

S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

COPY

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

9 February 1972  
day of 19

SUBJECT Women's  
Liberation Front

Reference to Papers  
00/71/272

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-

2. "At 2 pm on Sunday 6 February 1972, the Women's Liberation Front held their Annual General Meeting at the Workers Music Association Hall, 236 Westbourne Park Road, W11.

Privacy

3. The proposed agenda was as follows:-

Acting Secretary's report

Privacy

Treasurer's report

Privacy

Adoption of new aims and constitution

Election of officers and committee

Future Activities

Any other business

4. The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and the following persons were present:-

Privacy

BOX 530

Privacy

commenced by reading her report to the meeting (copy attached). This report makes pointed attacks on Privacy and her role in the WLF.

5. There was much discussion following the reading of the report and every person present made a contribution. The following spoke for the paper: Privacy

the following spoke against it: Privacy

Privacy

(Y200)

6. The report was put to the vote and was accepted by 6 votes to 4. This voting was arrived at due to the fact that the new aims and constitution did not allow men to be members of the WLF, therefore, not allowing them to vote.

7. The new aims and constitution were read over and, with a few amendments, were adopted (copy attached).

8. There then followed the election of the officers and committee, as follows:-

President:  
Secretary:  
Committee:

Privacy

9. Privacy suggested that the 'Women's Liberation Front' should change its name and it was proposed that the organisation be known as the 'Revolutionary Women's League'. It was decided that this could not be implemented until there was further discussion and in view of the lack of time the discussion was adjourned until the next Executive Meeting. This is planned for 6.30 pm on Wednesday 9 February 1972 at Privacy

10. Special Branch references to the persons mentioned are contained in an Appendix to this report.

HN348 1

WDC

2

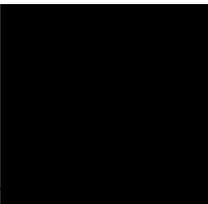
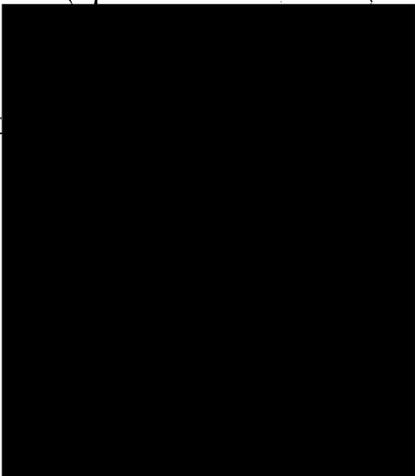
Submitted:

HN332

Chief Inspector

3

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT



Vertical text on the right margin, including "SECRET" and other markings.

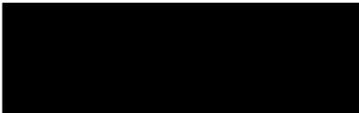
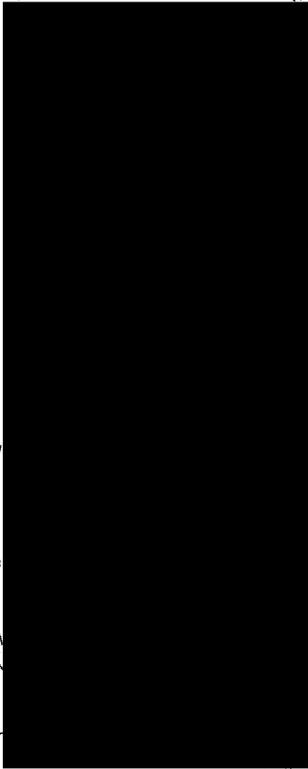


APPENDIX

Appendix to Special Branch report dated 9 February 1972 on Womens Liberation Front A.G.M.

Privacy

Privacy



## Preamble

In Britain, the vast majority of the population are exploited and oppressed by the capitalist ruling class, women suffer double oppression; as workers and women. Women are denied equality in all realms of society, educational, economic and political. Their subservience and their economic dependence on men is perpetuated not only by discriminatory and humiliating laws but by bourgeois culture and customs. Working class women are restricted to unskilled and low paid jobs, and constitute a pool of cheap labour used to undercut wages. In the home women are relegated to non-productive household drudgery and child-rearing. The liberation of women requires a relentless struggle against all forms of inequality and oppression, against the social system based on inequality and oppression, capitalism. It is only with the socialist transformation of society that the conditions for women's equal involvement in social production can be achieved. Women constitute 50% of the working class must be mobilised in the struggle against growing racism and fascism of capitalism in crisis. It is only with the full participation of women that socialism can be established.

1. To organise women in general, working class women in particular, to fight for the elimination of all exploitation and oppression and for a socialist society.
2. To expose the oppression suffered by women and to relate this to capitalist society and to oppose those who confuse the effects of women's oppression for the real cause i.e. the private ownership of the means of production.
3. To demand equal opportunities in employment and education.
4. To fight for equal pay for work of equal value.
5. In order that women have real opportunities to take part in social production, we demand that creches and nurseries are installed at the place of work, education and in the community, wherever there is a need.
6. All women should have the right to have children or not. In order to make this right effective, alongside child-care facilities, adequate contraceptive and abortion information and facilities should be made available free on the N.H.S.
7. To demand maternity leave for a definite period with no loss of pay, in the pre-natal and post-natal periods, and the right to return to the same job, guaranteed by law.
8. To fight against all discrimination and injustice suffered by women in all realms of society, in laws as regards marriage and divorce, in the superstructure; customs and culture.
9. To fight against the discrimination suffered by unmarried mothers and their children.
10. To wage a consistent struggle against male chauvinism and to strive to educate and encourage men to participate in all our activities.
11. To take our full part in the struggle against the growing attacks on our standard of living and our democratic rights and against the growing racism and fascist policies of the ruling class.
12. To mobilise women to support the anti-imperialist struggles of all oppressed peoples for the realisation of our common aim, the ending of the system of exploitation and oppression.

## Constitution

AGREES WITH

Any woman who actively supports and promotes the aims of WLF can become a member on payment of £1 per annum.

The General Members meeting shall be the highest body. All matters of policy and organisation shall be decided wherever possible by mutual agreement or by a majority vote with a quorum of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total membership.

At least 6 General Members meetings shall be held a year.

There shall be an Annual General Meeting which shall elect an executive committee.

The e.c. shall consist of 1 president, 1 Secretary and 1 Treasurer and 6 committee members, with the right to co-opt members.

The e.c. shall encourage active members to attend and take part in committee meetings.

The e.c. shall meet not less than monthly.

The e.c. shall assist in the setting up of branches.

The e.c. shall bring out a regular quarterly journal and shall set up an editorial/production committee as well as any other action committees wherever necessary.

February 1972

Privacy  
Acting Secretary

Sisters, welcome to the A.G.M. of Womens' Liberation Front. Womens' Liberation Front formerly called Womens' Equal Rights Campaign was formed nearly three years ago, although this is our first Annual General Meeting. I have a particularly difficult job to report on our work and sum up our experiences. They have been three years of struggle, there have been achievements and failures, positive and negative. I think you will agree that the fact that this is the first AGM since our formation, as well as the small number of women present here today testifies to weaknesses in our organisation.

I cannot possibly do a detailed examination of the whole three years here, but will attempt a brief outline of our history, highlighting the most essential facts and will deal with the last year in more detail, particularly since September when I became Acting Secretary of W.L.F. I believe that the roots of the present crisis in W.L.F. can be traced back to our early days. In the course of time certain peoples' weaknesses have developed to such an extent that they threaten the very existence of W.L.F.

Sisters, there have emerged two lines in W.L.F., they are distinct and clear. One line appreciates the need to combine practical work among working class women and progressive intellectuals such as students, with intensive study of the theory of the Woman Question, in order to contribute towards the building of a dynamic mass movement of women for the realisation of our social equality and emancipation and for a society free from exploitation and injustice. This line is irreconcilable with the other which is based on selfishness and personal ambition and seeks to secure careers and positions in isolated little groups of academics. One line has the confidence in the masses of women and their ability to play an indispensable role in changing society and liberating themselves, while the other in practice has nothing but contempt for the masses of women and seeks only to curry favour with opportunists of the same type.

However, I am glad to say that the situation inside W.L.F. does not reflect the situation internationally and in Britain, because the overall situation in the world today has never been better. All over the world the National liberation and socialist struggles are adding victory to victory and imperialism led by U.S. imperialism is heading for total collapse. Their victories are our victories. We salute our glorious sisters all over the world, particularly in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos for their victories against U.S. imperialism and its puppets. We salute our sisters in Dhofar and Ireland, who are in the forefront against British imperialism. And we salute the marvellous women of China and Albania who have achieved in the course of socialist construction unparalleled successes. We are meeting at a time of a great upsurge of militancy by the working class, against increasing attacks on our standard of living and on our democratic rights. At a time when imperialism is being dealt death-blows throughout the world, the British ruling class is being forced more and more, to come down harder on the working people of Britain. The ruling class have declared war. We are facing rising unemployment, rising prices, welfare cuts and the groundwork is being laid for fascism with racism, the Industrial Relations Act and the Immigration Act. In this context of growing fascism the work of socialists is ever more urgent and the work of a socialist womens' organisation to mobilise women against all forms of injustice, oppression and exploitation becomes all the more essential.

Women constitute 50% of the society and their full mobilisation for the struggle is essential. Up and down the country women are taking up the demand for equal rights, opportunities and pay. Their economic demands are developing into basic political demands; the right to work at a time of increasing redundancies. The struggle for the emancipation of women is part and parcel of the historic struggle against capitalism, the system of exploitation and private property, the root of all inequality and oppression. The role of a women's organisation is to lead the mass struggle of women to the realisation of the necessity to change society. There can be no mass movement without women. Any womens' organisation must integrate itself with the struggles women are already waging, for it is only by taking up the issues women are facing today, bringing out their political essence, that any movement will grow and develop. We must be bold and go to the masses of women, learn from their experiences and struggles and together grow and develop in maturity and consciousness. Any organisation which refuses to take this course of action will play no part in the mobilisation of the masses of waging women and will eventually die.

## THE FORMATION OF WOMENS' EQUAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

What is the Womens' movement, commonly known as womens lib. of which W.L.F. is a part? It consists of hundreds of small isolated groups of women up and down the country. There are a few organisations that are relatively large, but in the main it is true to say that the groups are scattered and that they are in the main discussion groups involved in limited practical activity. There should be no doubt that the majority of these women are good, but as yet they have little understanding of how to struggle for emancipation. They originate mainly from middle class backgrounds, with little or no experience of practical activities. This makes them prey, more often than not, to petty bourgeois deviations like feminism and anarchism, which fails to see capitalist society as the main enemy. The movement grew and developed, quite spontaneously in 1968. It was sparked off by a number of events such as the Vietnam movement, Paris events and more directly by the militant Ford womens' strike for equal pay and job opportunities. The woman question once again became a vital social issue. From the outset a whole number of fairweather friends jumped on the bandwagon, saw in this an issue which they could use for their own selfish and careerist ends. At this time Labour Party, Communist Party and T.U. hacks formed the National Joint Action Campaign for Womens' Equal Rights. This organisation raised only the demand for equal pay, and that to be achieved by begging the generosity of our elected representatives in parliament. In early '69 a few women already working together in what was then a communist organisation, joined the London committee of NJACWER and mobilised and took part in a demonstration for equal pay. However it soon became evident that we had to struggle against the careerism and opportunism of the leadership who had formed NJACWER to further their own individual ambitions. The climax of this struggle was a vote to change our name to Womens' Equal Rights Campaign and to gain independence from the national organisation. This was a positive step towards converting NJACWER from a purely reformist set-up into a genuine/womens' <sup>independant</sup> organisation. The vote was passed and was supported by many wavering elements, and we formed W.E.R.C. On November 17 '69 we adopted our aims and constitution (the basis of what we have now). We elected an executive committee of 14 and had a membership of 20. Since then our membership has never been more than forty, with no more than a dozen active members at any one time. WERC was controlled by the central organisation and did not function at all regularly through the e.c., our functioning generally was not very democratic and very soon some women not in the central organisation found it almost impossible to work in our womens' organisation without joining the other. Despite the insistence that W.E.R.C. was a broad front womens' organisation, it practise it was very sectarian and elitist. However positive beginnings were made, we began to hold regular study classes on the theory of the woman question as well as studying about the international situation. We benefited greatly from this and here developed our theoretical understanding of the oppression of women and the struggle for liberation. We discussed and began to learn more about the different ideologies in the movement particularly the very influential and well publicised petty bourgeois feminist ideas of which we correctly became critical of as a diversion and continually attempted to raise the socialist analysis. After discussion we changed our name to Women's Liberation Front as our former name still held reformist implications.

We recognised that genuine internationalism, militant solidarity with the women of Asia, Africa and Latin America in particular is an essential part of the womens' movement. From the very beginning we laid correct emphasis on solidarity work, and were very fortunate and honoured on occasions to have public meetings addressed by representatives of the Womens' Union of Vietnam. We held many film shows popularising the heroic struggles of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples against imperialism and under socialism. We have consistently given our full support and solidarity on anti-imperialist demonstrations; in support of the Indo-chinese peoples against U.S. imperialism, the Palestinian people against U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism, and in support of the Irish people against British imperialism and internment. We produced many leaflets and articles for our journal, showing the relation between the struggles of women of Britain and their sisters throughout the world. Nevertheless we were unable to build our organisation because we had not learnt how to apply our theory and our knowledge of the international movement to the concrete conditions in Britain. We did not undertake vital practical work which related to women here. It is only recently that some of us have recognised this fundamental weakness and attempted to rectify it. We have only ever held two public meetings on issues of womens' particular oppression in Britain. These were in February '70

discrimination against women in education.

nation in education, which we used in the paper and had a small demonstration to the D.E.S., but we were completely unable to use this to build a systematic campaign.

#### THE WOMENS' NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

In March 1970 we participated in the Ruskin Womens' Liberation conference which was attended by some 500 women and contributed a constructive socialist approach to the question. The conference reflected the general confusion and spontaneous approach to womens' liberation, many women individually recognising their oppression and wanting to talk and rationalise it, many seeking only reforms in the system. It was here that the W.N.C.C. was first formed. At this stage the Womens' liberation workshop was the dominant force in the movement, and supported by IMG women, from the very outset attempted to disrupt the building of a national committee to co-ordinate joint activities and initiate theoretical discussion. They tried to limit the W.N.C.C. to an information service alone. W.L.F. played a positive role, in recognising that at a time when there was not the unity to build a national womens' organisation with a correct unified policy, that the W.N.C.C. should reflect and safeguard the equality of all groups. Through consistent struggle we were able to have the terms of reference adopted, those recognised the many differing analysis in the movement and provided a forum for joint discussion and co-ordinated activities, whilst giving full equality to the autonomy of all groups within the W.N.C.C. W.L.F. has always taken the work of the W.N.C.C. as of ultimate importance to the building of a national womens' organisation. Although we have been very outspoken and active, we have had little influence and have been completely unable to isolate the disruptors and careerists and in the honest women, but have ourselves been isolated. This has been due to many factors, many of which have only just come to light in the assessment of the recent W.N.C.C. conference at Skegness. We were always faced with discrimination and slanders from the Trotskyites and the workshop leadership who were able to use the backwardness and feminist ideas of many of the women against genuine socialist ideas. Any serious theoretical discussion has continually been obstructed by these opportunists who were not prepared to discuss honestly and who were scared of letting the different political lines come out into the open. In early '71 we initiated a debate with the Workshop, which at the last moment they refused to come to, saying they were only prepared to have private talks. We were however successful on many occasions in stopping and exposing the manipulation by the opportunists inside the W.N.C.C. e.g. the take over bid staged by Leonora Lloyd of IMG, who with no consultation called and gave wide publicity to the setting up of a London W.N.C.C. & who when we proposed this earlier had opposed it. We were also instrumental along with the Liverpool group to disrupt the attempts of this same IMG group in gaining control by means of a central office for the W.N.C.C. at a stage when it clearly would have threatened the equality and democracy contained in the spirit of the terms of reference. However we were not completely blameless for our lack of influence as a whole, in fact we have been guilty on many occasions of arrogance and sectarianism, and have often lost the support on principled issues due to our lack of understanding and contempt for those with differing ideas, often making blanket condemnations of women without clearly drawing a clear line of demarcation between those manipulating at the top and those being manipulated. This of course is a very serious error and is certainly a factor to be taken into consideration when assessing the more recent developments at Skegness. There have been contradictory attitudes inside W.L.F. regarding the W.N.C.C. There are those who insisting on the backwardness of women inside W.N.C.C. are obsessed by extreme feminism and are blind and contemptuous of the genuine aspirations of many of the more active and progressive women. Nevertheless these people receive a new lease of life and show surprising enthusiasm each W.N.C.C. meeting, mobilising the membership, more enthusiastically than for anything else, finding it an excellent forum for making speeches and lectures to large numbers of women. For well over a year the only activity of W.L.F. has been the participation inside the W.N.C.C.; the planning and preparation, the participation and the reviewing afterwards were the only justification for the existence of W.L.F. Considering our forces, and recognising that a national womens' organisation will not be built by discussion alone, and recognising that for reasons mentioned the majority of women are not immediately susceptible to our ideas, it will be a long arduous task of both discussion and activities which will unite and strengthen our movement. I have been consistently critical of our participation in W.N.C.C. to the exclusion of everything else, particularly any practical work on issues directly relating to women. This last fact has often been a source of embarrassment and shame, when reporting on group activities at W.N.C.C. meetings. The feminists and Trotskyites report on their work, while W.L.F. has been left with egg on its face. (hardly a point in our favour, when we so loudly criticise the isolation

Contradictions inside W.L.F. over this and many other basic issues began to come to a head in early '71. After the decision to set up a North London W.L.F. branch we began to contact women in that area, despite some dragging of feet, this work was generally carried out with enthusiasm. Dianne Langford, the secretary and her husband Mr. Manchanda became hostile to this work, and jealous of the small initial success, began to be obstructive and tried to disrupt the building of this branch. At the first public meeting of the branch in January '71, we discussed the need to build a women's movement and the need to take up local issues such as the lack of child-care facilities. We emphasised the need to mobilise women for the mounting working class struggle against rising prices, rents etc. and against the Industrial Relations bill and the racist Immigration bill. We announced a local rally against the 2 bills to publicise and mobilise women for the National T.U.C. demonstration the following week, for which W.L.F. issued our own leaflet and took part. Mr. Manchanda, without any consultation, announced a National demonstration called to protest against the American invasion of LAOS for the same time as the local rally. This naturally caused much confusion. We found out later that no such demonstration had been called except by him at the spur of the moment.

Resulting from the initial contacts we had made we took part in a local campaign against the welfare cuts. We held two film shows, Red Detachment of Women and Heroic sisters of the Steppes, and began to conduct regular discussion and study meetings, where we studied the quotations of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung on the Woman question, as well as the Clara Zetkin article which W.L.F. published at that time. For the first time we had made possible the conditions for building closer links with women in the community and taking up of local issues, e.g. we attended a meeting of housewives organising against rising prices and began to make contacts with C.P. women in Hornsey and with black groups in the area. Throughout this period Mr. and Mrs. Manchanda gave no support, neither were they involved in doing any work themselves. They began to slander us as anarchists and revisionists.

In March '71 W.L.F. took part in the W.N.C.C. Womens' Liberation demonstration. The demonstration was called on the four demands; Equal pay and opportunity, against discrimination of women in education, for 24 hours nurseries and creches and for free contraception and abortion on the N.H.S.. These demands were the level of our unity inside the W.N.C.C., although of course the interpretations of these basic demands was different and it was around the opportunism of many on these fundamental issues that there was much struggle inside the W.N.C.C. we constantly put our emphasis on the need for these facilities and equal opportunities to enable women to become economically independent, a prerequisite for liberation. Despite the manoeuvres and the proposals for vulgar feminist exhibitionism in the form of a street theatre, our participation and presence on the demonstration was very successful. We mobilised well, bringing out our own leaflet. We held a public meeting and conducted a thorough exposure of the IMG and workshop factions who were intent on disrupting and taking over the W.N.C.C. and its demonstration. They tried to use the London organising committee to decide policy for their own sectarian and careerist ends. Despite the general weaknesses of the demonstration as a whole, the lack of emphasis on the four campaigns and the feminist slogans and street theatre and their apologetic speeches, the W.L.F. contingent was indeed the most well attended and politically vocal contingent, winning many women to our ranks and gaining new members. Manchanda accused North London members of 'not actively supporting this demonstration' and 'of showing opportunism towards the feminists'. Despite the fact that these slanders were a contradiction in terms, they bore no truth, because the N. London members were instrumental in the success of the W.L.F. participation through out general mobilisation and leafletting. The secretary, rather than doing the boring job of leafletting etc. spent her time in giving news conferences. Their subjectivism, jealousy and hostility was becoming a real obstruction to the development and growth of the W.L.F. Their sectarianism and arrogance at meetings was alienating women rather than bringing them closer to us.

Our journal 'Womens' Liberation' was originally supposed to come out quarterly and was to be produced by the executive committee and edited and finalised by an editorial committee, which consisted of the secretary, her husband, and one other who had left the organisation after the production of the first issue. It was then left to Mr. and Mrs. Manchanda to produce the second issue. Articles were complete almost six months before it was finally produced. After stubbornly refusing any help from others, they became defensive and blamed others for the paper not being out in time, accusing them of interfering. It was finally agreed after one years delay to have No. 2. issue ready for the March demo. It was not.

and development of W.L.F. they began to rapidly degenerate, refusing to accept any criticism of their behaviour and activity and defensively began to indulge in more and more slanders about other leading members.

Almost simultaneously to the building of the N.London W.L.F. branch W.L.F. was instrumental in the forming of the North London Alliance in Defence of Workers' Rights. This arose and developed from the few local contacts we had begun to make. The Alliance was formed to do propaganda work and agitation against the two bills, racism, against growing fascism. Through the work of the Alliance we developed close links with a number of organisations such as the Schools Action Union and the Black Unity and Freedom Party. Womens Liberation Front members initiated and were active participants in the public meetings and demonstrations of the Alliance also in the selling of the Alliance bulletins. We took part in the BUFP demonstrations and the protest march against the brutal murder of George Jackson. The work of our branch developed alongside the work of the Alliance, both complementing one another. The Alliance providing an ideal vehicle through which we could take up general propaganda and agitation work against the boss' offensive, while concentrating on more specific issues of injustice and oppression of women in our womens' organisation. It was through this work of the Alliance that W.L.F. made contacts with many genuine women comrades in the other organisations as well as winning new members.

In deep contrast to these positive, vital and developing forms of work, the secretary and **Privacy**, unable to build any branch in South London (due to the backwardness of working class women there!) as had been agreed, suddenly and quite unilaterally announced a public film show in the name of 'Camden W.L.F.'. This was called for the same day as a previously arranged N.L.A. meeting in which our branch members were involved. Leaflets were sent out to the new N. London members in an attempt to sabotage the work we had undertaken. About this same time, they also initiated W.L.F. study classes on Saturday afternoon, secretly inviting new members, when it had already been decided that Saturdays should be set aside for selling our journal, doing local work and branch building. The secretary began more and more to abuse her position and not to carry out her duties. She persisted in refusing to take minutes of e.c. meetings, in order to lie and distort about decisions, which she began to do constantly. These three disruptors, **Privacy**, Manchanda and **Privacy** resorted to manoeuvres and stalling tactics inside the e.c. Constantly interrupting and diverting meetings from the business and agenda at hand, they completely blocked any form of democratic discussion. They made allegations and slanders particularly regarding money and the Treasurer. They refused to have finance discussed in meetings, as it was out of order and baring even though a large sum of money was owing to the Treasurer. Very soon they degenerated into dishonesty, withholding money and submitting false claims. To this day The secretary owes W.L.F. over £19. These antagonisms finally lead them to pass a slanderous resolution at an e.c. meeting in July '71. This concerned the production of no. 3 journal, the production of which had been authorised to the Treasurer who had almost single handed produced and financed it. After having been severely criticised for their irresponsibility regarding no. 2. journal, they obstinately refused to take any part in the production of the new issue. The resolution stated that the journal was contrary to decisions and the general political line of W.L.F. and that those responsible should be dealt with accordingly, the resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

The constant disruption of our work and the refusal to rectify their behaviour as well as the secretary finally refusing to call the well over due A.G.M., resulted in the suspension of these three in September '71. **Privacy** was there elected as acting secretary to perform the Secretary's duties until the A.G.M. Those suspended have since been given every opportunity to correct their mistakes, to return money owing, but have in fact degenerated even further, contemptuously ignoring the democratic decisions of the organisation.

A journal for an organisation is essential for popularising ideas and winning people to the organisation. Our journal has never been able in a popular way to deal with concrete issues affecting women, due to our isolation. Apart from the obvious irregularity of production and in its sale, it has tended to be sectarian and has generally reflected the weaknesses of W.L.F. as a whole. There was a conscious effort to improve this in the last issue no. 3. and it was to some extent successful, if for no other reason than we had some actions to report (although mostly N.L.A. as we had still not taken up work inside WLF to any great extent) More recently the production of a theoretical paper for the Skegness conference on 'The roots of Womens' oppression and the way forward to Liberation' was our first real attempt of a thorough analysis. It was unfortunate that we did not prepare it sooner and give ourselves more time for discussion to improve it, as

and achievements of women under socialism. Again, an adequate discussion on the articles or to involve more women in the production.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION

October '71, we took part in both the organising and participation of the W.N.C.C. conference held at Skegness. The aim of this conference was to have a theoretical discussion between the different lines prevalent in the movement. Fortunately the conference was opened to the whole movement rather than just to those within the W.N.C.C who had felt the need for such a discussion. This was the first of many mistakes which all groups were party to and which culminated in chaos and the dissolution of the W.N.C.C. as well as the virtual alienation of W.L.F. from the other groups. Disruptors had been allowed to attend. Initially the disruptors were unsuccessful and staged a walk out on the first afternoon, leaving behind the more serious minded women, both groups and individuals. The next serious mistake, tantamount to disruption was committed by **Privacy** of the Union of Women for Liberation, who was in the chair. After the walk out staged as a protest at the form and content of the conference, many women remaining in the hall demanded that this be discussed before continuing with the agenda. **Privacy** not appreciating the need to discuss the walk out and to consolidate the women remaining, refused the discussion and ploughed on with the agenda. This at a crucial time resulted in alienating and confusing many women. From then on the disruptors, led by Leamington collective and supported by the IMG, GLF and some workshop women were able to sabotage the whole conference. Leamington wanting to bring about the end of the W.N.C.C. played on the grievances and ignorance of many women there, by indulging in an inademagogic campaign of slanders, lies and trickery. As a result of their manoeuvring and of the weaknesses of not consolidating and winning the support of the many genuine women there, they were able to turn this conference into a decision making conference. Rather than take up the problems that women felt regarding the W.N.C.C and the conference, we remained rigid in our determination to maintain authority and continue the theoretical discussion. The issue became one of anarchism or bureaucracy, with us not being able to apply our correct theory to the concrete situation. On the other hand the U.W.L. coming to thrive on their unpopularity, played right into the hands of the disruptors by their arrogance, indifference and sectarianism to the women there. Dismissing everyone out of hand, they insisted on sloganising and lecturing which along with the anti communist and false allegations generously being spread around, about the 'Maoists' made it almost impossible for us to communicate with any of the women there. On the final afternoon, when Leamington/<sup>by</sup>done all of their preparatory work for the final takeover, provoked, if provocation was needed, **Privacy** and the handful of UWL members into a punch up. There was then a unanimous decision to throw **Privacy** out. U.W.L. had succeeded in ridiculing the political line they professed to believe in. All people are judged by their practice and not what they say they believe in and U.W.L. is no exception. The majority of members of W.L.F. had been put in an impossible position; how could we support the U.W.L. buffoons who profess the same line as W.L.F.? We have to over a period of time prove that socialist women work and behave in a completely different way to this. We immediately disassociated ourselves from U.W.L. by the majority of our members voting for **Privacy** expulsion. Neither could we support the disruptive capital made from this by the feminists and the trotskyites of disbanding the W.N.C.C. and from this time on we ceased, in effect, to participate. In the discussions that followed to analyse and sum up the experiences of Skegness two lines began to emerge in W.L.F. again, it seems no sooner had we resolved the contradiction with **Privacy** than we were faced with yet another. There are those who although very outspoken against the bureaucracy and careerism of **Privacy** wanted to maintain W.L.F. as a talking shop and to use it for their own ambitious ends., just to replace **Privacy**. Unfortunately many of us did not recognise this soon enough and it is this which has led to the critical situation we are facing today in W.L.F. Liberalism lead some to believe that it was just a question of resolving small differences, when in fact they were fundamental. We are faced today with a constant fight at every meeting. In fact we are in a situation where our organisation is a hindrance to any real work. Struggles and contradictions are inevitable in the development of any organisation, however we seem to have had more than our fair share of dishonesty and careerism. It is understandable that many members have become disillusioned and demoralised. After **Privacy** report on Skegness was not accepted as an objective analysis, it was democratically decided to take out the essence in the compromised form of four main points which could be agreed upon, until a further more detailed

once, and certainly no right to abolish the W.N.C.C. The Acting Secretary took down these four points and articulated them into a letter which she accordingly brought to the next W.L.F. meeting. By means of dishonest trickery, using the fact that different women were present at this meeting, **Privacy** made out that this letter did not cover the four points and anyway she did not agree with it and would not allow it to go out. Despite the fact that the letter was written in order to send something out immediately we continued to indulge in endless discussion and argument. **Privacy** implored us to recognise the 'exemplary role of U.W.L.', 'The excellent theoretical tasks they have undertaken; their scientific foresight of the future manipulation of the Trotskyites and how WLF's only weakness was literally that we did not lick U.W.L.'s feet enough. She insisted that the majority of the women at Skegness were backward and reactionary and had no genuine grievances, and that UWL had walked out because they were discriminated against for their impeccable politics. It began to seem that plans were being hatched for a merger. Like TUC bureaucrats and the boss having arbitration talks on behalf of the rank and file to reach a 'mutually agreeable settlement' Why else such insistent admiration for the U.W.L., such humility about ourselves and such utter condemnation of everyone else?

After having been unable to discipline the acting secretary inside the so-called communist organisation that **Privacy** and **Privacy** lead 'the Marxist - Leninist Workers Association' and knowing fully well the disgust with which most W.L.F. members viewed the behaviour of U.W.L. at Skegness. **Privacy** used her dominant position in the chair to bully and confuse people, 'distorting facts week by week; She started off apologising for U.W.L. and step by step has ended up eulogising them. It is as a direct result of the haggling and dishonesty that have become such a regular feature of our weekly meetings, that many women have left. However after further exhaustive discussion, some agreement seemed to have been reached and amendments were put to the original letter. But again she tried to block this by first not accepting the amendments and by saying it was a complete alternative draft and also by enlisting the support of someone who wasn't even at Skegness and who arrogantly voted against every single amendment, while others who were not there, were modest enough to only vote on issues of principle on which they could take a stand. However most of the amendments were finally agreed to and passed and the final letter was adopted. It was agreed to type it out and send it off immediately in time for the Bristol region meeting. The Acting Secretary typed it out the following evening as agreed, while **Privacy** who had all along been insisting on the urgency of sending out the letter (even to the exclusion of everything else for nearly two months) consciously held it up and did not send it out until after two weeks, well after the Bristol meeting and in fact arriving after the U.W.L. notice for their so-called WNC meeting. The notice announced that WLF were jointly sponsoring the meeting and for all intents and purposes were jointly bankrupt! Refusing to deal with reality, unable to accept the fact that, however unfortunate, the WNC no longer exists. Without any discussion with other members, except for **Privacy** gave her full support and agreed to jointly sponsor the next so-called W.N.C.C. meeting, even though she was well aware that this was a controversial point inside WLF. There are those who say we have a special relationship with the U.W.L.; that we share a common ideology. If what is meant by this is that we read the same books, then this is true, but in practise the dogmatism and isolationism of U.W.L. and their lack of any practical activities is exactly what many of us have been fighting against inside W.L.F. For some there is a special relationship, **Privacy** have much in common. For both, the abolition of the W.N.C.C. was a tragedy, for it meant that they had lost a large platform from which they could lecture. These great theoreticians, these liberated articulate women are now without a kingdom. The ideological weaknesses of the women in the movement and at Skegness serve as a constant justification for their weaknesses, for as **Privacy** himself said of Skegness "We were fully in control of the situation ... We knew exactly what was going to happen ... and we behaved accordingly .... seeing as 99% of the women there are our enemies." Yet these very same people are wanting to perpetuate the W.N.C.C., seeing it as the most important aspect of their work!

The relationship of W.L.F. and U.W.L. goes back a long way. Due to **Privacy** opportunism in not accepting the correct criticism of someone for his absolute male chauvinist behaviour, she left W.E.R.C. in 1970 and formed U.W.L. some months later. Her leaving was no loss to the organisation, for even then she was only concerned with gaining a position inside the organisation and had never been prepared to do even the minimum of work. The UWL are in practise no better than those they so eloquently and excessively condemn. Their preaching of a theory, totally unrelated to any practise or any sincere concern for the oppression of women, is no

the hands of disruptors, and have made it possible for them in the W.M.C.C to achieve what they could never have achieved without such generous assistance. Much of their indifference and contempt for women is increasingly being shared by **Privacy**. She has completely capitulated to the arrogant line of the U.W.L., finding it easier to blame the backwardness of women in the movement, rather than blaming ourselves for our failure to win more support from progressive elements. Surely if W.L.F. was so absolutely correct in everything we do and say, why at a time of growing interest and activity in the womens' movement are we not only not winning women but losing those we already have? This is mainly due, as I have tried to point out throughout this document to our consistent lack of practical activity as well as our sectarian style of work. Obviously with the generally low level of political consciousness in the movement and with the strong diversionary trends within it, many honest women will be temporarily diverted away from socialist orientated groups. We can not afford to bury our heads in the sand and blame all our faults on the Gay Liberation Front and other diversionaries, who have nevertheless been very successful in diverting us into endless discussion, indeed their role is apparently of such utmost importance that we need even more discussion and an analysis in the next issue of our journal, and this most probably to be based on the disgusting and superficial analysis done recently by U.W.L. We must realise that the most urgent tasks facing us is to integrate with the working class. Do exactly what we have so loudly been telling others to do. In fact begin to put our ads into practise. To take up issues of discrimination and oppression of women, instead of sending our sympathy from the side lines. To begin to do this will require hard and consistent work, integrating our study and the lessons we draw from the experiences of women throughout the world. This form of work requires an honest dedication to the people, a concern for their suffering, rather than a concern for our own self glorification. We must modestly go to the masses and not expect them to come to us and in our isolation blame the backwardness of others. Recently those of us who have begun to understand this and wanting to rectify the situation, have attempted to get involved in the issues working women are involved in. For the first time we have attempted to integrate our theoretical understanding and aims with practise. We took up the issue of Hillside and gave our full support to the women and their families in their just struggle to be rehoused. In the course of this struggle we developed good relations with other local progressive groups and were able to raise the consciousness of the women at Hillside as well as our own. This struggle developed and eventually despite our small forces and our lack of experience, the campaign was successful, the families were re-housed. Some of us took up this work enthusiastically, and although aware of the increasing weaknesses and the degeneration of the organisation as a whole, thought that this would give us a new lease of life, especially as this was the type of work which we had previously <sup>been</sup> agreed should be initiated. Instead we were met with resentment and obstruction, particularly from **Privacy** who continually trying to dampen our enthusiasm, demanded to see the leaflet we were drafting, for as she said 'some people were beginning to act anarchicly, covering up our politics and behaving like welfare workers ... We have sympathy for womens' problems but we can't go rushing around all over the place taking them up.' Just as her brother **Privacy** had told us weeks previously W.L.F. should not be interested in womens' 'personal problems' Presumably the campaign of unsupported mothers and their children for their right to a decent home is their problem not ours! It was clear from our leaflet that we had no intention of 'covering up our politics', we raised the issue of the appalling living conditions these women were being forced to live in to show the nature of the society we are all living in. However after seeing the leaflet, **Privacy** retracted her statement, saying we must be careful we don't become welfare workers and reformists. Of course there are always liberals, social democrats etc. who do exploit peoples' problems for their own ends and lead them to reformism, but while being aware of this very dominant and pernicious trend in the Labour movement as a whole, there seems little basis for this to be levelled at us, especially seeing that our sectarianism displays the opposite extreme. **Privacy** also point blank wrote off the Claimants' Union as Anarchists, without knowing anything about them, after it was pointed out that those of us who had worked with some believed them to be positive and genuine individuals, she said she couldn't tell, implying that our opinions were not very reliable. For all her talk about the working class, the one thing these type of people fear most is mass work. The genuine struggles of the people are only reformist, reactionary, anarchic or social work. The situation is becoming increasingly remin-

ent of the careerism and obstructionism of **Privacy** and Manchanda, the way they presented any work or criticism because it reflected on their personal leadership. This became most clear with the recent proposal about the London Alliance and how 'it threatened the autonomy and independence of W.L.F.', distorting facts to make those people not so aware of the issues think that the Alliance was dictating to us all from above. This however is certainly not the case, those who were involved in the formation of the Alliance know this to be an absolute lie, indulged in in retaliation for the failure of the M.L.W.A. to gain control of the Alliance, and in the hope that W.L.F. would pull out. Although we have recently been very active in the Alliance and in its' committee work; in organising the fund raising concert in support of the many Alliance comrades who were arrested and are facing framed up charges, in taking up police brutality through the Tribunal committee. We have also been active in the Alliance tenant's committee, especially in the building of the Hackney United Tenants Association and in supporting the fight against the eviction of Mr. Macleish and his daughter Zelma.

**Privacy** has suggested on many occasions that W.L.F. should not be affiliated to the Alliance. We also now have W.L.F. members; **Privacy** questioning the very existence of the Alliance, formed to organise against growing fascism, by producing a theory that we are in fact not living at a time of growing fascism and that some people inside the Alliance are becoming paranoid about fascism. Having closed their eyes to the political situation in Britain today, clearly testifies that these people have for too long remained isolated in their small cosy waffle-shops. The truth of the matter really is that the 'autonomy and independence of W.L.F. is being threatened' not by the Alliance, of which we are an equal part, but by the M.L.W.A., who are intent in subordinating W.L.F. The result of this policy has been the rapid degeneration of W.L.F., for to some it they can't succeed in absolutely controlling W.L.F., better to kill it, for anyhow they can always join UWL.

If W.L.F. is to become a functioning and alive organisation to mobilise women for their liberation and working class liberation, we must rid ourselves of the baggage, of the careerists who think they can use honest women for their own selfish ends. We will only be used by the masses of people for revolution. We must be thoroughly objective about what we are now, look at the work we have begun to do, the positive and negative contributions we have made to the movement the experiences we have gained over the years and go boldly forward to begin to play our part in the building of a mass women's organisation.