at this time. Whilst Healy was preparing the expulsion of the Thornett group at home, the American Workers' International League was purging its membership, including founder member Tim Wohlforth who was accused of having CIA connections. The Australian Socialist Labour League purged those who questioned the Thornett expulsions, and splits occurred in Portugal and Greece on questions of

Healy's methods and the lack of democracy in the ICFI.

The evidence from the Thornett case indicates that disputes within the WRP and the ICFI are resolved by Healy personally initiating action against dissidents. But expulsions are always justified by appeals to normative themes which miscreants are accused of violating, and to the founding charters, ie. the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Anyone who leaves or is expelled from the party is treated as a mortal enemy of the working class, who has only been unmasked by the vigilance of the leadership. Often such apostates have been subjected to physical violence and are sometimes even forced to move to other parts of the country in order to avoid harassment by the party.

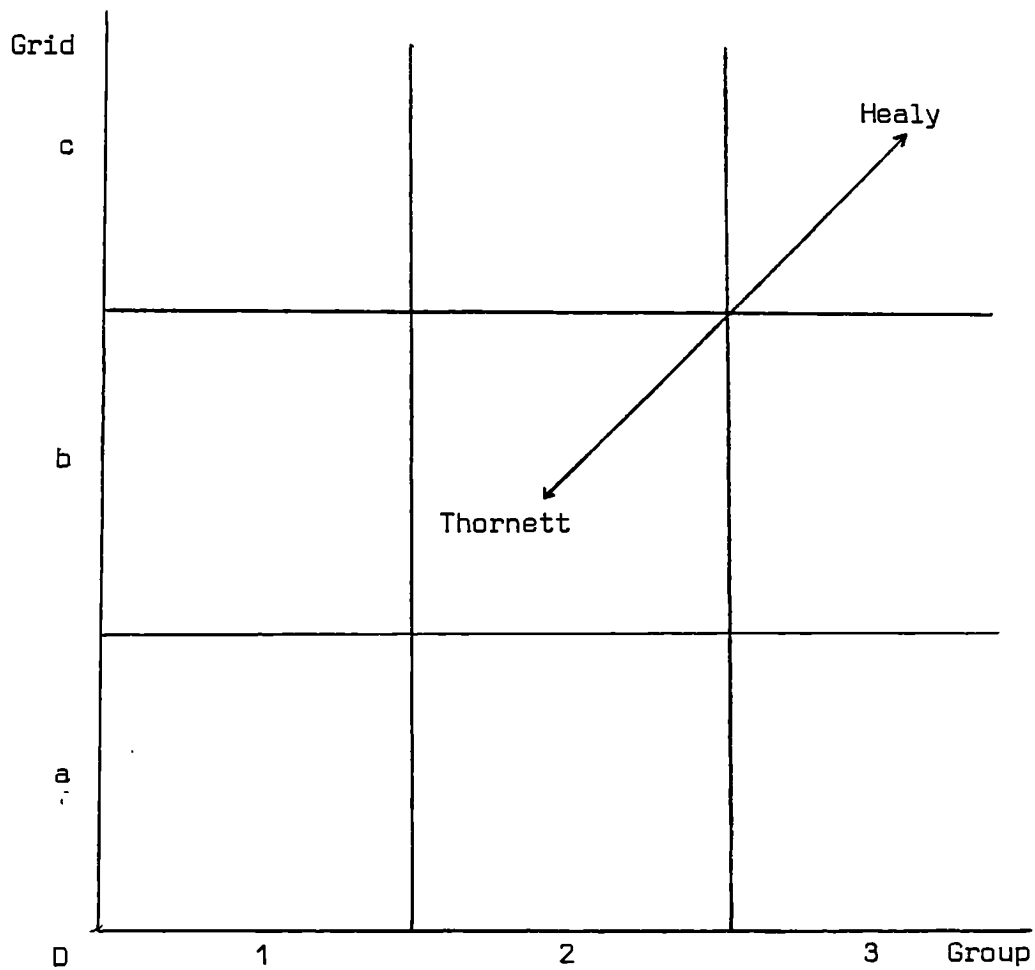
Finally, we may note that the power to carry out wholesale expulsions does reside constitutionally in the post of General Secretary. Now that Mike Banda has replaced Healy as General Secretary, Healy still plays the major role in deciding the orthodoxy of the WRP and the International Committee. He has been carrying out extensive purges overseas whilst pursuing his enquiry into Trotsky's assassination which has so far managed to implicate almost every Trotskyist leader outside of the tiny ICFI in Trotsky's death or subsequent cover-up.

Because grid and group is a typology based on the means of the exercise of power, it can show how strategies for achieving power may differ within a given framework, such as the political arena provided by the WRP. We may be able to identify patterns of stable and unstable combinations of varying strengths of grid and group and thus predict the kinds of cosmological appeals which rival leaders may take to their followers in the course of attempting to alter the means of exercise of power to their own advantage.

It is apparent that Dc3, occupied by the WRP, may be an unstable area of the weak grid/strong group quadrant. The maintenance of relatively strong grid constraints by the established leadership may contravene the ideology of equality among members which initially attracted them to the group. In the kind of social environment which we are considering, there is likely to be strong tension between individuals whose priority is the maintenance of a commonwealth of revolutionary equals (pulling the organisation towards the bottom left of the quadrant) and those whose model of a revolutionary organisation is one of militant efficiency (who attempt

Figure 19.

The opposing strategies of Healy and Thornett expressed in terms of the changes in relative strength of grid and group implied by their respective actions and proposals.



to strengthen grid and group controls over the membership). Both aspects of this tension are embodied in the charters of Leninist Marxism. For example, it was Trotsky, father of the Red Army, who proposed setting up labour armies in the USSR in order to carry through socialist reconstruction under military discipline.

Grid and group enables us graphically to expose a substantive, rather than a mere semantic, contradiction within democratic centralism. Centralist authority, which claims that the ends justifies the means in the name of efficiency, engages in a struggle against demands for democratic control of the leadership, and safeguards for dissenters. The principle invoked in favour of the latter case is that bad means can only distort the ends. The issues at stake here arise time and time again in the histories of democratic centralist organisations and may be represented in terms of grid and group by a diagonal line corresponding to the opposing strategies of Healy and Thornett, running from bottom left to top right of the D quadrant (figure 19).

The framework which we have developed here indicates some weaknesses of traditional categories in the sociology of religion. These are the ideal types: charisma and routinisation. In Weberian terms Healy is a charismatic leader. Since the events described in this chapter he has relinquished the post of General Secretary yet he remains very much the central figure of the WRP and the International Committee, both of which he was a principal founder. Charisma is attached therefore to the person of Healy and not to any office he may hold.

The ideal type of charismatic leadership leaves no room for formal offices. Although there are offices in the party Healy's leadership works at a strongly personal level. He relies heavily on selected individuals who hold offices largely through his patronage. Thus the leadership structure is oligarchical rather than bureaucratic. The holding of formal office is secondary - almost legitimatory. The Central Committee itself is not in principle an autocratic structure and is supposedly subject to democratic control by the membership. In practice the WRP has a highly centralised elite within the Central Committee whose power depends less on their formal office than on their favour with Healy. Sometimes part of the committee structure of the party will fall out of favour with Healy and will simply not be convened - for example the Trades Union Committee in 1974. From the viewpoint of the Weberian tradition in the sociology of



religion, we would have to describe the WRP as an imperfect example of the sectarian type - led by a charismatic leader - undergoing a process of routinisation which has given rise to formal offices.

It seems to me that the notion of impure examples of ideal types, that is those instances which do not correspond very closely to the ideal, seriously prejudices their heuristic value. My criticism is not that they are ideal in the sense of being rational constructs, but that they are idealised constructs from empirical examples supposedly shorn of their accidental historical elements. As such they are susceptible to my criticisms of essentialist typologising in chapter two. Weber's distinction (1947:373) between sectarian and denominational types based on the idea of charisma cannot adequately handle social change because they contain no dynamic possibilities in the way they are constructed. The concept of routinisation purports to link these static types. But this concept cannot really reconcile the existence of offices in the WRP with the exercise of personal power. In fact there is no evidence to suggest that these formal offices owe anything to the routinisation of Healy's charisma at all. Rather they are based on the charter of Lenin's theory of party organisation. The challenge stands for grid and group to handle the material more adequately than the Weberian tradition has allowed.

We have situated the Workers' Revolutionary Party in the weak grid segment, although at stronger grid than those organisations in which adjudicating rights have to be re-negotiated every time (eg. The Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse Tung Thought). When a leader does not have to go through the motions of re-negotiating adjudicating rights on each separate occasion, then the group as a whole scores stronger grid because the role has become formalised and is not in principle open to competition amongst the members. On the other hand, the holder of the adjudicating rights will be located at weaker grid than the group as a whole. That this is the case with the Workers' Revolutionary Party is apparently borne out by the fact that Healy was the only person in the party who was allowed to visit individual branches whenever he wished. In the London area Healy was the only person allowed to do political work in the labour movement outside of his own party branch. This sort of political activity was a feature of party building confined to within the Oxford area. Hence, we can detect some fine differentiation in the grid dimension. Healy is weaker grid than the party as a whole, as he is unconstrained even by the geographical insulations which restricted Thornett's activity

during the dispute to Oxford and to Central Committee meetings. Healy is also the holder of adjudicating rights. The party organisation in Oxford however, maintained a weak grid edge over the London area because there was less internal insulation within its area organisation. It is little wonder, therefore, that the opposition to Healy should have stemmed from the Oxford area on the basis of weak grid appeals.

With respect to the group dimension, Healy is only marginally less constrained by it than his followers. Although he is better placed to have contact with members of other organisations without incurring suspicion of being a spy or infiltrator of some sort, the extent of any direct contact with members or leaders of rival groups is minimal. The primary political arena for Healy is the International Committee and its British section - the Workers' Revolutionary Party. The witch-hunt Healy is pursuing against leaders of rival Trotskyist organisations is primarily for the benefit of his own members.

It would seem that groups such as the Workers' Institute, can persist at weak grid if formal mechanisms such as strict rotation of the chair at meetings and impersonal or 'oracular' dispute solving mechanisms are adhered to. Instability becomes acute when the group moves up the grid dimension, and the emergent leaders encounter resistance from members who, for a variety of reasons, insist on retaining a weak grid/strong group condition. Where people have chosen to join an organisation as a weak grid/strong group strategy (eg. Students), the accusations of betrayal which are levelled against the leaders who try to take the organisation up grid will be true at the level of the individual's social strategy, despite the fact that the move up grid might be a necessary step for achieving the explicit political aims of the group.

Weber's routinisation can thus be usefully re-interpreted in terms of movements along the grid dimension, without any recourse to the dubious notion of charisma. Another advantage in the grid and group explanation is that it enables us to identify strategies for resisting and reversing the process of routinisation. Thus the process is shorn of the fatalism of Weber's concept, whereby all sects must routinise. Furthermore, according to Weber's explanation, once routinised, the process is irreversible and the sect structure can only be recreated afresh by a new charismatic leader. However, we have seen how Thornett was able to de-routinise by moving down grid. Had he managed to take the majority of the party with

him, instead of a sizeable minority, the case would have been clearer, but there is no reason in terms of grid and group why this should not occur, whereas it is not considered in the Weberian framework.

## Chapter Seven

### From Federalism to Centralism

Four-and-twenty Trotskyists  
Came down from Inverness,  
When the faction fight was over  
There were four-and-twenty less.  
Balls to democracy  
Centralism and all,  
If you won't join the majority faction  
You won't join at all.

(From Four-and-Twenty Trotskyists - a satirical song about the splits in the far-left current in the early 1970s)

In this chapter and that following, we will compare the different strategies for organisational growth and development adopted by two Trotskyist groups during the decade following the youth protest boom of 1968. This will entail continuing our examination of the role of factions, and leadership responses to them, in major disputes within these organisations. The two groups which we will consider are the Socialist Workers' Party and the International Marxist Group. These groups differ significantly in their attitudes to alliances, the degree of formal recognition they accord to factions, and their susceptibility to schism.

In the previous chapter we claimed that the right of faction is a formal mechanism for accommodating diverse viewpoints within an organisation. Formal factionalism keeps controversy open and protects those expressing minority views from administrative sanctions by the group's leaders. It is with these considerations of the positive roles of factions in mind that we turn to examine firstly the SWP and then in contrast the IMG. We shall see that over the last ten years, the Socialist Workers' Party has abandoned the federal structure characteristic of its early days as the International Socialists and has attempted to suppress factionalism. During the same period, the International Marxist Group has adopted a strategy of formally guaranteeing its members the right to form factions. We shall see that as a result, the SWP and the IMG have shown contrasting patterns of organisational stability which have important implications for our understanding of the dynamics of sectarian organisations in quadrant D. In particular, we may be able to develop the suggestion, made in Chapter Six, that tension between leaders and other members of democratic centralist organisations may polarise in a diagonal band across the weak

grid/strong group quadrant.

### The Origins of the Socialist Workers' Party

Like the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the history of the Socialist Workers' Party, and its forerunner the International Socialists, has been dominated by a single individual. Tony Cliff first promulgated his State Capitalist theory of Eastern Europe in 1947 as an internal bulletin of the Revolutionary Communist Party. In 1950 he was amongst those expelled from The Club for alleged breaches of discipline on the Korean question. Thus, Cliff and some 25-33 ex-members of the Club regrouped around a duplicated paper called the Socialist Review. Committed to the State Capitalist theory, the Review began life with a print run of 350 copies at the end of 1950.

The new group took the view that support for North Korea was evidence of a developing pro-Stalinist trend in The Club and in the Fourth International as a whole. They were also critical of what they saw as The Club's collaboration with established Labour Party figures such as Bessie Braddock and the Fourth International's support for Tito's Jugoslavia.

The members of the Socialist Review group remained in the Labour Party and the Labour League of Youth (forerunner of the Young Socialists) in which it had 19 of its 33 members. Although it later became extremely hostile to the Labour Party, at this time all members of the group were expected to be active in the party:

It is most necessary that our comrades become known to the working class in their local areas as the most energetic and anti-Tory Labour Party workers. (1951 Election Directive quoted by Birchall 1975 A :18)

Particular attention was paid to the Labour League of Youth, which even at this relatively early period was seen as a fertile ground for gaining support. In December 1950 the group resolved:

That we concentrate in the next period on recruiting, and direct our primary efforts towards the League of Youth, accepting all elements who will accept our theoretical position, even though their theoretical level is low. (Internal document, quoted by Birchall 1975 A :18)

But despite this policy of relatively unselective recruitment, the Socialist Review group did not benefit as much as other Trotskyist groups working in the Labour Party from the seven or eight thousand members of the Communist Party who left after the events of 1956, and the group went into the 1960s with scarcely more members than it had begun a decade earlier.

The first major breakthrough for the group came through the success of CND which had been set up by a handful of intellectuals and pacifists in 1958, but which by 1960 was attracting 100,000 people to its annual Aldermaston march. Most CND supporters were young, and a significant proportion were working class. The strength of anti-bomb feeling in Britain at this time was sufficient to defeat the Gaitskellite platform at the Labour Party Conference in 1960 and carry a resolution committing the party to unilateral nuclear disarmament. (Although the policy was reversed the following year.)

Most important for the Socialist Review group was that the CND provided a first taste of political activity for a generation of young people who had remained outside the Labour Party. The CPGB and the Healyites were slow to commit themselves to CND because of their continuing support for the principle of military defence of the USSR against possible capitalist attack. So, the Socialist Review group was allowed a clear lead in breaking out of its traditional Labour Party milieu and establishing itself amongst the new radicals within CND.

The growth of CND also prompted the Labour Party to revive its defunct youth wing. (The Labour League of Youth had been dissolved in 1955.) In its first year, the Young Socialists could boast 726 branches and had an attendance at its first conference of more than 300 delegates. Despite fierce competition from the Healyites, the Socialist Review's youth entry paper Young Guard attracted enough new blood in the YS to swell the ranks of the group to 200 members by 1964.

During this period of expansion, the group launched two new journals in place of the Socialist Review. These were the theoretical paper International Socialism and the more industrially orientated Industrial Worker, soon to be renamed Labour Worker. In 1962 the group adopted the new title of International Socialists. However, their recruiting base in the Young Socialists had torn itself to pieces, largely through factional

struggles between Young Guard supporters and the Healyites, who pulled out just before the 1964 general election.

The general enthusiasm of the labour movement at the return of a Labour government in 1964 was to be short lived for the left. The incomes policy, tightening of immigration controls, and support for the Vietnam war were their chief sources of dismay. The Labour Party as a membership organisation went into a sharp decline and many party activities drifted out. In July 1965 the IS began a protracted process of withdrawal from the Labour Party.

The IS group rejects the Labour Party as an instrument for social change; rejects it as a milieu for mass conversion to socialist consciousness; and sees in it primarily an arena for ideological conflict, a link to a living working class audience, and a source of individual recruitment to a revolutionary programme.  
(Conference Resolution quoted Birchall 1975 A p.22)

By the beginning of 1968, the IS had more or less completely withdrawn its forces from the Labour Party which it saw as hopelessly moribund as a membership organisation, thus removing even the above rationale for staying in. The change was marked by the Labour Worker changing its name to Socialist Worker in order to avoid being identified with Labour Government policies. By this stage, the IS was able to claim a fairly steady growth in its membership since 1964 to over 400.

### 1968-1973

1968 was a watershed for the British far-left. It was particularly notable for the emergence of student radicalism following the LSE occupation of 1967 and the focussing of popular attention on the Vietnam war. Although IS had been officially represented at the setting up of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC), it only maintained a token presence for the first year of its operation. But by the middle of 1967 the anti-war movement in the United States had gained momentum and the emerging radical student movement in Britain was looking for a cause to adopt. At this point the IS decided to step up its involvement in the VSC, arguing that it should attempt to link up with 'workers' struggles'. Although the bulk of the effort in getting the VSC moving had been made by another far-left grouping (the IMG), the IS carried off most of the recruits which were to be made from the campaign in this period. However, the IS was still not large enough to consider itself as a viable revolutionary force on its own.

Thus, in 1968, it issued an appeal to all revolutionary groups to the left of the CP, for unity on the basis of four basic principles which at the time would probably not have been contentious in the Young Liberals:

- 1) Opposition to imperialism; for the victory of all genuine national liberation movements.
- 2) Opposition to racism in all its forms and to controls on immigration.
- 3) Opposition to state control of trade unions; support for all progressive strikes.
- 4) Workers' control of society and industry as the only alternative to fascism. (Birchall 1975B p.23)

At best, this appeal can be seen as an indication of a more 'open' style of work than we have encountered among the Healyites. At worst, it can be interpreted as a cynical manoeuvre to isolate the Healyites (who it was known would not accept) and to mop up the smaller groups and tendencies of the Trotskyist left. In the event, only one group responded positively which was Workers' Fight, the core of which had emerged from the SLL in 1967. The fusion was hastily cobbled together and in fact Workers' Fight maintained its own organisation as a permanent faction within IS up until 1971, when the groups parted once more. The appeal for unity was certainly premature and the subsequent splits and expulsions within IS indicate that any degree of unity which might have been obtained would only have been short lived.

Despite the setback of the rejection of its unity proposals, the IS resolved to transform itself from a propaganda group intervening in various struggles in a fragmented and localised manner into a revolutionary combat organisation in the Leninist tradition. Hitherto, the IS had been organised on a federalist basis whereby each branch sent a delegate to the leading body of the organisation. 1968 saw the introduction of democratic centralism for the first time. It was proposed firstly that the leading body be elected nationally from a conference, and secondly that the organisation should have the explicit right to impose discipline on all of its members. In terms of our analysis, this abandonment of federalism represents a decisive move to stronger group whilst the right to impose discipline marks a move up grid.

These proposals caused a considerable internal upheaval. Birchall (1975B:24) reports that at least five factions came into existence around various positions. These ranged from libertarian opposition to centralism



to orthodox Leninist views that the proposals did not impose a sufficiently strict discipline. The adoption of a democratic centralist constitution was only agreed after a lengthy internal debate and two stormy conferences in September and December. Birchall summarised the basis of this debate in his official history of the IS.

The heat of the debate can be partly explained by the newness of the membership - a good half had been in the group only a few months, and by the fact that many of them had come straight from the heady atmosphere of student politics. But the issues at stake were more fundamental. When the main job had been struggle in the fragments, the need had been to encourage initiative; conditions for the tenants struggle varied so greatly between say, Newcastle, Sheffield and London, that unified directives would have been of little help to anyone. It was in fact, vital to stress that comrades should not wait for directives.  
(Birchall 1975B:24)

Although the move was carried, there were a number of resignations of experienced members who found the stricter discipline unacceptable. The loss of the libertarian elements of the IS tradition can be traced to this transformation. However, despite these losses, the IS doubled its total membership in 1968 to just over 1,000.

The following year saw the beginning of the 'Turn to the Class' - an attempt to orientate the political work of the organisation to industry and the trades unions. Members with no experience of the labour movement were forced to try and learn its traditions and get involved with work around particular industries. However, as Birchall (1975B:26) admits, this was still essentially external intervention, even though, "leaflets had to be written in a responsible fashion if possible with a contact inside the factory".

The attempt to make a mainly student and middle class membership into an organisation working in an industrial milieu resulted in a fall in membership in 1969 as the students left and the workers remained suspicious of what they saw as external agitators. The 'Turn to the Class' was more or less postponed for two years while the IS switched its emphasis back to recruitment.

In 1971, the International Socialists was still more open to diverse viewpoints than its successor, the Socialist Workers' Party. It consisted of orthodox Trotskyist, libertarian, and left-wing communist factions, in

addition to its State Capitalist core. Duncan Hallas, a leading ideologue of the IS, claimed at the time that the International Socialists did not see themselves as being THE revolutionary party but as an organisation contributing to the development of the revolutionary left in Britain. However, this approach was not to last much longer. The years 1972-73 saw the IS intensifying its efforts in the competition to form the nucleus of the 'real' revolutionary party which was to lead the working class to power. To do this, the IS made a decisive effort to develop its orientation towards industry. Whereas its main growth previously had been through Tony Cliff's lecture tours of the universities, now it set out with Socialist Worker to promote rank and file organisations and to develop factory bulletins and rank and file papers. The membership figures for the relevant period clearly reflect this approach.

1970.....880 members in 68 branches  
 1971...1,300 members in 77 branches  
 1972...2,098 members

The 1971 increase was achieved despite the secession of Workers' Fight which had previously merged with the International Socialists in 1968. An analysis of the 1972 membership gave the following breakdown (Internal document):

White collar workers .....	725
Manual Workers .....	613
Unemployed .....	109
Students .....	381
School students .....	51
OAPs .....	4
Housewives .....	58
Others .....	157

During 1973 there were various faction fights and expulsions, including that of the Revolutionary Opposition which was to form the Revolutionary Communist Group in 1974. It is therefore extremely doubtful if the 1973 figures were appreciably higher.

The emphasis during this period was on the creation of a traditional Leninist Party structure based on workplace branches. These were principally built by student 'worker-priests' taking up industrial employment with a view to organising the working class. However, the factory branches which were built in this way collapsed dramatically precisely because of the emphasis on recruitment. Workers would join in

the heat of industrial struggles, but, once inside, they found that the International Socialists had no viable strategy for work in the trades union movement, which they rejected as being controlled by reformist bureaucrats. In an organisation whose membership drawn from traditionally trades unionised occupations was outnumbered two to one by those drawn from sectors which did not have a background of trades unionism, it is not surprising to find an emphasis on by-passing the trades unions and on building an alternative 'rank and file' structure. It is also scarcely surprising that, in a period of Labour Party opposition when the unions were under severe pressure from a Conservative government, workers were less than willing to desert a united trades union movement for piecemeal rank and fileism.

During the early 1970s, it was common for young workers to become leading lights in the International Socialists in a very short time. For example, they would have articles ghosted for them in Socialist Worker. For some workers, membership of the IS gave them a new social mobility. As one ex-member put it to me, the 'Turn to the Class' for many International Socialists was a turn to the middle class. Through the close association of students and workers, the social behaviour of International Socialists in this period was frequently characterised by the workerism of the student members and the sexism of many of the workers:

In this period of student domination in IS, it was often enough to proclaim that one was a worker to win admiration and flattery. At one IS conference an industrial worker denounced a document being circulated as 'so bad it must have been written by a sociologist'. He was cheered to the echo by the audience, a fair percentage of whom were sociology students. (Birchall 1975B:25)

Workers often seemed to be reluctant to bring their wives or girlfriends to IS socials but preferred to cultivate female student members, whose accessibility was a characteristic of the new social mobility of working class members. This was the period when the scathing epithet 'horizontal road to socialism' was applied to the IS by its far-left critics.

The factory branches, however, never reached fifty in number. Those that had been built soon collapsed, largely due to the failure to develop a trades union strategy or substitute the rank and file movement for the unions. There were a great many victimisations, but those cadres who survived went on to become leaders of the Right to Work Campaign - some

giving up their jobs to do so.

### 1973-1978

In 1973, the International Socialists suffered a fifty per cent turnover in membership, including many of its original members. The most significant losses were those connected with the Revolutionary Opposition, dubbed the Right Faction by the leaders of the International Socialists. This group was expelled after publishing internally a lengthy critique of International Socialist Policy entitled What We Stand For: A Revolutionary Opposition in I.S. David Yaffe, one of the principal architects of the Revolutionary Opposition, attacked both of the mainstays of Tony Cliff's theoretical position, namely the Permanent Arms Economy Theory and the State Capitalist Theory. Yaffe and his collaborators had maintained an intense barrage of discussion of aspects of Marxist economics in the Internal Bulletin of the International Socialists. In fact, they were eventually forced to take up a whispering campaign because they were told that they were taking up too much room in the Bulletins. The Revolutionary Opposition were to form themselves into the Revolutionary Communist Group in 1974.

It was from this time that factions, which had been previously permitted to operate quite freely in the IS, became increasingly frowned upon by the leadership. By 1976, factions were only permitted during the period of pre-conference discussion which lasts about a month. This was part of a general process of reducing the extent of negotiation of policies and strategies within the IS which took place over this period. The outcome was the entrenchment of the Cliff leadership.

At the beginning of 1974, the rapid turnover of membership of the International Socialists had led to a tendency for its cadres to be young and politically inexperienced. Cliff rationalised the failure to build factory branches by saying that even shop stewards are so deeply committed to the 'bureaucratic' structure of the trades union movement that they are saturated by reformism and dominated by the 'left' bureaucrats of the trades union hierarchy. The solution, according to Cliff, consisted in recruiting young militants into the organisation.

Cliff's view of the role of the IS had clearly shifted away from the 1971 position that, "The IS is not itself the embryo of the revolutionary

party" (Conference document). The balance of support on the executive shifted towards Cliff at the expense of the other tendencies which had previously given the IS its informal, federalist, character and the attractive openness it had displayed between 1968-71. The executive itself was increasingly filled with politically inexperienced students, with a tendency to uncritically accept Cliff's ideas. Negotiation of policy was greatly reduced, and discussion even at the Executive level was mainly confined to the problems of implementing Cliff's line rather than consideration of the merits of line itself.

In the face of the various internal crises of 1974, the IS marched into a period of intensive activity in connection with the Portuguese revolution. Whether it was intended to or not, this activism served as a smokescreen which diverted the membership's attention away from its own troubles. Membership fell dramatically from around 3,000 to less than 2,000. The factory branches were decimated. For example, three such branches collapsed in Hull between October and December. At the National Conference in 1974, less than half of the outgoing National Committee were re-elected - an unusually high level of turnover for any far-left group.

Although there are no figures available, it is well known that the expulsion rate soared at this time. Cliff himself has had a fairly narrow range of political experience, having only worked as a lecturer in a Labour College and as a part-time gardener before taking up full time responsibilities for the IS. He was not able to argue convincingly against his more articulate rivals in the organisation and increasingly resorted to administrative strategies to maintain his leadership. Established figures in the IS, such as Jim Higgins, were attacked as 'has-beens' who were unable to attract young militants to the organisation. Roger Protz, who as editor had done much to establish Socialist Worker as a relatively widely read left-wing weekly, was politically isolated by Cliff and removed from his post. This was carried out by a series of manoeuvres thinly disguised as a general shake-up to give the paper more working class appeal. Paul Foot was appointed to this task, and at this point, sales plummeted to twelve thousand from a target circulation (admittedly never fulfilled) of thirty thousand copies a week.

Other critics emerged in 1974, some of whom were more fortunate than Protz in the strategy which Cliff pursued towards them. Duncan Hallas and Ken Applebee were among the thirteen signatories of a critical article

entitled Socialist Worker: Perspectives and Organisation, which appeared in the internal bulletin in April 1974. Of these signatories, only Hallas and Applebee remain in what is now the Socialist Workers' Party. It would seem that on this occasion Cliff decided that it would be more advantageous to retain critics rather than isolate them with a view to expulsion. Cliff appears to have assessed the expenditure of resources in the removal of Hallas and Applebee as being greater than the cost of accommodating them. Both were given responsible positions within the leadership, Hallas as editor of the group's theoretical journal International Socialism. The absorption of dissidents into the established leadership is one of a number of strategies available to a leadership faced with troublesome intermediate leaders. (A number of others are discussed by Bailey (1970:79) in his work on political systems.)

The campaign was carried on by the remaining eleven signatories against what they saw as the increasingly erratic Cliff leadership which was accused of wild voluntarist campaigns in both the area of rank and file work and Socialist Worker. Initially the response of the leadership to these criticisms appeared to be a tolerant one. Socialist Worker of 18th May 1974 described the situation as one in which, "...these differences arise from different assessments and are containable in the IS tradition." However, changes in the leadership and organisational structure of the International Socialists led the critics, known as the International Socialist Opposition, to develop an extended critique of all major aspects of the organisation's practice, which they rooted in Cliff's over optimism and unrealistic political assessments. It was these same changes in the internal regime of the International Socialists, including the systematic removal of Opposition members from leading positions, that meant that the Opposition could no longer be accommodated within the International Socialist tradition and was forced to part company with the parent organisation to form the Workers' League.

The most significant change in the structure of the IS in the period leading up to the expulsion of the IS Opposition was the introduction of a new constitution for the leading bodies of the group. Since the introduction of democratic centralism in 1968, the IS had been led by a National Committee of forty members, elected from conference, and an Executive of six, selected from its own ranks by the National Committee. At the 1975 IS conference, Cliff, without prior discussion, introduced proposals for a small Central Committee to replace both the National Committee and the

Executive. This concentration of the national leadership was further increased by the stipulation that voting for the Central Committee should be for whole slates only, not for individuals. Of course Cliff's slate won easily and thus precluded any minority representation on the national leadership.

The Birmingham branch, which was about sixty strong, refused to abide by conference decisions from then on. The new Central Committee sent in a Control Commission (a disciplinary committee) which expelled about half of the branch. Twickenham branch was also decimated of its leading cadres for supporting the Birmingham position. Among these was a veteran Trotskyist from the Balham Group of the 1930s, Harry Wicks. Roger Protz, who had edited Socialist Worker, and Jim Higgins, were among other leading IS members who were expelled during this purge. Ironically, Higgins had led the control commission which had expelled the Revolutionary Opposition the previous year. The IS also lost significant groups of engineers and teachers to the new Workers' League.

In response to the issues raised by the split with the Workers' League, the Central Committee of IS set up a new body called the Party Council, consisting of delegates from branches, representatives of specialist sectors, and the various Rank and File front organisations of the IS. However, this body had only a consultative function and was not convened often or regularly and, over the next two years, the Central Committee became increasingly distant from the rest of the organisation.

Whilst the IS Opposition was being purged, Cliff was pursuing a policy of expulsion on yet another front. The numerically tiny Left Faction, which had existed for about two years without making any significant impression on the bulk of the membership, was summarily expelled without right of appeal in October 1975. Many IS members remained unaware of the issues on which the Left Faction was expelled. No effort was made to explain the basis of the split to anyone in the organisation below Branch Committee level. But the expulsion of the Left Faction fuelled allegations by other internal opposition groups, such as the IS Opposition, of increasing centralisation and high handed bureaucratic action by an undemocratic leadership.

The Left Faction adopted the title of Workers' Power, and within two months, had merged with the Workers' Fight group (which had itself merged

with the International Socialists in 1968, only to split with them again in 1971) to form the International Communist League. Workers' Power seceded from this organisation only nine months later, in September 1976, and still maintains a separate existence.

This period also marked a distinct growth in opposition to other organisations. The International Socialists attempted to disrupt the activity of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions and increasingly defined themselves, in organisational terms, by their opposition to the initiatives of the Labour Party, the TUC, and the Communist Party. In 1977, Cliff was the only British Trotskyist of note to refuse to join the platform at the rally in the Friend's House, in protest against Healy's accusation concerning the assassination of Trotsky. And in the same year he rejected an invitation of electoral co-operation with the IMG in fighting various by-elections.

The main focus for the oppositional politics of the International Socialists was the Rank and File Movement, which held its first national conference in March 1974. Unlike the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions, which was developed by trades unionists to resist the challenge of Labour's 1968 trades union legislation In Place of Strife, the Rank and File movement was not founded in response to an external threat to the organised Labour Movement. Rank and File was set up, like the WRP's ATUA, to oppose the traditional organisations of the Labour Movement by setting up alternative structures to what the IS describes as 'the bureaucracy'.

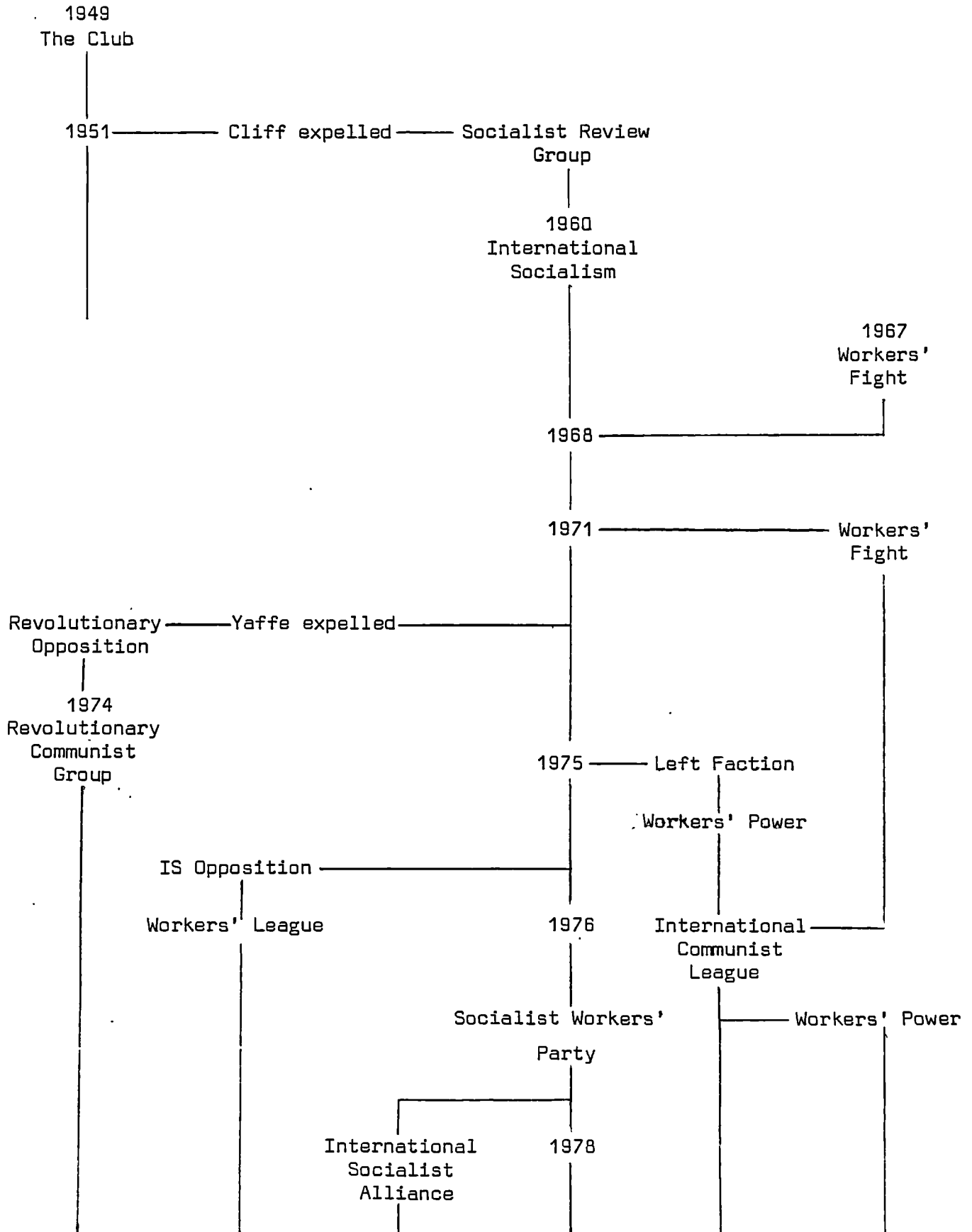
By 1976, Cliff clearly felt that he had consolidated his leadership of the IS, and he set it firmly on a course of opposition to other left groups and to the established structures of the Labour Movement. Socialist Worker was accordingly instructed to raise the question of whether the IS was ready to publicly transform itself into The Revolutionary Party. It became quite clear that the leadership had already decided on this course of action and were facing the task of pulling the rank and file of IS behind the move. After a period of relative uncertainty, the change was carried through and the name Socialist Workers' Party was adopted.

However, the establishment of the SWP did not herald the period of internal stability that Cliff had hoped for. Serious dissent within the party soon became apparent. Its roots lay in the expulsion of the IS



Figure 20.

Genealogy of the Socialist Workers' Party.



Opposition in 1975, when a number of sympathisers had elected to stay in IS to fight for their position rather than join the Workers' League. Among these were Martin Shaw and Richard Kuper, who continued to press for the restoration of the pre-1975 system of national leadership. Duncan Hallas and Chris Harman were two members of the SWP Central Committee who felt sufficiently pressed by these demands to propose extending the CC from six to nine members and possibly dropping the slate system. At conference, the only branch to come out wholly in favour of Shaw's position was his own, Hull. Hallas' and Harman's proposals were, however, accepted but were not seen as adequate concessions by Shaw's supporters. Shaw and Kuper, along with some forty others, left the SWP and formed the International Socialists Alliance. Among those who left the SWP at this point was Mike Kidron, Cliff's son-in-law, who had been primarily responsible for the development of the Permanent Arms Economy Theory. Kidron's departure not only meant the loss to the SWP of one of its principal theoreticians but, more seriously, the loss of Kidron's publishing house, Pluto Press.

The Socialist Workers' Party as a whole was bent on working class recruitment, and pursued this aim through a series of populist demands and activities. The Right to Work campaign, which was dominated by the Rank and File organisation, attracted large numbers of politically inexperienced young people. These were angry and frustrated with the large scale unemployment of the counter inflation programme of the Labour Government. Many of these young people were of Asian origin and had also suffered from racial discrimination in jobs. The appeal of the Socialist Workers' Party was largely based on the organisation of activities designed to channel the frustration of the young unemployed against the traditional leadership of the working class, namely the Labour Party, the TUC, and the Communist Party - which the Socialist Workers aspire to replace.

The Right to Work campaign was in a state of disarray by the spring of 1977. The Socialist Workers' Party did not seem to know what to do with it once it had been created. Some experienced ex-members told me that they believed that the party wanted to get into the shop stewards movement, in spite of the fact that Cliff had condemned the shop stewards some years earlier. Certainly, the obstacles to such a move were considerable since the Rank and File movement had been built on the basis of opposition to union bureaucracy and to the Labour and Communist Parties which dominate it. In the end, a movement based on fast recruitment achieved on a purely oppositional basis and lacking a programme was bound to disintegrate. The

industrial strategy of the Socialist Workers' Party seems to have stagnated, whilst the organisation concentrated its efforts on physical confrontation with the National Front at every opportunity.

Whilst the sincerity of the Socialist Workers' Party's opposition to the NF is indubitable, the adoption of the strategy of physical intervention was explicitly opposed to the policies of the Labour Party, the Communist Party, and the Trades Unions. As such, it may be interpreted as a hardening of the SWP's opposition to other groups on the left, especially in view of the fact that at this stage co-operation with other groups of the far left, such as the IMG, was minimal at an official level. The Labour, Communist, and Trades Unions' position was one of building up the widest possible opposition to the National Front on the basis of the threat that this organisation poses to community relations. This course was condemned in a SW pamphlet on the basis that:

...instead of fighting fascism on a class basis, vicars and liberals are chased after for support, and the levels of slogans are dragged down to their level. Simply slinging insults at fascists and announcing 'One Race the Human Race' has limited effect. (IS/SWP 1976:12)

(Only two years later, the SWP were the originators of such class conscious slogans as 'Pogo on a Nazi'!)

The basis of the SWP's position was that socialism provided the only alternative to racism and fascism. The effect of its militant strategy towards the National Front was to provide a focus of activity for SWP members and supporters at a time when the mileage in the Right to Work Campaign was running out. Barrie Sharpe (M.Phil Thesis:108) has pointed to the intense activism of Jehovah's Witnesses as a means to direct members attention away from recognising fundamentally diverse interpretations of what is taken to be a common body of knowledge. The major threat to the SWP from its rapid expansion throughout 1976-7 was that the hastily admitted, inexperienced new members, who swelled its ranks during the anti-unemployment campaign, would find themselves with time on their hands to step back from intense activism and recognise the inevitable lack of unanimity within the SWP. Such a rapid expansion had taken place that adequate induction and education of new members had been impossible, particularly as so many of the party's middle cadre, to whom this task should have fallen, had been expelled in the purges of 1973-76. However, despite all of the leadership's

efforts, intense anti-fascist activism failed to stem the tide of resignations, just as the Portuguese activism had failed to prevent the recession in the fortunes of the IS in 1974.

Another notable feature of the SWP's position in 1977 was the party's refusal to come to any sort of electoral agreement with the IMG, which had suggested joint candidates, or at least an agreement not to oppose each other, at Stechford and the other by-elections of that year. The political basis of this rebuttal appeared to be very flimsy and certainly annoyed a number of SWP cadres who favoured co-operation to that extent. However, the leadership was clearly not prepared to risk losing substantial numbers of SWP supporters and members to the IMG by exposing them to the better trained membership of the IMG in close co-operation. The SWP has recently changed its position on co-operation with other groups to some extent. In particular they have put a lot of effort and resources into the Anti-Nazi League, which also includes the liberals and vicars they dismissed only a year before. However, the SWP's refusal to co-operate with the major electoral alliance of the far-left is as firm as ever, despite repeated invitations for them to join with the IMG, Big Flame, and the ISA on the Socialist Unity ticket.

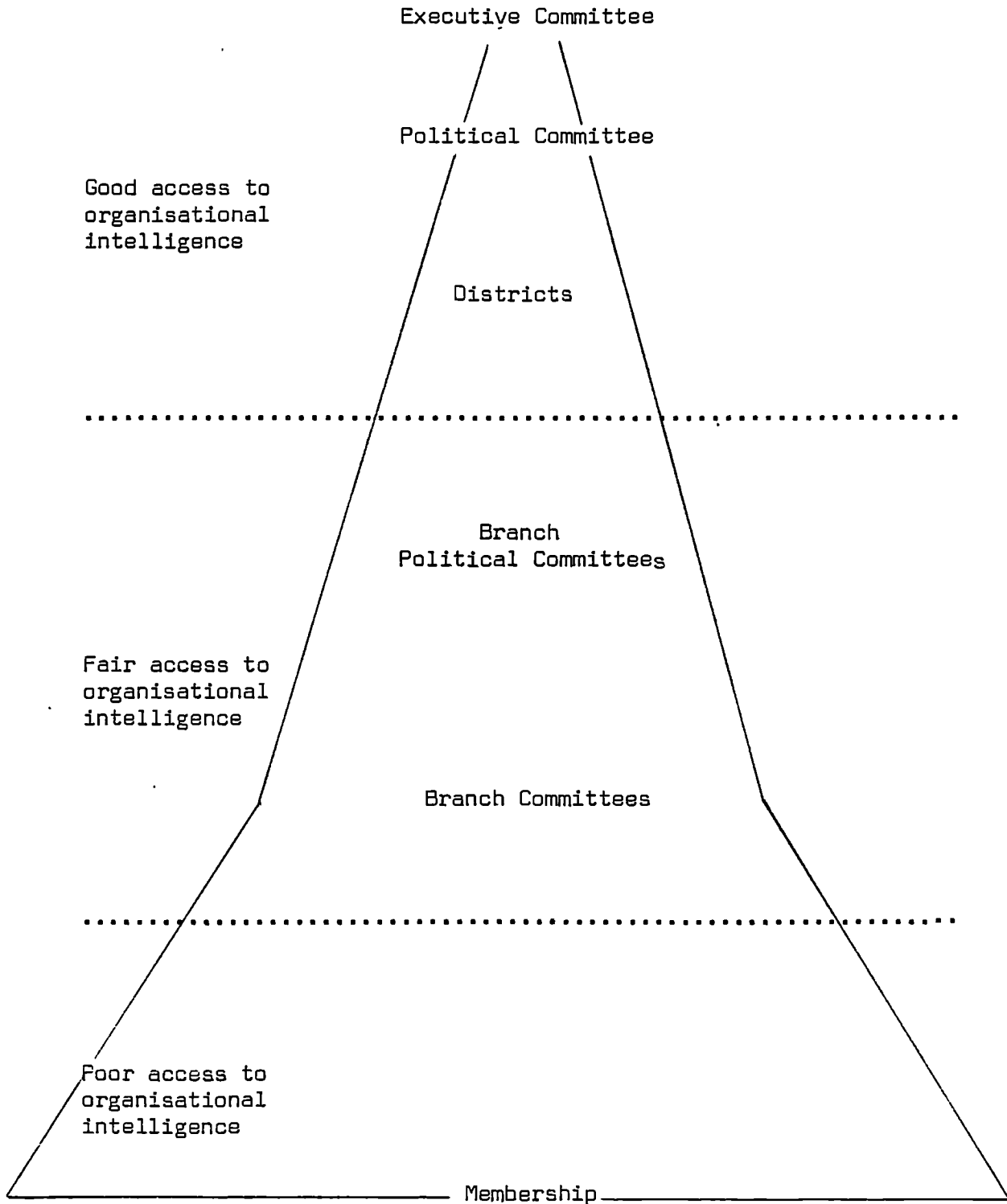
1978 saw the further consolidation of Cliff's personal grip on the organisation. Paul Foot resigned from the editorship of Socialist Worker over differences with the Central Committee on editorial policy. Cliff has now taken control over editing the paper, circulation of which has dropped from 20,000 at the height of the SWP's fortunes, to 12,000 copies per week, whilst membership has dropped from 3,000 to less than 2,500 during 1978.

### Grid and Group

During the course of the last ten years, the IS/SWP has apparently shifted its grid/group position considerably. Before the adoption of a democratic centralist constitution in 1968 the IS was a loose-knit federation of local groups, each containing a wide range of far-left viewpoints. Integration was therefore very weak, and hierarchy was virtually non-existent. Leadership was flexible and offices ill defined, without established incumbents. IS members were primarily accountable to other members of their local groups. The only readily available sanction was expulsion, but in the absence of a centrally maintained orthodoxy, it was

Figure 21.

Hierarchy Introduced into the International Socialists Following the Adoption of Democratic Centralism.



seldom invoked. There was much of the duplication of function typical of simple egalitarian groups. Negotiation of policy was widespread, involving everyone in the organisation, since there were no selective principles on which to exclude any section of the membership from debate on any issue.

The IS was itself more or less an alliance of diverse views. The appeal for revolutionary unity in 1968 indicated a willingness to enter strategic alliances with a range of other far-left groups on the basis of a very liberal minimum programme. Financial commitment to the group at this time was relatively low on the part of the membership as a whole. This was partly because the small size of the organisation and the absence of an expensive formal bureaucratic structure did not require heavy financial outlay. Members of the IS freely belonged to a variety of different types of organisations and were also involved in established Labour Movement structures. Up until 1968, IS members had even been active members of the Labour Party. Because of the unstructured character of the organisation, formal activities were relatively few and IS activity often relied on informal contact between members.

I am reluctant to formally attribute grid and group scores to the IS for this period as I did not observe them at first hand. But, all the indications point to a location of Dal, at the bottom left corner of the Weak grid/strong group quadrant - possibly even overlapping into weak group.

The introduction of democratic centralism in 1968 marked the beginning of a period of increasingly formal organisation. An elementary hierarchy was introduced, with a two-tier national leadership and a two-tier branch leadership. District organisation linking the branches to the national leadership was proposed but does not seem to have operated very successfully. The adjudication of disputes and negotiation of policy tended to be appropriated by branch committees and the national leadership. This eventually gave rise to what one member described to me as a hierarchy of understanding in the IS/SWP (Figure 21). Decisions of these committees could now be legitimated by reference to the rules of the organisation, and the discipline imposed by democratic centralist principles, as well as through the writings and actions of past revolutionaries. The division of labour and responsibility which accompanied democratic centralism, entailed decreasing duplication of function and the hardening of leadership roles. The introduction of centralist organisation also entailed the membership becoming accountable to the leadership in between conferences.

These increases in grid constraints were accompanied by strengthening group in the form of more frequent formal activities. Informal contacts with fellow group members also tended to increase as branches became large enough to provide a fairly comprehensive social life for members, and involvement in IS took precedence over their membership of other types of organisation. Withdrawal from the Labour Party was the beginning of increasing hostility to established Labour Movement structures leading eventually to the establishment of the Rank and File movement as an alternative to the existing trades unions structure. Internal integration was also increased by abandoning the old federal structure of IS. although, at this time, factions were not yet forcibly discouraged.

These changes in the internal regime of the IS indicate a move from the bottom left to the middle of the weak grid/strong group quadrant. Even at this stage, the IS was showing signs of instability, with significant resignations in protest at the introduction of democratic centralism, and a high turnover of recruits. 1973 marked the beginning of the backlash against Cliff's leadership, which was carrying the IS towards strong grid/strong group. The process of formalising IS organisation in emulation of the Leninist model of the revolutionary party was fast becoming a process of entrenchment of Cliff's leadership. The IS suffered a fifty per cent turnover of membership in 1973, including many long standing members who were disillusioned with Cliff's oligarchical tendencies. This was the beginning of a three year period which saw no less than five serious splits and a large number of expulsions instituted by the leadership. By the end of 1976, factionalism had been forcibly suppressed by the leadership except for the brief period of pre-conference discussion.

#### Grid:1978

By 1978, Cliff's domination of the SWP was firmly established. Most of the experienced leaders who might have provided an alternative leadership had left or been expelled from the IS/SWP during the preceding five years. With the recruitment of large numbers of politically inexperienced unemployed youth, the extent to which the whole membership could actively engage in meaningful negotiation of policy was greatly reduced. Anything approaching the free and open debate of the early years of the IS is only possible in pre-conference discussion, and within the limitations of conference itself. However, negotiation is not nearly so restricted as in the WRP, hence we only award the SWP a medium score of 1 on this index.

Adjudicating rights in disputes are more restricted than the negotiation of policy in the SWP. Minor infringements of discipline by individuals are dealt with by branch committees whilst more significant disputes are dealt with by control commissions appointed by the Central Committee. Hence, the SWP scores 2 for grid on this index. Disciplinary decisions are usually legitimated through reference to the rules and disciplinary norms of the organisation and are rarely elaborated through the sort of exhaustive reference to oracular texts in the manner which we observed in the WRP. The SWP appears to be stronger grid than even the Healyites on this basis and scores 2. Even in later years, the ultimate sanction against miscreants is expulsion although this is less frequently used now than in the period 1973-76. By 1978, suspensions and warnings, and in the case of officers, removal from office, are also available in less serious cases. So we may award a score of 1 on this grid index.

Duplication of function has been greatly reduced since the early days of IS. The formalisation of the organisation at both the national and local levels has resulted in a specialised division of labour. The responsibilities of even ordinary members may be divided up. Some may concentrate on selling Socialist Worker, while others devote most of their attention to the Right to Work Campaign, Rank and File, etc. Therefore the SWP scores 2 for this index. The division of labour also takes the form of an explicit hierarchy, position in which is recognised by the membership as reflecting access to information and privileged influence on decision making, thus earning the SWP a score of 2 for explicit hierarchy.

Leadership in the SWP is not so easily ascribed as in the WRP. However, firm support for Cliff is recognised as a qualification for achieving and retaining senior positions. Even as prominent a leader as Paul Foot is constrained in this way and was forced to relinquish editorship of Socialist Worker in the light of his disagreements with Cliff over editorial policy. We may therefore award a score of 1 for this grid index. The turnover of officers is not noticeably rapid, even in comparison with the WRP. For example, Hallas has edited International Socialism for four years, and Foot edited Socialist Worker for five. The length of incumbencies for these sorts of post in the Labour or Communist Parties would be at least double that, so the SWP deserves to score only 1 on this index also.

There is no doubt that the leadership of the SWP is far more accountable to its membership than Healy is to the WRP. It does have to



Table 7.

Grid Score Sheet for the Socialist Workers' Party.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Negotiation of Policy	4	1	4
2) Adjudicating Rights	4	2	8
3) Legitimation of Decisions	3	2	6
4) Sanctions	1	1	1
5) Duplication of Function	3	2	6
6) Hierarchy	3	2	6
7) Leadership	2	1	2
8) Turnover of Officers	2	1	1
9) Accountability	3	1	3
10) Access to Space	3	1	3
<u>Total weighted score for grid.....</u>			<u>40</u>
Total possible score for grid.....			56
Weak grid (Da) scores.....			0 - 18
Medium grid (Db) scores.....			19 - 37
Strong grid (Dc) scores.....			38 - 56

answer to conference, when lively controversies may emerge. However, between conferences the Central Committee is virtually a law unto itself and may direct the membership accordingly. In these circumstances it seems only fair to balance these two factors and award the SWP 1 on this index.

Finally, the index of control over access to space is not particularly appropriate in evaluating the grid strength of the IS. Unlike Healy, Cliff does not appear to have the power to confine individuals to particular geographical locations, nor to formally restrict SWP members from different branches or areas from meeting together, or addressing each others' meetings. However, space is by no means the total community resource it is in the Workers' Institute. SWP national officers do have their own office accommodation. Free access to the material resources of the organisation, such as duplicators and telephones, is not automatically available to every member. Ordinary members of the SWP do not have unrestricted access to party offices, etc. Hence, we may award a score of 1 to the SWP for this final index of grid.

These scores are summarised in table 7. They give a final weighted score of 40 for the SWP in 1978. This is a relatively strong grid rating for quadrant D, and locates the SWP in grid band Dc.

#### Group:1978

The SWP maintains a high level of formal group activities on a number of fronts. In addition to regular (usually weekly) branch meetings, the SWP frequently mobilises its members for demonstrations and pickets and also organises the Rank and File organisation, Right to Work Campaign, and anti-fascist activities. There is a high level of informal contact between members who will meet socially, before and after official functions, and at other times in pubs and in each others' homes. Hence the SWP scores 2 on both of these indices of group. Co-residence is not uncommon among younger single members of the SWP, particularly students. However, the recent recruitment of large numbers of unemployed Asian workers, who tend to live in family homes, has reduced the proportion of co-habiters in the SWP as a whole to the point where it only merits a weak score of 0.

Whilst the financial commitment of SWP members is considerably greater than that demanded by organisations like the Labour Party, it is

Table 8.

Group Score Sheet for the Socialist Workers' Party.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Formal Activities	2	2	4
2) Informal Contacts	2	2	4
3) Co-Residence	3	0	0
4) Financial Commitment	2	0	0
5) Involvement in alliances	2	1	2
6) Internal Integration	3	2	6
7) Membership of different sorts of organisations	2	0	0
8) Activity in established Labour Movement	3	1	3
9) Requirement to Witness	2	1	2
<u>Total weighted score for group.....</u>			<u>21</u>
Total possible score for group.....			42
Weak group (D1) scores.....			0 - 13
Medium group (D2) scores.....			14 - 28
Strong group (D3) scores.....			29 - 42

modest in comparison with that extracted by the Workers' Institute, or even the WRP. Hence the SWP only scores 0 on this index.

The SWP has consistently rejected any form of strategic alliance with other groups since the early 1970s. It has developed its own student organisation in opposition to both the Broad Left and the IMG, and its own industrial front in opposition to the Labour Party, Communists, Workers' Revolutionary Party, and the IMG. The SWP has also refused offers of electoral co-operation from the IMG on a number of occasions. However, the SWP does enter short term tactical alliances with members of some of these organisations in local initiatives. Also, during the course of 1978, the SWP weakened its isolation from other groups nationally through its work in the Anti Nazi League. Hence the SWP scores 1 on the index of attitude to alliances.

Open factionalism has been suppressed in the SWP, which no longer bears any resemblance to its early federalist character. Factions are now tolerated only in the period immediately before national conferences. There is certainly no institutionalisation of opposition, which Lipset, Trow, and Coleman (1956) describe as necessary for the operation of democracy in the International Typographical Union. There are no operative safeguards for open factions such as those which we will shortly be examining in the IMG. Hence the SWP scores 2 on the index of integration.

There are no barriers to SWP members participating in non-political organisations apart from the fact that in practice the SWP may absorb most of an individual's time and resources. The SWP therefore receives a weak score of 0 on the basis of this index. Members are of course involved in trades union and students' union structures. But in the trades union movement they are constrained by the SWP's hostility to the establishment, and their commitment to developing their own industrial front which is designed to destroy the existing union structures and substitute rank and fileism. Hence we must give the SWP 1 on the index of involvement in established labour movement structures.

Finally, the requirement to witness in the SWP is much weaker than in the WRP and the Workers' Institute. However, members often wear Socialist Worker badges carrying their official slogan for the latest SWP backed campaign and seldom seem to get through an evening in the bar without spending at least some of the time discussing the SWP's position on an

important issue of the day. Hence we can give the SWP a score of 1 on the basis of this index. These scores are summarised in table 8, where it can be seen that they give rise to a weighted group score of 21, which locates the SWP in group band D2.

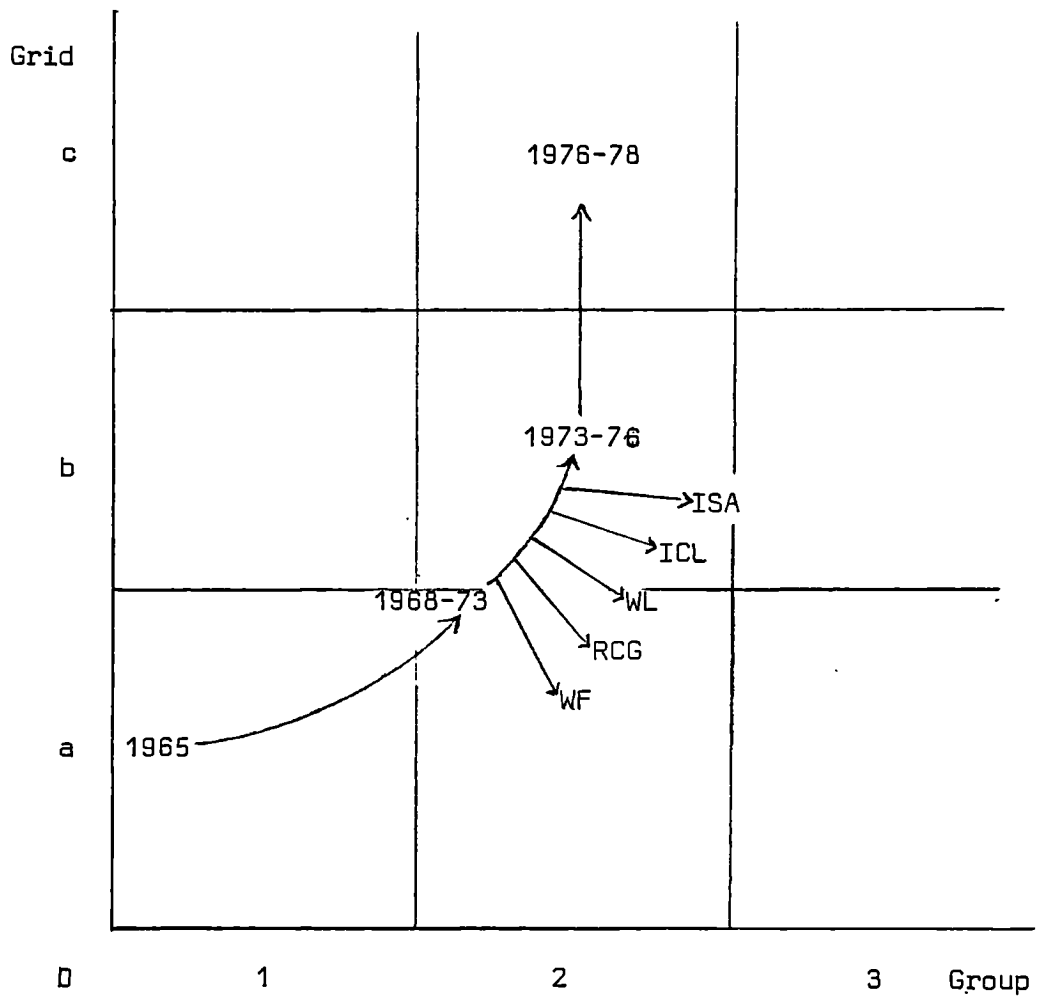
\* \* \*

The changing grid/group position of the IS/SWP over the past decade is illustrated in figure 22. Since the adoption of democratic centralism, in 1968, the SWP has passed through a period of instability which reached a peak in the period 1973-76. This period saw five major splits within the organisation coinciding with its diagonal path from the bottom left to the central segment of the D quadrant. It would seem that throughout this period, the IS/SWP experienced similar sorts of tensions to those which we observed between Thornett and Healy in the WRP. Cliff's strategy for building his organisation over the last decade has been based on the establishment of a strongly centralised leadership and a rapid expansion in membership. This attempt to mould the IS/SWP into a traditional Leninist party was manifested in the leadership's pressures to shift the organisation to stronger grid and stronger group. These pressures met with opposition from other members of the group, many of them leading figures of long standing, who perceived Cliff's strategy as an attempt to secure his own personal pre-eminence. The resistance to Cliff's strategy of increasing both grid and group constraints on his members led, initially, to the resignations of the libertarians between 1968-73 and, finally, to the formation of opposition factions which were isolated by the leadership and expelled between 1973-76.

The suppression of factions was obviously a desirable step for Cliff in pursuance of his declared aim of building a militant party with a strongly centralised command structure under Leninist discipline. It also served him well in the aim which others attributed to him, of securing his own power in the party. Blocking the formation of recognised factions reduces the opportunities for potential rivals to legitimately achieve intermediate leadership status and to consolidate opposition viewpoints within the party. Also, suppressing legal factions cannot prevent the formation of covert factions but the uncovering of a covert faction can be used by the leadership as an excuse to legitimate the expulsion of potential rivals (as we saw with the WRP).

Figure 22.

The Development of Grid and Group constraints in the IS / SWP During the Period 1968-78.



Although the opposition factions in the IS/SWP invariably exploited the democratic themes of the weak grid/weak group strategy against Cliff, just as Thornett did against Healy, it must be emphasised that once expelled the factions did not necessarily move in that direction. Some such as the ISA did indeed shift back to weak grid/weak group and are presently engaged in a unifying strategy with the IMG and others. The RCG on the other hand, soon fragmented into three groups whose social and organisational structures are closer to that of the Workers' Institute than any of the other groups described in this thesis, and the nature of their cosmological appeals has changed accordingly.

Just as the strategies adopted by opposition factions may change rapidly once they are outside of the organisation, the strategy of the IS/SWP leadership was also susceptible to change, once the opposition had been removed. Cliff has always wanted to expand his organisation to the point where he could really present himself as a viable alternative to the Communist Party. However, the removal of rival leaders necessitated a shift to strong group in order to remove their factional power bases. This obstructed mass recruitment and contributed to the very high turnover of members. Once the opposition factions had been expelled, and organised resistance to Cliff became very much more difficult, Cliff did not need to continue the shift to strong group which was acting against his other aim of expanding membership. Divested of the ballast in the form of factions exploiting weak grid/weak group cosmological themes, the SWP balloon was able to rise straight up grid, out of the unstable diagonal which appears to run from Dal to Dc3, and into its relatively stable 1978 position. Here Cliff is able to rely on his entrenched position as leader and on his ability to impose strong grid constraints over his members to control dissent. Therefore the possibilities for mass recruitment open up.

Our examination of the SWP and the WRP suggests that the diagonal running from Dal to Dc3 may be unstable for far-left organisations. We have suggested that there is a contradiction in the social relations of democratic centralist organisations between the desire of an established leadership to reduce factionalism, in the interests of providing strong leadership for a disciplined revolutionary organisation, and the desire of rival leaders to maintain factionalism, as a power base from which to challenge the leadership in the name of democracy. The cosmological appeals used by each side in this struggle for power will therefore tend to polarise between appeals to efficiency, discipline, and the need for

strong central leadership which are strong grid/strong group norms; and appeals to democracy, the evils of centralised bureaucracy, and the achievement of truth through the struggle between rival viewpoints, which are normative themes we would associate with the opposite corner of the quadrant.

Where there is not intense competition for leadership, as in the Workers' Institute, the cosmological themes of centralism and democracy are not opposed to one another and members do not see themselves as being faced with a choice of strategies at all. The groups in Da3 also tend to be relatively tiny, perhaps with three dozen members. Hence there is less pressure to form factions, in order to be heard at all, than there will be in larger organisations. Also, any attempt to split from the group is likely to leave a rival to the 'big man' type leader, found here, with only very few supporters. The potential challenger knows that he will do better biding his time until the group is large enough to give him a reasonable number of supporters to form the core of a new group if he should decide to go it alone.

Finally, we may reasonably cite the relative balance of grid and group constraints within a social environment as contributing to the diagonal pattern of instability which is emerging from our study. The extent to which a leader will be able to introduce increasing grid constraints over his members, without causing a split, is likely to depend on the strength of the group boundary. Where the group is relatively weak even the introduction of modestly strong grid measures may produce splits and resignations. This was the pattern of opposition reaction in the IS to the introduction of democratic centralism in 1968. However, as we move towards stronger group we may expect that members will be more reluctant to place themselves outside of its boundaries. The violation of weak grid norms will have to be more extreme before members will leave or risk expulsion by forming covert factions. Where the weak grid ideology of equality is not contravened, and the group dimension is strong, we may expect to find small, relatively stable groups without open factions but with a high degree of individual negotiation such as we saw in the Workers' Institute. Where the grid dimension is strong in relation to group, we may expect factionalism to be institutionalised and the rights of opposition to be protected by formal rules and guarantees. We have yet to describe an organisation of this sort which would occupy the space on the top left of the unstable diagonal. In order to justify these present interpretations



of patterns of organisational stability in quadrant D we must turn our attention to just such a group. Fortunately we do not have to look very far, since the third of the top-three Trotskyist organisations in Britain has developed a system of formally recognised open factions, which promise to fit the bill quite nicely. Hence we turn to the last of the four groups to be examined in this thesis, the International Marxist Group.

## Chapter Eight

### The Benefits of Factionalism

Banning tendencies and factions does not in fact prevent different views from organising.... Banning tendencies and factions merely drives organisation over differences underground and leads to their assuming the forms of secret factions, clique groupings, etc. It therefore gives the discussion within the organisation a malignant vicious form, breaking up its collective character and assuming forms outside its control. Democratic, open discussion through tendencies and factions, in the full view of the organisation as a whole, is the clearest form of debate. Little else, however, saps the vitality of a party on the organisational front as much as subterranean manoeuvres, cliques, secret currents and the like. [IMG Pre-Conference Bulletin 1978]

### The Origins of the International Marxist Group

The International Marxist Group was proclaimed as the British Section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1968 and received full recognition at the Ninth World Congress the following year. However, the emergence of the group had been preceded by a long period of preparation dating back to the great international split of 1953. Unlike the Healyites and the Socialist Review Group, the supporters of the International Secretariat were left scattered and disorganised, without any official British Section. It was a long task to effectively regroup them.

The first steps towards accomplishing this task was the establishment in 1955 of the Committee for the Regroupment of the Fourth International. This group brought together a number of individuals who had maintained contact with the International Secretariat in Paris and supporters of two non-British sections who were resident in Britain. The Committee hoped to regroup more individuals through a mimeographed journal called Fourth International.

The following year, the Committee fused with a small grouping which had been maintained by Ted Grant and Jimmy Deane after their expulsion from Healy's Club in 1950. The new organisation resuscitated the name of the short-lived pre-war Trotskyist amalgam, the Revolutionary Socialist League. During the first twelve years of its existence, the league never had more than fifty members, most of whom were industrial workers.

The Revolutionary Socialist League still maintains an active existence, under the veteran leadership of Grant and Deane, although it is no longer recognised by the United Secretariat. The League has always been a strong exponent of the strategy of entryism. It holds out the prospect of revolution being brought about when the present social democratic leadership of the Labour Party is 'exposed' by the demands of the ever worsening crisis of capitalism. The League believes that the rank and file of the Party will seek a new leadership which will be provided by the League and its supporters, who will already be within the ranks of the Labour Party, preparing to fill the gap left by the collapse of social democracy. The League, therefore, concentrates its energies on influencing Labour Party members in order to realise this scenario.

The Revolutionary Socialist League remains the most clandestine of the British Trotskyists (with the exception of the seven strong Socialist Current Group, which is itself a splinter from the League). The Revolutionary Socialist League publishes no literature of its own, although it organises around the newspaper The Militant which was founded in 1964, and over which it exerts total but unacknowledged control. Until 1963, the League had openly published its own journal called Socialist Fight. This disappeared when in that same year the League began to deny its own existence and dropped both its name and any public face. This extreme entryism led to the split in the British Section between the Revolutionary Socialist League and the newly emergent International Marxist Group. This came to a head in 1965, when an investigation by the United Secretariat decided that both organisations should be designated as 'Sympathising Sections' of the Fourth International. The League considered this demotion to be tantamount to expulsion and ceased to have any contact with the United Secretariat. The Revolutionary Socialist League continues to operate inside the Labour Party and founded its own International in 1969, the Communist Workers' International.

The developments leading up to the rift between the Revolutionary Socialist League and the United Secretariat are not easy to unravel, not least because the allegiances of United Secretariat supporters were very fluid during this period. For some years prior to the split, the Revolutionary Socialist League was loosely linked with a group of Trotskyists known as the Nottingham Group which had been formed initially as an internal opposition in the RSL but which started organising

independently in 1961 with the intention of building close links with continental Trotskyists. The major spokesman of the new group was Ken Coates, an ex-Communist, who had been subsequently expelled from the SLL (now an organiser of the Institute for Workers' Control). Its headquarters was Jordan's Bookshop, run by Pat Jordan, another ex-Communist and later a leading member of the International Marxist Group.

The United Secretariat had long maintained that its sections should combine entryism with having an explicit journal for the purposes of recruitment and training, and information of its members. Indeed, this had been the role of Socialist Fight up until 1963. With the rift between the Revolutionary Socialist League and the International Secretariat, a new journal edited by Ken Coates was launched by the Nottingham Group in January, 1964, as a half way attempt to provide an organising journal in Britain. However, as it was launched with support from prominent figures in the Labour Movement, The Week was restricted in the degree of explicit commitment that it could show to the Fourth International. However, by 1965, the Nottingham Group had clearly become the centre for the formation of the International Marxist Group as a 'Sympathising Section of the Fourth International'. Disagreement broke out once more over the question of orientation to the Labour Party. The work of the group at this time was primarily concentrated on two fields, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the Institute of Workers' Control, both of which were predominantly built up by IMG members in close association with Bertrand Russell. The group working in the IWC argued that criticism in The Week of reformist trades unionists, such as Jack Jones, damaged their own efforts in the Labour Movement. Members of the group working in the VSC disagreed with this position as a matter of principle, so Coates and his supporters left the IMG in order to concentrate on building up the IWC, unfettered by membership of a democratic centralist organisation.

#### 1968 - 1978

The Week ceased publication in March, 1968. The United Secretariat had consistently criticised Healy for his sectarianism in taking his members out of the Labour Party, for renouncing entryism, and for seeking to establish a public organisation. But in spite of this, it would seem that the comparative success of the SLL and the IS in absorbing new forces from the Labour Party youth organisation may have caused the United Secretariat to reconsider the benefits of having its own public

organisation in Britain. Thus the IMG was openly proclaimed as the Official British Section of the USFI. At this point the IMG had only 40 members.

Following on the upheavals of May, 1968, the USFI began to change its basic strategy. Basing its analysis upon the development of a new radical youth movement (relatively free from the influences of the traditional Labour Movement) the United Secretariat ended its general policy of entryism at its Ninth World Congress in 1969. It called instead for new revolutionary organisations, aiming at consciously constructing a party of the Bolshevik type:

...organisations which could function effectively and openly as real combat organisations capable of serving as poles of attraction for the best of the revolutionary youth who are repelled by Stalinism and reformism and for which spontaneism has little attraction.  
(Conference document 1969)

However, the British Section was not unanimous in rejecting entryism and welcoming the new 'Youth Vanguard' line of the United Secretariat. The dissenters, known as the London Opposition, felt that petty bourgeois youth only joins the revolutionary movement insofar as it breaks from the privileges of its social stratum - youth, as such, having no homogenous interests. When one of its members was expelled in 1970, this group of about 10, broke with the IMG. In conjunction with some ex-members of the Revolutionary Socialist League, they formed a new organisation within the ranks of the Labour Party. This new grouping, known as the Revolutionary Communist League, concentrated its activities on the Tribune Socialist Charter Group, within which they achieved a majority at the 1972 Convention. The group publishes the monthly Chartist and the Chartist International which calls for the building of a new Fourth International. The group's propaganda is notable for its emphasis on trades union rights for the armed forces.

For the most part the International Marxist Group was apparently well suited to the so-called 'Youth Vanguard' line, as most of its membership has always been drawn from students and certain professions such as teachers (ie. ex-students). Although the Revolutionary Socialist League has also made most of its headway in the last ten years amongst Labour Party youth, there is a marked contrast between the two organisations, as the League is still predominantly working class.

The aim of the International Marxist Group in this period was to achieve influence in the working class movement by creating an organisation which had first gained strength from social strata which were on the periphery of the industrial working class, and which would consequently be less dominated by traditional Labour reformist ideology. Examples quoted in 1970 included: black workers, women workers, young workers, particularly apprentices, secondary school students, but above all, students in higher education.

The decisive battles for a mass revolutionary party in Britain can only take place within the organised workers' movement. However, the unevenness of the development of the class struggle has led to a situation now where the qualitative transformation of the strength of vanguard organisation in relation to social democracy and Stalinism lies outside or on the periphery of the organised working class. (Internal document 1970)

Hence the IMG laid great emphasis on international campaigns which may have had particular appeal to students and to immigrants of various occupations from the third world. Indeed, the IMG derived much of its initial impact from its role in the organisation of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign during the late 1960s. But despite the commitment of almost all of its limited resources to the VSC, it was the IS rather than the IMG who benefitted most from the campaign in terms of recruitment. During this period, the IMG in fact gained a reputation for being preoccupied with distilling its own political position, and defining itself as clearly distinct from the older established groups to the left of the Labour Party. To the CPGB, and the IS, the IMG appeared as an ultra-leftist sect, divorced from reality, and intent above all on demonstrating its monopoly of truth irrespective of the practical political consequences. This image undoubtedly contributed to the slow growth of the IMG relative to the IS, particularly after its rejection of the latter's regroupment appeal of 1968. Between 1967-71, the IMG increased its membership from 40 to only 150, whereas the IS increased tenfold in the same period.

However, the IMG did not suffer from the high rate of turnover which beset the IS and the SLL. There was extensive discussion and debate within the IMG on almost every aspect of politics and social life. Through this debate the membership began to learn to distinguish between distilling its own characteristic position based on what was seen as

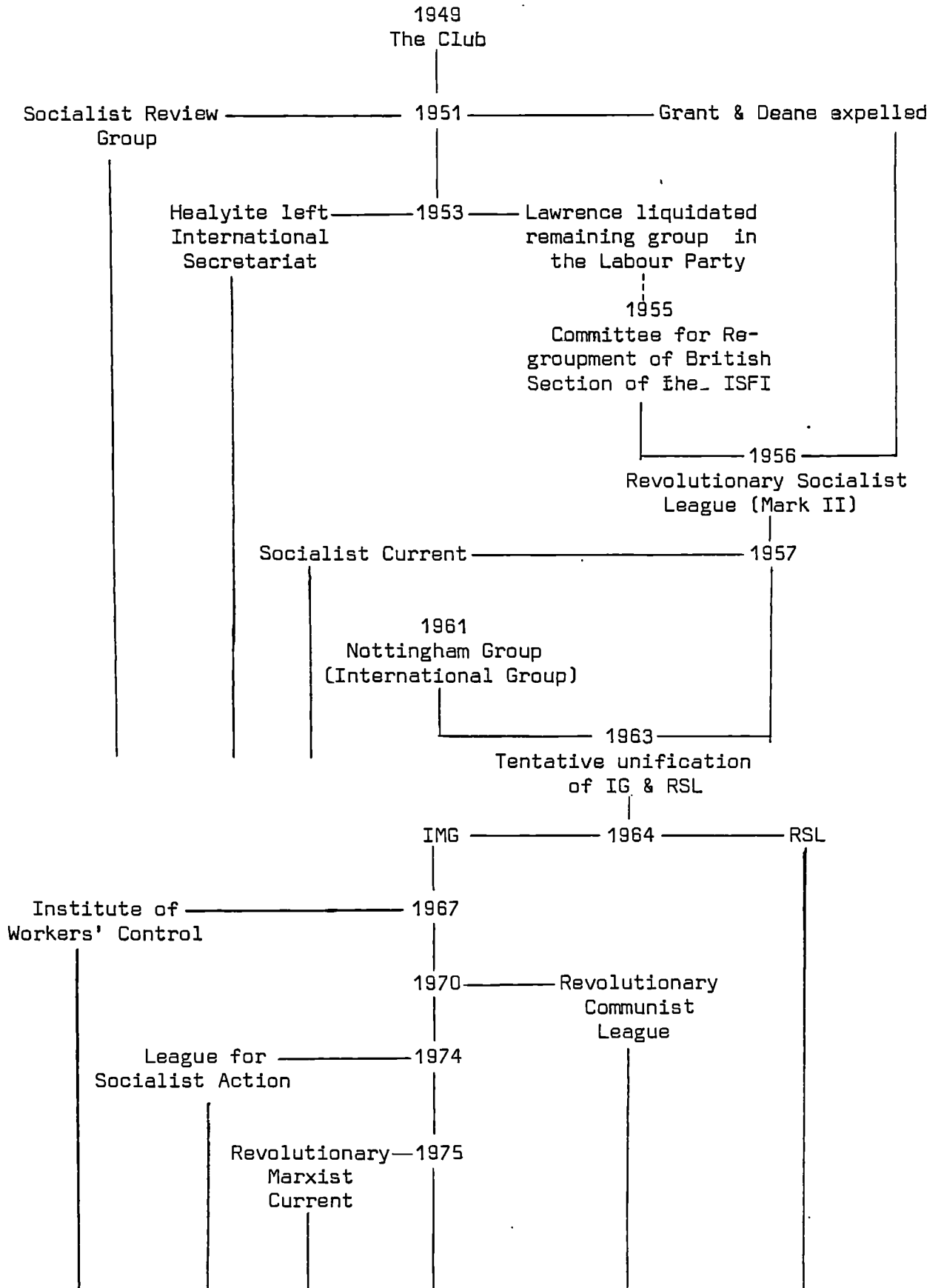
desirable, and the presentation to the public of a position which can form the basis of mass action. For example, the IMG dropped support for the Provisional IRA as a condition for united activity with other groups on Ireland. The membership of the IMG also learned that mass action necessitates united action with other groups on the basis of compromise, not on the basis of the others accepting the IMG's minimum programme, which had frequently been the basis on which the IMG perceived co-operation in 1971. In this way the IMG achieved a considerable increase in both the quality and size of its membership, which numbered 400 by 1973.

The International Marxist Group has over recent years also changed its attitude to the Labour Party quite significantly. Prior to the 1970 general election, Robin Blackburn, who had not at that stage publicly declared his membership, published an article entitled Let it Bleed, which equated the Conservative and Labour Parties as parties of capitalism. In the 1973 election, he argued in the New Statesman for the IMG line of support for Labour candidates, 'without illusions'. By the 1976 congress, the Group's leadership was arguing for a form of entryism whereby members would be sent into the Labour Party as 'Red Weekly Supporters' in order to develop the 'class struggle left wing' within the party. This strategy, which was carried by fifty seven per cent of the congress, differs from traditional entryism in that the IMG are retaining an external public organisation, which is currently attempting to regroup a number of other Trotskyist groups around itself.

The call for a Trotskyist regroupment is not a mere cri de coeur, or a piece of wishful thinking, nor is it just the cynical exploitation of an established normative theme. It is in fact intimately bound up with the structure of the internal organisation of the IMG, in a way which is of wide ranging significance in terms of establishing its grid/group dynamics. The account which we have of the development of the International Marxist Group differs markedly from the histories of the Healyites and the Socialist Workers' Party over the same period. The IMG has not undergone a major split on the scale of those which have been suffered by its principal rivals since 1968, and there have certainly been no mass expulsions. Apart from the London Opposition in 1970, there have only been two splits, involving a total loss to the IMG of less than 35 members. The first of these was in 1974 involving the loss of some

Figure 23.

Genealogy of the International Marxist Group.





half dozen supporters of a permanent faction in the International Secretariat called the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. This faction tends towards a more orthodox Trotskyism than the European Sections of the USFI as a whole. Its supporters never accounted for much more than 10% of the membership of the IMG, and they seem to have left out of sheer frustration at being condemned to permanent opposition. The group now has about 20 members and calls itself the League for Socialist Action. The second split was in 1975 and involved the whole membership of a recognised faction called the Leninist Opposition Tendency, founded in 1973 by one Tony Whelan. This grouping involved some 20-25 people, including the majority of the Liverpool branch of the IMG. After the split, they took the name Revolutionary Marxist Current, but became known to the IMG as the Red Current because of their idealist ultra-left politics. RMC membership subsequently dwindled to about a dozen before, in order to avoid total extinction, it merged with the larger Liverpool-based group Big Flame.

The relative stability and steady growth of the IMG to 1,000 members by 1978 is important for our analysis. It provides counter evidence to any over-broad and possibly fatalistic explanation of the various splits which have beset the Trotskyist left, particularly over the last ten years. We can see that schism is not merely the inevitable response of small scale political organisations to the external political pressures of the period, and a general decline in left-wing political activity among students since 1968. Although these factors have certainly constrained the groups of the far-left, their strategies for survival and growth in the face of these common circumstances have been quite different. We have seen the Socialist Workers' Party following an erratic pattern of growth and schism, which it has been able to maintain by drawing on new areas of recruitment outside of the traditional student milieu, such as the unemployed. At the same time, the IMG has maintained a pattern of steady growth, without a major split, among students and professionals, with some expansion among skilled workers. The structural factors involved in maintaining the stability of the IMG are crucial to our understanding of sectarian dynamics and to my suggestion that there is a stable area above the diagonal band of instability which we have identified across quadrant D.

The increase in IMG membership has in part been due to its programme of regroupment of the Trotskyist left. Although this has not produced a major realignment, the comparative openness of the approach has attracted

those who have been repelled by the harsh sectarianism of the WRP or the SWP. Other factors contributing to the IMG's growth include its ability to avoid crippling splits and maintain a more stable membership. These features of the IMG are undoubtedly related to its internal structure which differs from either of its principal rivals in at least two vital ways.

- 1) The IMG allows for the formation of factions within the group, which also provides a model of strategic federalism for regroupment with other organisations presently outside of the IMG.
  - 2) The IMG has not developed under the aegis of a single dominant leader, nor has it produced such a figure during the course of its development, who would be able and anxious to exclude potential rivals from participating in the leadership of the organisation.
- These two factors are not unrelated.

#### Tendencies and Factions

The IMG permits opposition to the leadership or majority position to be freely organised, without constraints based on branch membership or geographical area. It does this by recognising two sorts of structures, tendencies and factions.

Tendencies are organised groupings of individuals from various branches, who have differences with the majority of the leadership on a limited range of specific issues. They are constituted formally by 20 or so members declaring that they are forming a tendency on particular issues, and notifying the central leadership accordingly. The leadership, normally the Central Committee which meets every three months, has the prerogative of granting or refusing recognition to a tendency. However, it would be a serious step to withhold recognition, as this might provoke more extensive disagreement, possibly forcing the opposition into covert factionalism. Tendencies may be declared at any time, but most usually in the three months discussion period prior to a national conference, and are dissolved when the issue is deemed to be settled, usually by conference decision. However, a tendency may continue between conferences, in which case it is likely to add points to its original platform and convert itself into a faction. Exceptions may be made to the numerical requirements for recognition of a tendency if the issues raised by it are considered by the CC to be sufficiently important. For example, at the April 1978 conference, tendency rights were granted to a group of only seven or eight, whilst the largest tendency had almost 400 supporters.

A faction is set up when a minority feels that its differences with the leadership are so fundamental that to continue along the course set by the existing leaders would lead to the political degeneration of the organisation. Once again, factions declare themselves to the CC which has the right to grant or withhold recognition. Usually the leadership will recognise a faction even if it feels that the issues at stake only merit the recognition of tendency status, because to refuse recognition could be regarded as evidence of the leadership's degeneration which caused the faction to declare itself in the first place. Unlike tendencies, factions are not required to declare a limited range of issues on which they dissent from the majority. On the contrary, they are expected to develop a comprehensive critique of the existing leadership. Often, organisational grievances are cited as evidence of the leadership's political failure. But this is sometimes merely the frustration of a disgruntled tendency whose document was not published on time by the central office.

Once recognised, members of factions and tendencies have the right to hold their own internal meetings regardless of whether they are members of different branches or of higher committees. This is specifically forbidden within the Workers Revolutionary Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, the Communist Party, and most other democratic centralist organisations of the British left. In these organisations, members of different branches are only permitted to meet and organise political activity opposed to the leadership/majority position, at higher committees of the party. Furthermore, factions and tendencies in the IMG, are entitled to equal space in internal bulletins to put forward their positions, regardless of the numerical strength of the dissenting groups. Once again, this contrasts with the Communist Party in which contributions to the pre-congress discussion in the fortnightly journal Comment are only accepted from individuals and individual branches which choose to express a collective opinion. (This means that the space allotted to diverse views in the Communist Party's pre-congress discussion should reflect the numerical strength of the various unorganised currents within the party, and the editorial policy of the Journal.) It must be noted, however, that while pre-conference discussion in the CP is open to the general public, it is restricted to internal bulletins of the IMG.

Tendencies were once known by names, such as the London Opposition, or The Tendency, but those which have emerged since 1973 have been generally identified by letters as Tendency A, B, C, etc., rather than

by the names of leaders, descriptive terms, or geographical locations. This policy was introduced because it was felt that the adoption of certain names was provocative and caused unnecessary tension in debate. For example, the use of the name Bolshevik Tendency upset other members of the IMG who felt that they were being implicitly accused of Menshevism. There have been exceptions to this, however, since one of the five tendencies extant during 1973-4 was known by the initials of two of its members as BJP/JAB. Some of the older tendency names continued in use after the adoption of the policy of identification by letters rather than names, the most durable of which was The Tendency which seems to have been in almost continuous existence throughout the period we are studying.

Factions and tendencies do not seem to follow geographical lines, except when particularly strong cadres are able to win over a whole branch. This would seem to indicate good communications between the branches and with the centre, and a free flow of information throughout the organisation. This is in strong contrast with the covert factions which may arise from time to time in the CPGB, which because of restrictions on meeting outside of the official branch structure, tend to be regional. The formal structure of factions and tendencies is flexible and depends on the nature and range of issues involved. Generally speaking, a faction will elect a tight steering committee, and local committees, and will hold regular meetings. A faction has the right to impose its own discipline on members so long as it does not lead them to contravene in public action the discipline of the IMG as a whole. It therefore functions as a microcosm of the larger group. A tendency is much more loosely organised, perhaps with a national steering committee. It does not have disciplinary rights over its members because its platform is limited to the issues specified at its foundation, and unlike a faction it is not allowed to add to these, unless it applies for faction status. Tendency members may therefore disagree fundamentally with each other over issues not specified in the tendency's platform. Indeed, in principle, it is possible for an IMG member to belong to more than one tendency if their platforms are concerned with different aspects of the group's policy or strategy.

Tendencies and factions do not seem to break away from the IMG, or find themselves expelled from it as most of the covert factions in the WRP, or the unofficial tendencies and factions in the SWP have done. The IMG have lost less than forty members in splits throughout the period 1968-78. Since the Revolutionary Communist League broke away

from the IMG in 1970, there have been only two schisms in the IMG compared with five in the IS/SWP. The League for Socialist Action consisted of only half a dozen members of The Tendency, the rest of whom did not leave the IMG in 1974 but carried on its internal campaign for at least four more years before apparently resolving its differences with the leadership and disbanding. The Leninist Opposition Tendency, which is the only one to leave the IMG en masse, represented only about 20 - 25 members, mainly from one geographical area.

The formalisation of factions obstructs the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals and serves to depersonalise political power struggles within the organisation. The tolerance of open factions reduces the likelihood of significant schisms, expulsions, and cases of individual disaffection resulting in high rate of membership turnover. The consequent relative stability of membership means that the leadership of the IMG is more accountable to the membership than is the case with the WRP or the SWP where the higher turnover means that membership tends to be less experienced and more ready to accept the positions of the established leadership. The existence of recognised factions furthermore facilitates effective challenges to the leadership, which is consequently less secure in its dominant role than the unassailable regimes of Healy and Cliff. The fact that the IMG has not produced a single dominant leader of the order of Healy or Cliff is undoubtedly due in part to the structure of factions and tendencies acting to block the careers of individual leaders who appear to be bent upon entrenching their authority over the organisation as a whole, whilst facilitating the emergence of new leading figures. Certainly, the IMG does not have a single established arbiter of orthodoxy, and differences between John Ross, Tariq Ali, and Robin Blackburn have been expressed quite publicly on a number of occasions (eg. the dispute over the Morning Star in Socialist Challenge 1978.)

The relative freedom of the IMG from large scale schisms of the sort which beset the SWP and WRP can be accounted for, to a considerable extent, by the same structures. Where factions are legitimated by the leadership, and are operating quite openly, they cannot be portrayed as sinister and secretive sectarians bent upon subverting the democratic decision making processes of the organisation. The assignment of a neutral name to each faction, such as Tendency A, etc., reduces the extent to which the success or failure of a faction or tendency can be identified with the names of its leading figures and serves to depersonalise political disagreement

to some extent. It also makes it more difficult for opponents to vilify it in the sort of terms which the WRP leadership used to oppose the Thornett group, which it described as a personal clique. The problem facing a covert faction is that such accusations are often, almost inevitably, true, since being covert it is set up through personal contacts and is therefore likely to be concentrated in a particular geographical area under the leadership of a powerful personality. Furthermore, the covert faction will tend to restrict the number of its public spokespersons in order not to expose all of its supporters to disciplinary action. Therefore fewer members have the opportunity to achieve acknowledgement as intermediate leaders. This was not only the pattern of covert factions in the WRP where the Oxford Area leadership gave rise to the Thornett group which eventually was expelled to form the WSL but also serves as an account of the activities of the hard line Stalinists in Surrey District of the CP prior to their voluntary split with the Party in 1977 to form the New Communist Party under the leadership of the late Sid French.

The formal recognition of opposition in the IMG, embodied in its structural mechanisms allowing for the formation of factions and tendencies, has brought it stability, combined with steady growth. However, the cost of this strategy is high. The rule allowing equal space to all tendencies in its internal publications means that the group as a whole is forced to invest valuable resources, in terms of time and money, circulating the viewpoint of what may be a very small part of its membership. The cost of the 1978 conference came to £8,000, in an organisation of less than 1,000 people. As the organisation grows the difficulty of maintaining adequate communication between all the members of the organisation becomes increasingly difficult. The toleration of factions depends upon a high level of understanding of a variety of viewpoints within the organisation, and the whole system of tendencies and factions and the constraints on the emergence of individual leaders, depend upon the maintenance of an efficient communication network and frequent face-to-face contact of the membership. The system also places its own strains on the organisation, since the obligation upon the leadership to be seen to be dealing even handedly with minority tendencies might prove frustrating to the majority who feel that their programme is being held back in order to avoid causing a major rift with the minority.

Despite these problems internal strategic federalism has so far worked well for the IMG at a time when other groups of the revolutionary

left have been beset by crises. The SWP may have expanded its membership from two to three thousand during the 1970s, but it has undergone a series of damaging splits and recessions and has suffered from a very high turnover of members. The WRP during the same period has split and contracted.

The internal factionalism of the IMG also serves as a model for the group's policy of regroupment of the Trotskyist left and its popular front electoral policy. At the present moment, the IMG is the largest and leading force in Socialist Unity. The other constituents are Big Flame (with which the IMG splinter group the RMC merged during 1977) and the International Socialist Alliance. There is also a significant force of non-aligned socialists working under the same umbrella. This electoral alliance has emerged in the light of the SWP's rebuttals of IMG overtures for electoral co-operation at Stetchford and other bi-elections during 1977. Although the Socialist Unity alliance is not formally posed by the IMG as a prelude to a merger with its smaller partners, it is clear from the 1978 Conference documents of Big Flame, that the creation of an enlarged Trotskyist organisation including both the IMG and Big Flame is a projected long term outcome of the alliance. In effect, the IMG's overtures to smaller groups of the Trotskyist left for re-groupment, amount to invitations for those groups to become tendencies within the IMG, retaining their own rights of caucus, publication, etc. whilst gaining representation on the Central Committee of the IMG, and the increased effectiveness of being part of a larger organisation with more developed resources. The replacement of the old IMG weekly paper Red Weekly (formerly Red Mole) by Socialist Challenge in June 1977 represented a serious commitment to this programme of revolutionary unity.

We do not believe that any revolutionary socialist organisation today is a party or even the sole nucleus of a future party. To pretend otherwise leads to sectarian posturing.

The International Marxist Group which is launching this newspaper wants it to become a paper of struggle utilised by different groups, and by workers and other layers engaged in struggles. That is why we will open our pages to debates and discussion. That is why we will establish special sections in the paper which will be accessible to groups which have no other channels of communication.  
(Socialist Challenge 9/6/77)

Hence we can see how the model of strategic federalism applies equally to both the external and the internal relations of the IMG. The model is reinforced by the same underlying rationale of the value of diversity and open debate in both cases. The result has been that the IMG has managed to avoid the crippling splits which have beset the WRP and SWP throughout their respective histories.

Since the end of the April 1978 conference of the IMG, all of the tendencies have vountarily dissolved themselves, and the organisation as a whole appears to have achieved a remarkable degree of unanimity and a clear sense of political and organisational direction. However, the provisions for factionalism have been so well established that it is difficult to imagine that this degree of unanimity will be permanent. Indeed, it would bode ill for the high level of internal democracy in the IMG if factions were to lose their respectability as we saw happen in the SWP.

Despite its remarkable record of stability, the IMG has recently encountered its own setback in its pattern of steady growth, which seems to stem from strains encountered by individuals giving a high level of commitment to the organisation over an extended period. Whilst not renouncing their support for the IMG, or even disengaging from active politics, a number of individuals have dropped out of membership. This problem does not come as a total surprise in an organisation which has maintained a high level of activity with an exceptionally low turnover of members. We have not come across this problem with the WRP or the SWP, because the only members of these organisations to have survived their respective histories would seem to be the hard core of their leaderships. The SWP has maintained a pattern of leaps in membership during militant campaigns, followed by sudden losses. In 1974 the membership climbed to 3,000, but by summer of the following year it was down to less than 2,000. The pattern has been repeated since, with a membership of 3,000 declining to only 2,500 in the course of 1978.

The IMG has maintained a steady growth rate from 400 in 1974, to just under 1,000 in 1978. This has been achieved with a turnover which reliable sources described as miniscule. The contrast in the growth patterns of the IMG and SWP is illustrated by the incidence of SWP branches which flourish for a while during one of the boom phases and subsequently collapse, like the Hull factory branches at the end of 1974. This situation is all



but unheard of in the IMG. However, in 1978, this steady growth pattern changed. The IMG recruited between 150-200 members, but lost about the same number, including some veterans who had been active in the organisation for many years. However, unlike the refugees from the SWP and the WRP, these ex-members of the IMG have not formed tiny sects of their own or drifted out of revolutionary politics altogether. They have remained active and often in close contact with the IMG. It would appear that this lapsing of membership has more to do with the long term strain of the level of commitment that the IMG requires from its members than it has to do with political disaffection. This sort of loss from exhaustion must be counted as one of the costs of maintaining a system of factions, which requires a high level of group activity and debate if it is not going to degenerate into the sort of faction warfare stimulated by leadership oligarchy which we saw in the WRP and SWP. A test of this interpretation might be incidence of ex-members returning to the fold in the future.

### Grid and Group

The IMG seems to fulfil our expectations of the sort of stable organisation which we hoped to find to the left of the unstable diagonal across quadrant D. Factionalism is indeed institutionalised, and the rights of recognised opposition are protected by formal guarantees. But we must apply the same method of scoring grid and group to the IMG as we have done to other organisations, in order to confirm the grid/group position of the IMG on the diagram relative to the groups which we have already located.

### Group

The IMG has a very high level of formal activities including regular branch meetings, frequent attendance at demonstrations, specialist conferences, and various faction and tendency meetings. For this reason, IMG members may not cultivate extensive social contacts outside of the group, sharing instead a high level of informal contact with fellow members. Hence the IMG scores a maximum 2 on each of these indices. Co-residence is also common, particularly among students (who make up 25% of the membership) whilst many of the young professional members (often ex-students,) also share flats with each other. However, there is no realistic comparison with the strength of co-residence in the Workers' Institute, so we cannot justify a score of more than 1 on this index.

Table 9.

Group Score Sheet for the International Marxist Group.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Formal Activities	2	2	4
2) Informal Contacts	2	2	4
3) Co-Residence	3	1	3
4) Financial Commitment	2	1	2
5) Involvement in Alliances	2	0	0
6) Internal Integration	3	0	0
7) Membership of different sorts of organisations	2	0	0
8) Activity in established Labour Movement	3	0	0
9) Requirement to Witness	2	2	4
<u>Total weighted score for group.....</u>			<u>13</u>
Total possible score for group.....			42
Weak group (D1) scores.....			0 - 13
Medium group (D2) scores.....			14 - 28
Strong group (D3) scores.....			29 - 42

Members' financial commitments to the IMG are heavier than those of SWP members. The IMG levy a flat rate subscription of £1 per month and a sliding scale of supplementary contributions, based on incomes, which raises an average of £5 per month from each member. However, the financial demands made of IMG members are certainly lower than those made by the Workers' Institute, so we give the IMG a score of 1 on this index.

We have described the IMG's willingness to enter long term strategic alliances with other revolutionary organisations and the highly developed factional structure which it maintains within its own boundaries. Hence the IMG scores 0 for both its attitude to alliances and internal integration. The involvement of IMG members in activities of a primarily non-political nature is not merely tolerated but is guaranteed and encouraged in the constitution, which recognises the right of individuals to a private life, and to free time for non-political activities, essential for physical and mental well being. Hence IMG members are in principle and in practice able to participate fully in sports clubs and other social organisations. The IMG therefore scores 0 on this index also.

Unlike the SWP and the WRP, the IMG poses no industrial front organisation of its own to the established structures of the trades union and Labour Movement. However, it does of course criticise existing leaders. IMG members are expected to be fully active in Labour Movement structures, and attempt to build close links with left-wing members of the Labour Party. In so doing, IMG members may choose to keep a low profile, hence they score 0 for both their strong involvement in established structures, and their relatively weak requirement to witness.

These group scores are summarised in table 9 and give rise to a weighted total score of 13 which locates the IMG in relatively weak group band D1.

#### Grid

We have seen that the negotiation of policy in the IMG is widespread; indeed it has to be for the organisation to maintain itself as a single unit containing a number of competing factions. Similarly, adjudicating rights in disputes are clearly diffused throughout the organisation. Although the majority of the central committee may in principle refuse

Table 10.

Grid Score Sheet for the International Marxist Group.

<u>Empirical Index</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1) Negotiation of Policy	4	0	0
2) Adjudicating Rights	4	0	0
3) Legitimation of Decisions	3	2	6
4) Sanctions	1	2	2
5) Duplication of Function	3	2	6
6) Hierarchy	3	1	3
7) Leadership	2	0	0
8) Turnover of Officers	2	0	0
9) Accountability	3	1	3
10) Access to Space	3	1	3

Total weighted score for grid.....23

Total possible score for grid.....56

Weak grid (Da) scores..... 0 - 18

Medium grid (Db) scores.....19 - 37

Strong grid (Dc) scores.....38 - 56

faction or tendency rights to dissident groups, or may attempt to expel miscreants, such powers may only be used sparingly for fear of provoking other factions sensitive to any perceived threat to their own rights. Hence the IMG scores 0 for negotiation and adjudication.

On the other hand, decisions made in the IMG are seldom legitimated through reference to oracles. The criteria which are usually invoked are the rules and norms of the organisation and the immediate needs of the class struggle. Hence the appropriate score here is 2. Similarly, expulsion is seldom used as a sanction against dissidents, for the reason that this may be seen as an attack on a minority position. Wayward members may be more effectively castigated by suspension or removal of special responsibilities. So the IMG score 2 on the basis of sanctions.

Although everyone in the IMG is expected to know about what everyone else is doing, and to participate in debate on all aspects of the group's activities, there is a strong division of labour and responsibilities. At every level of branch and national organisation, individuals will be expected to take on responsibility for specific tasks, from collecting subscriptions and organising paper sales, to convening tendency meetings and writing bulletins. We give the IMG a score of 2 because there is relatively little duplication of function amongst its members.

There is a hierarchy in the IMG consisting of a Political Committee chosen from its own members by the Central Committee, which is elected from National Conference. Below the Central Committee is the Branch Committee and the rank and file members. However, the IMG follows a strong policy of taking decisions at the lowest possible level of this hierarchy, unlike the policy of Healy and Cliff of abrogating as many decisions to the centre as possible. Furthermore, the hierarchy in the IMG is less complex than that of the SWP or the WRP, so a score of only 1 is appropriate here.

Because of the intense competition generated by the faction and tendency structure, positions in the bureaucracy are not the sinecures they have become in the SWP and WRP. Office holders in the IMG have to continually negotiate their right to retain office, both with other leaders and with the membership as a whole. In fact, the IMG seems to have suffered acute difficulties in building an efficient organisational structure

precisely because of a general reluctance among its members to accept full time office, knowing that they may have to give up secure employment to do so. Hence leadership in the IMG is far from being ascribed, and the turnover of officers quite rapid. The score for both of these indices is therefore 0.

The leadership of the IMG is far more accountable to the membership than either Cliff or Healy are to their respective organisations. In these cases, opposition has been expelled over an extended period of time, and most of the middle cadre has been lost, leaving an inexperienced rank and file at the whim of an autocratic leader. However, the accountability of the IMG leadership is not simply a one way process, for the leadership does represent the legitimate voice of the majority which elected it. For this reason, it controls the distribution of full time posts and the facilities of the central office. The membership is also accountable to the leadership to act in accordance with the policies and principles of the organisation, which the membership lays down for itself at National Conference. This mutual accountability of leadership and rank and file earns the IMG a middle score of 1 for this index.

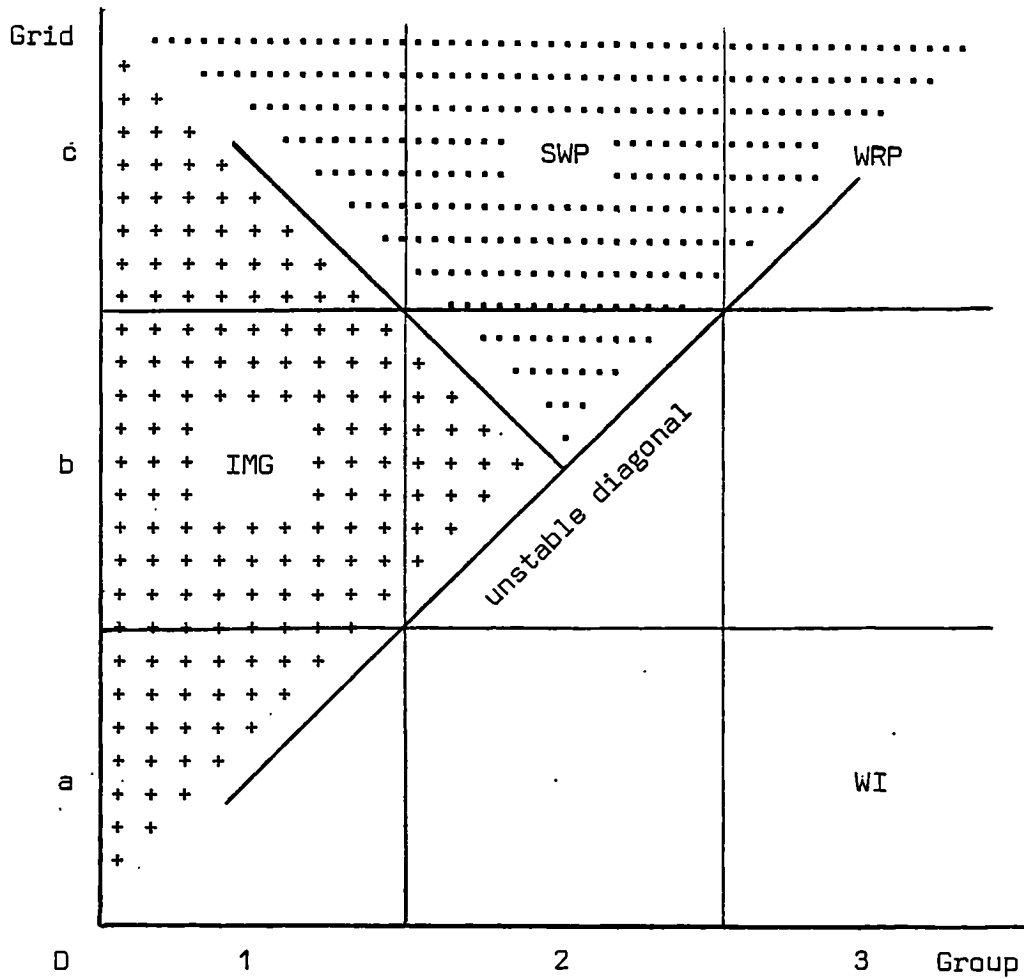
Finally, a score of 1 is awarded to the IMG for the index of access to space, on the same basis as the SWP. The leaders of the IMG do have specialised office facilities and privileged access to group resources such as printing facilities, telephones, etc. However, this index is not so useful here, where fewer activities are centered around the group's own premises, as it is with organisations like the Workers' Institute whose control over space may be a more practical constraint within the confines of the commune.

### Patterns of Stability

All of these grid scores are summarised in table 10, where it can be seen that they give rise to a weighted score of 23, putting the IMG in the middle grid band Db. Therefore, we locate the IMG firmly on the left hand side of the quadrant at Db1, more or less where we hoped to find a stable organisation in relation to the unstable diagonal. Thus the final pattern of the relative grid/group positions of the four organisations which have looked at in this thesis is that illustrated in figure 24. The pattern of sectarianism which emerges falls into three

Figure 24.

Patterns of Stable and Unstable Social Environments at Weak Grid/Strong Group.



Key.

	Stability due to small size.
+ + + + + +	Stability due to fair competition rules.
. . . . . . . . . .	Stability due to imposed discipline.

triangular areas of relative stability, two above the unstable diagonal and one below. Groups below the diagonal are likely to be relatively stable, but small and with a millenarian cosmology. They are usually the products of schisms which can ultimately be traced back to a larger organisation in or above the unstable diagonal.

The area above the diagonal is divided into two triangles which are stable for different reasons. The left hand triangle, occupied by the IMG, owes its stability primarily to the existence of factional and federal structures to contain dissent. The cosmology here tends to incorporate some of the ideas about the value of free competition of different viewpoints which we would anticipate finding in the adjacent quadrant A, but modified by a collective rather than an individual orientation to such competition. The rules constraining behaviour are certain competition rules, not classificatory constraints. The top triangle, occupied by the SWP, is relatively stable because of the successful imposition of grid constraints on the membership which enables the leadership to impose its will on the rank and file. Here we find the basic weak grid cosmology modified by ideas about the value of discipline and strength through unanimity and firm leadership which we would anticipate finding elaborated in the adjacent quadrant C.

The WRP lives out its life in the unstable diagonal itself where the relative balance of grid and group constraints perpetuates dissent within the organisation and drives it underground where it becomes a source of danger and pollution to the organisation. The SWP, which has set something of a record for splits in the British left, appears to have actually travelled along the diagonal over the period 1968 - 76, when it emerged in a relatively stable state in the centre of the top band of the weak grid/strong group diagram.

When splits have occurred, the emergent groups have in each case broken with the parent organisation on the basis of weak grid/appeals and have moved below the unstable band in the direction of the bottom right hand corner. (There is not one case of a split occurring on the basis of a group demanding the introduction of strong grid measures!) It was the protracted struggle to eject this weak grid ballast that Cliff was forced to wage throughout the period in question. When nearly all the



middle cadre of the SWP which constituted this ballast had been expelled, the SWP was able to rise up the grid and emerge on the stable side of the diagonal band of instability.

The fate of the new groups is variable. Some persist more or less as they are, eg. WSL, whilst others such as the RCG undergo further splits as they struggle out of the unstable diagonal. These subsequent splits are a logical development when a faction bound together by its opposition to a parent group, is forced through schism from that group, to develop its own public identity as a new organisation. The shift from purely oppositional perspectives will inevitably reveal ideological dissonance in a group which previously appeared unanimous in its political orientation.

Once a splinter group finds itself in the bottom right hand corner, it is apparently fairly stable. In every case, it will also be extremely small (around about thirty members). The group's stability at extreme weak grid/strong group can be explained by a number of factors. The group boundary is so strong, and the intimacy of the face to face interactions close, that group members can be reasonably confident that their organisation is not being infiltrated by hostile elements. Thus, group solidarity is increased. The distribution of power within the group is so deeply embedded behind the egalitarian ideology of weak grid that identifiable leadership and opposition factions do not emerge. Also, the entrepreneurial leader, if he exists, will be in direct contact with all group members, and his leadership will not be mediated through intermediate leaders. Hence, members will be aware of having a direct line to the leadership, and the constraints which beset oppositions confined in geographically isolated branches will not occur. The leader in this corner of the diagram has much more the status of primus inter pares whose relation to the rest of the membership is more like that of a guru than of a commander. If the group finds that it begins to attract a wide membership, then all of these stability promoting factors of extreme weak grid/strong group will break down as the organisation becomes less intimate and more widely distributed with extended impersonal chains of communication. Unless the group is able to transform itself very quickly into a strategic federation, it will simply move back up grid and repeat the process of fission in which it originated.

The IMG have avoided splits and high membership turnover by staying above the unstable diagonal, maintaining the weakest grid/weakest group strategy that they can within the weak grid/strong group segment of the diagram. This strategic federalism has however exacted a high price from the IMG in terms of the financial expense, the commitment of time and political resources, and the exacting level of commitment required from individual members, if the system is to be successfully maintained. This inevitably diverts resources into internal organisation which might otherwise be available for public campaigns which would increase the public exposure of the IMG and possibly increase its membership. However, the IMG themselves look upon the high cost of internal democracy as an essential investment. The empirical question which this raises is whether it will be possible for the IMG to maintain factionalism and strategic federalism in the event of it attracting a mass membership. Is there a critical mass for factional organisations such as this?

The contrast between the SWP and the IMG during the period 1971 - 76 is instructive in evaluating the usefulness of the grid/group typology. We know that the SWP suffered four major splits in this period, whilst the IMG suffered one minor one. However, the IMG did have its highest number of factions and tendencies co-existing during this same period. Both organisations were suffering from the same external pressures, such as the general downturn in class struggle following the defeat of the Heath government in 1974 and the general decline in student activism after the widespread unrest of the period 1968 - 72. But their responses to these pressures were markedly different. Whereas the SWP attempted to build its numerical support by darting interventions into different areas of activity eg. Portuguese solidarity in 1974, Right to Work Campaign in 1976, and violent confrontation with the National Front in 1977, the IMG abandoned the recruit-and-run tactics of student political groups of the early 70s and concentrated on improving the quality of its cadres and developing a longer term strategy for growth through strategic federalism. The SWP's perspective for its own expansion seem to have been based on a much shorter time perspective than the IMG's, and as a consequence, short term lulls in the intensity of its political activity, which may have been forced on it through external conditions, produced almost instantaneous disillusion amongst its politically inexperienced members. We can see how the strategies of the SWP and the IMG presented in terms of grid and group conditioned their responses to external pressures.

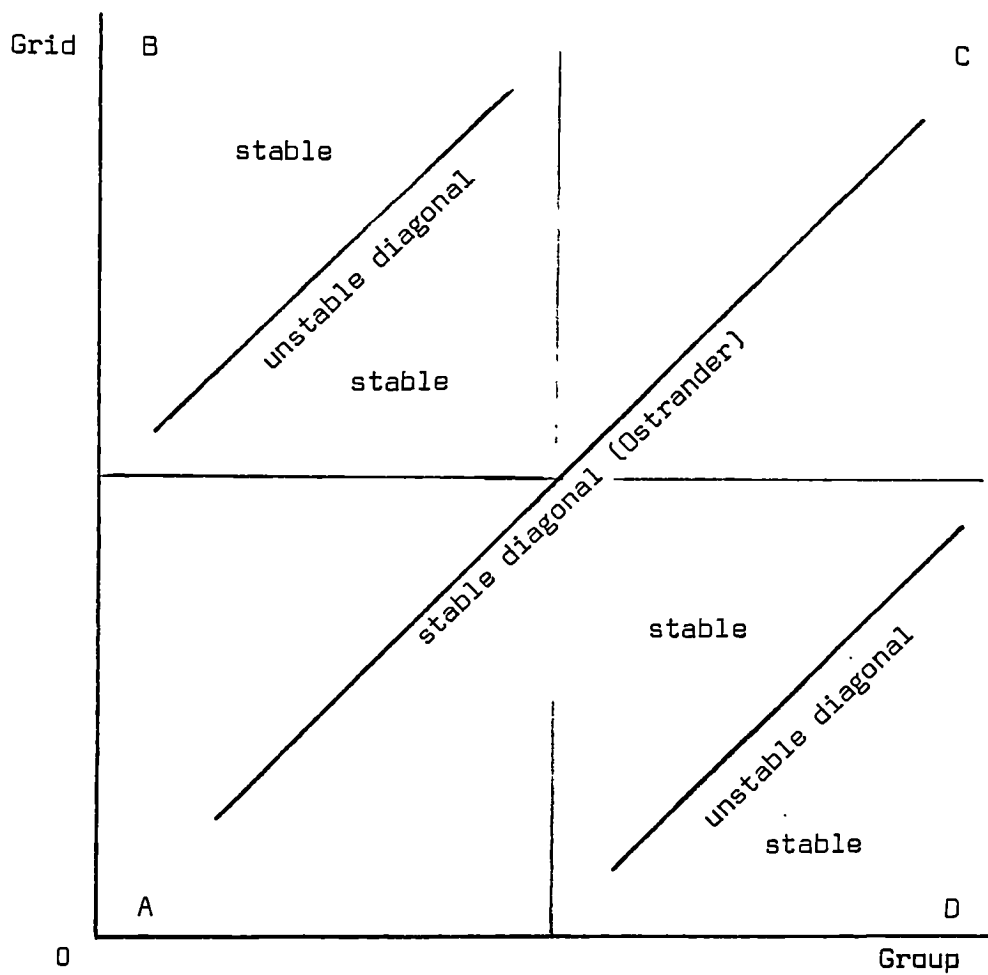
Whereas the SWP embarked upon witch-hunts, attempting to discern and expel the source of its failure from within its own ranks (while the leadership protected itself from blame) the IMG was able to preserve its organisation from a major schism by providing internal structures which involved the membership in widespread debates to determine its response to changing circumstances. The difference between the two organisations is analogous with the contrast between those legal systems which attempt to establish guilt and those which attempt to establish what events occurred. The point is that our typology is based upon factors which account for the differing responses of the SWP and the IMG to similar pressures, whereas existing alternative typologies of small group organisations, such as those reviewed in chapter two, do not.

David Ostrander has suggested in a forthcoming article that there is a stable diagonal which runs across the entire grid/group diagram in the same direction as our unstable diagonal. Whereas Ostrander suggests that both strong grid/weak group and weak grid/strong group are inherently unstable, we have suggested that there are stable areas at weak grid/strong group. If we extrapolate from the pattern of behaviour which we have described in these chapters, it is quite promising to suggest, as an alternative formulation to Ostrander's, that there are two unstable diagonals running across the whole diagram - creating Ostrander's stable diagonal between them and also creating stable environments at the top left and the bottom right corners. The bottom right corner would be stable for, as we have seen, the groups which exist here would be very small. The top left corner would be stable because the atomised individuals who find themselves stranded in this corner (subject to all powerful grid constraints but without group resources, would find it almost impossible to find a way of breaking out of their situation. Therefore, the patterns of stability of whole social units located on the full grid/group diagram, including all of the major quadrants, should look like figure 25. If this is the case, then we may have advanced the predictive value of the diagram with respect to the stability of the social environments it defines.

At the very least, with respect to quadrant D, we may expect the social strategies of individuals and of whole social units to be constrained according to the relative stability of their social environment. For example, in figure 24 we might expect that a likely response to external pressure of a group in the unstable diagonal would be an internal witch-hunt.

Figure 25.

Suggested Modifications to Ostrander's Patterns of Stability of Social Environments Across the Grid/Group Typology.



Groups in the bottom triangle (Da3) will be likely to heighten their anticipation of the millennium and experience increased solidarity. We should expect increased factional activity and widespread debate in the left hand triangle (Db1), while the group in the top triangle (Dc2) is likely to become intensely active and militant in its confrontations with outsiders. As yet, of course, these predictions are quite tentative. They are based on only four studies and on formal extrapolations from the definitions of grid and group. Further studies, perhaps including religious sects, will be necessary before these suggestions could be formally embodied in grid/group theory.

### The Problem of the Distribution of Power.

Douglas (1978:17) readily admits that the grid and group dimensions do not directly represent the distribution of power within a system. In making the dimensions operational at the macro level I have tried to clearly separate the distribution of power from grid in particular. But this does not mean to say that we can afford to ignore it. The problem is that while grid and group represent two means by which power may be exercised, they do not tell us whether the source of power is concentrated or diffuse.

Strong concentration of power is not synonymous with a strong grid system. It is quite possible to envisage social units beset by classificatory rules, but which diffuse power through the system. Neither is it true that power will necessarily be diffuse at weak grid for we know that, despite the ideology of equality, individuals may compete for leadership roles even though these are not sanctioned by the existence of formal offices. Even in this case, individuals may not succeed in appropriating personal power if the fair comparison rules are strong enough and are enforced by the group as a whole. The superficial temptation to identify the concentration of power a priori with any particular segment of the grid/group diagram must be resisted as strongly as the temptation to associate weak grid/weak group with the maximisation of human freedom.

The most immediately appealing means of incorporating the distribution of power into the typology would be to represent it as a third dimension on the diagram. The drawback to this solution is initially the difficulty of representing the position of a social unit on a three dimensional chart, especially one with twenty-seven cells! Mike Thompson (in Douglas

and Ostrander forthcoming] has successfully incorporated a dimension of 'manipulation' into a five celled diagram through recourse to catastrophe theory. I have not adopted this solution for two reasons:

1) Catastrophe theory, particularly in its application to social sciences, has been subject to more serious criticisms (Zahler & Sussman 1977) than the relatively trivial ones which Thompson acknowledges. Although I continue to find the theory tempting it is not the only possible solution so I prefer to forestall a distracting debate on the cusp catastrophe by looking at another alternative.

2) The construction of a three dimensional catastrophe model would be inexorably complex unless I were prepared to sacrifice my tripartite division of the grid and group dimensions. The potential rewards do not promise to be sufficient for me to do so.

There is a further, more fundamental, reason for my reluctance to introduce a third dimension into the typology to represent the distribution of power. This is precisely the fact that both grid and group represent different means by which power is wielded and, in this respect grid and group may be said to be dealing with the same kind of question. The distribution of power amongst individuals in a whole system is a problem which exists at a somewhat different level. Most important in this respect is the question of the possible effect which the introduction of such a third dimension might have on the distribution of cosmologies.

Within the grid and group framework, the correlation of cosmology and social environment depends upon how the exercise of power is experienced. But, the distribution of power is never directly experienced, except possibly in the exercise of naked force. It is always mediated through grid and group type constraints. In this case there can be no a priori basis for supposing that the actual concentration of power in the hands of particular individuals or its diffusion throughout a system would have any major effect on the cosmology independently of the exercise of that power - which is already accounted for by the grid and group dimensions.

In quadrant A power is exercised through competition.

In quadrant B power is exercised through insulating social classifications.

In quadrant C power is exercised through classification and exclusion.

In quadrant D power is exercised through threats of exclusion.

Of course the existence of ~~shared~~ grid/group constraints on the exercise of power will constrain individual perceptions of the means by which power can be appropriated by ambitious individuals within a system. We can expect those wielding power to exploit grid/group constraints to their own advantage, and even manipulate the grid/group experience of others in order to modify their options for the exercise of their own power. But these activities of the power holders are already encompassed within the existing typology. Any prediction we might make about the correlation of power wielding strategies with grid and group is relatively independent from the question of distribution.

The importance of the distribution of power to the grid/group classification of cosmologies is as an index of what vulgar Marxists have called 'false consciousness'. This terminology is absurd, since an individual's consciousness is just that, irrespective of whether it corresponds to another's perceptions - even when the latter is better informed and equipped, but the principle raises an important problem to which Douglas apparently has paid little attention. This is the extent to which a cosmology may conceal the nature of the wider social relations (relations of production, class relations, etc.) which give rise to a particular experience of the exercise of power through grid/group constraints. The practical value of grid and group may be greatly enhanced by the application of the typology in full awareness of the fact that cosmologies conceal social (power) relations at the same time as they make them intelligible.

Although we cannot justify a priori (deductive) association between particular grid/group quadrants and the distribution of power, we can justifiably expect the available options for the exercise of power (in terms of grid and group) to constrain the extent to which that distribution is made explicit. For example, power at weak grid, whether concentrated or diffuse, cannot, by definition, be manifested by overt classificatory controls. Although a powerful individual may attempt to introduce such controls it will almost invariably cause a rupture in the system as we saw in the cases of the WRP and SWP.

In view of the foregoing considerations I have resisted the temptation to incorporate the distribution into the grid/group typology. My alternative proposal is to evaluate the distribution of power along an independent continuum and to lay that continuum across each of the

grid and group dimensions separately. The object of this exercise would not be the creation of a refined grid/group typology, but to discern empirical correlations between the available channels for the exercise of power (ie, grid and group respectively) and the distribution of power. In other words, I propose to compare the grid and group dimensions with the actual distribution of power rather than attempt to incorporate the latter into the typology. This is because I am working on the assumption that grid and group constraints may prove to be ways of exercising power which conceal its source.

In this way we can evaluate the appropriateness of the various cosmological appeals made by the participants in the organisational disputes of the far-left. For example, do the characteristic appeals against the 'bureaucratisation' of an organisation really identify the basis of the degeneration of a group's internal democracy? Are other factors equally important but go unidentified because of cosmological constraints which conceal them from the group's members? Is it the case that the grid/group cosmology only provides what Bailey (1970) calls the 'normative themes' of a dispute? We have to consider the extent to which disputants are aware of the implicit basis of their disputes and whether, like Bailey, we should regard the underlying rationale of the normative themes to be a better account of the issues at stake than is given in those themes. As it stands, grid/group theory seems to assume that the cosmological norms are taken equally seriously in each section of the typology. My view is that the possibilities for unspoken scepticism are indefinable and that the extent to which private misgivings about the norms will be made public may prove to vary around the diagram. However, by introducing the distribution of power into our investigation, as an element to be compared with grid and group, we can examine the extent to which the cosmology of the organisations examined conceals the actual distribution of power.

Figure 26 shows the relative grid/group strengths of the organisations examined in this thesis as they stood when I completed my fieldwork in May 1978. Each of the grid and group dimensions has been compared with an evaluation of the extent to which power is concentrated in the hands of an individual or small clique.

The IMG has difficulty in maintaining continuity of leadership. The organisation has not developed under the aegis of any single leading figure. The strict rules of fair competition militate against the suppression of minorities which is characteristic of concentrated power in a weak grid/



Figure 26.

Grid and Group Ratings of the IMG, SWP, WRP, and WI in 1978 Compared With the Distribution of Power.

Grid		SWP	WRP
	IMG		
			WI
D			Group

Grid		SWP	WRP
	IMG		
			WI
D			Power

Power			WRP
			WI
		↓	
		SWP	
			↑
	↓		
	IMG		
D			Group

strong group environment. Conferences and committees are convened regularly and do not appear to be subject to the whims and interests of a leadership clique. Discussion of policy and principle is widespread within the organisation at all levels and debate is seldom confined to questions of implementation of policy. The assessment of the concentration of power seems to match well with the group rating of D1, but is weaker than the grid score of Db.

The WRP has a strong bureaucratic character but, whereas the turnover of officers in the IMG is quite fast, the offices of the WRP are more or less sinecures. Access to office depends very heavily on obtaining the approval of the Healy leadership. Committees and conferences of the WRP are convened irregularly in accordance with the directives of the central leadership. When they are convened disciplinary issues are often prominent.

The direct correlation of relatively strong grid Dc and a strong concentration of power in the WRP is not surprising. What is interesting is the comparison of the WRP with the Workers' Institute, both located in strong group band D3. Although we have rated both of these organisations as being very strong group with a pervading sense of inside and outside, we rated the grid position of the Workers' Institute as Da. It has few formal offices and very little overt differentiation between leaders and members. However, we find that the concentration of power in the titular secretary of the organisation, Balakrishnan, is very strong. It is the power of a guru and a reader of oracles befitting of weak grid and in marked contrast with the militaristic command which Healy exerts over the WRP. But, both cases are instances of concentrated power.

A further contrast between the grid/group rating and the power distribution is that the SWP, which we rated as heavily bureaucratised and bound by restrictive rules like the WRP, emerges with a less concentrated power rating. This is partly in view of the fact that Cliff has changed his role from guru to commander more recently than Healy, and is therefore less well entrenched, and partly because Cliff has had to backpedal to some degree on major constitutional issues such as the introduction of the Central Committee system. However, the assessment of power concentration in the SWP seems to correspond very well with its group rating. This is the clear pattern which emerges from our comparison of grid and group with the distribution of power in quadrant D.

There is an empirical tendency for power to become more concentrated

in an individual, or an elite, as the group constraints increase in strength. This tendency seems to operate independently of the grid rating of an organisation, which merely defines whether the leader is a guru, an interpreter of texts and oracles, and a primus inter pares, or whether he is a commander, an originator of policy and principles, and a maintainer of order and rules. This empirical correlation between power and group bears out the general hypothesis about the exercise of power in quadrant D, that it is maintained by threats of exclusion. As the group boundary increases, the magnitude of such a threat to any individual increases as he risks losing his social, even his physical, life support from the group.

The key to appropriating power in D is the manipulation of the boundary, the identification of outside threats, and the identification of internal opponents or rivals with those external enemies. Whether a power seeker achieves this through what Weber described as charismatic leadership in the Da grid band (eg, Balakrishnan) or through Michel's customary right to office in the Dc grid band (eg, Cliff and Healy) is of secondary significance - and is likely to be a function of size and geographical distribution. The vital difference between the WRP and the Workers' Institute is that the Institute is located in a small geographical area in Brixton and, until it was broken up by the police shortly after my fieldwork, most members were co-resident at the Mao Memorial Centre. The WRP is scattered over a much wider area so control over the boundary will be better achieved through bureaucratic structures than through reliance on personality and constant negotiation.

Hence we can see that there is a contradictory element within the normative appeals made by Thornett in his dispute with Healy. We identified Thornett's principal themes as:

- 1) Weak grid appeals against the extent of the party's bureaucracy.
- 2) Weak grid appeals for a return to the founding charter (thus opening the path for internal competition over its interpretation).
- 3) Weak group demands for internal factionalism.
- 4) Strong group demands for stronger boundary maintenance to combat external intervention (witch-hunting).

Whereas the first three demands are appropriate enough for an attempt to undermine the means by which Healy exercised his power over the WRP, the remaining demand only served to reinforce the concentration of power in the ruling clique. In fact, it was precisely on the basis of the normative theme of strengthening the WRP's boundaries against threats of external pollution that Healy was able to exclude Thornett himself from

The party. Yet, the demand that the group be protected against disruptive outsiders is an integral part of the normative apparatus of the WRP. Anyone merely wishing to supplant the Healy leadership with his own would be well advised to confine his demands to 2 above, which would serve to open up the leadership to competition without changing either the means of exercise of power or the extent of its concentration. A return to the founding charter would give the challenger an opportunity to engage in a contest of oracular interpretive ability with the existing leadership with the role of leader as the prize.

More fundamental changes in the organisation could be brought about on the basis of demands 2 and 3. However, the first demand is misguided because we know that the real issue at stake is not the extent of an organised structure (for the IMG use extensive bureaucratic mechanisms to enforce fair comparison rules) but the question of the concentration of power within the structure. Since we have observed an empirical tendency for the concentration of power in quadrant D to increase in direct proportion to the strength of the group dimension, we know that the appropriate demands would be those that weakened the group constraints. Thernett's demand for stronger group measures were therefore, counter-productive and may have contributed to his own exclusion.

## Chapter Nine.

### Conclusions.

It is appropriate that there should be many ways of approaching phenomena which are themselves inconstant and mercurial, of which we cannot hope, any more by computers than by concepts, to obtain any permanent or abiding pictures that capture their complete complexity. We need not even assume that our analytical procedures or conceptual frameworks bring us progressively nearer any final picture - the fixed goal is hypothetical, and progress towards it has no yardstick. The contributions to the subject are contributions to our contemporary understanding rather than steps to any final statement about the nature of social phenomena.

There are, then, no definitive typologies, no correct terms. The typology employed here is offered only in the hope that types of this kind may illumine some relations in a diverse body of phenomena in new ways: that it has its own limitations and blind-spots one cannot doubt. (Wilson 1975:10)

In my introduction I claimed that there must be two tests for any typology. Firstly, that it must rest upon a sound epistemological foundation and, secondly, that it must have a high heuristic value in practice. I have shown the epistemological basis of traditional typologising to be quite unsound. It has depended, since Aristotle, on the doctrine of essences, or the principle of substitution, which stipulates that classes are formed in such a way that, "whatever we know of one object in a class we also know of the other objects, so far as identity has been detected between them" (Jevons 1874, 2:345). This principle has been shown to be false both formally, in the work of Wittgenstein and Ryle, and experimentally, in the work of psychologists such as Vygotsky, Rosch, and Hampton.

I have argued, following Needham (1975), that polythetic classification does not rely on the principle of substitution and reflects the inconsistency of the natural and social worlds more accurately than essentialism. Polythetic classification is therefore less prone to the reification of its categories and to built-in erroneous evaluative or evolutionary assumptions. I have also argued that a matrix form, such as that employed by Fernandez (1964), allows a typology to represent process, which is not satisfactorily encompassed by hierarchical or simple dichotomous schemes. Furthermore, a two-dimensional matrix does not suggest the unidirectional development implicit in a hierarchy or a one-dimensional continuum between a pair of polar types. In the light of these arguments about hierarchical and evaluative assumptions, the matrix form of grid and group (Douglas 1973, 1978) makes it immediately attractive for investigation as a potential alternative to traditional social typologies.

My argument that the grid and group dimensions may be understood as polythetic concepts is not merely designed to make the typology more attractive in the light of the epistemological problems which are encountered in more traditional typologies. It may also be seen to be of practical value in determining scoring systems for grid and group of the sort suggested here for political sects. The scoring employed here is on an ordinal scale, not a cardinal scale, and depends upon the qualitative assessments of the ethnographer as to whether any empirical index is present as weak, medium, or strong. However primitive this system may be, it is necessary to employ some device of this sort in order to control scale variables and to make explicit which empirical criteria we are classifying as either grid or group constraints - in accordance with the basic predicates of their definitions. If this is not done, grid and group remains wholly impressionistic and invites justifiable suspicion as to its validity as a comparative technique - no matter how inspirational it may be as a way of thinking about social processes in a single society.

I should like to put it on record that I do not believe that the development of a cardinal scale for scoring grid and group is either an achievable or desirable aim. While the qualitative ordinal system used here is not the only operational method available (Hampton in Douglas and Ostrander, forthcoming), we have shown that it is capable of producing worthwhile results. There is certainly a great deal of room for improvement, but we must be careful not to pretend to a greater degree of mathematical accuracy than is justified by the type of data we are using to assess the dimensions. In this respect, the distinctions between the formal predicates of grid and group and the empirical indices by which we assess the relative strength of the dimensions (as denoted by the predicates) should help to clarify some of the problems of what counts as either grid or group in practice.

In reviewing the existing literature on the classification of religious sects and denominations we saw that it often suffers from an excessive emphasis on variations in the belief system and the religious aims of the sects. This gives rise to purposive theological categories, such as adventism and conversionism, which tell us nothing about the structure of lived social experience within the sect. These categories are also essentialist and enforce a static representation of dynamic phenomena. The users of essentialist categories are forced to employ either transitional sub-categories or notions of impure examples of ideal types, which in both cases undermine the epistemological basis of the main types. The matrix

form of grid and group facilitates the representation of change without resorting to the ad hoc solutions of essentialism. Furthermore, our typology is based primarily on the social relations of the individuals and groups being studied rather than on the content of their respective ideologies.

Basing a typology of sectarianism on the constraints of the social environment as it is experienced by sectarians has not allowed us to neglect the ideological level. Grid and group makes an explicit link between the analytic levels of social relations and ideological structures respectively. Grid and group maintains that social units in any segment of the diagram will generate a characteristic cosmology (structure of ideology) because the negotiating individual has to structure his ideas about the world in such a way as to justify and explain his actions and experiences as they are constrained by his social environment. In using this typology in the description of far-left sectarianism, I have shown how the proposed match between the cosmology and the social environment can help us to understand the strong tendency of egalitarian sects towards utopianism.

In examining the millenarian Workers' Institute, I suggested that explanations of these sorts of phenomena in terms of relative deprivation are inadequate to explain why millenarian rather than revolutionist or ecstatic responses occurred. By asking what sort of social environment would sustain the compressed historical and geographical dimensions which are characteristic of the millenarian cosmology, I was able to restore these temporal and spatial themes to the forefront of our understanding of millenarianism. The social environment in question proves to be one in which there are few grid constraints being exerted within a strong group boundary. Hence we can see that those instances in which millenarianism is the outcome of relative deprivation or status disorientation are those in which the relatively deprived adopt a weak grid/strong group strategy to resist the deprivations they find themselves suffering. In this environment, where time and space are compressed, the arrival of the millennium becomes credible. I believe that these ideas represent a significant advance in our understanding of millenarianism, which would not have been made without the inspiration of the grid/group typology.

In all we have examined four groups of the far-left in terms of grid and group. These are:

- 1) The tiny egalitarian Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong

Thought, sustaining a millenarian cosmology at Da3.

2) The oligarchical centralised Workers' Revolutionary Party which, under the leadership of Gerry Healy, sustains a catastrophist siege cosmology at Dc3.

3) The Socialist Workers' Party which in ten years grew from a tiny federalist organisation at Da1 to become the largest of the far-left groups, expelling its internal opposition and thus moving to Dc2 in the process.

4) The International Marxist Group, at Db1, which maintains internal factionalism as an organisational principle whilst pursuing strategic federalism with other groups.

By identifying each of these organisations as occupying a different minor segment of the weak grid/strong group quadrant we have achieved two things which are significant for the typology as a whole. Firstly, we have demonstrated that there is diversity within the major quadrants. Secondly, we have shown that Hampton's justifiable apprehension (in Douglas and Ostrander, forthcoming) that the majority of people surveyed will fall into a central area of eclectic loosely integrated cosmologies has not been borne out.

In using grid and group to trace the history of splits and factions among the groups of the far-left, I have suggested that there is a coherent relationship between the grid/group position of an organisation within the D quadrant, the strategies adopted by dissidents and leaders in internal disputes, and the cosmological appeals which they employ to justify their respective strategies. The coherent pattern of these variables suggests a diagonal band of unstable grid and group combinations across the D quadrant. Below the diagonal, towards Da3, groups are too small to be able to afford major disputes and splits. To the left of the diagonal, around Db1, we find an area of relative stability reflecting the fair competition rules emanating from quadrant A, whilst above the diagonal, at Dc2, stability is imposed through the introduction of stronger grid constraints emanating from quadrant C. These patterns of behaviour correlate with Ostrander's suggestion (forthcoming) that there is a stable diagonal running across the grid and group diagram as a whole, flanked by unstable areas on either side. We are also reminded that grid and group are continuous variables and that the division of the diagram into four, nine, or any number of segments, is dependent solely on the intentions and demands of the classifier.

Finally, by comparing the relative strength of the grid and group



dimensions, for each of the four organisations studied, with the distribution of power, we have been able to establish a generalisation about the concentration of power in egalitarian sects. Here, the abrogation of power by an individual, or an oligarchy, depends on control of the group boundary rather than upon the introduction of strong grid constraints. A leader who contrives the expulsion of his opponents may do so without exposing the extent to which he is wielding personal power in contravention of the group's democratic norms. Even if his conduct is challenged, this leader can exploit strong group norms by claiming to be preserving the organisation from corruption or infiltration. On the other hand, anyone who attempts to exercise overt classificatory controls over his opponents is likely to invite criticism for violating the democratic egalitarian principles enshrined in the group's cosmology. Healy, of course, used both strategies to maintain his hold over the WRP - hence his location verging on strong grid/strong group. At the other extreme, the IMG's institutionalisation of factionalism offers safeguards to dissidents against arbitrary expulsion and militates against the emergence of an individual leader who is able to impose strong grid constraints on the organisation.

Thus, the grid/group typology has proven to have considerable heuristic value in accounting for a number of features of the cosmologies and organisational dynamics of egalitarian political sects. Specifically these include:

- 1) The strong cosmological bias towards utopianism and millenarianism.
- 2) The strategies of leaders and dissidents in organisational disputes.
- 3) The changing organisational patterns of a sect over a period of time.
- 4) The organisational implications of factionalism and strategic federalism.
- 5) Patterns of organisational stability and instability.
- 6) The exploitation of cosmological norms to conceal the appropriation of power.

When we also take into account the fact that the grid/group typology may be interpreted as having a sounder epistemological foundation than traditional social classification, then we may be said to have satisfied both of our basic tests of the validity of this kind of typology in social anthropology.

Grid and group does not provide causal explanations of events. Even as a typology it is not exhaustive. There are other ways of describing sectarian data - such as those used by Wilson (1975) and earlier writers discussed in chapter two. But as a heuristic device, grid and group helps

us to organise material in such a way as to clarify the articulation of cosmology and social relations at the same time as it facilitates comparisons. One of the aims of this thesis, as set out in the introduction, was to devise a single typology which allows the comparative study of sects and denominations or parties irrespective of whether their beliefs are religious or secular. Indeed, one of the motives in selecting political groups for the empirical examples used to illustrate this study was to be able to discuss such a typology in a context which is relatively unhampered by existing classificatory assumptions. It should be clear that, with the possible modification of some of the empirical indices, grid and group does provide us with a typological device which may equally validly be applied to religious groupings.

Of course, grid and group is not intended only to be applicable to studies of sectarianism. David Bloor and Martin Rudwick (in Douglas and Ostrander, forthcoming) have each applied the technique to the history of ideas, while Gerry Mars (forthcoming) has utilised it in the comparison of occupations. Whilst these studies cannot be directly compared because of the large variations in scale, the use of a similar conceptual framework represents a unifying force within anthropology and reasserts the comparative aspect of our subject which, in recent years, has been increasingly neglected in favour of the production of more detailed, but fragmented, individual studies.

However, for me, the most significant methodological aspect of grid and group continues to be its most general theoretical aspect - that it is a prototype of bivariate analysis utilising polythetically constituted dimensions. The specific formal definitions of the grid and group dimensions are, in my view, less important in the long term than the principle of polythetic bi-variate analysis as an alternative to essentialist hierarchies and dichotomies. Using the same typological form, dimensions other than those of grid and group may be specified as a basis for comparative study. In particular, many traditional dichotomies may prove to be better dealt with as independent polythetic dimensions. One example would be Weber's traditional and rational types of capitalism (1930) which, like grid and group, seem to consist of polythetic clusters of features lacking any single essence. For all its usefulness as the most advanced form of polythetic bi-variate social classification, utilising possibly the most general dimensions of sociality, it would be a pity if the methodological advances of this kind of typology were to be restricted solely to the dimensions of grid and group, which cannot be said to be exhaustive of all social phenomena.

Appendix.

Alphabetical List of Far-Left Political Groupings Believed to be Extant  
in January 1978.

Key

M	Maoist
T	Trotskyist
P	Pabloite
R&F	Rank and File
S	Stalinist

These categories are not strictly accurate as many of the groups denoted as having Maoist origins are hostile to the Communist Party of China and some of the Trotskyist groups have moved a long way from Trotsky. However, they do designate the main tendency from which the groups originate.

Appeal Group (S)  
Association of Communist Workers (M)  
Association for the Realisation of Marxism (M)  
Big Flame (R&F T)  
Bulletin Group (T)  
British and Irish Communist Organisation (S)  
Committee for a Communist Programme (T)  
Communist Organisation of the British Isles (M)  
Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist (M)  
Communist Party of England Marxist-Leninist (M)  
Communist Unity Organisation (M)  
Communist Workers' League of Britain Marxist-Leninist (M)  
Finsbury Communist Association (M)  
International Communist Current (?)  
International Communist League (R&F T)  
International Marxist Current (T)  
International Marxist Group (T)  
International Socialists' Alliance (R&F T)  
Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain (M)  
New Communist Party (S)  
Revolutionary Communist Group (T)  
Revolutionary Communist Tendency (T)  
Revolutionary Communist League of Britain Marxist- Leninist (M)

Revolutionary Communist League (T)  
Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (PT)  
Revolutionary Socialist League (T)  
Revolutionary Workers' Party - Posadist (T)  
Socialist Action (R&F T)  
Socialist Charter (T)  
Socialist Current (T)  
Socialist Union (T)  
Socialist Workers' Party (R&F T)  
Workers' Fight (R&F T)  
Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism Mao Xedong Thought (M)  
Workers' League (R&F T)  
Workers' Power (R&F T)  
Working People's Party of Scotland Marxist-Leninist (M)  
Working People's Party of England Marxist-Leninist (M)  
Workers' Revolutionary Party (T)  
Workers' Socialist League (T)

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