

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

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19 81

SUBJECT

1. This report deals with the 1980 National Delegate Conference of the Socialist Workers Party.

2. The 1980 National Delegate Conference of the Socialist Workers Party, the supreme body within the organisation responsible for the formulation of future Party perspectives and the election of leading committees, was held at The Africa Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2 commencing at 9am on Saturday 13th December 1980 and continuing on a daily basis until the business was concluded at 5pm on Tuesday 16th December 1980.

3. This report, together with the attached conference documents and publications, will summarise the topics debated, outline the resultant perspectives for the coming year and give an insight into confidential party statistics. It is necessary, however, at this stage to explain the significance of the various documents submitted, as follows:-

1980 National Delegate Conference of the Socialist Workers Party.

346/81/2

Reference to Papers

- Documents 1 to 10 Additional Information Sheets concerning confidential statistics on party membership, activities, and publications;
Document 11 Details of social events arranged for Delegates;
Documents 12 to 14 Resolutions on 'Ireland' and the 'National Question' to be discussed during the relevant debates;
Documents 15 to 16 Nomination list and Final Elected List of the 'National Committee';
Documents 17 to 30 Drafting Commission reports to assist delegates with voting on the issues contained therein;
Document 31 Copy of the National Secretary's letter to individual delegates.

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(NB - In the interest of strict security Documents 1 to 10, 15 to 16 and 17 to 30 were issued to individual delegates only whilst the latter were within the confines of the conference hall and taken from them before leaving the room at the end of each session. All copies of these papers were destroyed at the culmination of the event, with the exception of a 'master copy' held by the Central Committee.)

Publication 1	Pre-Conference Internal Bulletin No 1
Publication 2	Pre-Conference Internal Bulletin No: 2
Publication 3	Pre-Conference Internal Bulletin No: 3
Publication 4	Conference Agenda and Resolutions from Districts, Branches and individuals.

4. The organisation, administration and finances of the National Delegate Conference were dealt with at length in Special Branch report dated 2.2.79 under reference 346/79/3 (1978 National Delegate Conference) and there have been no significant changes in the procedures adopted by the Party for this event other than the organising personalities. The task was undertaken this year by Pete CLARK (National Secretary/Central Committee), [REDACTED] Privacy (National Treasurer) and [REDACTED] Privacy (Assistant to the National Secretary) and these, together with Duncan HALLAS (Central Committee), Roger COX (North West London District) and [REDACTED] Privacy (Typesetter at 'Socialist Worker'), formed the Conference Arrangements Committee responsible for the smooth running of Conference, compilation of the agenda and enforcement of 'Standing Orders'.

5. The agenda was drawn up with a specific view to completing the necessary business within four days instead of the normal five-day period, thus reducing the cost and ensuring that delegates in full-time employment did not suffer unduly from lost wages, the only amendments to the timetable originally published on page 3 of the Conference Bulletin (Publication 4) being as follows:-

Monday 15 December 1980

2.00	to	2.30	Gay Work
2.30	to	3.30	Anti-Race Work
3.30	to	5.30	Anti-Nazi League

[REDACTED] .../...

Tuesday 16 December 1980

9.30	to	10.00	Party Finance
10.00	to	11.30	Ireland
11.30	to	11.45	Drafting Commissions
11.45	to	1.00	Election of Leading Bodies

In general, the times allocated to the various debates tended to reflect the importance of the subject under discussion with regard to the Central Committee perspectives for the coming year.

6. Throughout the debates at Conference there were few arguments over the major perspectives for future Party activity which the Central Committee had previously promulgated to the membership by way of the Pre-Conference Bulletins (Publications 1 - 3), the resultant resolutions being passed unanimously when put to the vote. Thus, in view of the lack of emotive issues or the existence of conflicting viewpoints, it is not intended to report on each specific debate as the basis for the perspectives presented by the speakers may be found in the three Pre-Conference Bulletins and the resultant policy formulated by Conference in the Drafting Commission Reports (Documents 17 to 30).

7. Those items of Conference business which require comment are the National Secretary's report, Party Finance and Election of Leading Committees - all these being considered by the Central Committee as too delicate for general publication on the grounds of security.

8. National Secretary's Report (Saturday - 10.45 to 11.30)

This was introduced by Jim NICHOL (Central Committee) who held the post of National Secretary until October 1980 when he relinquished his position as a paid full-time party worker to become an 'articled clerk' with [Privacy] (Solicitors), [Privacy] London EC1. The position was subsequently taken by Pete CLARK, who has undertaken a considerable re-organisation of the party headquarters in an effort to introduce some semblance of efficiency into the organisation.

9. NICHOL opened his speech by referring the delegates to the Additional Information Sheets concerning membership statistics (Sheets 1, 2 and 3) and internal publications and bulletins (Sheets 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10),

[REDACTED]

then dealing with each specific item at length and answering any pertinent questions from the floor. Throughout his talk he emphasised the fact that during the preceding twelve months the Party membership had grown successfully to a figure in excess of 4,500, due largely to a well-timed intervention when the working class was experiencing a considerable downturn. It was his view that if the present effort was maintained during the coming year, it would be relatively easy to build the membership to a number in excess of 5,000 in particular, creating a stronger base in industry and the public service sectors whilst improving the financial position of the Party by increased subscriptions.

10. Control Commission Report (Sunday - 9.30 to 10.00)

The Control Commission consists of five leading 'cadres' elected annually from Conference with a responsibility for investigating breaches of internal security and misconduct (whether political or otherwise) by individual party members and also mediating in cases of grievances expressed by the membership against specific policy issues.

11. Privacy (South West London) presented the annual report on the activities of the Control Commission during the preceding period, although this amounted to little more than a verbal account of the information contained on Additional Information Sheet 4. However, during the course of the debate that followed it became apparent that the Control Commission had not actually been convened to discuss any of the items under examination, all the business being transacted over the telephone. In view of the fact that this was considered by Conference to be a serious breach of security, it was resolved that some decision be taken to ensure that the Commission met on a regular basis in future. This was agreed and placed on the business for the debate concerning the 'Election of Leading Bodies' when a new Commission would be chosen.

12. Party Finance (Tuesday - 9.30 to 10.00)

This item on the agenda was regarded by the Central Committee as being of prime importance due to the need at this particular time to maintain a strong full-time staff of party workers and organisers, maintain the weekly publication of 'Socialist Worker' and produce sufficient propaganda for industrial interventions. It was no surprise therefore that Jim NICHOL spoke on the subject of finance, as it was he who

[REDACTED]

earlier last year spent three months touring the districts and branches throughout the country 'persuading' members to increase existing bankers orders or alternatively pay their subscriptions by that method. He impressed on the delegates that the Party could only just manage to pay its way by continually 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' and that a drastic increase in cash flowing into the Party coffers was essential. In this respect, the Central Committee had proposed a general 10% increase in the rate of subscriptions throughout the organisation and he requested that this be formally passed as a resolution by Conference. After some debate on the subject, during which NICHOL was asked by one delegate whether the Party would publish an annual account for the benefit of the membership, the Conference acceded to the Central Committee and passed the resolution by a substantial majority. (It was interesting to note that NICHOL explained the absence of accounts by stating that the finances were so much intertwined between various Party units, eg the paper, industrial department etc, that it would be impossible to produce any figures without employing an army of accountants).

13. Election of Leading Committees (Tuesday - 11.45 to 1.00)

This session was divided into three parts, as follows:-

i) Election of the Central Committee

Tony CLIFF, one of the founder members of the Party, spoke for a short while on the achievements of the Socialist Workers Party during the previous year and directly related these successes to the leadership given by the outgoing Central Committee. It was no surprise, therefore, that he proposed the following persons as the Central Committee for the coming year:-

Yolanda BYSTRAM	Industrial Department
Alex CALLINICOS	Socialist Worker
Pete CLARK	National Secretary
Tony CLIFF	'Floating'
John DEASON	Industrial/Right to Work
Lindsey GERMAN	Women's Voice
Duncan HALLAS	'Floating'
Chris HARMAN	Socialist Review/Education Anti-Race Work

Paul HOLBOROW Organiser for London
 Phil MARFLEET Industrial Department
 Jack ROBERTSON Socialist Worker/Industrial
 John ROSE Editor - 'Socialist Worker'

This, in actual fact, amounted to the re-election of the previous Central Committee with the addition of John ROSE, the Editor of 'Socialist Worker', which was felt essential for ensuring that the decisions and perspectives of the Central Committee were carried by the paper. There were no alternative 'slates' proposed by any of the delegates present and so the above persons were elected unanimously.

ii) Election of the National Committee

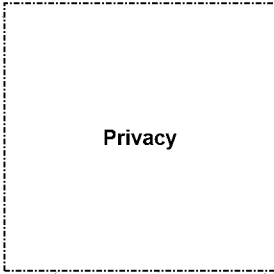
The selection of the 40 party members to serve on the National Committee - a body inaugurated at the 1979 National Delegate Conference with a mandate to meet on a bi-monthly basis in an attempt to bridge the gulf between the Central Committee and the grass-roots membership - was a complicated process. Initially, during the first two days of Conference, delegates were entitled to nominate any party member as a candidate for the National Committee. On the third day, following the closure of nominations, a 'Nominating Commission' of full-time party workers would examine the list of candidates and draw up a 'Preliminary List', which was then published and distributed amongst the delegates. After this, it was the right of any delegate to request an audience with the 'Nominating Commission' and argue his case for the inclusion or exclusion of any particular candidate. Once these representations had been completed the 'Nominating Commission' produced a final 'Recommended List' (see Documents 15 and 16) for presentation to Conference during the relevant debate. This was the only time during Conference when there appeared to be a division of opinion over a resolution placed before the delegates. In this case it was argued that [redacted] Privacy from Leeds should replace [redacted] Privacy from Leeds, the grounds being that the latter had been relatively inactive during the



past year, and that Privacy should replace Privacy to provide a more balanced representation in respect of 'black work'. In the event, however, both of these amendments were lost, the first by 33 votes to 32 and the second by 36 votes to 27.

iii) Election of the Control Commission:

In order to resolve the problem that had arisen concerning the failure of the previous Commission to meet on a regular basis, Duncan HALLAS proposed that the incoming members meet at least once every two months and that two members of the Central Committee be seconded in order to act as a catalyst. This resolution was agreed by the delegates and the following persons were then proposed as the 'Control Commission':-



and 2 Central Committee members to be decided.

This resolution was passed unanimously and marked the end of the session dealing with the 'Election of Leading Bodies'.

14. In addition to this report, a photographic album of persons present at the Conference is being prepared and will be submitted at a later date.

11

Trevor Butler

A/Ch

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT



APPENDIX

to Special Branch report concerning the 1980 National Delegate Conference of the Socialist Workers Party

DELEGATES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area represented</u>	<u>References</u>
Privacy	West Hertfordshire	[REDACTED]
	Wolverhampton	
	Swansea	
	Glasgow	
	Dundee	
	South London	
	N.U.M. Fraction	
	Leeds	
	Edinburgh	
	Glasgow	
	Waltham Forest - London	
	Cambridge	
	Cardiff	
	A.U.E.W. Fraction	
	N.A.T.F.H.E. Fraction	
	C.P.S.A. Fraction	
	Hammersmith and Kensington - London	
	Edinburgh	
	N.A.L.G.O. Fraction	
	Wrexham	
North London		
N.U.T. Fraction		
Liverpool		

Name

Area represented

References

Privacy

Steve JEFFREYS

Privacy

Sheffield
South West London

Reading
North East Manchester
Portsmouth
South East London

Glasgow
South Manchester
South East London

Slough
West Middlesex
Liverpool
Central London

Birmingham
Guildford
A.U.E.W. Fraction

South London

Norwich
Tower Hamlets - London

Waltham Forest - London
Edinburgh
N.A.L.G.O. Fraction
Central London

Birmingham
Sheffield
Haringey and Enfield

Grays
Leicester and Loughborough
Newcastle
Liverpool

Name

Area represented

References

Privacy

Steve JEFFREYS

Privacy

Sheffield
South West London

Reading
North East Manchester
Portsmouth
South East London

Glasgow
South Manchester
South East London

Slough
West Middlesex
Liverpool
Central London

Birmingham
Guildford
A.U.E.W. Fraction

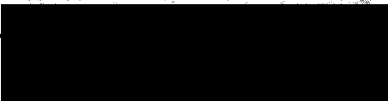
South London

Norwich
Tower Hamlets - London

Waltham Forest - London
Edinburgh
N.A.L.G.O. Fraction
Central London

Birmingham
Sheffield
Haringey and Enfield

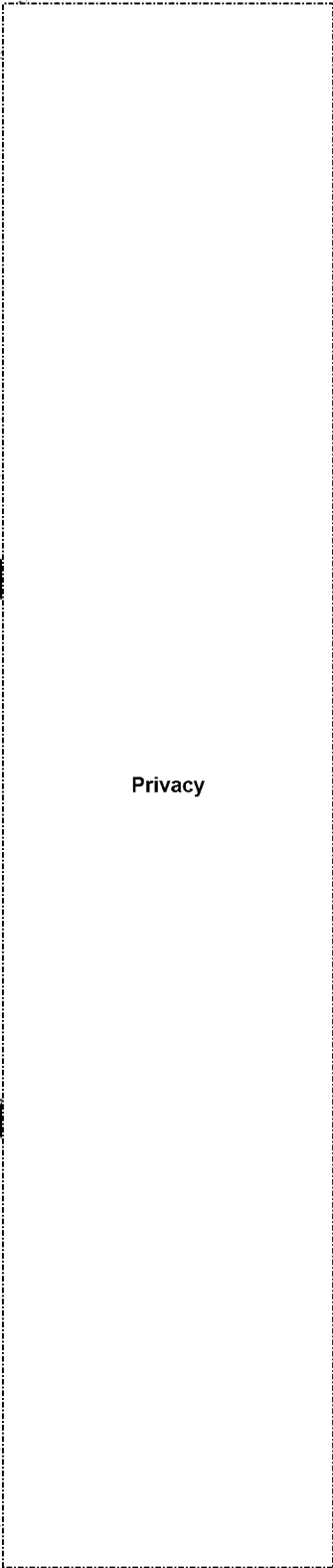
Grays
Leicester and Loughborough
Newcastle
Liverpool



Name

Area represented

References



Privacy

Newham - London

Gloucester

Glasgow

E.E.T.P.U. Fraction

North East Lancashire

North West London

North London

E.E.T.P.U. Fraction

Lancaster

Leeds

Hackney - London

Newcastle

Leeds

N.U.T. Fraction

North London

Brighton

Bradford

Bristol

Medway

N.U.T. Fraction

Rail Fraction

Haringey and Enfield

Hospital Workers Fraction

Hackney - London

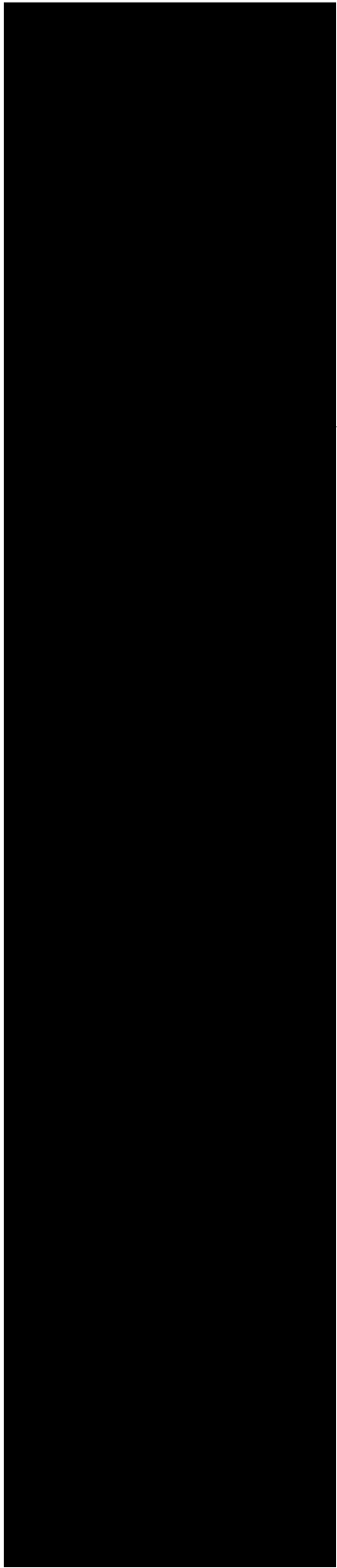
Central London

A.U.E.W. Fraction

East Midlands

South London

C.P.S.A. Fraction



Name

Area represented

References

[Redacted]
Privacy

Bristol
Hospital Workers Fraction
Coventry
Southampton
North West London
North West London
Oxford
South West London
South Manchester
York
Sheffield
Newham - London
Salford
Hackney - London
Hull
Glasgow

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

APPENDIX II

to Special Branch report concerning the 1980 National Delegate Conference
of the Socialist Workers Party.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND FULL-TIME ORGANISERS

Pete ALEXANDER	Anti-Nazi League and Anti-Fascist Organiser
Yolanda BYSTRAM	Central Committee
Alex CALLINICOS	Central Committee
Pete CLARK	Central Committee
Tony CLIFF	Central Committee
John DEASON	Central Committee
Lindsey GERMAN	Central Committee
Privacy	Full-Time Organiser for Liverpool & Merseyside
	Full-Time Organiser for Manchester
Duncan HALLAS	Central Committee
Chris HARMAN	Central Committee
Privacy	Full-Time Organiser for Lea Valley District - London
Paul HOLBOROW	Central Committee
Privacy	Full-Time Organiser for East London
Phil MARFLEET	Central Committee
Privacy	Full-Time Organiser for Birmingham
Jim NICHOL	Central Committee
Privacy	Full-Time Organiser for South Wales

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX II (cont'd)

Privacy

Jack ROBERTSON

John ROSE

Privacy

Full-Time Organiser for
South London

Central Committee

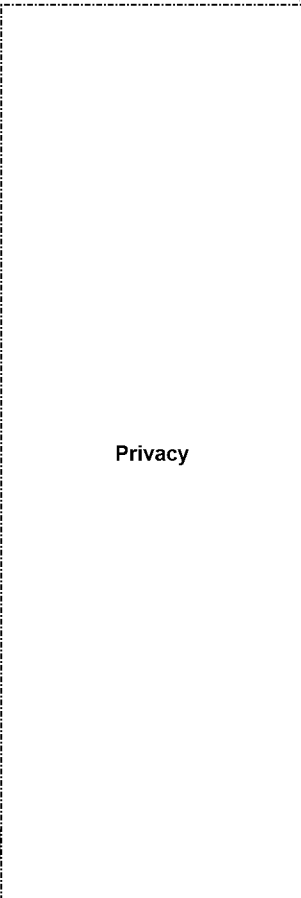
Central Committee (new
election at this conference)

Full-Time Organiser

Full-Time Organiser for
Newcastle & Tyneside

[REDACTED]

Photocopy error



Privacy

Industrial

Industrial

Building Workers Fraction

Socialist Workers Party
National Office -
'S W Printers'

Journalist - 'Socialist
Worker'

'Rebel' Organiser

Irish Sub-Committee

FBU Fraction

Right to Work Campaign

Paul FOOT

Journalist - Daily Mirror



Privacy

Racework

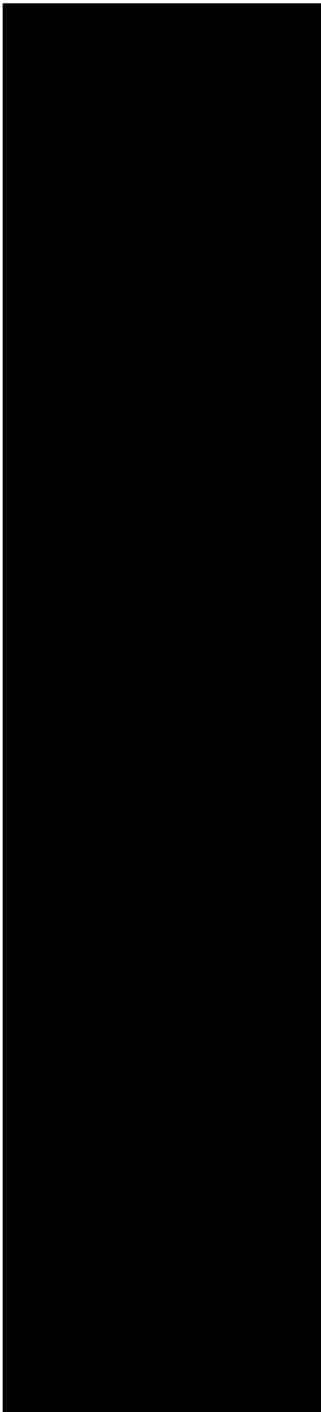
Pete GOODWIN

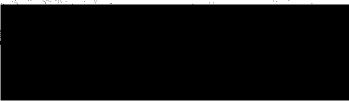
International Organiser/
'Socialist Review'



Privacy

Journalist & Writer





Industrial

Industrial

Anti-Nuclear Campaign

Journalist - 'Socialist Worker'

Industrial

Industrial

Industrial

Industrial

Industrial

Privacy

Student Organiser

Rigi work Campaign

Manager - 'Socialist Worker'
Print shop @ 'East End Litho'

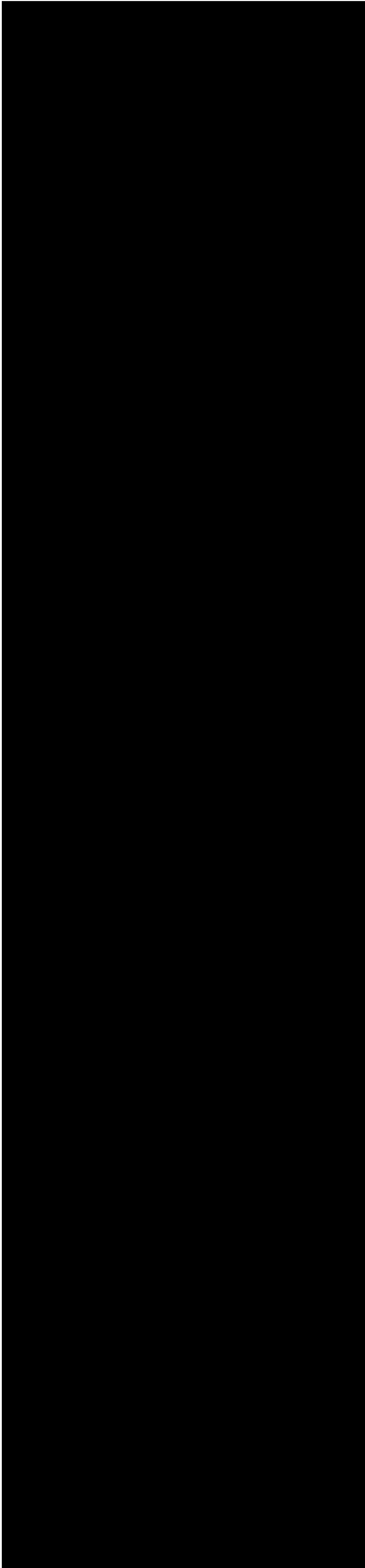
Women

Racework

Control Commission

Women

Journalist - 'Socialist Worker'



[Redacted]

FBU Fraction

Design - 'Socialist Worker'

Women

Industrial/Party Perspectives

Journalist - 'Socialist Worker'

Racework

Industrial/Party Perspectives

Party Perspectives

Women

EETPU Fraction

[Large Redacted Area]

Privacy

[Redacted]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHEET No

The figures for 1980 have been calculated from the first 3768 registration slips received this year; questionnaire figures have been used in conjunction with these to calculate total membership figures etc.

Please note that in previous years, the figures were based on the first 3400 reg slips and direct comparisons can only be made between the percentages. Actual figures are given, however, for information.

<u>Total Number of Members</u>		<u>Social Composition (used on total figures)</u>			
		<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	
1972	2350				
1973	2670	Manual	32.0%	33.5%	36.0%
1974	3900	White Collar	32.0%	34.0%	32.0%
1975	(no record)	Unemployed	7.0%	9.0%	12.0%
1976	2650	Students	19.0%	14.0%	12.5%
1977	4000	Schoolstudents	2.0%	3.2%	2.7%
1978	4200	Housewives	2.0%	1.2%	0.7%
1979	3600	Others	<u>6.0%</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	<u>4.5%</u>
1980	4100	total	104.0%	98.4	100.4%

Social Composition of members (from first 3768 registration slips; from first 3400 in 1978 and 1979)

	78 (first 3400)	79 (first 3400)	80 (first 3768)
Manual	1122	1140	1348
White Collar	1008	1166	1197
Unemployed	281	336	445
Students	594	491	478
Schoolstudents	168	112	103
Housewives	76	41	27
Others	<u>203</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>170</u>
Total	3400	3402	3768

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHEET No2Manual Union membershipWhite Collar Union Membership

	78	79	80		78	79	80
NUPE *	123	241	160 *	Civil Service	123 *	125 *	153 **
USDAW	36	22	34	AUT	17	15	6
DOCKS	6	6	4	NATFHE	88	81	86
BOILERMAKERS	22	16	12	ASEMS	138	127	188
EETPU	61	60	64	NUT	240	223	276
GMWU	52	54	53	EIS	32	22	25
ICWU	234	247	317	TASS	47	39	45
NUM	27	9	9	RPEX	31	27	31
PRINT	94	96	109	NALGO	237	226	296
AUEW	186	129	204	NUF	20	23	30
POST OFFICE	33	26	34	ENTS	17	7	-
UCATT	56	43	59	NUBE	6	9	2
RATL	33	26	48	IRSF	-	-	18
BUSES	21	25	29	Others	-	-	41
NUSMWH&D	14	9	5				
NUFLAT	2	2	2				
ISTC	9	4	30				
NSMM	6	5	5				
DBTW	6	1	1	Unemployed	281	336	445
NUAAW	3	2	1	Students	594	469	478
FBU	32	10	14	NUSS	168	119	103
FTAT	7	1	-	Housewives	76	35	27
BAKERS	7	11	7	Non union	-	-	27
COHSE *	33	27	76*	others	203	150	170
NUHKW							
OTHERS							

*includes IRSF members

**IRSF in separate category

NB 79 and 78 figures based on first 3400
80 figures based on first 3768.

* In previous years there was a Health workers category, this year they have been divided into unions.

Additional Information Sheet 3

Trade Union Positions Held

	<u>Total</u>			<u>Manual</u>			<u>White Collar</u>		
	78	79	80	78	79	80	78	79	80
Shop Stewards	692	721	817	289	303	342	403	418	475
Trades Council Delegates	286	275	320	132	141	163	154	134	157
Others (Branch Cttees etc)	391	364	589	120	102	115	271	262	272

NB The figures for 1980 are based on 3768 reg slips and the previous years on 3400. Also please note that one person is able to hold more than one position ie from different categories.

Registration over the period 10.10.80 to 5.12.80 (8 weeks)

Total recruited	186	
unemployed	77	41%
manual	42	23%
white collar	18	10%
NUS	26	14%
NUSS	7	4%
<hr/>		
no of women	30	16%

Women Membership

	78	79	80
Total	915	865	829
percentage	29.5%	23.5 %	22.0 %

CONTROL COMMISSION REPORT

Sunday 9.30 am.

1. In April 1980 the Control Commission was asked to look at the circumstances in which one full time party worker had resigned and the employment of another had been terminated.

It was made clear that there was no question of reinstatement and that the hiring and firing of full timers is entirely a matter for the Central Committee.

The Control Commission concluded that while all parties had acted in good faith, the procedures for the employment of full timers could be improved as follows

- i there should be clearly defined lines of responsibility for employment of full timers
- ii there should be greater political clarity about the role of full timers
- iii there should be a recognised procedure in the event of dispute about termination of or major alteration in employment

The Central Committee accepted these recommendations in principle.

2. LANCASTER -A student member badly assaulted the Broad Left President of the Student Union after the President had spoken against support for the Right to Work march. A long argument took place in the Lancaster Branch who then asked the Control Commission to intervene. The Commission decided to exclude the student involved from the Party until he leaves Lancaster in June. His readmission to the Party will be discussed by the Control Commission with him in June and depends on his behaviour in the period until then.

3. There is a dispute over a member in South Wales which the Commission is still investigating. A similar situation exists in Glasgow.

4. The Republican Faction complained that a document was not circulated in the branch envelopes in contravention of the Constitution, rule 10b. The National Secretary told the Control Commission-

- 1. All their material has been circulated in all 3 pre Conference Internal Bulletins -including the document the complaint is about which appeared in the 2nd IB about 12 days after it was not put in the mailing. The Republican Faction's national meeting was advertised in the mailing for some 6 weeks and the Faction Secretary's phone number included in the mailing.
- 2. There is in principle no objection to brief faction material being circulated in the envelopes but the decision on what goes in depends on political priorities on a week to week basis.

The Control Commission believes that there is no substance in the Republican Faction's complaint.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION SHEETSocialist Review

The current paid sale of Socialist Review is approximately 3400. It breaks down as follows (paid sale on left hand side, number distributed on the right hand side)

	paid	distributed
SWP Branches	1830	2750
Bookmarks	200	200
Subscriptions	420	450 (including complimentary copies)
UK Bookshops	500	750
Foreign Bulk	150	150
Office	300 (extremely variable)	500
		200 (for accidents)
Total Paid Sale	<u>3400</u>	printorder <u>5000</u>

In the last year Bookmarks, UK bookshops and foreign bulk sales have remained static. Subscriptions have risen from approx 300 to 420. SWP branch sales from approx 1500 to 1830. Office (demos etc) from approx 100 to 300. The price rise in August had no significant effect on sales.

Financially this should leave us just about breaking even. Income from the above sales is about £1575 and expenditure (including the wages of one fulltimer) about £1560. However long delays in a lot of payments and that the bulk of the increase in subscriptions was in the middle of the year and has now slowed down, while we have only just achieved the level of branch sales mean that we still have a shortfall.

We need to put on another 300 or so sales to be financially stable. Such a target is by no means unrealistic: the way in which some branches have succeeded in raising their sales by over 50 per cent in the last six months shows that others could follow their lead. A number of comrades have been amazed to discover that they can easily sell SR to non members. But at the moment it is clear that very few comrades are even trying to do this. (the overwhelming bulk of the branch sales are clearly to members). So we have to say to our members that they should not only be buying Socialist Review but also selling it!

Additional Information sheet

International Socialism Journal

Sales of IS Journal have remained stable since the last conference, despite an increased price (to cover increase in print costs) since issue no 9.

Based on an average of nos 6,7,8, and 9 sales are as follows

	No Sold	Income at current prices (excluding postal charges)
SWP Branches	550	520
Office	230	240
Domestic Subs	60	280
Domestic Bookshops	410	250
Bookmarks	200	160
Foreign Subs	160	180
Foreign bulk	330	165
	<u>2740</u>	<u> </u>
Back Copies	160	Total 1955

In addition

Domestic complimentary copies (mainly Bookmarx Coop) 80
Foreign Complimentary copies 50

Costs are currently (exc p&p) for a print run of 3000

Printing and Binding	1100
Typesetting	600
Miscellaneous(p&p for comps etc)	100
	<u>£1800</u>

It can be seen therefore that the journal is completely financially self supporting. Because of the attention given to the Socialist Review very little effort has been able to be put into expanding the sales of the Journal. Hopefully in the next year it should once again be possible to do this. Given the reputation that the Journal is developing we should be able to add fairly easily to what is at the moment a very secure base.

Additional Information Sheet

Publications

Since last conference the following pamphlets and books have been produced:

December 1979	Defend Our Unions	8000 copies
January 1980	Workers Power not Nuclear Power	3500
	Marxism and the collectivisation of agriculture.	500
	Russia: How the revolution was lost.	2000
April 1980		
May 1980	Budapest 1956	500
	Never Again'.	
	The Hows and Whys of Stopping Fascism	1700
June 1980	Steel Workers Power	1000
July 1980	Roasa Luxembourg	1700
October 1980	Troops Out of Ireland	1700
	Missile Madness	3000
November 1980	To the Bitter Climax of Death if neccessary: The H Block hunger strike Sisters and Workers.	

In the pipeline

- Labour Party
- Import Controls due in January
- Permanent Revolution (Cliff)
- German Revolution 1919 (Harman)

Socialist Worker bulletins: white collar workplaces and unions

- Pigeon Post - Reuters, London*
- County Hall Scuttler - South London*
- DHSS -Tyneside*
- Manchester Council Workers*
- Lea Valley Hospital Workers
- Sheffield NALGO
- Islington NALGO
- Hackney Council Workers

Rank and File Bulletins: manual workplaces and unions

- Engineers Charter -Hull*
- Engineers Charter - East London*
- Engineers Charter - North West London
- Engineers Charter - Medway*
- Platform - Manchester*
- Platform - Glasgow*
- Picc Up on the East - Piccadilly Line LT

Rank and File Bulletins: White collar workplaces and unions

- Rank and File Teacher - Harlow
- Rank and File Teacher - Newham, East London
- Nalco Action - Islington*
- Nalco Action - Liverpool*
- Nalco Action - Wandsworth*
- Nalco Action - South Yorks*
- Nalco Action - Camden*
- Nalco Action - Tyneside*
- Nalco Action/NUPE Rank and File - Manchester*
- Nalco Action - Salford*
- Nalco Action - Hackney*
- Nalco Action - Kingston
- Redder Tape - Central London
- Redder Tape - Manchester
- Redder Tape - East London
- Redder Tape - South London*
- Hospital Worker - Leicester*
- Hospital Worker - Edinburgh*
- Hospital Worker - Sheffield

Others

- Lea Valley Right to Work Campaign
- Merseyside Right to Work Campaign
- Red Letter - Bradford Trades Council

Rank and File Conference bulletins produced at annual conferences of:

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| NUPE | NATFHE |
| EETPU | ASTMS |
| NUM | NUT |
| NUJ | NALGO |

- UCATT
- ISTC
- BAKERS
- COHSE
- CPSA
- SCPS

We want your bulletins.....

There are dozens more bulletins than we have listed which are never seen in the Industrial Dept. Please send copies as produced to Ind. Dept., PO Box 82. London E2

International Delegates

The following organizations are represented at conference

International Socialists (Canada)

Sosialistik Ungdom (Norway)

Left Socialists VS (Denmark)

SAG (Germany)

SWM (Ireland)

Privacy

In personal Capacity

Privacy (Holland)

Two comrades from S America.

Any comrade who would like to meet any of the international delegates please contact the CAC.

Conference Additional Information Sheet 10

Listed below are those bulletins received by the Industrial Department over the period January - November 1980. We know that there are many bulletins still not sent in to us - so if yours isn't listed, please don't complain - send it in!

Bulletins marked *, have been received on at least three different occasions.

Socialist Worker Bulletins: manual workplaces

DRG - Hemel Hempstead
 Council Workers - Merseyside
 Fords - Merseyside*
 Glaxo - Merseyside*
 Meccano - Merseyside
 Airfix - Merseyside
 Birds Eye View - Merseyside
 Lusneys - East London
 Allen and Hanburys - East London
 Fordworker - East London
 Heinz - North West London
 AP - Leamington
 Investacast - West London
 Polygram - East London
 Assembly Plant, Cowley - Oxford*
 Kellogg's - Manchester*
 Vospers - Southampton*
 Stones - South London*
 Shipbuilder - Tyneside*
 Caterpillar - Tyneside*
 Ses - York*
 University Workers - Leeds*
 Talbot - Linwood*
 Production Worker - Luton
 Leyland - Birmingham*
 Smith's - Cheltenham
 A Crow's Nest - Hull*
 Thorn-EMI - Enfield*
 Massey-Ferguson - Manchester
 Industrial Bulletin - Harlow
 Council Workers - Edinburgh

Real Steel News

Scunthorpe*
 South Yorks*
 Teesside*
 Stanton - Ilkeston*

Numbers of individual SWP leaflets: for May 14th, October 10th etc, have also been received. They are not included as all appear to be general "one-off" productions.

Resolution 1 For Tuesday**IRELAND**

1. Conference recognises that the hunger strike by the Republican prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh and in Armagh jail has emphasised the central importance of the struggle in Ireland to our work. In particular, it highlights our responsibility as revolutionary socialists to build support for the prisoners in this country. We resolve to send a message of solidarity and support from this conference to the hunger strikers.
2. This support can only be built effectively if we have a perspective of raising the issue inside our workplaces and at all levels within the Trade Unions. In this respect we welcome the opportunity that Charter 80 has provided for us in mobilising a broad base of support around the five demands of the prisoners. We commit ourselves to continue to build Charter 80 as a campaign for human rights for Irish political prisoners.
3. Beyond the immediate issue of the hunger strike, whatever its outcome, we resolve to argue for our principled position of the immediate withdrawal of British troops and self determination for the Irish people as a whole. We can only raise these demands if our Irish work is rooted in the mainstream of our political activity. Ireland is not the property of a handful of 'specialists', it is not a 'separate' issue; it is an integral part of our current perspective of raising generalised politics in specific campaigns. For example, Ireland can be effectively raised within the CND movement around the slogan 'No H Bombs, No H Blacks'; within the Right To Work Campaign around the issue of army recruitment; within our work around Poland on the basis of support for dissidents; within our campaign against the Employment Act, linking the criminalisation of workers in this country with the criminalisation of the political prisoners in the North of Ireland.
4. In terms of our United Front perspective the divisions in both the Communist and Labour Parties on the Irish issue need to be exploited. The CP is split down the middle between those who are prepared to support broad front initiatives like Charter 80 and the Committee for Withdrawal and those who take their line from Sinn Fein and the Workers Party and who oppose any initiative that is likely to focus attention on the National question. The official position of the Labour Party is for a continuation of the bi-partisan policy with the Tories, but there is a growing minority that are prepared to support one or more of our campaigns. In our work with members of both parties we should seek to exploit these divisions.
5. We recognise that our members need the political arguments to be able to take up the Irish issue with confidence in their workplaces and unions. We welcome the excellent coverage of Ireland in Socialist Worker in recent months and resolve to ensure that this coverage is continued beyond the immediate issue of the hunger strike. We note with relief the belated appearance of the pamphlets on Troops Out and the Hunger Strike. We recognise the need for regular educational material for internal use in the Party, eg speakers' notes, and for a response to current theoretical arguments in the ISJ. We continue to operate inside the Troops Out Movement and support its initiatives without having any illusions in its ability to build a mass solidarity movement in this country. We also need to tighten our own internal organisation by formally constituting a nationally representative Irish Sub Committee that meets regularly throughout the year.

Resolution 1 Sheet 2

6. We recognise the fundamental weakness of the Irish revolutionary left and the difficulties that our fraternal organisation is faced with. We also recognise, recent developments notwithstanding, that the Republican movement has different political traditions from those of revolutionary socialists and we must continue to argue that ultimately it will be the mobilisation of workers as a class that will be responsible for the successful conclusion to the anti-imperialist struggle. The struggle for national liberation cannot be separated from the struggle against capitalism. Despite the problems that exist as a result of the sectarian division within the Northern Irish working class, we must continue to emphasise the common interests of all workers and support any developments that reflect this interest. In particular we recognise that the deepening of the economic crisis in Britain will bring protestant workers into conflict with the British government and that this conflict may provide us with the opportunity of arguing against the divisiveness of sectarianism. Any upturn of working class militancy in Britain will have the effect of minimising sectarianism in the North of Ireland. We need to ensure that the Irish issue is located within any such upturn.
7. If the deaths of the hunger strikers lead to a bombing campaign in this country, it will make the task of building a solidarity movement here much more difficult. Nevertheless, we will have the responsibility of explaining why those who have been the victims of oppression react in such desperate ways and why the ultimate responsibility for such violence lies at the door of the British government.
8. The political situation in the South of Ireland is volatile. The support for the hunger strike has been considerably greater than the Republican movement dared to hope for and the fact that they were able even to raise the question of industrial action on the issue is a measure of that support. On the economic front the recession in the South is even more severe than in Britain and the organised trade union movement is under considerable pressure as a result of Hughey's policies. We welcome the initiatives of our fraternal organisation, the SWM, that have attempted to link the organisation within the unions in the South and the struggle in the North along the lines of 'Teachers Against the H Blocks', 'Busworkers Against the H Blocks'. We need to continue to offer practical support to enable our hard pressed comrades in the SWM to carry out this perspective.

Central Committee
Irish Sub Committee

Resolution 1 Sheet 2

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Centra' Committee
Irish Sub Committee

NATIONAL QUESTION

'As a conscious expression of the proletarian class struggle to throw off the bourgeoisie, and in accordance with its main fight, which is the fight against the bourgeois democracy and the unmasking of its hypocrisy, the Communist Party should not place its main emphasis in the national question on abstract and formal principles, but on an exact evaluation of the historical and economic milieu.' (Lenin: Theses on National Question for Second Congress of Comintern).

1. We have to begin by making a clear distinction between two quite separate phenomena which are confused by all varieties of reformism: the unity of a particular state structure, and the unity in struggle of the different sections of the working class that are exploited within that state structure.

As revolutionary socialists, our goal is to lead the working class to smash the bourgeois state. We cannot, therefore, give any credence to any notions to the effect that the unity of the state structure of the United Kingdom is somehow something 'sacred', something that benefits working people. To do so would be to fall into the trap of supporting, however indirectly and however good our intentions, the predominant form of nationalist, anti-working class ideology in Britain - that of British nationalism. For us to campaign in any referendum or any election around the slogan of unity of the British national state would therefore be absolutely wrong. Under no circumstances can we be opposed to devolution or separation of Scotland or Wales from the British state. It is true that devolved or separatist parliaments in Wales or Scotland would be bourgeois parliaments, bound hand and foot to the multinationals. They would not provide the workers in these countries with any greater control over their own lives. They would be an integral part of international imperialism. But this is no reason for us, as revolutionary Marxists, to see them as a greater evil than the united British, imperialist state which exists at present.

We cannot regard separation of Scotland (or Wales) as the greater evil, in the way that reformists do, who identify with the present united British state as a mechanism for gradually moving towards socialism.

2. Hence we are not against devolution within the British state. Nor do we use the argument (used by many reformists) that we have to accept devolution reluctantly, because it is the only way to stop separation. For we are not against the complete splitting off of Scotland or Wales. To be against it would be in favour of the present British nationalist set up as compared to the Scottish or Welsh nationalist alternative. That is why it would line us up with sections of big business and the Tory party.

3. Does this mean that we argue for devolution or even separation? Certainly, there are circumstances in which we would be in favour of such an argument. This is where the combined and uneven development of capitalism has produced the oppression of one nation by another - whether the oppression be political, economic or cultural (eg the denial of the right to use one's native tongue in school and at work).

Under these circumstances, the demand for national independence (or autonomy) can arouse the fighting energies of the most oppressed sections of the population, including the workers, against one of the expressions of capitalist rule. Revolutionary Socialists cannot stand aside from such a struggle. Thus, for instance, in the Basque country and Catalonia, revolutionary socialists have been forced (often despite their own inclinations) to take part in the struggle for national rights.

But even in these circumstances, revolutionary socialists have to engage in the national struggle with great care. For the national demands are often containable within capitalism (even if it is reluctant to go to the trouble of changing its state form so as to contain them) - and then nationalist slogans that mobilised workers against the system can become slogans that tie them to elements who are integrated into the system. eg the nationalist ferment in Slovakia in 1967 helped in the overthrow of Novotny; but the movement helped the Slovak to consolidate his power in 69. Therefore for

utionaries, demands for national rights have always to be subordinated to internationalist working class demands (eg Free Euskadi; dissolve the repressive bodies; Longlive the Spanish working class)

4. The situation is further complicated in the case of Scotland and Wales by the fact that these countries do not suffer from elements of political economic or cultural oppression (except in the case of the smallish Welsh speaking minority). The Scottish bourgeoisie entered into the union with the English bourgeoisie on a more or less voluntary basis (it wanted to co-exploit the British Empire, and did so - incidentally, it also co-exploited the ^{Highlands} with the clearances). Scotland is a backward economic region - but less so for instance than the NE England which has a lower per capita national income. The vast majority of Scots speak English as their native tongue and a native of East Ham is more likely to be discriminated against because of his accent than is a native of Edinburgh. In the Basque country or Catalonia it was until recently, a heinous crime to display the national emblems; the British Bourgeoisie boast that many of its regiments occupying N Ireland fight under Scottish emblems.

All these points sum up a simple fact: Scotland was not a nation exploited by British imperialism - it was the partner in crime of England in the imperialist exploitation of the British empire.

5. Scottish nationalism is not, then, a reaction against national oppression rather it is something else - the reaction of a small section of the Scottish bourgeoisie and a bigger section of the Scottish petit-bourgeoisie at the declining fortunes of British capitalism. They want to use North Sea oil to cut themselves off from the sinking British economy. The perspective of doing this enabled them to offer a reformist prospect (even if an illusory one) not based on class struggle (or for that matter on any form of struggle), to a substantial section of Scottish workers in the late 1970s.

Within the working class movement, the nationalist ideology (and this applies in Wales as well as Scotland) has not been an ideology that mobilises workers against one form of their oppression: rather it leads them into the pursuit of this new reformism necessarily involves them cutting their links with British workers. The reformist, class collaborationism of the ideology accounts for one of its key features - its passive character, its basis in electoralism rather than mass activity in the factories or localities - and also its preparedness to countenance the maintenance of the British monarchy.

There is no way in which some more radical version of nationalism than that of the SNP could lead away from the reformist conclusions. The demand for more radical policies could not be seen as a demand for a more radical struggle against (non-existent) national oppression; inevitably it would be seen as a demand for more powers for the Scottish parliament, for more north sea oil for 'Scotland' as opposed to 'England'. Any socialist verbiage would be buried beneath this nationalist reformism.

6. There are, of course, hypothetical situations in which this might change - for instance, if a Westminster parliament tried to coerce an SNP-led Edinburgh assembly, the coercion could create elements of national oppression and give rise to a mass based struggle against that oppression. But at present we are a million miles from such a situation.
7. From the previous points we have to draw two practical conclusions:
a) We do not defend the unity of the United Kingdom in any way. To do so is to line up with the predominant nationalist ideology in Britain today.

Additional resolutions 2 sheet 3

What is more, by doing so, we will never win Scottish workers from Scottish nationalism. All we will seem to counterpose to their national reformism is the status quo, as defended by Thatcher etc.

Our refusal to defend the status quo means that we say that if the Scottish people want to separate from Britain, they are entitled to do so. That does not mean we are in favour of separation (any more than the fact that we are in favour of people's rights to get divorced means that we are going to compel them all to do so: that is their decision).

We say, in effect: The question of nationalism threatens to poison relations between English, Scottish and Welsh workers. The Scottish and Welsh are entitled to decide what they want. We ourselves do not mind what they choose.

b) We do not spread the illusion among Scottish and Welsh workers that the devolution or separation of these countries would be any gain for them. We insist that an Edinburgh or Cardiff assembly will leave the workers in exactly the same position as before. We oppose Labour movement bodies taking part in a campaign that cannot be of benefit to the class, and that can only encourage Scottish workers to put their faith in collaboration with a section of the local bourgeoisie rather than in unity with workers in England (or anywhere else).

8. The setbacks suffered by the nationalists in the 1979 general election do not mean that we can forget about the national question. The swing from Labour to Tories in May 1979 was 15.2 per cent in Great Britain as a whole, but only 0.7 per cent in Scotland. Even though in part this reflected the temporary collapse of the SNP inroads into urban working class areas, the voting patterns show that Scotland behaves politically in a markedly different fashion from England. The successful campaign for a Welsh-language TV channel shows that the nationalists continue to enjoy considerable popular support in Wales. The nationalist advances in the late 1970's were made at the expense of a moribund Labour Party. Similar circumstances - perhaps a Foot government which failed to deliver the goods - might produce yet another nationalist revival. We need to be prepared for this possibility.

The position spelt out here is intended to provide the basis on which we can approach the problems posed by the nationalists. It marks us off from the restraints of the Labour Movement without aligning us with the unionist British nationalist camp. No doubt there will be quite complex tactical judgments to be made should there be a further nationalist revival, comparable to those involved in the debates we had in 1977-78 over whether to vote 'Yes' or 'No' or to abstain in the devolution referendums in Scotland and Wales. Our decisions will have to reflect the balance spelled out here - opposition to the British Imperialist state, refusal to tail bourgeois nationalism.

Preliminary List for National Committee

Proposed

Privacy	Glasgow	TGWU
	Glasgow	AUEW
Paul Foot	Glasgow	EIS
	Glasgow	TGWU
	Southall	ASTMS
	London	NUJ
	London	NUJ
	London	NUJ
	Norwich	COHSE
	S London	CPSA
	Newcastle	TASS
	Newcastle	Boilermakers
	Sheffield	NUSS
	Edinburgh	NALGO
	London	CPSA
	Manchester	unemployed
	Slough	NUT
Pontypridd	NUJ	
Basildon	FBU	
N London	FBU	
Sheffield	NUPE	
London	ASTMS	

Privacy	London	NUPE
	NW London	AUEW
	Leeds	NUPE
	Manchester	NUS
	Leeds	NATFHE
Roger Cox	Manchester	AUEW
	Sheffield	ISTC
Privacy	NW London	AUEW
	Coventry	TGWU
	Birmingham	Sheet-metal workers
	S London	NUT
	Liverpool	NALGO
	Cardiff	EEPTU
	S London	EEPTU
	Tottenham	NUJ
	Gloucester	NALGO
	London	AUT
Warrington	NUPE	
Steve Jeffries		
Privacy		

Other Nominations

Privacy	S London	NATFHE
	S London	NUT
	Tottenham	NUT
	Finsbury Park	NUS
	Glasgow	EEPTU
Colin Clark	Grays	unemployed
	London	NUT
	London	T&G
	S London	FBU
	Harringey	POEU
	Kings Cross	ASLEF
	Enfield	NATFHE
	Tottenham	ASLEF
	Manchester	ASTMS
	London	NUT

Privacy	S London	NALGO
	S London	GMVU
	S London	NALGO
	N London	-
	E London	-
	Cambridge	-
	Hackney	AUEN
	Leeds	UCATT
	Leeds	-
	NW London	NUSS
	Liverpool	NALGO
	Edinburgh	EEPTU
	Liverpool	FBU
	Leamington	AUT

NOMINATING COMMISSION FINAL REPORT Recommended list

Privacy	Glasgow	TGWU
	Glasgow	AUEW
	Glasgow	EIS
	glasgow	TGWU
	Southall	ASTMS
	London	NUJ
	London	NUJ
	London	NUT
	Norwich	COHSE
	Newcastle	Boilermakers
	Sheffield	NUSS
	Edinburgh	NALGO
	London	CPSA
	Manchester	unemployed
	Slough	NUT
	Pontypridd	NUJ
	Basildon	FBU
	London	ASTMS
	London	NUPE
	NW London	AUEW
Leeds	NUPE	
Manchester	NUS	
Leeds	NATFHE	
Manchester	AUEW	
Roger Cox	NW London	AUEW
Privacy	Coventry	TGWU
	Birmingham	Sheetmetal workers
	S London	NUT
	Liverpool	NALGO
	Cardiff	EETPU
	SW London	EETPU
Steve Jefferys	Tottenham	NUJ
Privacy	Gloucester	NALGO
	London	AUT
	Warrington	NUPE
	Sheffield	ISTC
	S London	CPSA
	Sheffield	NALGO
	N London	NATFHE
	Edinburgh	EETPU
Privacy	Leeds	UCATT
	N London	ASLEF
	S London	CPSA
	Sheffield	ISTC
	Bristol	NUPE
	SW London	TGWU
	Haringey	POFU

OTHER NOMINATIONS

Privacy

Colin Clark

Privacy

S London	NAATFHE
"	NUT
Tottenham	NUT
Finsbury Park	NUS
Glasgow	EEPTU
Grays	unemployed
London	Y&E NUT
London	T&G
London	FBU
London Aslef	
Manchester	ASTMS
London	NUT
London	NALGO
S London	NALGO
London	
London	
Cambridge	
London	AUEW
Leds	
London	NUSS
Liverpool	NALGO
Liverpool	FBU
Leamington	AUT
Portsmouth	NAATFHE

DRAFTING COMMISSION No. 1United Front Work

With continuing difficulties being faced by the working class in industrial struggles there has already begun and is likely to continue an electoral and political drift of opinion. Individual militants are likely to be drawn toward the Labour Party not by its attractions but by the difficulties faced in taking direct industrial action against cuts, redundancies and increasingly on wages.

The changes in the Labour Party leadership with election of Michael Foot and the constitutional changes passed at the Conference are likely to assist this mood. The initiative of November 29th and the proposal for further unemployment demonstrations and active campaigning against Thatcher make our response critical. At the level of ideas the pull of the Labour left is likely to increase massively, while they remain remarkably weak as an organised cadre.

Our response to reformist initiatives must be to work in and alongside the reformists in order to grow with them. In order to do this we must overcome the reluctance of some of our comrades to involve themselves in initiatives not made by the SWP initially. Two dangers will arise from our work in this area, the problem of sectarianism and that of hiding our politics, clearly identifying the argument for building a revolutionary party.

Activity alone is not sufficient. It must be backed by political arguments informed by consistent education of our members.

Combined with this we should try to draw in the widest numbers in a fraternal and constructive manner.

Approaches need to be made to LP organisations, including the LPYS at both national and local levels. These approaches should take place at both a formal level and the informal level of personal contacts. With this approach we can identify weaknesses in the reformists organisation and politics, over Ireland and H Block in particular and strengthen initiatives of common interest eg Gardners.

The United Front will apply to all areas of our work in our trade union work and rank and file groups, in local and national cuts campaigns and the CND and AML. United Front work is both an answer to the problems of weakness the whole movement faces and an essential component in building a strong revolutionary party.

Privacy

Duncan Hallas

Drafting Commission

'Right to work Campaign' and unemployed work.

Unemployment is the dominant feature of every aspect of industrial work at the moment. The 'Right to work campaign is now located firmly inside the movement. Its credibility is high and it can provide the best cutting edge for approaches to the labour party

The marches against unemployment planned by the labour party over the coming months give us a chance for joint action with the labour party and their periphery, to work alongside them and to argue our politics (against import-controls, jobs not bombs etc.)

Our work around the unemployed.

- consistent SW sales on doles.
- Consistent dole bulletins to incorporate all aspects of our political work; ANL, CND, army recruitment, solidarity work, anti Tory stunts etc. Our experience shows us that it is possible to have a nominal charge for these bulletins.
- We should involve contacts made at the dole with labour party supporters, young socialists etc in anti-Tory work, pickets of Tory ministers, council banquets, occupations of job centres etc.
- We should have a 'right to work' presence at CND and ANL meetings, we should also approach local CND, ANC groups for joint activity around army recruitment offices, nuclear plants etc.
- We should involve contacts made at the dole with solidarity work for both local and national disputes arguing the need to link the struggles of employed and unemployed workers; by visiting RTW contacts, having factory gate bucket collections, 'rt, To work' bulletins etc.
- we should give unsectarian support for TUC/trade council unemployed centres, using them as a means to make a right to work intervention, by arguing the need for activity as a means of linking the struggles of employed and unemployed workers. We must be careful not to let work around these centres become a substitute for activity and consistent work around the dole, leafletting factories under threat of closure etc.
- all 'prospective' marchers should be encouraged to be involved in our activities before and after marches.

Workplace intervention

- Regular visiting of RTW workplace contacts with solidarity work, and invites to local Rt to work meetings. When planning RTW meetings efforts should be made to involve women trade unionists who support the right to work campaign, by publicly arranging babysitters, having women speakers etc.

Link the RTWC in struggles over local redundancies, with gate meetings, leaflets and meetings.

- We should involve student unions in local activities and get RTW speakers to student meetings, where possible SUS should organise fund raising benefits for the RTWC.

* Over the next year the right to work campaign will be taking up the issue of making the TUC responsible for organising the unemployed ...

1. organise a union for the unemployed.
2. have dual membership of the unemployed workers union and the union to which the worker belonged before losing his/her job.
3. that unemployed workers should have representation on TUC bodies.
4. that the TUC should sponsor the RTWC.

These demands should be argued for in every comrades workplace, and we must campaign amongst our RTW supporters to do the same.

We must ensure that we don't substitute our right to work intervention for SWP intervention: At all interventions there should be SW sales, SW leaflets, speakers etc.

LABOUR PARTY UNEMPLOYED MARCHES FROM MERSEYSIDE, GLASGOW ETC.

It is to be welcomed that the labour party is organising activities (demos, marches) over unemployment it gives us the chance for joint activity with unemployed and employed workers in the labour party periphery.

1 We should ensure by consistent - dole work that we have a large presence on the marches.

2 In every town along the routes of the marches, comrades should make approaches to labour party/communist party/LPYS and all RW contacts to plan receptions, meetings, gigs accomodation etc for marchers. We must be seen to be the most serious fighters in the planning and organisation of the marches.

We should be unsectarian in our approach, and at the same time have a clear SWP presence; SWP banners, paper sales etc.

Our intervention in these marches is as important as our work around previous 'Rt to work' marches and a chance to put our ideas about 'unity in action' into practice.

RW organisation.

Every branch should ensure that there is a local 'right to work campaign' secretary, who can convene, as necessary open organising meetings around activities, and who is responsible for coordinating regular mailings, visits of RW contacts dole work etc.

Drafting Commission 3Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament

CND has emerged as the only real national body for coordinating the movement. It is run nationally, basically, by pretty soft Eurocommunists. The disadvantages of this is that they have no real idea how to run a mass movement; indeed they seem quite incapable of realising that they must give the hundreds of thousands who support the campaign passively something to do if we are to win. And of course the CND leadership refuses to see the connection between the bomb and hospital closures, the bomb and the Right to Work, the bomb, nationalism and the Nazis and so on.

Yet at the same time CND has two great strengths. The first is its present refusal to be tied to the Labour Party's coat-tails, its commitment to build an independent campaign. The second is the extreme openness of CND to fresh ideas and answers. Even at its November annual conference, where the negligence of its leadership led to a scandalous underrepresentation of the thousands who have recently been flooding into the campaign, the dozen or so SWP comrades who were there managed to make a big impact: our speeches were applauded, we sold a reasonable amount of literature and so on.

In recent issues of the IB we have stressed how important the struggle against the missiles is, how when we were the International Socialists in the early 1960s we were built out of the CND, and how uniquely our politics fit the question. However, several new features have emerged which strengthen the argument significantly. First of all the local committees (mainly CND but also END, ANC, local town against the missiles) are incomparably stronger than in the early 1960s, with well attended meetings, film showings, pickets, leafletting etc. Secondly CND has a distinctly wider appeal now. Recent public opinion surveys have been registering 40%-plus support for its aims, an impression that accords well with the experience of many local committees.

Finally there is the crisis itself. In the 1960s the fear of the bomb was mainly technical - the dangers of accidental war and so on. Today it is different. The crisis has sharply posed the alternatives in the form of missiles and therefore not hospitals, bombs and therefore not jobs. It is important to remember that no such link existed in the 1960s; then we had declining sums spent on bombs amidst rising sums on welfare. Now that is no longer the case. The bomb is immediately and directly connected with the preoccupations of ordinary working class people - unemployment, low wages, bad schools, hospital closures etc.

This means that the potential for a really massive campaign is very considerable. But it will mean taking up a campaign around demands such as 'Jobs not Bombs', 'Hospitals yes! Trident no!' and so on. How exactly can this be done?

Within each of the local groups our comrades have three distinctive tasks:

1. Regularly and openly selling SW and other literature.
2. Arguing for an orientation toward mass involvement - local demonstrations, mass leafletting and so on.
3. Arguing for the campaign to orient itself above all to the youth and to the working class.

The latter needs spelling out in greater detail. Nothing would be easier than to raise the question of the working class in the abstract in these circumstances. And the danger here would be an end result which produced a purely formal link with a few TU bureaucrats, a link which once established could be used against alternative links with the rank and file.

The links that we need to make should be first of all concrete and rank and file in character, behind which we should only then attempt to drag the official union machinery. This can be done in several ways.

1. We should immediately and on our own initiative launch campaigns against the bomb via our existing rank and file contacts. We should initiate eg Hospital Workers Against the Bomb, Engineers Against the Bomb, Teachers Against the Bomb and so on. As in the ANL groups it could be an excellent way of extending our R&F periphery. This should not be seen as a chore to earn us credibility in CND, but rather as a new and fruitful way of building the party and our periphery.
2. Local Right to Work committees should immediately begin agitating around the 'Jobs not Bombs' issue. They should, eg, picket the local army recruiting office, appealing to the local CND to make this a joint venture. In short we should be doing the work both inside and outside CND. Outside to create a genuine rank and file focus for anti-bomb activity to draw people toward, inside to involve the best elements there in these activities. This should be backed up by national activities of the RTWC - leaflets, statements, contingents on CND marches, making sure that there is an anti-bomb content on RTW marches (we should march not just via factories but also via secret bunkers, army recruitment offices, air bases and so on).
3. In addition to the RTWC, both the ANL and especially the NUSS have an important role to play too. Already 200 schools have been involved in Schools Against the Bomb. The NUSS has a crucial task in spreading this further with national leaflets etc. This is something that all comrades whatever their age can be involved in: 30-year-olds can leaflet a school just as well as schoolkids themselves. Within the youth we should attempt to win people to our politics generally through Rebel, NUSS, the Right To Work Campaign.
4. A number of important initiatives have already emerged. One of these is the Manchester Against the Missiles Labour Movement Conference against the Missiles on March 28th. Another is the January STUC Special Conference against the Missiles; and the Scottish CND Easter march to the US missile base at Holy Loch. We must play an important part in building for all of these through factory bulletins and the various 'teachers against the bomb' etc groups working consistently around the theme of 'Jobs not bombs' and so on. This activity would put us in a good position to push for a TUC-led national demonstration against the missiles along the same kind of lines as the abortion demonstration last year.

In a number of areas the work against the bomb is being carried out not by CND branches but by other bodies such as the ANC. This has led a number of comrades to suggest that the nuclear power question should be given equal attention to the bomb. This is a mistake. Of course we must show the connection in our propaganda between the 'peaceful' and the warlike nuclear industry. And also where the local committee that is doing the work on the bomb is the ANC we must support this and avoid proliferating by creating any new body. But where CND committees exist these must be our priority. Where they do not exist already our comrades must build them.

If we follow this approach we stand a reasonable chance of helping to build a bigger mass movement than anything seen since the war, of orientating it firmly toward the working class, and of winning significant numbers to the SWP.

To back this up we will also need the following: a regular page of coverage in SW and at least one major feature in each Socialist Review; day/weekend schools in every region, a cheap, short 'Jobs not bombs' pamphlet and regular meetings - branch discussions and public.

Drafting Commission No 3 Sheet 3

Where we have already initiated activity through eg the RTWC, it might be worth proposing joint CND/RTW meetings on 'Jobs not Bombs' and so on. We must be flexible on the question, but we may well find that a combination of SWP day school plus big jointly organised public meetings are better than SWP public meetings.

Let us be quite clear about what we are proposing. We are saying that our existing activities - all of them - must be given an anti-bomb component; doing so could strengthen our penetration in all these areas. It will also strengthen and deepen CND. But more importantly it could provide an essential bridge from more opposition to the bomb to involvement in rank and file working class activity and from there to the SWP itself.

This is why making the fight against the bomb a major priority will not and must not detract from our other activities. On the contrary it must be central to all of them.

Finally this issue is perhaps the best there is for united front activity with the Labour Party at the present time. But this will require in addition a much higher political profile than at the present time. This will involve much harder politics around the slogan 'Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism'. As a recognition of our prioritisation of the anti-bomb campaign the logo of SW should be changed back to 'Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism'. To coordinate all this work we need to create a national anti-missiles committee immediately after the conference.

Privacy

Drafting Commission 4

Drafting Commission 4

Industrial Perspectives, Fighting Redundancies and Workplace Organisation

The downturn continues and over the last twelve months has accelerated. The number of strikes and the number of workers involved in strikes is the lowest since the forties. The vast majority of disputes are defensive. The rightward lurch of the bureaucracy continues, while the employers' combativity is increasing. On the wages front settlements are at best at the level of inflation, more commonly below. The Firemen's settlement in real terms is only 15% and the miners below 10%. More and more, both from the Government's 'flexible norm' and of 6% in the public sector, and the single figure offers in the private sector the employers are adopting a take it or leave it approach to the wage bargaining. Particular powerful groups can still break through but the general picture is of Edwardes style management. Mass unemployment does now intimidate many workers from fighting.

There has not however been any decisive defeat of any significant section of the class. A militant minority exists in every workplace. The ability and confidence of that minority to win a majority is coloured by the overall effect of the downturn, exacerbated by the rustiness and bureaucratisation of workplace organisation. Because of these factors even where there are significant victories as in the docks and Gardners generalisation from such victories is minimal.

Strike intervention

Strikes are commonly defensive, long, bitter and official. But despite official 'recognition' elementary solidarity is rarely forthcoming through official channels alone. This means that almost every strike welcomes 'outside' assistance. All our members must become involved in strike solidarity work. Such work is not the preserve of 'industrial experts' within our own ranks. Collecting money for a local strike can be done by us all - workers students, women and men. Local branches intervening around a particular dispute must be sensitive to the particular issue involved, but at the same time should never hide our identity as SWP members. Elementary solidarity is the prerequisite for our right to argue our politics and the strategy necessary to win the specific dispute. Collecting money for strikes is not only vital for the strikers but an essential lesson of solidarity for those giving and collecting money.

Fighting Redundancies

With jobs being lost at the rate of 3,000 a day redundancies and closures are not being met with significant resistance, the magnificent Gardners victory is an exception, the kind of exception that we must fight to spread, but none the less the exception.

The argument for profitability (in the private sector) and the viability within cash limits (in the public sector) save the

will of many workers to fight. So too does the prospect of long hard struggles with considerable personal hardship unless workers believe that they have a chance of winning.

The response of the Official leadership has been verbal with little action. In particular the nationalistic blind alley of import controls and these called alternative economic strategy is a convenient escape route from the prospect of struggle in the here and now. It is also an escape route which concedes the whole argument for profitability.

The combination of a militant occupation and taking the dispute to other workers for support by generalising it into a struggle against the Tories economic policies points the way forward.

We have to combine detailed suggestions about how to win disputes (mass and sectional meetings, bulletins, occupations, collecting money, blacking, picketing etc), with clear socialist arguments against import controls and other profitability arguments.

While fighting now for 5 days work for 5 days pay, with the government paying if the individual employer cannot- we must always take the opportunity to present our case against the chaos of capitalism and the logic of socialist planning under workers control.

In these circumstances the task for our members is the building of strong rank and file organisations at all levels along with the guidelines laid out in the drafting commission on industrial perspectives at last years conference, which covers accountability of shop stewards, opposition to ballots etc. In order to do this our members must:

1. Fight to become a shop steward (or its equivalent) and sell SW INSIDE the workplace.
2. Argue for solidarity with other strikers by collections, blacking attending every week inside the workplace.
3. Wherever possible regular production of SW bulletins which deal on one side with the factory and on the other with general political issues.
4. Agitate for rank and file self activity.
5. Fight to raise politics in the workplace from opposition to racism right to abortion, Poland etc to the political implications of democratic rank and file organisations.
6. Relate workplace agitation to campaigning in the trade union machine.

Our members within every workplace must receive full support from the local geographical branch and district. Every branch and district must recognise that industrial work is our priority whether working from the inside or the outside.

The anti Tory bitterness reflected in the political upturn of support for LP initiatives like the Nov 29th Liverpool demonstration and the forthcoming Glasgow 21st demo suggests the possibility of volatile militancy (eg the Leyland riots). Large scale fightback will greatly increase with any easing of the economic crisis which will increase ^{workers} confidence to fight.

However it is not for us to wait for such an upturn but to be the hardest fighters in the here and now for immediate action. The Gardners victory is not automatically generalised and spread. It is up to us to fight for such generalisation of the struggle whilst at the same time facing up to the real reality of the present relation of class forces.

Privacy

John Deason

Privacy

Privacy

Drafting Commission No 5CUTS

The Labour cuts were mainly in areas of capital spending - removing small hospitals, schools, nurseries and so on. Tory cuts go far deeper, and aim principally to remove jobs and with them whole services. The intensity of these cuts gives them a far more openly political dimension, which is heightened by the employers' need to severely weaken union organisation in order to force their pleas through.

The trade union bureaucracies have to all intents and purposes given up the fight. For example the civil service trade unions and Nalgo have abandoned much of their previous programmes of action. There is a long list of defeats, and demoralisation in many areas.

But the bitterness at rank and file level is immense, and reflects itself in numbers of small, isolated fights, within which successes may be chalked up, broad propaganda gains made and the rank and file groups developed.

The fact that we face Tory cuts gives much scope for Labour opposition. The British Council verbal opposition to Council house sales but actual participation in selling them is a prime example.

We need to seek a united front with all those bodies apparently moving to fight the cuts, but we must approach all such moves sensitively, maintaining our own independent rank and file and SWP base.

This united front work can often be operated in the local cuts campaigns, which we must fully participate in. They offer a first class opportunity for most SWP members in the locality to intervene.

Where we have members on the 'inside', we need a detailed programme of action, which avoids meaningless rhetoric, but includes for example:

Banning of overtime

No redeployment or flexibility

No cover for unfilled vacancies, substitution or 'standing in'

No co-operating with job evaluation, or work study

No co-operation with new technology where it affects jobs or conditions

Industrial action - from token stoppages to all out strikes and occupations.

But rank and file groups should organise around a similar programme. But we need to break down the barriers between 'inside' and 'outside', and the local campaigns in particular make this possible, by offering an open door to effective intervention by our comrades from the 'outside' - as parents, schoolkids in education, as consumers of other public services, tenants, local residents, members of black organisations, pensioners etc.

The cuts are highly political. We should go onto the offensive with the socialist argument, the question of the bomb, of socialist planning, and generalise the struggle to that of the private sector and the whole fight against the Tories. The gross nature of the cuts means we can argue class politics.

Privacy

Phil Marfleet

Privacy

Drafting Commission 6Working in the unions, the fractions and Rank and File Groups

While the general downturn in the industrial struggle has made work in many areas difficult, the general upturn in the political climate and decline in significance and influence of the Broad Left has made interventions in the unions at Rank and File level much easier eg Right To Work campaign. But the extent to which we can now build depends on the degree of attention that we give to Fraction work and organisation.

Every Fraction should have an effective Executive maintaining contact between members and ensuring interventions in the internal life of the union, union conferences and elections and ensuring national response to disputes. Fraction executives must also give attention to R&F groups ensuring regular bulletins and improving their papers. The fractions and the industrial department need regular liason with the feedback of all bulletins being sent to the industrial department.

In addition the fractions and R&F groups need to:

- * broaden activities from traditional areas into other sections of unions and industries. eg Typists Carter in NALGO, 15.5 campaign in AUEW.
- * Broaden the range of political issues which are raised. None are taboo from the RTWC, missiles to Ireland.
- * Extend united front work with the Broad Left while maintaining an independence of base and activity.

Workplace activity remains our central emphasis but should be linked into geographical branch and district activity giving mutual support. SW Bulletins and SW sales organised from outside workplaces must be seen as the central means of contacting the 'militant minority' and ensuring those inside workplaces are supported. Due to the presence of SWP members at higher levels of the law bureaucracy, many of whom are open to election to national sectional regional or other union positions. It will be necessary to adopt a clearly stated policy to avoid pitfalls associated with elections and bureaucratic pressures. Therefore:

- 1) None should stand for any executive position or full time national or local union position without the agreement of the Central Committee.
- 2) None should stand without full discussion in the relevant fraction or district in the case of local fulltime positions.
- 3) All candidates must produce election addresses. These should be drawn up by the relevant fraction or district committee and submitted to the Central Committee for approval.
- 4) If a fraction member is elected, each fraction must set up in consultation with the Industrial Department a series of regular meetings between the elected member and other experienced members of the fraction.
- 5) The decision to stand someone for re-election needs to be discussed and decided in the same way each time the question comes up.
- 6) All comrades producing election addresses should send copies to the central committee prior to the closing date for nominations, for advice and approval with a brief description of positions held.

further the long service of many members in particular those in 'professional' and higher grades leads to difficulties with possibilities of promotion to supervisors and management grades. Therefore there should be consultations between the Industrial department, the CC and the fractions about promotion. The fractions should be asked their line if any and the problems which arise for their members in the workplace. These discussions should take place with a view to giving guidelines for interpretation by the fractions.

Privacy

Phil marfleet

Privacy

Drafting Commission No 7WOMEN

1. Women are at the receiving end of many of the Tory attacks. They suffer a double burden because of their role in the workplace and in the home.
2. So far, there has not been a united, large-scale fightback. Women's strikes are few and far between, often ending in defeat. Activity on a political level has taken place on a number of fronts, and has often involved women, eg anti-Thatcher pickets, Ireland, CND. A small minority want to fight.
3. Womens Liberation Movement is in crisis. The impact of the Tory government, recession and the election of a woman Prime Minister has meant a retreat into inward-looking solutions, rather than an attempt to organise working-class women. At a time when ideas of women's liberation are becoming more relevant to working women, the womens liberation movement is incapable of relating to them.
4. There is no real attempt to organise women through the bureaucracy of the unions.
5. The problem for us is to bridge the gap between our size (Womens Voice and the SWP) and that militant minority. The obvious tactic and one which must be central to our work, is the united front. There is no one clear way this can be operated.
6. We have to work round a number of issues in the coming months:
 - a) public sector wages, against the 6%. Also other strikes which may occur in localities, such as Chix, which can offer us opportunities to build.
 - b) violence against women: for the first time this is becoming more relevant to many working-class women. We need to make sure we are putting class demands.
 - c) abortion. There are two new bills to reduce the time limit for abortion coming up in the new year. We need to launch and intervene in campaigns through workplaces, unions and in the localities.
 - d) unemployment. We have failed so far to intervene effectively round women. Both Womens Voice and the Right To Work Campaign need to produce material we can use to reach women on the doles.
 - e) CND. A remarkably large number of women are involved in the campaign. We have to use Womens Voice as a means of reaching them.
 - f) Festival against the Tories. A WLM initiative due to take place in May. We should use it to get women along. We have volunteered to do workshops, stalls etc, so we have a platform on the day and can use it to draw women from the WLM closer to our class politics.
 - g) united front work.
6. Despite this long list, comrades do not have to rush out and do all of these things. Our perspectives have to be realistic. If each WV group/branch/district intervened in one of the above properly, we would make gains in recruitment and credibility.
7. We reiterate last year's perspective of building WV as an organisation with its own structures and with the politics of the SWP. The decline of the WLM created possibilities for WV in that area. We see WV as organising our own women supporters to intervene in struggles in the class.

8. Womens work should not be left to WV groups. Therefore WV is an integrated part of party work and party building which involves SWP branches in developing WV and leading women activists in WV being integrated party members.
9. We believe that there was demoralisation which resulted in a decline in activity after last year's conference. In the last few months that has been partly rectified. But WV groups need the back up and integration into the general work of the districts. The SWP should back WV initiatives where appropriate and vice versa. Otherwise we should not be surprised when the groups 'drift' politically.

ROLE OF THE PARTY

10. Districts have to give a lead in women's initiatives, and initiate the two-way process talked of above. Specifically we would like to see:
 - a) a women's organiser on every DC, and where possible in branches, to be responsible for the work, but not to carry it single-handed;
 - B) Review sales of WV in every district and branches;
 - c) a recognition that there is a problem with cadre in WV, and think about greater input;
 - d) Building WV to be recognised as a political job, the same as any other;
 - e) Geographical branches being encouraged to sell WV as a way of recruiting women, and likewise SWP women should sell SW etc at WV meetings;
 - f) making sure on every demo, and campaign, that there is an input into selling EV;
 - g) SW reflecting the initiatives and campaigns going on among women.

CONCLUSION

If we adopt the above perspective, we can make small gains over the year. But we should be clear that requires greater input from the party, both in terms of WV groups and the party's work round women in general!

We have managed to maintain our sale of WV at 5,000, which is an achievement. Obviously, the sale can be improved. Doing that over the next year will help us to build. Without the sales, we are wasting our time doing anything else.

What we are trying to do - through WV and through our party work - is something which has never been easy, drawing women workers in particular to our politics. We have more opportunities now than for a long time, and a degree of credibility. We have to make sure we make the necessary gains.

Privacy

Lindsey German

Privacy

Drafting Commission No 2

GAY WORK

The lack of prominence given to gay work has been highlighted by the fact that it was not even on the printed agenda for conference. The fact that gays are a minority in the party means that gay comrades cannot be expected to shoulder the responsibility for gay work by themselves. It is essential that all comrades take up the issue of gay rights within their unions.

The need for this is reinforced by victimisations of gay workers over the past period and, in particular, in the case of Privacy The appeals tribunal held that an employer's sincerely held prejudice against an employee was enough to justify dismissal. The decision has since been used in the case of a miner sacked for medical reasons which were proved to be unfounded. It can be used against blacks, women, trade unionists and the left.

When a black person or a woman is attacked, when a trade unionist is victimised we leap to their defence. The same support should automatically be given when gays are victimised and attacked.

There have been good campaigns within some of the fractions, eg NUT and NALGO, against victimisation and the EIS has passed a motion at Annual Conference declaring its support for gay teachers' right to teach.

The teachers fraction have found a good level of support for gay issues, if they can raise it so can every other fraction.

The issues should be raised at workplace, union branch and national union level and also within rank and file groupings. A useful means for doing this is the Gay Rights at Work Conference, March 28th. All SWP members should be raising the conference and winning delegations to it.

Privacy

Dr afting
Drafting Commission 10

The Anti Nazi League.

Over the last year Nazi activity, fuelled by the economic crisis, has been steadily increasing. Racist graffiti, fascist marches and attacks on blacks, jews, gays and socialists have once again become depressingly familiar. The National Front has reemerged from its 1978 electoral debacle and the internal squabbling which followed it - still uncomfortable wearing the Nazi labels given it by the ANL. They have been joined by the openly Nazi British Movement, who are attempting with some success, to recruit disaffected young people. The reemergence of the Nazis has been characterised by increased violence and more open anti-semitism.

1. It should be a top priority to organise against the Nazis in schools and on the football terraces, which they are making their recruiting grounds. The ANL has produced a school students/NUSS leaflet and this should be distributed as widely as possible. Many young people identify with the Nazis for cultural reasons (ie football, music, violence) rather than because they are attracted to racist ideas and these kids will welcome anti-racist arguments. The BM are recruiting on their anti-establishment stance and we must point out the contradictions in this. It is essential to steam the real reasons for unemployment, bad housing, hospital closures etc and to make sure that action is directed against the establishment and not against blacks. We need to pose an alternative solution to that offered by the BM and we can do this through the RTW and NUSS. We should start working now to the ANL Youth conference on 28th February.
2. There is a lot of support for the ANL amongst black people. We have to try and turn that support into activity. This means recruiting individual blacks into the ANL and also working in a united front with black organisations. We should approach the Temples and Mosques both in order to mobilise people and to raise money.
3. The ANL can only be successful as a mass movement. We must isolate the Nazis by involving everyone who is against them in the ANL. It is unrealistic for SWP members to take it upon themselves to free the streets from fascism by forming 'hit squads'. If anything this helps the BM to grow as they feed off this kind of Macho street violence. We can only win by constantly seeking to involve more people in anti-racist work through leafletting, meetings and demonstrations. Isolating the Nazis in the workplace remains an essential part of ANL activity. Obtaining trade union affiliations to the ANL can make this work easier.
 (* See below for insert)
4. Counter demonstrations continue to be an important part of the ANL's strategy. In the near future we will probably not be able to mobilise sufficient numbers to actually stop the Nazis marching. However past experience has shown that the Nazis are demoralised by having to march along back streets and not along their advertised routes as in Welling or having their marches cut short as in Paddington. There will be counter demonstration on 11th January assembling at 12am at the civic centre. All Midlands ANL and SWP branches should support.
5. It is important for the SWP to retain its own identity within the ANL. This can be done by producing separate SWP leaflets for meetings and demonstrations and by making sure that SWP contributions at ANL meetings clearly state our politics and by selling SW at ANL meetings.
6. All non SWP supporters of the ANL should be approached to take out a bankers order to the ANL.

Peter Alexander

Privacy

INSERT* The Anl supports all attempts by black people and others to establish self defence organisations and local groups should seek to widen the basis for support for these through TU financing and active involvement. However we
 this is not an immediate priority for the ANL

Drafting Commission No 11

- 1. The role of the branches: Despite the difficulties currently involved in building in the workplace, our long-term aim is to build a party in which the majority of the membership is located in workplace branches.

It is at the point of production that workers are organised and where they exercise real power. The socialist revolution is unthinkable unless there exists a mass workers party rooted in the factories, schools, offices and mines.

- 2. The workplace branches: Towards that end, we have to involve the whole membership in:-
 - a) selling SW outside workplaces;
 - b) distributing SW workplace bulletins (or mailing that national bulletins);
 - c) selling SW inside their own workplace;
 - d) ensuring that wherever we have more than one member in any workplace they meet regularly;
 - e) after careful consideration and systematic integration of new members into the local SWP organisation - setting up workplace branches.

Any workplace branch has to clearly understand that while its primary function is to argue for socialist ideas and militant struggle inside the workplace it is also essential that the branch has ongoing involvement in general SWP activities outside the plant.

- 3. Geographical branches: The key in this period to sustaining our members in workplaces and to building up and strengthening our base in workplaces lies in the geographical branches (except obviously where we have workplace branches). For most of our members in workplaces the key to both discussing what happens at work and to involving them in the general politics and activities of the Party lies in the local branch simply because in most workplaces we have only one or two members rather than eight or ten.

Therefore every geographical branch needs to work systematically around local workplaces where we have members to support them. That is the way to ensure that we build up a net of contacts and sympathisers, readers of Socialist Worker, supporters and contributors to the bulletin where we establish one etc. That net of contacts, sustained by members of the local branch, is the future membership of SWP factory and workplace branches. But first we have to establish the network with slow systematic work, and unfortunately we are working in unfavourable conditions for this nevertheless vital activity.

Working from the outside. In the vast majority of workplaces we still have no presence. The only way to build up supporters and members inside these places is working from the outside - selling Socialist Worker, visiting contacts, getting to know the shop stewards and other militants.

But this requires a shift in the way we all work now. The primary job of all SWP members is to build in their own place of work or study. The second job of all SWP members is to help build the Party outside their own workplace in someone else's where we do not have members. We all need to be specialists and we all need to turn our hands to any area and any place where we can build.

In particular students must involve themselves in the work of town branches - helping out with factory sales, visiting industrial contacts, helping to build up an effective industrial network. All district committees and branch committees must ensure that they have a student on them from the local student branch/group etc.

The key to much of this work from the outside and on the inside is how effectively we can build up sales of Socialist Worker in the coming period.

4. Socialist Worker sales: The problem we face is that the sales of SW have not risen in the same proportion as the rise in our membership. There are a number of reasons why this is not the case. Many of the older comrades were worn out during the period of the Social Contract and got out of the habit of really pushing the paper. This was reinforced by a greater emphasis we placed on selling SW on the inside in order to root our comrades inside the class. The other reason for the lapse in SW sales in the seventies is that the transformation of our membership into white-collar and manual workers with an ability and responsibility to work inside the trade union movement meant selling SW became one of many activities of party members. This resulted in a change of habits in the party to the sale of SW and has meant that in turn new comrades have often followed the bad habits of older comrades in selling SW.

To correct this, and build the SW sale systematically, we need to win all our comrades to the centrality of SW to our political intervention. Our ability to win solidarity round a strike like Gardners, to spread the lessons of Gardners to other workers, depends on the sale of SW.

Equally our ability to survive as a political current over difficult issues such as Ireland and E Blocks depends on the extent to which a periphery round SW has been built which has had consistent access to our arguments. In other words our SW periphery limits the extent of our intervention in the movement and is our buffer against hostile ideas and currents in the movement. We can carry people over Ireland only in as far as we have sold SW regularly to them.

To build the sales of SW we need to do a number of things:

- a) Reestablish the idea that comrades should sell SW everywhere: union meetings, trades council, pubs, streets, workplace - inside and outside -, estates, demonstrations, pickets and the like.
- b) Numbers of SW sellers should be increased publicly as this increases our visible party presence and actually helps sell SW.
- c) Every branch must establish three kinds of sales for all members:
 - i) Workplace sale from inside
 - ii) Workplace sale from outside
 - iii) Street sales/tube sales
 - iv) Pub sales
 - v) Estate sales

All branches must ensure that SW is sold on pickets, demos, outside public meetings etc. The SW organiser is the most important person in any branch and on top of organising all SW sales must ensure that all comrades get their papers every week, investigate ways of ensuring contacts get SW every week. We have to deliver SW to members and contacts on a weekly basis. All comrades have to carry public SW sales of some kind. The more influential a position a comrade has inside the trade union movement, the more he/she should publicly sell SW. All branches should review SW sales monthly with the aim of pushing the order to 10 per member with a 2/3 paid sale over the next six months.

Privacy

Peter Clarke

Privacy

Drafting Commission 12

Race Work

1. Racism is an inevitable product of capitalism in its present state of development. Attempts to turn old established sections of workers against new 'immigrant' sections are a feature of all advanced capitalist countries. Policies are designed to provide capitalism with a cheap easily intimidated labour force and to strengthen the hold of ruling class ideas amongst workers. Therefore the fight against racism is not an optional extra for revolutionary socialists, still less something to be left to be dealt with by those on the receiving end of repression alone. It is a central part of the struggle for working class unity and power.
2. Our race work aims both to combating racism and in helping to build a multi-racial revolutionary workers party. Only Revolutionary socialist politics can effectively forge the unity of black and white workers. For us to succeed those politics must relate to the fight against racism and the oppression and different traditions of blacks.
3. We therefore reaffirm the position adopted at last years conference that race work should not be ghettoised. However it is clear that this position has not been carried in practice and censure the CC for their failure to ensure that this occurred. We welcome the recent appointment of an anti racist/ anti nazi organiser and have every confidence that it will be possible to begin to rectify the situation.
4. The campaign against the Tories proposed Nationality Act has to be used to win broader support for our arguments over immigration and racism particularly among white trade unionists and to mobilise black people. The SWP is affiliated to CARL (Campaign against Racist Laws) and our members should campaign to win support for its initiatives:
 - a) Every SWP branch/district should attempt to get delegates to its national conference in Birmingham on Saturday 10th January in Birmingham.
 - b) We should endeavour to move resolutions in opposition to the act and for affiliations to CARL in every trade union (and student body where we have members.
 - c) Every SWP branch/district should now be contacting local 'immigrant' etc organisations with a view to discussing the possibilities for local propaganda and activity against the Act.
 - d) We shall mobilise nationally for the proposed march against the Nationality Bill
5. We should respond to cases of harassment, raids, deportations etc both as part of our regular trade union work and by organising campaigns, picketing etc. We are opposed in principle to police presence in factories. Use of Immigration regulations (and in future the Nationality Act) to intimidate workers is an attempt to attack on union organisation the Employment Act.
6. Making anti racism an integral part of our politics means adopting a consistent approach to racism in the workplace and in the unions. This will include opposing racist jokes, removing or covering up racist graffiti, stewards etc assisting black workers with non-work problems and fighting discrimination. Rank and File papers and workplace bulletins should take up anti racist issues including the small everyday questions as well as the big national issues.
7. There has been a revival of Nazi activity over the last four or five months in particular of BM and NF influence among white youth leading to attacks on black people. The revamping of the ANL has been a necessary response to this. But effort has to be taken locally and nationally to ensure that -a) it is a real united front involving non SWP members in activity alongside us to protest at attacks, defend paper selling, organise leafleting, driving Nazis off streets etc. b) that we encourage the involvement of black organisations and individuals in the ANL.

8. The fight against racism among white youth is inseparable from the building of the Right to Work campaign. At the same time with unemployment among black youth at levels of four times the national average special agitation must be used to ensure a strong representation of Black youth on the marches and demonstrations
9. Black people often move towards revolutionary politics by a different route to white workers, and special propaganda and agitation can be of considerable advantage. Where possible we should endeavour to produce local publications, such as those in S London and Southall. We are in favour of aiming to produce a regular national black paper, but recognise that we lack the resources to do this at the present time. We would also like to see the appointment of a black organiser when resources become available. The Race Work Organiser and R.W. cttee should endeavour to produce a low key discussion bulletin aimed at developing our black cadre and our anti racist intervention.
10. All new black members should be integrated into the general work of the party and into the ordinary branches. Only in this way will they develop the confidence to engage in politics both with white workers and in the milieu. Our more experienced black members are encouraged to work in or around existing black or community organisations and youth groups, in order to build the SWP'S influence among black. Black caucus meetings should be convened on a regular basis, at least quarterly, in order to assist the development of our black cadre and our level of intervention.
11. In order to ensure that our race work is improved a certain amount of reorganisation is required. The organiser should :
 - a) ensure that every district with a large black population has an experienced cadre responsible for the work outlined above. Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and most London districts should immediately appoint such local organisers. The local comrades responsible must be DCmembers and in the majority of cases will be whites.
 - b) Co-ordinate the work of these comrades, calling for periodic meetings of them to exchange experiences and discuss the development of the work.
 - c) organise schools and other education both for local race organisers and our black members. Every district/branch should ensure that they send a delegate to attend the race work weekend which will be held in London on 31st Jan/1st Feb in London and that all black members are encouraged to attend.
12. The anti racist/ anti Nazi/ black coverage in SW must be radically improved. To this end one member of the editorial staff should be given responsibility for commissioning at least one article a week and the race work organiser should be a member of the papers editorial board. This will help us to sell the paper to more black people and give our members more confidence to discuss such issues with black people. It is an essential task of local reorganisers to ensure that the paper receives strong news items and stories

Finally it must be understood that race work is something that has to involve all our members and not hived off to the few black members that we have. White members must be prepared to face up to their responsibilities if we are to progress in this essential sphere of our work.

Privacy

Peter Alexander

Privacy

Privacy

Amendment

If any black demonstration is held, eg as in Newham, or Anwar Ditta, a national mobilisation of black members should take place to plan an organised intervention (Districts should pay the expenses of these comrades)

Privacy

UCPI000016148/59

Drafting Commission No 13STUDENT WORK

The aim of all our student work is to build SWSO groups and recruit students into the SWP. But in many colleges we have no members or perhaps one or two contacts with no real links with the party.

All districts, DCs, full time organisers have to ensure that the discussion of student activity and recruitment becomes a regular part of discussion and organisation. In areas where we have few or no members other comrades will have to organise regular paper sales and leafleting of the colleges in the area.

All District Committees etc must also ensure that even where we have a good SWSO group its members' activities are part of a district structure and general activities and that these comrades are not just left to sink or swim.

The coming period offers us good opportunities for recruitment in the student world. The union has galloped to the right and we are the only viable organisation on the left. The general mood among students reflects that of workers outside, strong anti-Tory feeling, the worry of the dole queue, little faith in the union's ability to provide victories in struggle. But still there is the small minority willing to have a fight. This makes united front work with the Labour Clubs, over unemployment, CND, SU financing, Ireland etc very important in terms of us addressing ourselves to and working with those most interested in getting rid of the Tories.

It looks doubtful if there will be much activity on any specifically student issues except perhaps the Tory proposals to eradicate the financing of student unions. So on all issues, we have to bring the general back to the specific, eg the CND campaign should include occupations where military research is being carried out, occupations of Army Recruitment Centres. On unemployment students should actively support strikes and demos.

In particular students must involve themselves in the work of town branches - helping out with factory sales, visiting industrial contacts, helping to build up an effective industrial network.

But at the same time we must remember that all comrades have to initially win credibility with those immediately around them, that means in union meetings, public meetings, organised paper sales etc. It also means organising for industrial disputes to be taken into the colleges, eg strike speakers in meetings and coffee bars and collection sheets taken around all the time.

The building of SWSO groups must be the priority for all student comrades. We will have to build credibility and a periphery that we can then involve in work outside the college.

Privacy

Drafting Commission 14

Youthwork

The NUSS has been dominated by the SWP for the past 18 months. Over that period of time we have built a network of militants who wield considerable influence in their own areas.

Nationally the NUSS has approximately 10,000 members. We can only build and recruit by taking militant action and confronting school authorities headlong. The experience of Luton, Sheffield and North West London serves as evidence for this.

The lessons that we have learnt therefore over the past two years have been:

- 1) Most school students hate having to go to school and resent the treatment they get there and therefore all it takes is a spark to ignite a strike or a riot. Schools are a hotbed of rebellion and it would be lunacy to ignore them.
- 2) For most school students NUSS is their first form of political involvement. They therefore become very approachable and interested in our politics. This is crucial. There is little point in our intervention in NUSS if we are not going to recruit school students to the SWP.

Because of the nature of NUSS activity it cannot be sustained for long periods of time. It is therefore crucial that we pull in the militants in order to keep them around us.

THE ANL

The British Movement have been campaigning and recruiting inside the schools, especially amongst disaffected working-class skinheads, that is the rebellious kids who only go to school because they have to, even though they hate it.

These are the same kind of kids who hate having to wear school uniform or getting the cane or having to put up with the petty, humiliating rules that are used to control school students.

We therefore have to pose NUSS as a positive alternative to the Nazis and channel the natural rebelliousness and anti-authoritarianism that exists among working-class youth into fighting back against the system we live under.

- * National ANL/NUSS leaflet
- * ANL Youth Conference, February 28th in London.

We need a regularly produced paper in order to pull together all the issues that affect youth and connect our politics to them. The paper needed to use as a focus for recruiting youth to the SWP.

Privacy

Addenda to youth Commission

Insert: after ANL youth Conference.

(in note form apologies!)

CND NUSS grew out of the Mass single issue movement
ie the ANL and SKAN. We have to therefore use CND to bolster the support we
already have in NUSS and use the network of militants that we have created to sustain
it. We are organising a national speaking tour called
"Schools not Bombs"
in response to the upsurge in CND and the activity

The Role of the SWP

It is dead easy to leaflet schools and all districts should draw up a list of
schools in their areas in ~~pxx~~ order to leaflet them. ~~ixxi~~

Individual school students should ^{be} give as much support as possible in terms of leafletting
printing and finance.

SWP branch meetings should relate to school students who attend and not alienate
them

District committees should appoint one person with responsibility for youth.

Above all it is most important for the SWP to appoint a fulltime organiser.
The potential at the moment is excellent but unless we are given the resources
we will fail to capitalise on the situation.

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01 986 5491

Treasurer
01 986 8354

Womens Voice
01 986 6222

SWSO
01 986 8355

Dear Comrade,

SWP Conference 1980 Dec. 13th to 16th inclusive

Your conference credentials are attached with details of accommodation and directions. Documents will be available at the Registration desk.

Registration begins at 9 am on the Saturday for those attending the whole conference. Please be on time as late arrival always disrupts the sessions. Please do not invite or bring along other comrades as it only causes embarrassment when they are refused admittance.

Any queries phone the National Office.

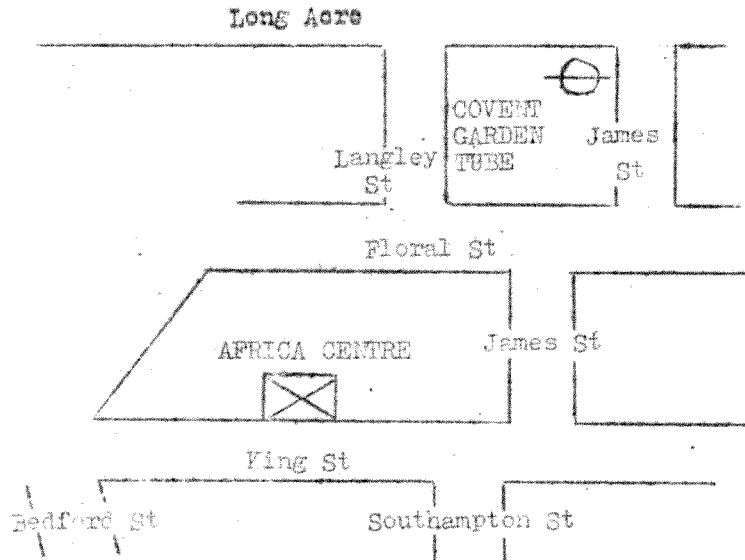
Yours Fraternally

Pete Clark

National Secretary.

YOUR ACCOMMODATION IS WITH

Conference Address :
Africa Centre
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London WC2
(836.1973)



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SWP



Internal Bulletin Sept. 1980

Pre Conference Issue 1 20p

THIS is the first pre Conference discussion bulletin. There will be two further bulletins. Dates are set out below. The annual Conference of the SWP is an important event for us. It allows us to take stock of what has happened over the last year; to discuss the way forward and to elect the leading bodies of the Party.

The three Conference bulletins will contain material attempting to lay down our perspectives for the next 12 months and reports and assessments on our work in the last 12 months.

All members are welcome to contribute articles on any subject, agreeing, disagreeing, modifying what has been said or taking up different issues. There is just one restriction—no article should be more than 2,000 words and of course you can write far shorter articles on just one point if you like.

It makes a very great deal of difference if articles are cleanly typed on one side or sides of paper, double spaced. It really cuts down the work for the very small number of people at the Centre who have to run all the arrangements for Conference.

A word about how our Conference works as newer comrades may not know. Delegates are elected from districts, branches and fractions. They will attend the Conference knowing the views of their district but not mandated. This is an important principle, since if all delegates were mandated there would be little point in holding the Conference as all we would need is a ballot. Delegates are expected to listen and contribute to the debates at the Conference and vote as they see fit after they have heard all the arguments.

The procedure at Conference is designed to allow a full and far-ranging discussion on each agenda item. After an introductory speech, every delegate is free to say whatever he or she thinks is relevant, without regard to the wording of particular motions. No motions, in fact, are formally put during the discussion.

Instead, at the end of each discussion, a drafting commission is elected from the floor to formulate the sense of Conference. If there is a clear division of opinion two (or more) drafting commissions are elected. Any minority commanding the support of ten delegates is entitled to a drafting commission if it so wishes. The propositions agreed by the drafting commissions are put to Conference in a subsequent session (and are open to amendment as well as acceptance or rejection).

The drafting commission drafts (whether agreed or rejected) are printed in a post-Conference bulletin.

This method of debate has proved to be a most effective one of exchanging views and making decisions.

A point about district, fraction or branch motions for Conference. These will all be printed and circulated to members in the pre-Conference bulletins as expressions of opinion. They will not be voted on at Conference

except in so far as they form the basis for drafting commission reports. The delegate of any party body submitting a motion will be entitled to speak during the relevant discussion. But it is not necessary to submit a motion to enable your delegate to speak. The odds are that he/she will be called anyway.

DELEGATES

Each district will be notified of their number of delegates calculated on the basis of one per 30 members. Fractions are notified separately.

Districts will choose their delegates at one of their pre-conference aggregates on the basis of their contribution to the work of the district and the discussions taking place. In order for us to get the maximum out of the conference, we need delegates who can relate the recent struggles in the workplaces and factories. Often the best comrades to give this experience to the conference have families and do not push themselves forward. Districts should therefore give some thought to their choice of delegates and where necessary try to encourage comrades to be delegated.

REGISTRATION FEE, POOLED FARE AND LOSS OF EARNINGS

£47 per delegate is payable *in advance* by the districts, not the individual delegate.

Fares will be paid, but comrades are asked to travel by the cheapest method possible i.e. by car or bus.

Loss of earnings will be rated at £12 per day, for money actually lost. Where possible comrades are asked to take days holiday with pay.

Peter Clark, National Secretary.

Conference 1980

All articles for second pre Conference I.B. by Monday 13 October.

All articles for third pre Conference I.B. by Monday 10 November.

All delegates must pay and register by Friday 14 November.

Conference will be held in London from Saturday 29 November until Tuesday 2 December inclusive.

Political Perspectives The Central Committee

The world economy

The basic reality within which we will be operating for the next year or so is that of economic slump. It is true that the US recession has passed its low point—industrial production rose in August after having stagnated for much of 1979 and fallen by 8.5 per cent between February and July 1980. This recovery could, however, be short-lived. It was a product of easy money policies adopted by the US Federal Reserve Board, which allowed interest rates to halve between April and July. Inflation rates are still in double figures, leading one American economist Paul Samuelson, to write: 'My own fear is stagflation. I see no evidence that we are on the road back to price stability' (*Newsweek*, 2 September). Worries that as the American economy recovers inflation will go through the roof have led the Federal Reserve to push up interest rates again, threatening to strangle the recovery at birth. Some economists believe that there will be another recession in the US sometime next year.

The main western European economies, hit later by the current recession than the US, are still slowing down. And the 'new industrialising countries' in the third world which rode out the mid-1970s slump thanks to loans from western banks are unlikely to escape so lightly this time round. Indeed, these countries are proving to be some of the weaker links of the world capitalist chain, as the pressures caused by rapid industrialisation and the creation of powerful working classes clash with the austerity programmes imposed by regimes eager to mollify foreign debtors and cover their oil bills. Already 1980 has seen major political crises in four such countries — Brazil, South Korea, Turkey and, last but by no means least, Poland. The shock waves from the first of the current upheavals, the revolution in Iran (a 'newly industrialising country', although not, of course, an oil importer) have encouraged the adoption of a new, aggressively interventionist, policy by the US, including the creation of a Rapid Deployment Force for use in the Gulf region, and posing the danger of a clash between the super-powers.

The reality, then, is of world crisis, affecting various economies with different degrees of severity. The idea put forward by left reformists that there is some 'alternative strategy' involving import controls, planning agreements etc through which Britain could escape the effects of this crisis is simple, utopian.

British capitalism

Britain, however, will suffer greater damage during the current recession than most of the other major capitalist countries. Manufacturing output dipped below the lowpoint of the 1975 recession in the second quarter of 1980 and is still falling fast and there are now well over two million unemployed. The strength of the pound is speeding up the

deindustrialisation of Britain as factory after factory unable to stand up to foreign competition closes down. British capital is faced with its severest crisis of profitability—the real rate of return on capital fell from six per cent in 1978 to 3½ per cent in July 1979—March 1980, and the profits squeeze has undoubtedly become more severe since then. The *Financial Times* angry about the Tories' failure yet to cut real wages, complained recently about 'an unprecedented shift of national income from profits to wages' caused by the strong pound (30 August 1980).

Not all of this is a result of the Tories' policies. The decision to allow the pound to rise was taken by the Labour government in late 1977, and sterling's strength reflects factors—above all, North Sea oil—not directly to do with government actions. Denis Healey, like Geoffrey Howe after him, cut public spending and raised interest rates to keep the City happy and prevent another outflow of capital from Britain like that in 1975-6. There are constraints to which any capitalist government in Britain is subject—thus the arch-monetarist Keith Joseph is busy pouring money into such state-owned lame ducks as British Steel, while government aid to industry is, in real terms, higher in 1980-81 than it was in 1977-78, helping to undermine the tight control of the money supply that is the bedrock of the Tories' 'free-market' economics.

The difference between Thatcher Conservatism and the right-wing Labour establishment is not so much one of policy (although there are real policy disagreements) but rather of the ideas with which the policies are justified. The Tories have been able to dispense with 'social contract' ideology in favour of a return to 19th (or late 18th) century ideas of 'free' enterprise, survival of the fittest, the weakest to the wall and the devil take the hindmost.

How has it been possible for the British ruling class, through its various political agencies, to shift the whole centre of gravity, the 'middle of the road' position in mass politics, so sharply to the right? Ten years ago even the Tories were committed (on paper) to the maintenance of full employment. The fact is that the years of Labour government, 1964-70 and 1975-9, have had a profoundly demoralising effect on the workers' movement.

Long before the impact of the present slump we had quite a sharp argument inside the SWP about whether or not there was a real downturn in terms of working-class militancy and solidarity and the sort of basic class-conscious attitudes that had been built up in the late 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s and the early 1970s. That is now a lead debate. It must be obvious to everyone that there has been a major decline, a real downturn.

The Tories hope to shift the balance of class forces further in favour of the bourgeoisie, and in this way to lay the basis for the profitable expansion of at least the more advanced and internationally competitive sections of British capitalism. What are the chances of preventing such an outcome, of turning the tide and reversing the defeats the class has already suffered?

The state of the mass movement

The most obvious feature of the downturn in the workers' movement is the continuing general lack of confidence in the possibility of successful resistance to the effects of the slump and the Tory government. Opposition to closures and redundancies where it has occurred has crumbled quickly. Moreover, the effect is beginning to be seen in wage-settlements in the motor industry, and more generally in private manufacturing, where, in the words of one recent survey of pay claims, 'the flight from wage militance has astonished even the employers' (*Times*, 17 September).

At the same time union membership has held up remarkably well despite the erosion of shop floor organisation and the effects of two million plus unemployed. There has been no disintegration of basic union organisation like that which occurred on a considerable scale in the late twenties and early thirties.

Moreover, average wage rises have been more or less keeping up with inflation until very recently. Clearly, the employers and the government are now intensifying the pressure on wages and there is the possibility of national (defensive) wage struggles next year. Whether or not this happens, there will certainly be numbers of small scale defensive strikes like those at Chix, King Henrys, Brixton Dole etc.

These are disproportionately important because their scale makes effective SWP intervention easier (and no other help is usually an offer). They must always be a focus for energetic support work and guidance.

The same is true wherever any actual resistance to closures or redundancy occurs. One serious success in the field can have a big effect on working-class confidence. A dock strike in defence of jobs, if it actually happened, would obviously require an all-out mobilisation in support.

In any case we have to seize on all opportunities, large or small, for intervention. The downturn in the class struggle does not mean that there is no struggle, merely that the conditions are less favourable than they were five years ago. Persistent intervention in whatever conflicts occur (including cuts issues of course) is one of the most important ways of developing a network of contacts in the mass movement at *earning* the reputation of being people who are always in the forefront of solidarity operations. The *political* importance of organising collections, for example, cannot be overstressed. It is central to the task of rebuilding traditions of solidarity.

The Labour Left and the Communist Party

An important symptom of the downturn—and it is a symptom which becomes a secondary cause—has been the eclipse of the broad left in the union machines (in most cases) and the rightward shift of what remains of it. At the 1980 TUC there was no real broad-left challenge to the centre-right leadership of the General Council on the main issues. Such conflict as there was arose from the far right's attempt to exploit the Polish strikes!

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The Communist Party, lynchpin of the left of the movement for the last 50 years, has continued to decline in influence and activity, even if it may, as it is claiming, have reversed the long-stand fall in its members. The revival of the Labour left since the election, (the normal pattern when the Labour Party is in opposition) by no means fills the resulting vacuum. There is no serious indication that the Labour left is as yet making any great gains in recruiting new activists. From the date given in *Socialist Review* (September-October 1980) it appears that all the main 'genuine' Labour left organisations (Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Labour Co-ordinating Committee) are considerably smaller than the SWP, while of the 'Trot' centrist organisations only the *Militant* group is of any substance. The LCC is unlikely to realise its ambition of winning rank-and-file support within the unions since to attempt to do so would involve clashing with 'left' bureaucrats whose block votes they hope to use against the right at Labour Party conferences.

At the same time the *ideas* of the Bennite left—the 'alternative economic strategy', import controls etc.—are incomparably more influential than our own among the politically conscious minority of workers. They offer, indeed, the only coherent set of ideas around on the reformist left. The Labour right, who believed that, thanks to Keynes, slumps were a thing of the past, are ideological bankrupt. Hence the constant stream of renegades creeping into the Tory party or chasing the will-the-wisp of a new 'centre' party. Benn and Co claim that, the historic goals of the Labour right—full employment, the welfare state—can be achieved with a further dose of state intervention but *within the framework of capitalism*. We may well see the Bennites lose the struggle for power within the party but have their *ideas*, probably in a highly nationalistic form, taken over by the Labour centre-right.

The united front

In this situation, where the CP/broad left is in decline but *ideologically* reformism continues to dominate the movement, the united front tactic will be of great importance to us. This is especially so since we can expect sections of the trade union bureaucracy to make some moves against the Tories. The line taken by the TGWU, first in backing the call for a dockers strike, then in deciding to lobby the Tory conference on 10 October, offers an example. We have to avoid two extremes. One is to denounce any initiative from the bureaucracy as a betrayal, an invasion of our territory, etc. The other is to fail to differentiate ourselves from the reformists. The former mistake is quite tempting when the trade union leaders seem to be taking over one of our own initiatives, the latter is quite easy to make if the bureaucracy do move, because even their token gestures can easily swamp our own efforts.

Our approach must be to seek out every possible opportunity for united action with the reformists, whether it be at a local or national level, within a specific union or

across the class. We should welcome and support any initiative taken by the trade union leadership, but seek to take it further, make it more effective and militant, under rank-and-file control etc. It is by combining political firmness and sharp criticisms of the reformists' ideas with the willingness to undertake joint action with them around specific issues that we can make inroads into their support.

The decline of the CP into an appendage of the Labour left means that it will probably be through making approaches to the latter that we will have an impact on the former's still considerable periphery. The combination of organisational feebleness with a big, loose periphery characteristic of the Labour left itself gives us exceptionally favourable opportunities for developing united actions (commonly on our initiative but also on others'), particularly with trade unionists under Bennite influence. The LCC industrial conference in November, for example, is an opportunity to push our ideas on industrial activity and to develop contacts. The problem is not so much to 'expose' the Labour lefts (although our politics have to be firmly, in fraternally, argued at every opportunity) as to draw some of them into joint activity.

The Work of the SWP

It remains the case that we are attempting to draw into activity a layer of workers who are very much a minority and are often relatively isolated in their workplaces. There is as yet no mass left current. But the minority is growing. Our appeal is one of providing realistic focusses, activity plus general politics. The public face of SWP branches must not become too narrowly operational. International affairs, Poland in particular, open up ways of presenting our distinctive politics. The central thrust of all our work must be to put ourselves at the centre of whatever anti-Tory activity there is. *Socialist Worker* is the central instrument for this task and for raising discussion and revolutionary socialist ideas. Ways of extending its influence will be a very important consideration for us in the months ahead.

The importance of the Right to Work Campaign is obviously much greater now than ever before. The significantly broader sponsorship obtained this year shows something of the possibilities. Ways and means of developing them and of maintaining a RTWC presence after 10 October need to be studied.

The 'cross fertilisation' of contacts won through the RTWC, through strike intervention, cuts struggles union electoral work, anti fascist activity, women's work or whatever is vital.

The power of the SWP to influence the course of events depends on our being at the centre of a net of contacts in the working class movement and being the source of initiatives and the most reliable activists. Systematically, building and *cultivating* this periphery (as a start, ensuring that *Socialist Worker* reaches all of it) is the key to growth in both numbers and influence.

And there are real prospects for party

growth in the next period. Membership has been picking up and neither the CP nor the lefts (with the partial exception of the Militant) now offer an effective *national* alternative to the SWP, although the CP is still on paper, much bigger than we are. We are better placed than we have ever been to become the real core of the militant left.

The Collier - a Progress Report by Privacy

It is four and a half years since *The Collier* was revived. Progress since then, both in terms of building the sales of the paper and the SWP membership in the NUM has been slow but steady.

The Collier was originally started after the 1972 strike. Our intervention in that strike had been extremely good. We recruited, made hundreds of new contacts and started IS branches in coalfield areas all over the country. Before that strike we had had nothing in the pits at all.

The years between 1972 and the autumn of 1974 were very fruitful for us because everywhere comrades, especially students, took very seriously the job of going out into the mining areas to sell SWs and make new contacts. Of course, it was easy to be enthusiastic with two national strikes in three years, one of which led directly to the kicking out of the Heath government.

By the autumn of 1974 we had between 40 and 60 miners in IS. This apparent numerical strength hid a major weakness. Many, if not most, of our miners were dotted about the country, unattached or only loosely attached to IS branches.

In South Wales, for example we had 15 NUM members. Most of these were notionally involved in two branches. In fact these branches relied entirely on comrades from Swansea and Cardiff going up the valleys to 'service'—i.e. organise them. The other factor that kept them together was the regular appearance of *The Collier*, which provided an obvious focus for organisation and activity.

Between the end of 1974 and spring 1976 *The Collier* was not published. With hindsight it was obviously an act of criminal negligence on the part of the IS leadership of the time to ditch *The Collier*—but with hindsight many things are obvious.

By the early summer of 1976 the mistake had been rectified and *The Collier* was started again.

But in just 18 months the objective situation had changed dramatically. When the Labour Government came to power in 1974 they set about sweet-talking the miners. Space does not permit an analysis here of how that was done. Suffice it to say that the miners' muscle started to look a bit flabby.

The changed situation partially explains the fantastic drop in IS membership in the pits between 1974 and 1976. It is further

explained by the fact that in almost every part of the country where we had miners in 1974 the efforts of the local districts and established branches to keep isolated NUM members involved and to nurture the new, small and inexperienced branches on the coalfields, were all allowed to gradually slacken away.

The result was that by the spring of 1976 there were just 6 NUM members on the books.

The *Collier* was re-started trying to use the old network. This proved to be very risky and outdated. Such had been the change in the political situation that many of the militants of 1972 and 1974 had become cynical and apathetic. Efforts to revive lapsed IS miners failed with very few exceptions.

It is therefore very largely true to say that the growth of *The Collier* since 1976 has very largely been independent of its earlier base.

It has also been a lot slower and more difficult. There have not been national strikes, there have not been (as yet) parallels of the Scanton-Jones betrayals among the broad left leaders in the NUM—although the power of the right leaders has grown. The effect of the Social Contract was paralyzing. Just as it seemed that a new instance was starting to develop in 1977—a large number of unofficial strikes—the right leadership landed the rank and file with the productivity deals. The broad left leaders managed to duck any light so skilfully that there was little backlash against their lack of light from rank and file militants.

The effect of the productivity deals has been extremely serious. In even the most militant pits very important gains have been made by the management in terms of discipline, manning levels, absenteeism, sinking in of NUM Branch officials etc.

The dramatic failure of the deals has now led to the NCB and the government being more optimistic about getting away with pit closures than they have been for 10 years. Despite all the talk about a 'great future for the coal industry' there can be no doubt whatsoever that a large number of closures are coming. The Coal Board's strategy of concentrating output in a handful of 'super-pits' depends on creating a vast area of small 'unprofitable pits' over the next few years.

The miners are tired of the deluge of 'nothing strikes' for more closure than the attitude of the South Wales N. M. officials to the Right to Work Campaign. In 1976 they wouldn't touch it with a three-pole, today they are the first to back the march from South Wales to Brighton. This reflects their weakness, not our strength!

The year's long sales slump—the paid sale of *The Collier* has increased from 300 copies in 1976 to around 1,000 today. SWP membership in the pits has increased from about half a dozen to about 25.

Nothing to crow about, but the figures have some very positive implications, which have not come easily given the climate. The *Collier* has the respect of rank and file militants. Of this there is no doubt. But it is not an easy task to maintain that respect in a

organised support. The influence of Scargill and Co is an important factor here. When it seems that all you have to do is leave it to King Arthur to solve all your problems, why go to all the trouble of doing something yourself? In other words, because there have been no massive betrayals by 'left' leaders in the NUM to match those of Scanton and Jones etc, it is not easy to offer the rank and file alternative.

Of the 1,000 paid sale almost half comes from non-SWP miners, including orders of up to 50 from several NUM branches and lodges.

In coalfield areas SWP branches without any NUM members take 12 per cent of the copies printed. They account for less than 2 per cent of the paid sale. The remainder of the sales are accounted for by SWP miners. The number they sell varies enormously—from 10 in one case to nearly 200 in another. It is clear that where sales are properly organised it is not difficult to sell a lot of copies at pits on a Friday when the men pick up their wages.

SWP branches in coalfield areas should set themselves two tasks to help overcome the present weaknesses.

Firstly, it is still the case that many of our miners are very isolated geographically. It should be seen as important by the larger SWP districts on the verge of the coalfields to help the smaller branches to integrate the miners. As an example of this is the way Sheffield district is planning to invite miners from outside the district to some of their industrial meetings.

Secondly it is very important that comrades who don't work in the pits understand how important it is to use *The Collier*. You don't have to have blue scars on your face to talk to a miner.

SW sales at pits can be very rewarding. At one pit near Rotherham two comrades sell up to 50 copies every day between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm. (That beats getting up at the crack of dawn to sell just two copies outside factory gates!). It can help to build the confidence of new unemployed comrades to be able to sell the paper like that.

There are many problems, and no easy solutions. What is necessary is to get back to the ABC: visit contacts regularly, use SW as the central tool for intervention and in taking new contacts, use *The Collier* to back up SW sales, contacts etc.

Draft policy on standing candidates for executive and full time union positions including local full time positions.

1. No-one should stand for any executive/full-time/national union position without Central Committee agreement
2. No-one should stand without full discussion in the relevant fraction
3. All candidates must produce election addresses. These should be drawn up by the relevant fraction committee and submitted to the Central Committee for approval
4. If a candidate is elected, each fraction must set up in consultation with the Industrial Department a series of *regular* meetings between the elected member and other experienced members of the fraction
5. The decision to stand someone for re-election needs to be discussed and decided in the same way each time the question comes up.

These points were agreed by the last National Committee meeting and will be raised again at Conference

students and industrial work

Privacy
Hull SWP

Since the 1978 Conference student comrades have been encouraged to form college branches and to build SWSO groups to organise our periphery in the colleges who agree with the basic politics of 'Socialist Worker' but do not feel committed enough to join the SWP. Within this perspective industrial work of SWP students was to be from *inside* their colleges, arguing for financial help to strikers, support for picket lines, etc as a means of winning our political arguments amongst students. This perspective of work *within* the colleges has undoubtedly been proven correct, those colleges in which student comrades have seen their primary political responsibility as being work in the college seeing substantial recruitment to the SWP and to SWSO.

During the same time, however, the work of many SWP students *outside* the college has been limited and sporadic, many student comrades becoming 'thirty week socialists' with little or no contact with the party during vacations. In part the lack of activity of student comrades outside their colleges has been due to the downturn in the level of the class struggle but it also reflects the failure of the party, both nationally and locally, to produce detailed perspectives for the work of students outside their colleges. Unfortunately the document 'Student work in the coming year' in the August IB continues this failure and provides only a one-sided perspective for the work of student comrades. Whereas the document provides a detailed perspective for work *inside* the college it failed to provide any perspective for the work of student comrades *outside* their colleges.

Students make up approximately one-eight of the membership of the SWP and so their level of activity and orientation to work outside the colleges is crucial to the effectiveness of the party as a whole. Because they have more free time than other party members, students, together with unemployed comrades, have to carry a large proportion of the work maintaining regular factory SW sales, the distribution of bulletins etc. The fact that the majority of our industrial work is still from the outside makes this work doubly important. In the past, however, the conflict of demands between this work and work within the colleges has caused a great disagreement between student comrades and the rest of the party. One "solution" to this conflict has been the failure of some areas to take student work seriously and the consequent lack of systematic work in their colleges by student comrades in these areas. This results in a failure to recruit students to the party and in a few years means the absence of any SWP presence in those colleges, even when there is a strong SWP organisation outside. At the other extreme some student branches exist in almost total isolation from work outside the college. This results in a squandering of much needed personpower,

growing mistrust between student and worker comrades, the failure of students to develop a total understanding of our politics and the danger of a rampant workerism amongst those comrades who feel that student members have nothing to contribute to the building of the party.

In the coming year it must be a major priority to avoid both these mistakes and to integrate all student comrades into the industrial work of the party without distracting from systematic work in the colleges. Student comrades must, as a political requirement, participate fully in the work of their local branches. As a *minimum* this means that every student comrade must take part in one SW factory sale *and* one SW town or estate sale a week. This is necessary not only to maintain the level of systematic activity of the party needed to rebuild our periphery but it also required in the light of the expected continuing decline in student militancy.

The integration of student comrades into the industrial work of the party will not, however, take place merely by raising the level of activity required from student comrades. Without involving *all* student comrades in the political life of their local branches such requests for activity outside the college are seen as an unreasonable addition to their work load and are either ignored or are the cause of conflict between student and worker comrades. The present situation in some parts of the country in which student branches exist in isolation from local branches with co-ordination between branches taking the form of a District Committee and the occasional District Aggregate has failed to produce integration and involvement of students in the work of their local branches.

This is in no way an argument for the dissolution of student branches but rather for the establishment of organisational procedures that encourage both the systematic activity of students in their colleges *and* in their localities. District Aggregates have to take place frequently and student comrades have to be educated by regular contact with worker comrades to understand that activity outside the college is not an addition to their political work but an integral and essential part of that work, without which they remain student militants but not revolutionary socialists. District Committees in areas with student branches must draw up perspectives for local activity which are based on the full integration of student comrades and do not use students as a mere addition in personpower in isolation from the life of the party in that district. District Committees have to regularly discuss student activity so that they have a realistic understanding of the capabilities of student branch members to undertake work outside the college and relate student activity inside the college to party activity outside. An aim of the social life of such districts should be to integrate students and workers. Finally SWSO and the party centre must do everything necessary to ensure that student comrades remain in contact with the party during vacations.

Poland by Privacy

The strike actions in Poland have been a tremendous inspiration to socialists in Britain; In the disheartening aftermath of May 14th and in the hard slog, leading up to October 10th, Polish workers organised proof that workers can fight, can organise and can change the world. Despite the threat of repression, and despite having to organise in conditions of illegality, Polish workers achieved an amazing high level of rank and file organisation, if they did it—so can we, that above all is what comes out of the events in Poland.

The situation in Poland has also presented us with a rare opportunity to pose revolutionary politics in an open and realistic way. Poland has vindicated all the SWP's arguments about socialism, state capitalism and the way that the working class develops in struggle. Those SWP branches who immediately took the opportunity to organise a public meeting on Poland generally met with a large and unusually enthusiastic response.

Our politics and our arguments fit the situation exactly. Just how appropriate they are has been demonstrated by the high level of political discussion at all the meetings. Recruitment and generous donations to the SWP appeal for the Polish Free Trade Unions have also indicated how our politics connect with the situation. At a practical level this has meant that we are virtually the only members of the left who have made any concrete proposals (not just slogans) for support of Polish workers.

The rest of the left, from Stalinists to obscure Trotskyist sects, have been really caught out by the Polish events. Right across the spectrum they have been looking for excuses for not mobilising support for Polish workers. The CP left attempted to discredit the action either by saying it was all a CIA plot, or that it was all distorted by the western press. (This among other things shows that the CP members do not read their own paper—for the Morning Star actually had a good coverage of the events and even conceded that the strikes were justified).

The Spartacists, Workers Actions and Workers Powers on the other hand were quick to condemn the Polish bureaucracy but at the same time found fault with Polish workers. Polish workers it would seem are all nasty catholic nationalistic creatures steeped in the worst kinds of reactionary peasant traditions (not to mention alcohol). Clearly such deviants are not the stuff that revolutions are made of. Such an analysis inevitably makes comrades in these sects dogmatically grudging in their support for Polish workers (and is also what provokes the lynching threats from SWP members!).

But despite extreme provocation from the Sparts, we have not needed to be sectarian about our politics. Our rank and file approach to support for workers struggles wins a response from those unconnected trade unionists who are exuded by events in Poland wish to organise support for Polish workers but get no help either from the pro-Soviets in the CP or the loonies in the Trotskyist left.

So far our efforts have been modest enough. Tow pickets of the Polish Embassy, a series of public meetings and some £600 collected towards the (£1000) appeal for an SWP donation to the Free Trade Unions and the fare to send a comrade over to Poland to report on events there.

These in turn have inspired some resolutions of support at trade union branches, resolutions to the TUC demanding support for Polish workers, and even some donations direct to the Polish Free Trade Unions (Leystonstone Trades Council).

The TUC record on support for trades unionists in eastern Europe is disgusting. Thousands of trade union delegates junket in style at official reception in Warsaw and Moscow every year whilst trade unionists rot in jail for fighting for basic rights like the right to organise and the right to strike. The amazing contortions that bureaucrats will go through rather than risk embarrassing their opposite numbers in the stooge unions in eastern Europe is disgraceful. The Polish event give us an unequalled opportunity to cut through the hypocrisy—with the western press on our side for once (just).

But we must be careful to distinguish ourselves from the right wing, Frank Chapple and the anti communists. We must make it clear that we support the Polish workers because we support movements from below for that is how socialism is built.

The support and solidarity for Polish workers is vital. But it is important that the Polish strikes are not treated as something remote that is happening thousands of miles away. Of course we support workers in struggle. But we support them more because their struggle is our struggle. Polish workers are being squeezed by the same crisis that is causing unemployment here, the problems of the Polish economy are caused by the same forces that are causing a major recession in western economies. Polish workers fighting inflation are fighting the same fight as we are fighting. We support Polish workers not just because we are sympathetic. We support them because they are fighting OUR fight too.

And the best support we can offer is not just money, not just resolutions to those overfed trade union leaders in the TUC, but is organising here and now for democracy in our own unions, for the rights to strike, and to organise that the Tories want to take away.

At SWP meeting and at trade union discussions there must be a continuing emphasis, not just on internationalism, but on how the struggles are connected. Winning resolu-

tions, organising the largest meetings, or collecting money is useful in itself. But is essential in the struggle to change the world in Britain as well as in Poland.

THINGS TO DO:

MEETINGS: Organise a public meeting in your branch. If you want speakers contact Pete Goodwin on Privacy days.

DONATIONS:

Money for the SWP donation to the Free Trade Unions and the fare of comrades to Poland (we need £1000) should be sent to SWP International Dept. at PO Box 82. (Cheques should be made out to SWP International Fund).

INFORMATION:

The current issue of Socialist Review contains 10 pages on Poland including facts, figures and analysis. If you want regular information about Eastern Europe, 45p for single copies from Bookmarks or £4.50 for 1yrs subscription from Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

East Europe Group:

Any members who speak an east European language or have a special interest in east Europe should contact the EE group at PO Box 82. We need help with meetings and activities. We are also planning a day school in December.

FREE TRADE UNION:

Write c/o

Privacy Privacy

We have set ourselves the target of raising £1100 in order to send £500 to the strike committees and to enable two comrades to go to Poland to make contacts and report on the situation following the strikes. After much delay over visas (bureaucrats looking over their shoulder) the comrades have finally got off (Sep 22) and the money delivered to the strike committees.

To date (Sep 18) we have received just over £700, as detailed below. We have heard of more coming in so keep it up. Donations to SW International Fund, PO Box 82, London E2.

Received as of Sep 17
SWP Branches, districts and meetings
Feb Edge Joint Chapels Levy £52.00

GLC	£6.50
Walthamstow	£11.75
Central London Mtg	£98.00
Stoke Newington	£16.50
Norwich	£75.00
Enfield	£25.00
Loughborough	£12.00
Oxford	£10.00
Blackburn	£5.00
Finsbury Park	£10.00
Finsbury Park	£10.00
Sheffield	£41.00
Hackney District	£50.00

Plus donations from the following individuals:

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STOCK UP FOR
OCT 10th NOW!

ORDER
FORM

FILL IN QUANTITIES OF

- a) SHEETS OF STICKERS;
- b) BADGES

TOTAL THE QUANTITIES
AT THE BOTTOM, AND
CONVERT TO MONEY
DEPENDING ON THE TOTALS
YOU HAVE ORDERED.

NB. REMEMBER TO FILL
IN YOUR BRANCH!



BRANCH:

Send to SWP, PO Box 82, London E2

Description	SHEETS OF STICKERS	BADGES
'SHE'S GOT TO GO! SWP'	X	
'STOP THE MAD AXEWOMAN MARCH FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK'	X	
'THATCHER DEGRADES WOMEN' WOMEN'S VICE	X	
'NOT WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM!'	X	
'OUT! RndF'	X	
'50 YEARS A SCOUNDREL SWP' (Queen Mother)	X	
'READ SOCIALIST WORKER PC Box 82, London E2'		X
'TROOPS OUT NOW SWP'		
'HELP THE POLICE - BEAT YOURSELF UP SWP'		
'FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK'		
'BUZZBY SAYS WHO'S TAPPING YOUR PHONE?'		
'A GOOD POLICE FORCE ARRESTS MORE CRIMINALS THAN IT EMPLOYS!'	X	
'LIES, DAMNED LIES AND THE DAILY MAIL' SWP	X	
'IN THE CLASS WAR, SOCIALIST WORKER HELPS YOU WIN'	X	
'KICK OUT THE TORIES: Socialist Worker'		
'STOP THE EMPLOYMENT ACT - DEFEND OUR UNIONS'	X	
'NO TO MICK'S LAW - I AM THE 7th PICKET, RIF'		
'BEWARE THE JOB CRUNCHERS: SWP'	X	
'WORKERS POWER NOT NUCLEAR POWER'	X	
'NO TO NUCLEAR POWER LEAVE THE WEAPONS FACTORY!'	X	
'GET RID OF PESTS STEP IN A TORY' SWP	X	
'SOCIALIST WORKER - REFRESHES THE PARTS FLEET ST CANNON REACH'	X	
'THE RIGHT TO WORK MARCH BEGINS / CHAPTER - EVANS' (Union) MARCH' (Trade Union) CARTERS'	X	
'IF THE TORIES GET UP YOUR NOSE, PICKET! (Sticker not used)'	X	
	STICKERS	BADGES
TOTAL QUANTITIES	sheds	
STICKERS: 12p a sheet or 20 sheets for £2 or 110 sheets for £10	↓	↓
BADGES: 20p each or 10 for £1.50 (can be mixed)	A : P	A : P
Cheques/PO to 'SWP'	☺	
TOTAL ENCLOSED		

Palestine Solidarity Work

Privacy

Bromley SWP

1. The Record

Palestinian solidarity work, in a coherent organisational sense, has invariably failed. The last 10 years are littered with the corpses of successive efforts. We have had Palestine Action and Free Palestine, BAZO and MERAG, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and now, it seems, Palestine UK Co-ordination.

Some groups have survived by carving out an irrelevant niche for themselves, purely concerned with winning support from Labour M.P.s and bourgeois politicians like Sir John Richmond and Sir John Baggot Glubb (Pasha). Others have avoided the problem of general solidarity work by concentrating on the theoretical journals industry—Khamzin, Ithaca Press, Merip Reports, Review of Middle East Studies.

Forays made by left-groups have mostly ended in disaster, too. The best known case is the WRPs. Their pre-occupation with Palestine represented a retreat from the class struggle, into a periphery cut-off from the labour movement. It only furthered their decline into obscurity and eventual support for the Islamic Mojahaddin-e-Khalq.

Palestinian militants in Britain have fared no better. The lack of activity by the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) is symptomatic of the 'downturn' within the Palestinian resistance itself. Older militants have become tired and disenchanted. Younger ones face the obstacles of becoming involved in a shrinking movement.

All in all, it is a telling and sorry record. Solidarity work, in terms of organisation and activity, has deteriorated over the last few years. It has, of course, never been strong organisationally. But the general level of activity was much higher in the past.

2. Orientation

Yet, despite this depressing picture, enthusiasm for Palestine remains strong. There is a large reservoir of people on the Left who are interested in Palestine and it is growing, slightly, at present, because of the Zionist offensive on the West Bank. Indeed, whilst the level of activity has dropped the interest has grown. This is best shown by our own Middle East Group which remains our largest and most successful group engaged in solidarity work.

Our immediate problem is how we can best make use of this interest in Palestine. In the past we ourselves have not been immune from the problems others have faced. We have been unable, if we are honest, to hold the people attracted towards us. And there have been plenty of them. Take the recent example of Iran.

It seems to me that if, in future, we are to avoid the traps and pitfalls others have encountered, then we must take a different orientation from them. (Not that we have copied them! They have failed because they have cut themselves off from the Labour movement. They have become isolated and inward looking, directing their energies

towards the London based milieu and student movement, which is fluid by its nature. Consequently, campaigning has lapsed.

Which is exactly what we should not do. We need to build a periphery around work orientated towards the Labour movement. This isn't a plea to transpose Middle Eastern students directly into the environs of the labour movement. That is a silly idea. The point is simply one of orientation. Clearly, if we are realistic, most of our work on Palestine will centre on students and the London based milieu. What we have to do, however, is relate this work to the labour movement.

Recruits, predominantly students, will only be won-over by the efficacy of a campaign. And what evidence there is suggests that a campaign on Palestine inside the labour movement can be quite efficacious, especially issues concerning Palestinian workers and trade unions. Recently, for instance, some members of the General Union of Palestinian Workers visited a few trade councils and collected signatures from officials.

The immediate response from the Zionists was a letter from Labour Friends of Israel, signed by Heffer, Mikardo and Hoyle, to every trades council and TUC delegate, warning-off anybody who supported them.

It is but a small example of what can be done. The strength of Zionism has rested on its impregnation of the labour movement in this country, in particular the Labour Left and bureaucrats in "white collar" unions. A campaign to counteract this influence would attract people who want to do something about Palestine because it offers them a meaningful task instead of an interminable debate on national formation in the Arab region. But, of course, there are difficulties with this approach.

3. Limitations

We are a small party with a group of Middle East "specialists" who are much, much smaller. As members of the group are heavily involved in other Party work it has been hard to keep up even routine work and meetings. Moreover, party members interested in Palestine and the Middle East are spread out over the country and can't play an integrated part in the groups work which, from necessity, is based in London.

Then there is the question of resources. How much resources should we devote to Palestine or solidarity work in general? We simply don't have the resources to spare unless there is a pressing issue at stake eg. Poland. There is also the danger of being over-ambitious, pouring energy and resources into an activity when you could possibly get the same result for less resources.

Those of us engaged in solidarity work have to appreciate that what we do is not the overriding priority. Any illusion that our solidarity work is helping to tip the international balance of forces, is unrealistic rubbish. Our work purely complements our immediate priorities because it can win a few people to our ideas and challenge the notions many more have about the British State, Zionism and so on. SO what should we do?

Present priorities

Even though we are small, it is necessary to maintain the visible presence of active

campaigning. We must at all costs avoid pure routinism on Palestine. It won't hold people. At the same time it is imperative to keep up routine work for purposes of continuity.

We have to start with some very modest objectives. The first thing is to ensure that Palestine, and other Middle East solidarity work, is pushed early on in the student year. There should be meetings on relevant topics and contacts established.

Secondly, and to help follow this up, we need to form some kind of annual focus on the Middle East, say, a conference or symposium, which would bring together students and the milieu. This year, in November, the group is holding one called Revolution in the Middle East, and including Fawaz Turki and others.

From this event we want to start building for a march on 15 May. It seems to me that the best way to do this is on the basis of kind of resolution or charter on Palestinian Trade Unions, West bank repression, political prisoners, etc. which we should use to win support from trade councils and trades union bodies. The resolution or charter would form the basis of the march, the idea being to win some sort of sponsorship from these organisations for the march.

It don't think one major event in May and one in November is beyond us. Of course we have to be careful and cautious and make sure that the work is put in in between. But, judging by the present state of play, it shouldn't be too difficult to take the lead of Palestinian solidarity work in Britain in the not too distant future.

Gay Work

by Privacy

Recent struggles

During the last year there have been a significant number of struggles of gay people, mainly over victimisations. Privacy

was sacked simply for being gay, the tribunal finding that an employer's prejudice was sufficient ground for a sacking. Privacy

Privacy was sacked after being convicted of a cottaging offence. Privacy

simply for being gay, and a number of others. In most cases there was some sort of defence campaign set up, the most effective of which was that around Privacy

who was refused a teaching medical certificate unless he underwent psychiatric examination. But all these campaigns were ritualistic and involved no action beyond the motion/petition stage—except that of Privacy

Privacy, a youth officer in a club in West London, where the club's users went into occupation demanding reinstatement. The occupation, although finally defeated, was the first sign for some time of a militant fightback going beyond the respectable limits of normal disputes.

This was followed during the Gay Pride March by a sit-down involving some hundreds of people outside the Bow Street police station after some of the demonstration

so many people to take action shows the existence of a minority—albeit not socialists, which is prepared to fight.

But the organisation

There is lacking however any organisation capable of channelling that opposition into any useful direction. The Fragments Conference and the Campaign for Homosexual Equality Conference failed to provide any focus or direction for reformist activities never mind new direction for struggle. The various sections of the gay movement similarly have been unable to generate any of the new forms of struggle which are often lauded as being the advantage of their structuralness when arguing against the building of the party.

Our Work

Most of our work has gone into building the Gay Rights at Work Committee, a group with about half SWP members, which has produced a pamphlet and badges after a conference attended by more than one hundred, of whom 35 were delegates and 26 union union branches officially represented. Since then we have been able to produce action sheets around a number of the disputes referred to earlier, and have been able to influence in some small way the development of those campaigns. In the process we have been able to integrate more effectively the work of the rank and file organisations and the trade union gay groups. And we have been able to carry arguments about the importance of workplace activity and trade unionism into parts of the gay movement which would not automatically develop such a sympathy.

Gays Against the Tories

This work can be developed now by building support for 10th October through propaganda aimed specifically at the gay movement around "Defend Queer Unions" as well as "Defend Gay Rights", and a number of people can be drawn into specifically anti-Tory and pro-union work who would not otherwise be affected. The extent to which this is effective however depends on the extent to which branches, even if they do not include gay comrades, relate to the gay movement in their towns and the extent to which gay pubs, CHE groups and Gaysocs are involved in building around specific disputes. Any such work helps to increase our credibility as the only organisation capable of an effective integration of action involving gay and non-gay people.

Our weakness

Possibly our greatest weakness however remains our failure to build any effective lesbian periphery. Neither SW nor WV has carried articles by or about lesbians, and there is little which the predominately-male gaygroup can do about this. The lead really does need to come from material carried in WV pulling lesbians into Womens Voice groups and then involving them in more general work.

Students

The virtual collapse of student gaysocs during the last couple of years has weakened the

gay movement quite considerably. SWSO groups should take the lead in setting up gaysocs, even if they have no gay contacts, in order that the motions can be gone through so the atmosphere exists which will make it possible for some of the students to come out and begin activity.

SWP Gay Goup

Our work has been bedevilled by most of our activists becoming more and more involved in other political work, at the continual expense of our gay work. There will be however a national SWP weekend school on gay work from 17th-19th October in Manchester. At this it should be possible to plan future work and to present a report to conference.

Motion on Import Controls

Central Liverpool Branch

The Last Party Council unanimously passed a resolution from Merseyside District on import controls. In essence it stated that with trade union leaders both left and right putting forward the demand for import controls as the answer to the problems of the current recession that SWP should launch a campaign to put the socialist case against import controls by:

- 1) vastly increasing coverage of the issue in SW.
- 2) producing a standard leaflet which could be reproduced as factory bulletins.
- 3) producing a pamphlet on import controls.

Judging from SW this motion has been totally ignored. In the meanwhile with the recession getting worse trade union leaders have not slackened in their campaign for import controls and indeed some have gone one stage further with a buy British campaign. So you would expect the issue to get more of a hearing in SW even without the prompting of the Party Council. But this has not happened.

The ignoring of the Party Council motion has not just resulted in a political weakness in the paper but has also caused a doubt about the internal democracy of SWP and the role of the Party Council. What has happened so far might lead some members to think that proposals from the Party Council have no chance of being implemented if they do not originate from the Central Committee.

We call on the Central Committee to ensure that the Party Council motion on import controls is impeded and to inform us as to when the pamphlet on import controls will be published.

Reply to **Privacy**

Privacy

Cardiff, SWP.

I'd like to reply briefly to **Privacy's** article on Wales in the last I.B., as I think the drift of what he is advocating is towards disastrous concessions to Welsh Nationalism.

He says "There is a common culture among workers of both North and South", etc. etc. and I believe this is simply not true. The distance of South Wales from the struggle over the language and on second homes being wages in the North simply can't be wished away. In fact it could be seriously argued that Cardiff (and perhaps Newport) is so culturally distinct from the rest of the South that it constitutes a third camp.

What he fails to pinpoint is to some extent the artificiality of the campaigns on the language here in the South—workers aren't known for being over-impressed by lost causes—and it's a matter of genuine puzzlement to many working class militants that Gwynfor Evans is threatening a hunger strike over the fourth T.V. channel and not over the smashing of the coal and steel industries.

What is it that **Privacy** wants us to do? Surely the party was correct in its principled opposition to devolution? Surely we are correct to oppose separatism? There is no great virtue in having the steelworks closed by Welshmen rather than Englishmen. We can understand that the survival of the language is something that our comrades can agitate on in the North—that the second homes campaign is a natural for socialist agitation—if the paper isn't covering the issues sufficiently then it ought to be.

But we also have to say quite clearly that it suits the Tories for it to be reported that Maggie was pelted with eggs in Swansea over the language question rather than the truth that she was being mobbed over unemployment.

We can argue over the emphasis we give in defending Welsh culture—what we must oppose is any opportunism on the question of political identity. **Privacy's** correctly that the C.P. panders to separatist currents (so by the way do the IMG) and the truth is that it does them very little good. They're in decline because they are out of touch with the rank and file who by and large reject the sentimentalism of "Welshness", "How Green was my Valley" and "Dragons not Dole Queues".

Privacy Cardiff.

Welsh Nationalism And The Socialist Workers Party

Cardiff Branch

Privacy

Privacy

This article is intended as a reply to the article by [redacted] in a Welsh Paper for the S.W.P. I intended only to answer a number of points raised in the article, then look more closely at the Welsh Nationalists themselves and finally draw some conclusions. Wales a Nation?

Wales has never been an independent state, has never developed an independent bourgeoisie and has never played an independent role in the economic development of Britain. Today there is no desire to differentiate Wales and England but still a national consciousness survives in even the most anglicised areas. But this consciousness is most marked in the petty-bourgeois who have dominated Welsh political life since the Industrial Revolution. Originally this domination was exercised through the Liberal Party and Oswald Dwyer, later the Labour Party was to be its instrument, suffering from its usual weaknesses.

It is and ed from rural elements of this class that Iud Cymru and Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Cymraeg (Welsh Language Society) draw their leadership from today. However this class has never attempted to form its own state in the heyday of British Capitalism preferring to share in its spoils instead. (Ideology of the right of nation to self-determination is false, resting on an automatic assertion of nationhood. This has nothing in common with Lenin's formulation which rested on a specific analysis of Eastern Europe and Russia, and was not intended to apply to the advanced capitalism of Western Europe. Today in Britain nationalism of any form can only be reactionary. I DO NOT intend this to refer to Ireland where economic and social developments have proceeded under totally different conditions) therefore it is our duty to fight against it.

North and South, the division between North and South in Wales is almost meaningless for all Welsh workers living in Gwent and the three counties of Glamorgan (approx 50% of all Welsh people live in this area) what is of more significance is the barrier between The Valleys and the coastal belt. The very expressions which C.D. uses "gap and divide" are probably the result of the major part of the population of South Wales. Certainly a "cultural divide" was built but it was built between English and Welsh workers, not between north and south.

Language and Culture

Privacy

Here I go on far former ground and again I disagree with him that on this question we have to split. This can only be remedied by Welsh speaking comrades and if we have more than 9 members I would certainly be surprised.

Plaid Cymru, From The Right Quick March to single under 60 seats P.C. has come a long way. From its foundation in 1923 as a party of the right, by Saunders Lewis to its leadership by Gwynfor Evans it may have changed remarkably little however.

Its first leader was Saunders Lewis, who has since founded Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Cymraeg (Welsh Language Society) to promote his views, whose policy was "a reaction—an attempt to nurture a Welsh conservative party, and to safeguard the civilisation in which we share." (Y Faner, 6 Sept. 1923).

It was during the early 60s that P.C. emerged as a party under the populist leadership of Gwynfor Evans. Yet even for Evans Welsh Nationalism has a reactionary nature, as is evidenced by the following. "Yet by another standard than language, the people of the valleys remained inimitably Welsh. Their political ideas, their style of oratory, their love of singing, their aptitude for rugby, their lack of class consciousness..." It was in 1960 that P.C. obtained their first parliamentary seat at a bye election in Carmarthen. The electoral figures are themselves revealing showing P.C.'s vote coming from all three of the other parties, but mainly it would seem from Liberal and the more peripheral Labour voters so it would seem that the vote comes from relatively privileged social strata.

Since then P.C. has maintained a consistent parliamentary presence, but its elected representatives have never yet come from the North-East or the South and always from areas with strong Welsh speaking populations.

The Welsh Socialist Republican Movement

This new grouping occupies a position somewhere between the positions of Tony Benn and Peter Hain in the Labour Party. And like Benn they are as entrenched in their respective bureaucracy, but like Hain some part of their cadre experiences an irresistible pull to the left.

Their manifesto "Socialism for the Welsh People" by Gareth Miles and Robert Griffiths, and their irregular paper Y Faner Goch (The Red Flag) are both oriented towards the working class unlike previous advocates of Welsh Nationalism. But while solidly entrenched in P.C., they do go so far as to call for a struggle against the Rural Right, in P.C., even saying that it might become necessary to organise a Welsh Socialist Party.

Yet the W.S.R.M. undoubtedly contains some sincere radicals and its politics are in general to the left of the Labour Party's with clear support being given to the Irish struggle, to anti-fascism (at least verbally, none have been active in the A.N.L. in Cardiff), defence of the trade unions and nationalisation. All this adds up to a form of left reformism which can be used by the P.C. right to give it credibility in the industrial areas of Wales in which they have a foothold.

Some Conclusions

The policies put forward by C.D. seem to owe more to the thespies of Fanon than Marx, indeed their logical conclusion would be for the S.W.P. to tail Plaid Cymru. Yet he does point out, correctly I feel, that in the SWP we have neglected to even nod at the Welsh language movement. The difficulty lies in intervening in this movement we certainly cannot advocate that all Welsh members try to learn Cymraeg. The only alternative would be to produce a supplement to Socialist Worker, this could be done on a monthly basis as an insert to the regular paper. (this could also be done in Scotland or

any English region) or an occasional magazine could be issued as the C.P.G.B still do.

As far as nationalism itself is concerned we must reject it totally whether in its Welsh, English or British forms.

The duty of Welsh socialists is to fight for international unity of Welsh and English workers. In Wales we must argue against the reactionary party of nationalism and in England we stress that the future of Wales belongs to the Welsh proletariat only. To supporters of P.C. we must say O.K. vote Plaid then—and see what good it does you.

To finish I would like to quote the theses on The National question adopted at the 1977 conference of the S.W.P. "Its not as nice as being able to earn the applause of one side or another—but it is a distinctive revolutionary position that will enable us to put our politics across!"

Irish Work by Irish sub committee

"Is ionann bua ar impiriulachas agus lagu ar chapilleachas na Breataine agus da bhri sin bua do lucht oibre na Breataine is ea e."

Since last year's Conference there has been a modest upturn in the British struggle and a corresponding modest improvement in our Irish work. Breaking out of the ghetto has proved difficult but a step in the right direction has been undertaken over the past year.

A brief review of the last year. On the P.T.A. we helped organise pickets last December following the large London arrests and on a number of other occasions throughout the country. In January we had the largest contingent on the Birmingham Bloody Sunday demonstration. In Scotland as part of many events throughout the year our comrades staged an Ex-Soldiers Against the War tour. On the March 1st anniversary of the withdrawal of Prisoner Political Status picket protests were staged. The Armagh women prisoners protest engaged many women activists and a large number of WV supporters went to Armagh Jail on International Womens Day. It led to many pickets here in support of the Armagh 11 and 1 via SWSO led to the NUS Conference supporting the Armagh women prisoners. Both Skegness and Marxism '80 held successful Irish meetings. The Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland (CWI) which organised the 1979 August 42th mass demo organised a Withdrawal Forum on June 14th where the most representative trade union and political Irish Conference for years resolved to call a withdrawal demo on the 15th November. On the anniversary of internment 9th-10th August a 150 Troops Out Movement delegation went to Belfast largely at our suggestion. Over half the delegation were members and they participated in the mass demo there and the Rock The H Block rock concert and secured considerable publicity. Finally we launched the Charter 80 Human Rights for Irish Political Prisoners campaign.

In Britain the climate has become more favourable for Irish work. A number of examples suffice. Inside the Labour Party a broader Labour Committee on Ireland campaigning for withdrawal emerged as a result of the 12th August demo and the London Labour Party voted overwhelmingly for withdrawal. The N.E.C. supported the Prisoners and the L.P. Conference has been forced to debate Ireland. The C.P. while formally clinging to the Better Life for all non-existent campaign have been compelled to move to support the Withdrawal demos.

More importantly more militants in the trade union movement are prepared to speak out on Ireland despite the fact that the TUC Congress has not debated Ireland for years. Altogether there is a greater readiness to politically recognise Ireland as an issue, to debate it and a gradual slow move towards building a mass campaign for British Withdrawal.

Obviously the situation in Ireland has a direct bearing on our Irish work and the picture is one of a sustained upturn in the resistance to British Presence. Such as the continuing armed struggle resistance to the British Army military repression. The increase in street demonstrations showing a growing level of support for the Prisoners and the struggle against British rule. The political debate inside the Republican Movement around social ideas and activity. The growing involvement of the Irish Labour Movement particularly in support of the Prisoners. The total failure and inability of Atkins to impose a so called political settlement.

Our Orientation

As far as we are concerned the British working class is the only force this side of the Irish sea capable of forcing the withdrawal of British Troops. We are the only organisation that understands the need to build a mass troops out current in the Labour Movement and has the organisational capability to do so. The character of our intervention on Ireland is important. We need to relate to and engage fellow workers on the Irish issue. Even discussing Ireland in the workplace is sometimes a victory. We need to use united front methods on occasion rather than just simple declarations or direct attack to draw workers into discussion and activity to overcome their existing consciousness. For example we are engaged in a united front in the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland and Charter 80 and that presents us with a greater opportunity and a wider audience within which we can wage and win our troops Out Now arguments. Remember on the mass 12th August demo not only did we engage those supporting withdrawal on a vague basis but we won the largest turnout ever behind our Troops Out Now banners. We don't dilute our politics at all in terms of our demands and propaganda but we work within broader campaigns to reach wider audiences within the working class movement. Merely turning our 4000 members out on a demo which has the correct demands

but which fails to draw fellow workers into debate and activity is not productive however much it might assuage our consciences. The test we apply to an Irish demo or initiative is in what way can it assist in engaging militants in the class and draw them towards our ideas and activity.

Our Tasks

Firstly to politically equip all our members with the arguments on Ireland and to win the mainstream of our party to the recognition that Irish work is a politically integral part of members trade union and political work. In this regard the regular Mike Milotte coverage in SW has been excellent and likewise the dramatic uptake in regular WV coverage. Next years targets SR and IS publications. Of course the next item is the Irish pamphlet. Self criticism as Lenin was telling me yesterday is vital in this business. Our major failing this year (apart from failing to buy the C.G. an atlas) was no pamphlet. However as you read this a SWP Troops Out Now pamphlet is being printed summarising our politics on Ireland and will be available for branches in October. Finally the Ireland Unfree Book will be available in the Next Year.

The other important area here is the strengthening and broadening of the Irish Sub Committee to include C.C. representation and comrades with trade union experience. Also building the Irish activities fund and securing fulltime assistance. It is also necessary to formalise a Northern England Sub Committee and a Scottish Sub Committee. Finally there will be an Irish Day School on Sunday 16th November in London the day after the 15th November demo with major speakers from Ireland.

Secondly to build the two major current Irish initiatives, the November 15th withdrawal demo and Charter 80. The CWI is calling the 15th demo on the following demands: No to Tory Policies on Ireland, End Partition, For British Withdrawal, For Irish Unity. It is the 60th anniversary of Partition and thus the broad appeal for the demo. Trafalgar Square has been applied for to assemble and then march to an indoor rally at Camden Town Hall with an invited platform ranging from Benito Paul Foot and Christy Moore to Linton Johnson. The sponsorship letter with the papers provides us the lever to raise Ireland in the work/place/Trade union branch/trades council and presents us with an audience within which we wage the arguments for unconditional and immediate withdrawal. A mass mobilisation for the demo itself is vital to go beyond the mass 12th August demo. But equally important it presents us with the greatest opportunity to break through on Ireland and widen the terms of the debate within the class. We recognise that in the short term the immediate withdrawal argument is difficult to win immediately. Bloodbath myth tears and demoralise the North first arguments are utilised by liberal, reformist and C.P. currents to block our advance. A tactical assessment has has to be made in the trade union

branch about how best to push forward the perimeters of the debate. We push the immediate withdrawal arguments but if they fail first time round it is necessary to push forward the more general British Withdrawal proposal. It is a step in the right direction if we can succeed in moving the terms of the Irish debate to something than even Labour. Whatever proposals for the situation it is vital that this year we make a determined and co-ordinated attempt to take British Withdrawal through trade union branches to the annual T.U. Conventions and even onto the T.U.C. By establishing a growing momentum of calls for British Withdrawal starting in the workplace we help build the wider ground within which we can wage our politics. Troops Out Now can win and gain greater energies and effectiveness. An essential vehicle for us in this task is our fractions and securing articles in the Bank and File papers and workplace bulletins.

Charter 80 is the other major campaign. Every other day the prisoners protest in the H Blocks and Armagh is in the headlines and an explosion possibly a second strike or a death is likely soon. The campaign is directly pitched at challenging and undermining the process of military rule for political prisoners in our jails in Ireland. The Tories are determined not to give way to the Prisoners but demands for a demand, vital in the Irish struggle that we help build a massive campaign in support of Charter 80. With all human rights last night stick in mind it is vital we have deliberately ensured that "Irish Political Prisoners" is part of the banner of Charter 80. Obviously we need to especially for Tories and the 3 demands movement. Political Struggle and the SWP that is what we stand for. Political Struggle Irish Prisoners of War. That is essential to win a broad base of support for the prisoners 3 demands that can effectively challenge and smash the Tories strategy. A challenge by the Tories would smash their criminalise the war strategy and be a moral boost for the Irish struggle. The Charter 80 approach has already proved valid. Sponsors now range from Tony Blair to Lawrence Daly and particularly from the C.P. like Gordon McLennan to Mick McGrath. The support provided us with a banner paid into the trade union movement making sectarian slipping against irrelevant particularly as the Republican prisoners themselves welcome and helped initiate Charter 80. What remains is for every member to take the Charter 80 3 demands resolution into their branch, organisation, workers group and student union and on up to their N.E.C. An activist campaign is vital and a day of action nationally will be called with the most imaginative publicity seeking projects undertaken in many towns. Other Charter 80 initiatives to follow.

Thirdly campaigning for an immediate and unqualified withdrawal of British Troops and through the N.E.C., SWP and Rebel. Anti P.I.A pickets as necessary following arrests and support for Lawrence Daly.

Council and other similar campaigns should be maintained such as Ex Soldiers against the War.

Fourthly support and liaison with our fraternal organisation in Ireland the Socialist Worker Movement. Their paper The Worker will now be distributed on a regular basis and a document from them outlining their perspective will be in the next IB.

Fifthly our attitude towards the Troops Out Movement. A detailed document will be in the next IB. But in brief there is one TOM in that UTOM was renamed TOM. We recognise that TOM is not the one and only pre occupation of our Irish work in that the organisation has still a narrow base. We support and build TOM insofar as it assists in building a troops out current in the class. At the December Conference we helped secure a centralised structure with an elected Steering Committee. A libertarian leadership inhibited a number of positive initiatives so that at the June TOM Conference we moved a new leadership which included two members and secured a national office and a full timer. We moved support for the Belfast delegation that gave TOM a degree of national profile and publicity. We are for a number of members in each locality joining the TOM branches and supporting specific local and national initiatives in particular a trade union based repeat delegation to Ireland. But not for TOM, nationally or locally being used as substitute for mass involvement by members in important initiatives like Withdrawal and Charter 80. Members should be represented at the next TOM Conference on 13th/14th December in London.

Finally SWP members should justifiably be confident about our record. We have consistently and resiliently carried the major political initiatives on Ireland in this country whilst other currents have undergone political U turns or organisationally dropped in and dropped out of building an Irish solidarity campaign. Confident in our politics and responses. Also when an issue arises obviously comrades should seize the opportunities without waiting for the London based Sub Committee or the C.C. (some of whom are still examining their atlases) to give direction. In the first instance Sinn Fein should be the guideline so that by the Irish activists themselves taking up initiatives we win the whole of the party to the centrality of Irish work.

Conclusion

There is an upturn regarding the political climate on Ireland. The two priority initiatives to build are the 15th November demo and Charter 80. Not least in terms of recruiting and building the party on the basis of our Irish work amongst the Irish community and Irish militants in industry.

Ireland is a juggling thorn in the side of the British ruling class, it refuses simply to wither away. Whether its Mountbatten's demise or Atkin's failed talks Ireland unfree continues to haunt British political life. We have a decisive contribution to make to ensure the victory of Irish Freedom and Socialism. We ignore Ireland at our own peril.

The draft position of the proposed Republican Faction—An interim position on the National question in the United Kingdom.

Privacy

SOUTHWEST SWP
Faction Secretary

1. The S.W.P. takes the view that the United Kingdom should be reconstituted on the basis of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland with England, Scotland and Wales governed as a democratic republic. This would represent a considerable democratic advance and would weaken the most reactionary elements who are opposed to the working class. It would open a clearer path in the struggle for socialism, which can only be established by the working class taking power through their own institutions, (i.e. soviets).

2. The demand for a republic differentiates revolutionary marxism from other political tendencies. Without a democratic republic there can be no socialism. A republic is a necessary, (but not sufficient) condition for socialism. In monarchist countries this should be made clear in the Party's programme.

a) Reformist socialism omits the demand for a republic from its programme. They conveniently forget to mention it whilst in the same breath talking of 'democratic socialism' (i.e. a democratic monarchist socialism.) Their silence reveals their compromise with the existing political system.

b) Anarchist socialism also omits the demand for a republic from its programme. Anarchist tendencies simply wish to abolish the State immediately. Consequently they make no distinction between monarchies and democratic republics. This is an important difference with the marxist theory of the State as set out in 'State and Revolution'. By omitting the demand for a republic from its programme anarchism is the ultra-left twin of reformist socialism.

c) Bourgeois nationalism sees independence as a principle and may include the demand for a republic as part of its programme (cf. Sinn Fein and S.N.P.). The S.N.P. is a pro monarchist party which could adopt a republican stance if it helps win support for independence. The revolutionary marxist position is the opposite, since we see the republic as a principle we would adopt a pro independence position if it aided the struggle for a republic. When bourgeois nationalism takes up the fight for a republic revolutionary marxists must give 'unconditional but critical support'. This means that we support unconditionally the struggle for a republic by whatever means the bourgeois nationalists choose. (parliamentary, military, mass action.)

We do not make a condition of our support that the bourgeois nationalists demand a socialist or workers republic. But this forms the political basis for our criticism of the bourgeois nationalists. If a bourgeois republic should come into existence we are for its replacement by a workers republic as soon as possible. The implication of this is that we should consider united front work with bourgeois republicans, not simply with bourgeois socialists in the Labour Party.

3. It may be the case that the British working class as a whole moves in a republican

direction. In which case we might argue against independence for Scotland and Wales if it seemed likely to provide a base for reactionary forces.

4. Alternatively, republicanism may develop through the smaller nations giving a lead to the English working class. Hence Scottish and Welsh workers would be justified in joining the Irish in struggling for a republic and thereby exercising their right to self-determination.

5. It may be the case that our support for a republic might lead us to support independence (i.e. exercising the right to self-determination). In which case we should make it clear that we support the maximum unity of the working class throughout Britain. We would strongly resist any reactionary attempts to whip up anti-English sentiments among Scottish and Welsh workers. We would strive to maintain the organisational unity of British-wide trade unions and to extend class conscious unity.

6. Class conscious unity is not the same as the unity imposed by the British State and often mirrored within the trade unions and Labour Party (eg their implicit or explicit support for British interests in northern Ireland.) Class conscious unity, even if exercised between workers in dependent political states, could be more effective in producing real solidarity over economic, social and political issues of vital concern to the working class as a whole than the passive organisational unity 'guaranteed' by the trade unions and Labour Party. (eg the failure of trade union officials to extend the Scottish Central Belt rolling strikes of 1974 or the failure of successive Labour Governments to extend progressive social legislation in Scotland).

SUPPORTING THE DRAFT STATEMENT
(in alphabetical order)

Privacy

first

Some notes on the proposed Republican faction

1. At the time of writing we have 32 supporters and we believe that we will be able to gain at least 40. Therefore we would like to claim the right of faction within the rules of the Party. In doing so we would ask the C.C. to explain its position in relation to the points we are making. We think this would be useful to Party members because with the passing of the Devolution referendum it is no longer clear what the policy of the Party is.

2. We would like to stress that we do not see our proposed faction as "oppositious" in the way that factions are sometimes thought of. We simply have a limited point to make on a particular area of Party policy. Consequently we see no reason why in principle, some if not all the CC should not consider adopting our draft (perhaps with amendments) as proposed basis for Party policy.

3. The draft statement is seen by us as a general statement of position based on marxist theory. At the same time it is not a substitute for an analysis of the different development of the nationalist movements in the differing historical circumstances. Such analysis must be made in addition to a general position. Neither is our draft statement a substitute for a consideration about how, or around what issues, we might relate to nationalist movements (e.g. political prisoners in Ireland, Welsh language, devolution referendum). However some form of general statement is necessary to enable us to find our bearings in particular circumstances.

4. The danger for the Party in the case of Wales and Scotland is that we could be seen as ignoring the national question and then at some later stage be seen to switch, in commit the Party to supporting independence for Scotland and Wales. *But* it does say how it is that we might come to adopt such a position. Therefore it would enable the Party to make such a transition in its position (see paragraphs 3 & 4). This is why we called it an 'interim' position.

5. Finally if any comrade would like to support our position please contact one of the comrades supporting the faction or write to me s/o.

Privacy

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S.E.5. In addition we will be considering organising a national meeting to consider the draft and other matters.

Privacy

South London

SOME NOTES ON THE REPUBLICAN FACTION

Alex Calinicos

Two separate issues are raised by the contradictions in the 'Interim position on the National Question in the United Kingdom'. One is that of the national question, the other that of the demand for a democratic republic. These are not clearly distinguished in the document, but there is clearly a difference between supporting, say, national independence for Scotland, and campaigning for the abolition of the monarchy in the existing British state.

On the national question, our position is that developed by Lenin and the early Comintern: support for the right of self-determination (including secession) of oppressed nations. The continued British occupation of the Six Counties is a clear case of national oppression and our position is therefore unequivocal: Troops Out of Ireland, Self-Determination for the Irish People. The case of the national movements in Scotland and Wales is by no means so clear-cut, since it is not obvious that the Scottish and Welsh peoples are oppressed in the sense that the Bretons or Ukrainians are, and the SNP is a bourgeois reformist party whose growth is a result of the decline of British capitalism rather than the subjection of Scotland to English rule. Our position, as stated at length in *Theses on the National Question* adopted by the 1977 party Conference, is that the main enemy is the existing British state and that in no circumstances will we defend the integrity of that state against the nationalists (as Labour opponents of devolution do). At the same time, separation from the United Kingdom, let alone local assemblies in Edinburgh and Cardiff, represent no solution to the problems facing Scottish and Welsh workers whose interests lie in the widest possible unity of workers. To put it in a nutshell—the heritage and continued reality of British occupation of Ireland mean that self-determination for the Irish people is a pre-condition for unity between British and Irish workers, while Scottish and Welsh independence at the present time would probably make it more difficult to unite workers in Great Britain. Therefore, while we defend the right of self-determination of the Scottish and Welsh peoples, we do not argue that they should exercise that right and secede from the United Kingdom. The question of principle, then, is opposition to the existing British state and support for the right of self-determination; this has to be balanced against an assessment of the balance of forces opposing and supporting devolution/independence at any time. Getting the balance right requires quite careful tactical judgement—in my view, conference got it wrong in 1978 when it decided to call for abstention rather than a 'Yes' vote in the referendum on devolution, but that is water under the bridge.

Where the document goes haywire is less its discussion of the national question than the claim that 'without a democratic republic there can be no socialism. A republic is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for socialism'. Now, it is true that revolutionary socialists have always regarded one form of

bourgeois rule as offering the widest possible opportunities for the development of the workers' movement—namely, bourgeois democracy: the rights and freedoms that this state-form involves, in however limited and restricted a form, provide a framework within which independent working-class organisations can flourish. Therefore, from Marx and Engels onwards the communist tradition has stressed the importance of the labour movement fighting for the most advanced form of political democracy as a precondition for socialist revolution—after all, the Russian proletariat overthrew Absolutism and established their own dictatorship in eight short months (it is true, if my memory serves me right, that Kerensky abolished the monarchy shortly before the October revolution—would the Bolsheviks have failed if he had not issued this decree?). Moreover, none of the classical marxists harboured any illusions about bourgeois democracy. First, effective popular control of the state is denied by a variety of means—no right of recall of MPs, the separate of legislative and executive, the 'independence' of the judiciary, etc. Second, the repressive state apparatus is no weaker in a bourgeois democracy than in a dictatorship; it may often be stronger. Third, mass consent to capitalist class domination is organised through intermediaries—above all, the trade union bureaucracy and the reformist parties.

The struggle for democratic demands assumes particular importance under regimes which fall short of bourgeois democracy. The potentially explosive character of such a struggle should be obvious from the cases of Poland and South Africa today. Under the Tsar one of the Bolsheviks' main demands was for a democratic republic. And in Germany before 1914, where the government was not responsible to the national parliament elected by universal manhood suffrage and where the Parliament of the largest state, Prussia, was elected on a limited franchise heavily weighted in favour of the rural *landowners* (landowners), Rosa Luxemburg argued that the Social-Democratic Party should organise mass strikes demanding the democratisation of the state as a means to developing the revolutionary conscious necessary to overthrow capitalism. More generally, of course, Trotsky argued that the struggle for democratic reforms could lead directly to workers' power.

The question is whether the basis exists for such a struggle in Britain today. The answer must be, no. The basic structure of the British state is no different from that of the other western capitalist countries. The continued existence of the monarchy, the House of Lords and so on could not be allowed to obscure that reality. One shrewd bourgeois commentator pointed out more than a century ago that 'no-one can approach to an understanding of the English institutions ... unless they divide them into two classes ... first, those which excite and preserve the reverence of the population—the dignified parts, ... and next, the efficient parts—those by which it in fact works and rules' (W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution* p. 61). A series of political crises from the 1832 Reform Bill to the 1927 Abdication have shown that neither of the two 'parts', the monarch and the

can resist the will of the 'efficient parts', the Cabinet backed by the House of Commons. It does not follow that parliament runs the country—it merely registers the results of general elections and provides lobby-fodder for the government, which itself is subject to the pressure of the bureaucracy, the City, big business, the IMF, Washington, the judges—and sometimes even its own back-benchers. The idea that the British state is somehow less advanced or democratic than other western capitalist states cannot be substantiated—despite differences of structure (the US and West Germany are federal states, the US and France have powerful directly elected presidents, the German courts can declare parties 'unconstitutional' etc), they all have the same basic form. (The myth of British backwardness is largely a product of the old populist idea that the country is run by a 'quasi-feudal aristocracy' rather than a modern bourgeoisie, a notion developed with some sophistication by the *The Breakup of Britain*. This theory was completely demolished by Edward Thompson in his famous essay 'Peculiarities of the English'.)

This does not mean that anti-monarchist propaganda may not sometimes be of importance. First, there is the *ideological* role of the monarchy. The Queen may have little effective power, but she is a powerful symbol of national unity. To quote the cynical Bagehot again: 'The Monarchy ... gives now a vast strength to the entire Constitution by enlisting on its behalf the credulous obedience of enormous masses' (p.89). No-one who remembers the Jubilee should dispute this, and *Socialist Worker*, when the opportunity arises, it's take a swipe at the royal family (as in the 'Sod the Jubilee' front page). But we should remember that the significance of the monarchy here is as part of a complex ideology involving other themes—patriotism, the War, racialism, for example—which will be broken down less through propaganda than as people's ideas about society in general change through their experience of struggle around specific issues.

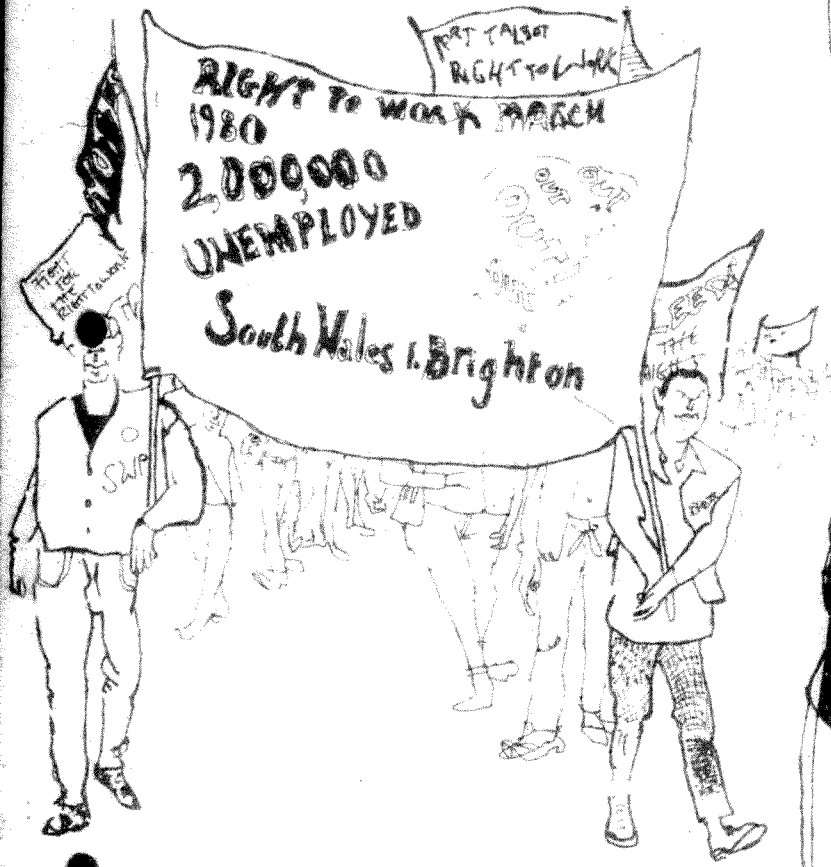
Second, there may be particular cases where the 'dignified parts' of the constitution become of direct political importance. Remember the role of the House of Lords in sabotaging some of the legislation of the Callaghan government in its latter days. And there might well be circumstances in which reactionary forces used the monarchy, for example, to get rid of a left-wing Labour government (George V played an important role in the fall of the 1931 Labour government). There might then arise the need in this specific situation to campaign actively for the abolition of the monarchy or of the House of Lords. But this is very different from making the democratic republic a matter of *strategic* necessity, without which 'there can be no socialism'. This is, quite frankly, nonsense. It might be that the monarchy was abolished before the overthrow of capitalism as an incidental by-product of the class struggle; it is equally likely that one of the first jobs of the new

British workers' republic will be to evict the Windsor family from Buckingham Palace and other government property. To say that we *must* get rid of the monarchy before we can think of socialism is to accept a version of the stalinist stages theory, according to which the bourgeois-democratic revolution... must precede the socialist revolution. In the first place, the bourgeois-democratic revolution was victorious in England more than three centuries ago when one of the Queen's ancestors had his head cut off. In the second place, there is no rigid division between the struggle for democratic rights and that for socialism.

This is after all the meaning of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution: the working class, fighting to defend or extend democratic rights, can transform this struggle into one which threatens the very basis of capitalist rule and poses the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Republican Faction, then, because it mechanically separates democratic and class struggles into separate 'stages', has adopted a misguided interpretation of British history, is onto the wrong track. Its intervention may, however, serve some 'useful' purpose. First, there is a tendency to discount the potential significance of national movements within Great Britain. The defeat of devolution and the temporary eclipse of the SNP should not make us complacent: the nationalists could well revive in the right circumstances, posing us serious tactical problems. Secondly (and this is something the comrades did not raise, but perhaps should have) we from time to time find ourselves involved in opposing encroachments onto existing democratic rights. Our Anti-SPG campaign and E.P. Thompson's defence of trial by jury are two recent cases. Some discussion of the place of civil liberties issues in our work might at some stage be useful. All this, of course, is rather less grandiose than the perspective advocated by the comrades, but is probably a bit closer to reality.

INTERNAL BULLETIN



SWP Internal Bulletin
November 1980
Pre Conference
Issue 2
20p

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NEXT INTERNAL BULLETIN -all articles by Monday 24 November.
-Please type all contributions.

CONFERENCE DATES Saturday 13 December to Tuesday 16 December.

RESOLUTIONS to Conference by Monday 24 November.



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Problems of United Front Work Central Committee

The Evolution of the Labour Party.

In the spring of 1979 the Labour Party, dominated by the Callaghan-Healey right wing, polled its lowest share of the total vote in a general election since 1931. Individual membership had declined to between a quarter and a fifth of the strength it had in 1951—from well over a million to between 200-250,000 in real (paper) members.

The performance of the Labour left in the period 1974-79 was pathetically feeble. The leading 'lefts' (including Foot, Benn, Shore and Silkin) all held office in the most right wing government since the war prior to Thatcher.

By the Autumn a certain reaction was apparent. The left revived. Choosing to fight on the so-called 'constitutional' issues; reselection of MPs, control of the election manifesto, election of party leader, they carried the 1979 conference against the right in several votes. This year the Conference reaffirmed compulsory reselection of MPs and voted again for a 'wider franchise' for leadership elections (by a hairsbreadth) but failed to agree on a method for realising it.

Notwithstanding the fairly accidental character of the results (the left victory on the leadership issue is said to have been due to the absence of the two leading right wing officials of the Boilermakers) they are probably irreversible in the sense that the right is now forced to fight on the method of implementing them rather than for the status quo.

The question is how significant all this is in terms of a real shift to the left by the labour party. Certainly the right is far from being decisively defeated. The PLP election for leader, outcome unknown at the time of writing, is an indication of this. Significantly only Benn of the leading lefts has repudiated it.

Still we must reckon on a continuing struggle in the Labour Party and the possibility of its being (temporarily) 'destabilised' as the reliable alternative government of British capitalism.

The labour party probably has some 50,000 plus activists (defined on the basis of a low level of activity). In spite of an influx of Trotskyists and ex revolutionaries there is no reliable indication of any marked growth here. However this does not mean that the arguments especially of the Bennite left are confined to a smallish circle.

On the contrary they undoubtedly reach a much larger layer, especially in the unions. Most of the people we work with and will be working with are influenced by them in varying degrees. The media campaigns against the

labour left can only strengthen this trend.

A contradictory development is worth noting here. In the second half of the 70s there was a marked shift to the right in the balance of forces in the union hierarchies (in general). Nevertheless, the TUC adopted the essentials of the alternative Economic Strategy before the Callaghan Government fell. This illustrates that 'left wing' economic nationalism is by no means particularly left but it also indicates the political bankruptcy of the labour right, which has not been able to produce any coherent policy alternative.

Now the Labour party too has accepted the AES (and without a card vote) in spite of the fact that the right knows that it is unacceptable to the ruling class under present circumstances. Conflicts are being built in, conflicts which will also have their effect in terms of the thinking of active trade unionists over the next few years.

The positive side of all this for the SWP, and it is a very important side is a degree of re-politicisation of a substantial layer of workers. The politics are reformist but they are also, by their nature, oppositional.

This gives us excellent opportunities to intervene with our ideas. We can get a hearing to the extent that we are seen as a force and that depends, above all, on the development of joint activities of many kinds with leftward moving people. The question of united front work is going to be exceptionally important in the period ahead.

The United Front Tactic—Basic Ideas

We did not, of course, invent the idea of the united front approach. It was developed, long ago, by the Communist parties before they succumbed to Stalinism. Trotsky explained the matter as follows:

"The progress of the class towards class consciousness, that is, the building of a revolutionary party, is a complex and a contradictory process. The class is not homogenous. Its different sections arrive at class consciousness by different paths and at different times. The bourgeoisie participates actively in this process. Within the working class it creates its own institutions, or utilises those already existing in order to oppose certain strata of workers against others. Within the working class it creates its own institutions, or utilises those already existing, in order to oppose certain strata of workers against others. Within the proletariat several parties are active at the same time. Therefore, for the greater part of its political journey, it remains split politically..."

But the proletariat moves towards revolutionary consciousness not by passing grades in school but by passing through the class struggle, which abhors interruptions. To fight, the proletariat must have unity in its ranks. This holds true for partial economic conflicts within the walls of a single factory as well as such 'national' battles as the one to repel Fascism. Consequently, the tactic of the united front is not something accidental and artificial - a cunning manoeuvre - not at all; it originated entirely and wholly in the objective conditions governing the development of the

proletariat.

One or two points about the united front tactic are frequently misunderstood.

First, it is not a substitute for building the party, it is a means of building the party. A great deal of nonsense has been put about on this issue. Thus the IMG during its 'Socialist Unity' phase continually denounced us as 'sectarian' because we would not submerge our party identity in the various 'fronts' it was trying to promote. The whole 'fragments' tendency has, as its only real common ground, a sharp hostility to the struggle to build a powerful revolutionary party—which it calls 'sectarian'.

Real sectarianism is abstention from the actual struggles going on, on the grounds that they are not 'pure'. In its more extreme forms it leads to a purely propagandistic approach to politics combined with virulent denunciation of those who try to work in the actual struggle for all manner of sins.

To understand the absolute necessity of building the party, in our case the SWP, has nothing whatever to do with sectarianism. It is the mark of political seriousness.

But isn't there a contradiction between saying that the united front tactic is central and, at the same time, speaking of the absolute necessity to build the party?

No, because we envisage the building of the party in struggle. We do not, in any actual struggle—at Gardiners at the moment for example—artificially counterpose the growth of the party to the immediate need for a fighting unity in action. We fight to create that unity which is essential to win the dispute and at the same time seek to attract people to the SWP on the basis of our activity and ideas, on the basis that we are the best, most serious fighters as an organisation and not simply as individuals.

Nor is there a contradiction between our genuine and wholehearted commitment to a particular struggle (eg the anti-missile campaign) and our determination to strengthen the SWP in the course of it.

The party is necessary to win on any but a purely episodic basis, even partial aims which fall far short of socialism.

Most of those we work with do not understand or do not accept this, or they adhere to the labour Party or some other body. That is the nature of the case with united Front activity. We do not approach them on the basis of an ultimatum—join the party or you are no good. That is sectarian stupidity. We seek rather to show the relevance of our politics in the course of the struggle and to win people on that basis.

For this, the independent presence of the party is essential. Whatever organisational compromises may be necessary in various operations, the SWP as such must always advocate openly its whole political position. We do not deceive our temporary allies (that is the essence of the 'frontism' the CP used to practice and it is always counter productive) by representing ourselves as other than we are.

Second, the united front tactic is always

aimed at creating some kind of *activity* in the mass movement). A united front for propaganda is always wrong in principle. An agreement between small groups, for whatever reason, is not a united front *unless* it can lead to drawing much larger numbers into some kind of action.

The fundamental assumption is that if workers (or students etc) are drawn into action, their self confidence—and so their openness to our ideas of workers' power—is increased. Those who do not accept this have not yet grasped the ABC of communist politics.

Of course, 'mass' is a relative term. It means, in our present situation, real forces beyond our ranks. And these forces will be under reformist influence in varying degrees. To the extent that the operation is big, by our standards, it will involve a relationship with reformist leaders, local or national.

This is a very difficult problem. It is easy to repeat the slogan 'the first rule in a united front is systematic mistrust of your allies.' It is also quite inadequate. The statement is true, so far as it goes but it can easily lead to sectarian attitudes unless it is correctly understood.

Let us put the matter another way. The left reformist leaders (right down to local union officials, left MPs, etc) have one foot in the camp of 'respectable' bourgeois politics, their other foot is in the working class movement. So long as the movement is passive there is no great contradiction here. Once there is a real struggle which attracts ruling class hostility (and so the hostility of the Labour right, their agents) the pressure on the lefts to compromise increases massively. Given their politics (and personal situation) they always tend to capitulate.

Now a united front operation is always, by definition, for *limited ends* ... ends that we genuinely support (e.g. against these redundancies, that victimisation or, more broadly, for the right to work or against the fascists) but which fall well short of our overall aims.

The reformists have agreed to the limited ends (often under our pressure) We do not break with them because they will not, go *beyond* these ends but if, and only if, they renege on them.

In the end, and in big scale struggles that shake the foundations of bourgeois society, the reformist leaders must renege or cease to be reformists. We then aim to win their supporters to us *because* they sold out on the fight for the limited ends.

Our experience

However, in the present situation, the *major* problem is to develop activity in opposition to the Tories and the right wing. The exposure of the lefts can be left to events provided we maintain a clear independent SWP political presence. The greater danger for us now is to lose the opportunities for united front work now opening up.

So much for the general considerations. We have also certain concrete experiences.

Practice always differs from general theory because the concrete circumstances are always more or less unique. So our experiences of united front work to date all, in one way or another, present special features.

In principle all our rank and file groups are based on the united front tactic. In practice, over the last half decade, the rightward drift of the trade union lefts have turned most of them into groups of SWP members and sympathisers. This is not mainly a matter of tactical mistakes—although some may have been made—but of the objective situation.

In present circumstances the fractions need to be on the lookout for opportunities to broaden rank and file appeal. The *Engineers Charter* intervention in the AUEW presidential election is an example of a systematic attempt to force sections of the Broad Left into united activity, an intervention that is having a positive spin-off in the Gardner's dispute.

Right to Work

The Right to Work Campaign was our earliest substantial and sustained attempt at a general united front. It was launched (in late 1975) at a time when the downturn and consequent rightward shift were gathering force and when a section of our own membership was succumbing to it (leading to a shift off to the right at the end of 1975). Denounced as an 'SWP front' by the CP, the sects and many of our ex-members, the problem for us was to promote the activity (the first march was in early 1976), which depended almost entirely on our members and sympathisers, whilst fighting very hard to broaden the union support and establish a credible base which was clearly within the SWP periphery.

This persistent struggle has obviously borne fruit and has played a real role in establishing the credibility of the SWP. The 1980 march attracted the broadest support thus far and on October 10 the forces we were able to mobilise around the RTWC certainly well exceeded those the left reformists organised independently.

The ANL had a different origin to the extent that it proved possible to involve more than a token number of left reformists at an early stage. This had not been possible with the RTWC due to unfavourable circumstances.

The ANL started as a bloc between various left MPs etc and the SWP for a very limited aim to fight the NF. As with the RTWC our comrades did the donkey work but the bloc was able to attract forces well beyond the drawing capacity of either component on their own. This is an important characteristic of an effective united front.

A feature of the ANL was that we felt it essential to retain a sizeable influence on the 'machine' because of the need to prevent the whole operation being derailed by ultra-left phrasemongers or 'constitutional' opportunists. The decision was absolutely right in the circumstances.

Both the RTWC and the ANL are examples of successful united front operations. Neither can be mechanically copied, precisely because every situation has special characteristics.

Conclusion

A general proposition: we must seek to put ourselves at the centre of a significant movement of opposition to the Tories, national and local, when ever we possibly can.

Therefore we have to involve ourselves in united front work, both informal and formal, whenever any opportunity or half opportunity offers. This will involve learning how to deal in practice with the various pitfalls that it inevitably involves. Concrete and detailed discussion and exchange of experiences will be necessary in each case. But the greatest danger is to fail to get seriously involved.

Anti Nazi Work Central Committee

Last year's conference document concluded: 'Although we have been reasonably successful in checking the Nazis this time, the economic and social conditions in which they could flourish still exist and indeed will get worse. The ANL therefore has to aim to maintain its structure intact and be in a position to respond should the need arise.'

The economic and social conditions have worsened. The Nazis are growing. How should we respond?

The evidence for the growth of the fascists—despite the splits and demoralisation following the General Election—is now visible and widespread. There is an increased amount of racist and fascist graffiti, more fascist publications are being circulated, more leaflets are being distributed. There would seem to be an increase in racist and anti-gay violence, and a number of attacks on socialists and meetings have been reported recently. The number and scale of Nazi marches has increased.

The continued growth of the Nazis will depend, in large measure, on the scale of working class resistance to the Tories and employers. The Right to Work March and the occupation of Gardners assist, in a small way, the struggle against fascism. However, in treating the sewers we cannot afford to ignore the rats. If we do they will increase in number and become a bigger threat at a later date. Before dealing with how we respond, let's consider the specific features of the New Growth of the Nazis.

1. *Size and penetration.* The ANL pushed the NF back into the gutter of British politics... they are still there. We branded them as Nazis and they have a long way to go before they regain their popular appeal. That success is particularly evident in unions like the UCW and on the railways. We estimate that the total number of card-carrying fascists (in the NF, BM, NNF, NFCM, and BDP) is in the order of 5000 (taking account of those with dual membership). That compares with about 15,000 in the NF at their height, with another 10,000 plus in the NP etc. But we have to be careful, as there are signs, the recent Hoxton demo for example, that some of the older fascists are prepared to crawl back out of the woodwork.

2. *Youth.* Our big problem is that the Nazis are attracting a good deal of support from working class white youth in many areas. Many are not formally members of Nazi organisations. There is a strong cultural element in the

attraction—skins, two-tone music, football hooliganism, identification with swastikas and Hitler... is not a problem for the fascists in winning youth support. Underpinning all this is a concern for machismo and opposition to the establishment. In some areas, the APL, the Anti-Paki League, is now said to mean the Anti-Police League. Anarchist type graffiti can be seen alongside fascist scrawlings.

Organising RAR gigs (with the Youth rather than for the Youth) and leafletting football matches, doles and particularly schools should be undertaken. We must try to break the association of fascism with skinheads. There were a number of skins on the Right to Work march (many Nazis would term them redskins!) Most of all we have to relate to the youth on the basis of *anti-establishment action.* Action directed at the bosses, Tories and police, not the blacks.

The RTWC and NUSS provide the best vehicles for such action. The comrade who fly-posted a Right to Work Campaign October 10th poster alongside an ANL Keep the Nazis Off the Streets poster had the right idea. There are contradictions involved in the Nazis attracting working class youth. The BM, for instance, recognise that their skinhead support will frighten off potential petty bourgeois and older working class members. They are prepared to accept this for the time being, and countenance the possibility of using youths as a 'flying-picket' to break strikes in the future, thereby winning back some of the p.b. support. Nevertheless, the support that the BM and NF are winning from youths (some quite young) is a problem for us now. This is not least because the kids who are attracted towards the Nazis are the same rebellious individuals that we want to draw towards the SWP. The responsibility for this work cannot be left in the hands of our few school student members. 30 year olds are just as good at handing out leaflets as 13 year olds!

3. *Propaganda.* NF as well as BM publications have become increasingly anti-semitic. The old conspiracy theories and examinations of Hitler's record have been trotted out. In terms of agitation the Nazis have tried to relate to the crisis with slogans like: 'British jobs for British Workers' (NF at Corby in particular); 'Ban all foreign trade' (particularly NNF in Hull) and 'Stop the degeneration of Northern industry' (BM in Dewsbury). ANL propaganda will have to relate to these arguments.

4. *International.* The atrocities in Bologna, Munich and Paris have regenerated a concern to that concern and point out the links between the organisations responsible for those atrocities and the NF, BM and League of St George in this country.

5. *Violence.* The increased level of violence associated with the Nazis has already been mentioned. Much of the violence seems to be

spontaneous, but it serves to provide excitement and activity... which are important elements in holding youth supporters. Current levels of violence also help to prepare young fascists psychologically for more cold-blooded, planned acts like those on the continent. Stareage and occasional use of arms by Nazis in this country, coupled with the increased violence and the events in Europe, make atrocities more likely in this country. There is no point in becoming hysterical... very little can be done once a bomb has been planted. What we can do is work to reduce support for the Nazis, and ensure that there is a massive outburst in reaction to any atrocity.

Much more of a problem is the violence which usually affects us now. Clearly, we must take proper precautions in stewarding meetings, gigs, etc. In some areas paper sales and leafletting will have to be better organised, involving more people. These activities should not be seen simply as chores, but also as a means of involving wider layers. After a CP meeting was attacked, recently, the participants understood much better the importance of the united front! Where black people or gays organise self-defence we should offer our support, and urge trade union support through funding and involvement. When comrades are attacked the biggest mistake is to do nothing and hope the problem will go away—that will only give them confidence and demoralise our members.

Much more important is the way we react politically to acts of violence against our people—they must be publicised in leaflets, press, meetings etc and used as the catalyst for a counter-offensive, involving more people in leafletting and (hopefully) sweeping them off the streets. It should be made clear that we are opposed to our members and supporters engaging in unprovoked acts of violence against Nazis (or people who look like Nazis). This will only lead to retaliation, usually at a higher level. We are more susceptible to such spirals of violence than they are, because we feed on class struggle and open campaigning whereas they feed on fear and violence. We remain in support of attempts to stop them marching, meeting, organising, selling or leafletting. In situations where we cannot afford to do this for (eg) fear of attacks on our sales, we will need to go away and build up the necessary support first.

All too often comrades try to react to specific acts, without taking account of the general context. The general context is one of increasing Nazi activity. Unless we react by developing generalised, active opposition, Nazi intimidation is bound to increase and hamper our work.

BM. The main features of nazi growth outlined above—youth, violence, openly Nazi identification—are reflected in the growth of the British Movement. The scale of the growth is not yet clear. In Dewsbury, they attracted only 40 sympathisers and were unable to march. In Welling, they were joined by 300 (mostly local) youngsters. Nevertheless we must take account of the BM in our

propaganda and organising. In the longer term the NF are probably the bigger threat. They are still the largest Nazi organisation, and they will probably have less difficulty than the BM in broadening the social basis of their organisation.

The ANL response

If the ANL did not exist we would have to create it. Revolutionaries have always favoured unity in action and the development of a united front organisation in the fight against fascism. This is partly because it strengthens the struggle against the Nazis; partly because in the long term it will assist us in drawing support away from the reformists. Nationally the ANL is our best link with the CP and the Labour left; locally this is often also the case. The working class movement has been strengthened enormously by our creation of a single organising and co-ordinating centre in opposition to the Nazis. It is of great importance to us and the movement as a whole that whatever the level of struggle against the Nazis we retain the ANL, nationally and locally, in a sufficient state to respond to increasing Nazi activity.

Below is a statement from the ANL steering committee. It contains a perspective for an increased level of ANL activity and improved organisation. We intend that the statement will be circulated widely within the movement to alert people to the present problems and the need for a response. It is worth adding a few words:

1. *Propaganda.* A general leaflet and a school students leaflet (jointly with NUSS) are in preparation. We are planning leaflets on the BM and on unemployment. We would like to produce leaflets directed at blacks, trade unionists, and football supporters. We are also producing two new posters. Whether we are able to produce more posters, leaflets and badges depends partly on receiving good, powerful designs and partly on money.

2. *Counter-demonstrations.* Counter-mobilisations remain important for the ANL but there is a problem. Local turn-out in opposition to the Nazis has mostly been good on recent demos e.g. Catford, Nuneaton, Dewsbury, Welling; but support from the SWP and 'hard' ANL members has declined, particularly in London. Approaching 3000 supported the Southwark mobilisation, there were about 2000 at Catford, under 200 at Hoxton (admittedly with little notice) and about 600 at Welling. In that time the centre's commitment to a large mobilisation has increased as the threat has become more evident.

The SWP is in favour of attacking Nazi demos, and where possible stopping them. In practice, the scale of police mobilisation, particularly in London, prevents this from occurring. We should be quick to take advantage of opportunities if they arise; but comrades should not turn on the organisers if they don't, as we rarely have the numbers to really take the initiative—even Leicester owed a lot

to good fortune! In part the answer to the problem lies in working for bigger mobilisations. That cannot be done by enlarging the catchment area that SWP members are expected to come from—that is substitutionist and produces diminishing returns. It can only be done by involving people outside the Party, i.e. as part of the process of rebuilding the ANL. In part the answer also lies in recognising that we support counter-mobilisations for reasons in addition to physically smashing the bastards. For instance, at Welling, if there had been no mobilisation the Police would have marched the Nazis past Welling Corner and along the main roads. As a result they would have gained greater confidence, and our activists and black people locally would have been demoralised and begun to regard Welling as a 'no-go' area. In the end we scored a partial victory by mobilising greater numbers than the BM and by occupying Welling Corner. Nazi marches will inevitably be a focus for anti-fascist activity whether we make them so or not. We should measure the success of counter-mobilisations in terms of strengthened ANL organisation, people drawn into contact with and closer to the SWP (particularly blacks) and the confidence of our activists compared with theirs, and not just in terms of the number of bricks thrown. We are fighting a war, not just a succession of battles.

3. Events

The ANL is planning an International anti-Fascist Rally, to take place at the beginning of December in London. We hope to have major speakers from Italy, France and Germany. The rally will publicise the links between the different fascist organisations. In the new year the ANL intends to hold a major Youth conference against Fascism.

4. *Organisation.* Nationally, organisation is already being improved. The ANL has a new office and new organisers. Time will have to be spent in improving funding, particularly through affiliations and bankers orders. Hopefully SWP members will take advantage of the bankers orders to obtain regular income from sympathisers who wouldn't regularly contribute to the SWP. A full, national conference of the ANL is planned for the end of February.

Most important is what happens in each locality. It is crucial that each area/town has an ANL secretary/convenor—someone people locally can turn to if anything in particular happens and someone the ANL Office can turn to to respond to national/regional initiatives. In some areas that will be the limit of organisation for much of the time. In other areas it will be appropriate to have more active groups/committees meeting say monthly. More important are the people who can be involved in activities e.g. in response to counter-demos, local pickets, leafletting, paint-outs, fly-posting, defence of meetings. We should always be looking to involve new people in the ANL—at the moment that means youth particularly.

This article has not dealt with the Nationality Act, deportations etc. They will be covered in another article on Racism and Black Work.

This article has aimed at arguing for increased ANL activity in response to the new growth of the fascists. We do not expect the ANL to return to the 78/9 scale of operation—that is neither necessary or possible. We do expect the ANL to be taken seriously by every district and branch. We are not the only ones concerned about the Nazis. In the process of working with others who share our concern (possibly for different reasons) we can expect to recruit some—this is particularly important with black people and school students.

Womens Perspective by Central Committee

It is already a truism that the crisis hits women workers harder than men. Their double role, as workers in industry and in the home, lays them open to double the number of attacks from Tories.

Women are often on the receiving end of the Tory attacks on workers. The Employment Act with its restrictions on picketing, the closed shop and maternity leave will mean that in many of the small and/or badly organised workplaces where women have often traditionally worked, conditions will become worse. Many parttime jobs are being hit by the growing wave of redundancies and closures announced daily.

The official unemployment figures stand at over 2 million. Many women don't bother to sign on as they aren't eligible for benefit.

Privacy in WV estimated that the real figures including those women are another half million. Cash lists in the public sector will hold womens wages down, while much of the private sector also looks like settling well below the rate of inflation. All of which means real poverty since one in every two working class families rely on the womans wage to keep above the poverty limit.

No: can women seek comfort from the social services. Benefits are being kept at lower than the rate of inflation which means cuts in real terms. Child benefit increases by a miserly 75p. Prescription charges, rises in the cost of school dinners, increase in VAT to 15% all means more cuts in already depleted family budgets.

The scenes at St Benedicts in recent weeks show the determination of the Tories in closing hospitals. Many of the patients are expected to go back 'into the community', in other words into the home to be cared for by women.

The response from the working class movement, and from women within it to these attacks has been some responses in the public sector, there has not been a generalised fightback. Just as there have not yet been occupations of factories against redundancy and closure, so women have not been fighting the ending of twilight shifts.

There have been small protests in localities over closures of hospitals, schools, transfer of teachers, visits from Tory ministers, many of which have been lively and militant, but little activity based in the workplace.

The Womens Movement

The womens movement in Britain has been around over ten years now and, composed of educated and mainly professional women, is sizeable and confident. At the start it identified and was involved with strikes like the early equal pay ones and the night cleaners. Certainly up till the mid 70s—a period of upward class struggle and Tory government—the WM identified clearly with the working class movement.

The crisis has not unfortunately passed the WM by, and today its position is much more equivocal. Activity of any sort, and often especially activity round strikes and other workers issues, is now often low on the agenda. Consciousness raising—always central to the womens movement—has now been raised to the only principle for many women. This reflects itself in increased emphasis recently (even from socialists inside the movement) on 'patriarchy' as something distinct from class society, on the need to fight patriarchy as well as (or even, instead of) capitalism and the need to separate women out from the struggles of men in order to develop their own consciousness. Emphasis on patriarchy leads to the sorts of reformist conclusions or worse that we saw at the Beyond the Fragments conference. Of course the patriarchy/capitalism analysis fits in with such organisations as the Communist Party.

A second feature of the WM has been the failure of the movement to come to terms with the first woman prime minister. Since Thatcher election, many women in the movement have refused to attack her on the grounds that such an attack is an attack on all women. The WV badge 'Thatcher degrades women' is our response to that. The attacks on women by her show that she doesn't act in the interests of women, but in the interest of her own class—a class to which we (and many women in the WM) are totally opposed and which we want to overthrow.

However, that such an argument can play such an important role shows the inward looking nature of much of the WM today. It renders the vast majority incapable of being active in the class struggle and in general anti-Tory campaigning.

Significantly, many sections of the WM were not involved in its most successful campaign over the last year, the Campaign against Corrie. This campaign involved more Tuists, more working class women, larger demonstrations and more militant action. It also defeated the bill. Yet what was lacking in many areas was the active participation of individuals in the WM. It was left to members of socialist organisations and small numbers of radical feminists to make the running.

Prospects

The situation is not easy for us but it does present us with many opportunities. We know that women are under attack. We have to try to be part of the fightback against those attacks, however fragmented and however small. The situation and our size means that we cannot initiate our own campaigns very often. Instead what we have tried to do movement which involved us and organisations much larger or more influential than us—trade union bodies, the Labour party, the Communist Party—in joint activity round specific anti-Tory activity aimed at getting the Tories out. We know that in such a situation larger numbers of people can be involved and within that framework we have a wider audience to argue our tactics over a campaign and our general politics as well. Such an approach is the best way we have of building Womens Voice at the present time.

As we predicted a year ago, WV has not grown in leaps and bounds. We knew that the situation did not allow that. However we have been able to maintain our paper sale, and our membership, that we had previously. WV is now the only other regular monthly womens paper apart from Spare Rib. Our WV groups are small but they exist; in a few areas we have lost groups, in a few other areas we have built new ones out of the last year. Anti-Tory campaigning over the next few months gives us a focus to work round and the chance of gaining many new contacts and new readers for the paper. We have to grasp those opportunities even though they are small. The greatest danger is that because WV is not at the centre of such campaigns we will adopt a sectarian attitude towards them.

We need to do two things: firstly to build a movement larger than us which involves women who are far from being revolutionaries in a campaign against the Tories. Within that we can win the best of those women to active support for our politics. Secondly, we need a political organisation which can explain the crisis and provide an alternative.

We recognise that there are a minority of women who want to fight at present. We also recognise that a large number of working class women are affected by the ideas of womens liberation, although they have never come into contact with the movement itself. Our aim has to be to draw the two strands together. October 10 is the first initiative but it is hopefully only the first of many campaigns against the Tories. We have to assess how we have built for the 10th and how we can build in future. Every district has to look to its work among women and plan activity around these. A few did this with the letter for Oct 10, but in most places it was left to the WV groups to visit contacts etc.

The NW Women Voice rally against the Tories in September is a good example to draw from. The comrades got together on a steering committee to coordinate, but the bulk of the work seems to have been done in Manchester. Months of preparation for the rally with street meetings, consistent work round two strikes, Kleins and Kirby-Henrys, patient visiting of contacts and serious political preparation for the day paid-off, 130 women attended, from a good cross section of unions, including many non members of WV or SWP. Our politics (which were never hidden and indeed were emphasised by many of the speakers) clearly fitted the experiences of these people. On the one hand we put across the socialist answers, such as why unemployment, but we also distinguished ourselves from the sectarians by having agitational work to offer too. The rally showed an audience is there waiting for us to take the opportunity. We should try similar focuses in other areas.

WV magazine is also undergoing a change because of the different political circumstances we are in. Faced with the crisis and the Thatcher attacks we are having to provide more political answers, such as articles on the cold war or import controls, than we had to a couple of years ago. Particularly when the women's movement is in such crisis, our clear political positions have made it easier for us to provide an alternative.

We're in a period where politics have to come to the fore. SWP women have shown that we have been able to initiate a successful paper, and an organisation of WV groups. We haven't remained immune from the crisis that has hit socialist organisations around Europe over the question of feminism. The argument last year over what sort of WV organisation we wanted to build was about precisely that. The activity around the Corrie campaign and now around October 10 shows that women can be mobilised and are open to our political ideas.

There are various things coming up over the next months, for example a national women's festival against the Tories, started by various sections of the women's movement. We cannot afford to stand aside from any activity which involves some of the minority which we want to address ourselves to. We need WV magazine to be able to relate to our existing periphery and reach out to a new one, and we need the groups to give many of our women a focus and give them something to bring our new periphery to.

In the last analysis, our success depends on how we can involve new people in our existing organisation and win them to our political ideas. We will only do so if the united front against the Tories is our major work over the coming months.



The Fight Against Nuclear Weapons

Pete Goodwin

If anyone had got up at our last conference and argued that the fight against nuclear weapons would become a major issue in the coming year they would probably have been greeted with embarrassed silence. Of course no-one did. 'Ban the Bomb' had been as dead as a dodo since the mid sixties and there seemed no reason to believe that it would make even a modest resurrection.

However, unnoticed by us, another meeting was taking place at roughly the same time as our conference which was to change all this. It was a meeting of NATO representatives which took the decision to deploy a new generation of nuclear missiles in UEurope including, of particular importance to us, the deployment of cruise missiles in Britain.

This decision sparked off a revival of the movement against nuclear weapons. And for good reason. Because the new missile systems, in particular cruise, are inextricably tied to new scenarios for nuclear war which make the actual pressing of the button qualitatively more likely. Aside from this initial spark the movement has been further fuelled by the decision of the Tory government to spend £5000 million to update Britain's own nuclear weapons system with the Trident missile, by the revelations about the government's 'civil defence' plans and the general increase in international tension which we have termed 'the new cold war'.

The revival of the movement has been spectacular. Just to give some examples:

- * In less than a year EP Thompson's pamphlet *Protest and Survive* has gone through four printings and is now to be published in expanded book form by Penguin with an initial print order of 50,000.

- * Thompson has drawn big crowds at meetings with apparently very little organisation: e.g. Bradford 700, Newcastle 700, Leamington 300 etc. In each case we are talking about the biggest left public meeting held in the town for several years.

- * The film *The War Game* has been widely shown to big audiences: e.g. Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham—the film was shown in each city half a dozen times in the space of a few weeks with audiences averaging a hundred or more.

- * The top subject for resolutions at this year's Labour Party Conference was defence and disarmament, with over 130 resolutions on the subject, the overwhelming bulk of which called effectively for a unilateral renunciation by Britain of nuclear weapons. And the conference carried a resolution to this effect. This got little publicity in all the fuss about the constitutional changes, but it should be remembered that it is much the same as the resolution that turned the Labour Party into turmoil at the high point of CND in 1960.

- * Significant demonstrations have occurred in a number of provincial towns: e.g. Manchester, Blackpool, York, Liverpool and in the relatively rural areas around the two proposed Cruise missile bases. The demonstration called in London in June on the issue by the Labour Party drew 20,000 people—including the largest Labour Party mobilisation seen for some years. At the time of writing (Oct 12) all the indications are that the CND demonstration in London on Oct 26 will have at least double this number (trains have been organised from half a dozen areas, CND nationally knew of at least 123 coaches) and that there will be a big turnout on the Scottish demonstration in Glasgow the day before.

- * Media coverage of the issue has been substantial, e.g. the *Panorama* debate, good TV news coverage of demonstrations, almost daily coverage in the letters and feature pages of *The Guardian*!

A small number of SWP comrades off their own bat have been involved in the growing movement from near the beginning. They have found the experience extremely fruitful and in few areas have actually been in the leadership of the movement (e.g. Norwich). But on the whole comrades have been extremely slow to respond. It is only since the beginning of October that we have started to get a significant number of meetings on the subject. And despite recent coverage in SW and Socialist Review, the production of a pamphlets and poster etc, many comrades are still reluctant to move.

There are two main reasons for this reluctance. Both of which have to be argued out.

First of all many comrades dismiss the movement as 'middle class'. Secondly many comrades see it as a 'diversion' or 'a soft option'.

The first argument has at least the merit of some half true impression to back it up. All reports of the early meetings reveal that a high proportion of the audience were members of the professions (teachers, lecturers, social workers etc) and also that they were heavily weighted towards the age group late 30s and above. However even this would not be grounds to ignore it. After all quite a lot of our members are teachers, lecturers, social workers etc who we are absolutely clear should do union work among their colleagues, so why not political work on the issue that is moving them? But it is clear that the movement is now pulling in substantial number of students and young people in general, which makes it immediately a key issue for SWSO and Rebel. It is also clear that the head of steam generated by the movement is bound to draw in substantial number of manual workers, who after all pay the taxes for the bombs and are just as likely to get fried by them.

Alongside 'priority to industrial work' the SWP has always had the equally important motto, 'if it moves get stuck in'. The anti-missile movement is already moving in a big way. Like it or not, 'middle class' or not, we get stuck in or get left on the sidelines.

The second argument which comrades use to justify their reluctance to get involved in the anti-missile movement does not even have the merit of half-true observations. It is just plain silly sectarianism. Far from being a 'diversion' or a 'Soft Option' the fight against nuclear weapons is intensely political. The huge spending on weapons is the ultimate condemnation of capitalism's wastefulness. The destruction of humanity that they threaten is capitalism's ultimate barbarism. The fight against them immediately raises questions crucial to our politics like the nature of the state, capitalism as a world system.

There is no doubt that if we get stuck into the movement we can very easily recruit out of it and draw new people into our political periphery through it.

The fight against nuclear weapons

At the time of writing (Oct 12) our immediate task is simply to get stuck in. This involves:

- a) Holding SWP and SWSO meetings on the issue
- b) Selling SW, other SWP literature and intervening in discussion at CND/END/ town against the missiles meetings and local activities.
- c) Getting one or two SWP comrades regularly involved in each local committee on
- d) Having full regular coverage in Socialist Worker on the issue.

e) Having substantial numbers of SWP comrades on the Oct 25 and 26 demos. We can judge at the conference whether we have achieved this. If for example, by the time of the conference we have *not* by then had 70 or 80 SWP and SWSO meetings on the subject, had an SWP contingent of 1000 or more on the Oct 26 demo, got swp comrades involved in local committees in most major towns and more or less sold out of the first print of our pamphlet, *then we are in trouble*.

If we have done these things then we should be thinking about two inter-related problems in terms of perspectives.

- a) How to further develop the movement
- b) How to bring out our politics in it.
- c) The immediate focus of the movement is the demonstration on October 25 and 26. But the movement has sufficient momentum and as yet untapped resources to continue and grow for several months after this. However undoubtedly after Oct 26 people will begin to start seriously searching around for ways and means to extend and deepen the movement. There are only so many times you can show the *War Game*.

We also know from the experience of CND in the early sixties the limits of an essentially moral single issue protest movement. We therefore have to do three things:

- 1) Give a working class orientation to the movement. This involved using material about nuclear weapons, civil defence preparations etc in our workplace bulletins, experimenting with workplace based anti missile activities (we had firemen against the Nazis, why not Firemen against the Missiles) and trying to use the various official trade union policies against the missiles do develop some activity at the base. We also have to push the existing anti-missile movement in this direction, which will often mean making what for us are quite mundane practical proposals, like leafletting in a working class shopping area, getting a local trade union branch to show 'The War Game' etc.
- 2) Relate the anti missile issue to all the other fronts of the anti Tory fight. The most obvious relation here is the cost of the Trident programme alongside the cuts: 'They cut this school, but they spend £5 billion on Trident' and so on. But other connections can be made. These connections have to be made in practice, for instance involving anti missile activists in general demonstrations against visiting Tory ministers etc.
- 3) Encourage direct action, whether this be occupations of missile bases, occupations of colleges over defence related research, or blacking of defence related goods.

All these things are easy to propose in abstract but we need to actually translate them into practical proposals which fit into the present capabilities of the movement at a given time and place. For that we need discussion from experience. And we need to get that experience pretty rapidly.

One further question about developing the movement: its organisational form. Different parts of the country have different experience of this. In some places activity takes place under the label CND, in others END and in others a local committee against the missiles. We have no abstract preferences here, we should get involved in whatever is doing something regardless of the name. And this includes having some involvement in whatever national organisations which may be taking initiatives.

4) In large part we carry our politics into the movement by our proposals for how to develop it. A good slab of our politics is after all concerned with the working class and direct action. We also have to apply the political tactic we use on other issues, the united front. And it should not be forgotten here that if in general we are talking about united front with the labour lefts then one important area of that is the fight against the missiles.

We also need to highlight the need for clearcut unilateralism and clearcut opposition to NATO. On the level of propaganda we have to push to the forefront our theory of state capitalism (as the basis for a class analysis of the war threat, and in opposition to the 'workers' bombers') and the need for a revolutionary transformation of society to get rid of the missiles. If we are actively participating in the movement this propaganda should reach receptive ears and we have good prospects of recruitment.

One final side issue. A number of comrades have suggested that we make a priority of linking the opposition to nuclear weapons to opposition to civil nuclear power. We do not think this is correct. We should certainly not forget about the issue of civil nuclear power, which is important enough in itself and is quite likely to revive as an issue. But the main thrust of our political intervention in the missile movement should be a working class orientation, direct action, link with other struggles against the Tories, and on the propaganda level our general revolutionary world view.

The SWP in the steel industry by

Privacy

The SWP intervention in the recent steel strike was reasonably successful. The gains were modest but important enough to warrant how we organised ourselves and what lessons could be drawn for other industries.

The Real Steel News at national and local level gave us an influence inside the industry way beyond our small membership and the small numbers organised around the bulletins. The first lessons that the success of Real Steel News depended on 2 1/2 years hard consistent work. We knew the industry, the union machinery and the militants who emerged as the strike leaders. In these depressing times it is an encouragement to any isolated member that patient work, often with few people, and a shopfloor bulletin, does pay off when the tide turns.

Another crucial point was that the SWP responded well to the dispute. SWP and Socialist Review were well respected for their coverage. Many steel workers came to respect the SWP not just because of Real Steel News but because of the support provided by the Party. Virtually all flying pickets found the local SWP helping with accommodation, lists of places to contact for fund raising, socials etc. Many political meetings were held in non steel areas and our intervention generally helped to create a greater politicisation. Pickets in London for instance were taken to hospital occupations, the Corrie demonstration etc. Also the activity helped revitalise some of our 'tired members. An indication of the success of our intervention was an invitation to a social of the strike committee in South Yorkshire to a coachload of London SWP members.

Our international solidarity work was also valuable. Trips were organised predominantly through SWP contacts in Europe. This direct intervention with visits to raise funds was much more effective than the passive approach of many on the left. It is interesting to note that steelworkers involved in this work now have no sympathy at all with the import control argument.

It is worth drawing a brief balance sheet for our organisation inside the steel industry in South Yorkshire, where we started with a small base before the strike.

a) We had a hardcore of about 10 before the strike, and now the numbers have doubled. We didn't lose many recruits, despite the notion that this is supposedly inevitable

b) It's not just a question of numbers. All our members strengthened their positions amongst their workmates, and developed politically. Our influence on newly formed joint committees, for instance, is modest but much improved.

c) The composition of the group also improved since all recruits were manual workers. We now have a healthy balance of white collar and manual grades. The atmosphere at our meetings is very encouraging; determined but realistic.

d) The sale of Socialist Worker to steelworkers has risen from about 30 before the strike to over 100 now. There is a good new estate sale at Stocksbridge, and several new factory gate sales. Socialist Review is also now quite popular, at least with our own members.

Whilst making general political propaganda, the Real Steel News limited its agitational demands by and large to things our members could get their teeth into with at least some chance of success. We never promised what we never had a chance of delivering. This was strength, and was coupled with an avoidance of left-wing jargon and clichés. Both before the strike and during it we have attempted to be well informed and reliable. Anyone responsible for a bulletin must be scrupulous in checking details; there is no place for half truths and rumours.

We have held new steelworker recruits BEST where a stable SWP geographical branch exists. The BSC redundancies took their toll on most of the recruits in South Wales, but the absence of geographical branches also made the task of holding them to active socialist politics much tougher. This point is again demonstrated in the Sheffield area. We had much more influence at Stocksbridge than in Rotherham during the strike but we have held the recruits who live in Rotherham better, by building a new, but strong geographical branch.

An SWP Bulletin

There is little doubt that our intervention was helped by the fact that RSN was an openly SWP bulletin. Whilst being honest about the SWP nature of Real Steel News we have always tried to involve non-members. We consistently point to the need for a rank and file movement that, to have any validity, would need to involve many times the people that are at present close to SWP. It is probably true that the non SWP periphery of some 'Rank and File' groups is no bigger than around the SWP initiatives?

This is not to devalue the need to develop rank and file organisation, but the reverse. A small group of SWPers with perhaps a CP or IMG'er thrown in does not add up to a rank and file movement. An openly SWP group creates no illusions, and can help build up the trust where we are involved in building rank and file campaigns or organisations on a far broader scale.

In the SWP we are all committed to building a national rank and file movement in our

industries with a national rank and file paper. It is worth observing that some of us are attempting to do this directly, whereas in steel we have consciously made the decision to place our emphasis in the short term on building LOCAL groups and bulletins on a SWP basis. The national bulletins have given us some credibility, but the local groups producing their own bulletins have been the basis of any strength we have developed.

Many people will immediately be able to put arguments for Rank and File groups and bulletins, but I shall make a few points from the opposite view to promote a little discussion.

a) Few of us in steel believe that we launched Real Steel News three years ago as a rank and file paper it would have survived in the depressing period we have been through. After all, we did launch 'Steelworker' as a rank and file paper in the early seventies, which was much better produced, but it collapsed. The SWP Real Steel News built on a small base we have now.

Rank and File

b) There is no tradition of rank and file organisation in steel and no 'broad left'. Attempts by non SWP, ISTC officials to build a reform movement up inside the ISTC have come to very little. This was a 'non-political' initiative and most of its supporters didn't have the politics to understand and survive the backlash from Bill Sirs and the officials. It is interesting that Sirs uses the SWP bogey man approach with considerable success to squash many a left wing initiative, including those that had nothing to do with us. So even if we dropped the SWP tag it wouldn't make much difference, or make it much easier when it comes to confronting the union mafia. If we had dropped the SWP label, Sirs would have pinned it on fast.

c) We have been able to recruit (modestly), which is often difficult if you are bending backwards to prove to people how your rank and file group is not just a SWP front. It also helps to keep sectarians out of the group when it is small and vulnerable.

d) SWP members probably can more easily build their own base when doing solidarity work around a dispute where our intervention is an SWP one. Many of our people addressed SWP meetings all over the country during the strike. There was the situation where our pressure on Scargill was used quite successfully by the Collier groups to strengthen their position (modestly). Perhaps this could have been achieved with a rank and file steelworker paper, but I am not convinced. Also our intervention drove the CP in Sheffield, where it claims to be one of the best organised areas in the country, into near despair. This is no good thing in itself but it did show us that their all-powerful machine is not quite as powerful as they like to pretend.

e) One of the reasons the SWP as a whole was able to respond so well around the dispute was the fact that our major intervention was as the SWP not a rank and file group. This meant that the mechanism for involving all members directly in the strike existed, and was probably higher than for any other strike since 1974. SWP members everywhere could hand out the SWP bulletin.

f) The SWP politics, when openly pushed, can help hold individual isolated militants through depressing times. It may be no surprise to some that steel workers are capable of highly emotional, and thoughtful debates about whether the wages in a socialist society would all be equal, or what is happening in Afghanistan etc. Many of our members are visibly refreshed by coming together with other socialists in the industry. After all the atmosphere at work at the moment is appalling.

g) We have shown that we can work alongside best unaligned militants shop stewards etc. who will be the heart of any rank and file movement. We have also developed an experience of many 'non-party politics' militants in the industry

Propaganda

h) In addition we were able to work with left officials and shop stewards but also criticise them. This was in stark contrast to the rest of the left who are either simply sectarian or don't dare criticise for fear of disturbing the falsely based unity. Being openly organised around the SWP bulletin makes this much easier to achieve than with a rank and file organisation where it is very easy to either not raise the criticisms or reduce the meeting to squabbles.

i) Because of our approach we have never become oriented around the ISTC union machine; conferences, EC elections etc., even though we have members in quite influential positions. The bulletin and the SWP politics repeatedly throw us back to a shop-floor, inter-union perspective.

j) If the debate about whether a bulletin should be an SWP or a rank and file takes place only among the close circles of a few SWP members it is by definition something of a self-deception. I can still remember clearly the Saturday afternoon in my back garden when Privacy then the Sheffield full timer, and I, a white collar worker in a research laboratory with no base in the industry whatsoever, decided that the first Real Steel News should be a LOCAL SWP bulletin. It was not undemocratic for the two of us to make the decision, at the time we had no other members in steel in South Yorkshire I chuckle to myself when people say why wasn't Real Steel News set up as a national Rank and File paper.

k) How many times is a rank and file label chosen because SWP are depicted as subversive troublemakers in the media and by the local CP? There are good reasons for setting up rank and file bulletins, but embarrassment about revealing SWP connections is not one of them.

In summation we believe that the decision to keep Real Steel News as an SWP bulletin and to organise our intervention around it was crucial. If we had falsely declared a rank and file group and paper we would have discredited the notion of a real rank and file movement capable of defeating the right wing and the employers. Instead by building the SWP and laying the political foundation for the rank and file organisation we have kept the morale of our members high. It is very doubtful we could.

In conclusion, it is impossible to generalise from one industry to another, one union to another or from one area of the country to another. We have a small toehold in steel, and only the embryo of a national organisation. We are committed to building a rank and file movement against closures and job losses, for union democracy etc. But we have taken the decision to build LOCAL SWP groups (linked also to geographical branches) with an openly SWP bulletin. We have made some modest but limited gains, and since our practise is somewhat different from many of our industrial and trade union activities, I hope there is some evaluation of other experiences in light of the Real Steel News work.



Unemployed Centres and Unemployed Work by Andy Strouthous Newcastle

Newcastle SWP has received several enquiries about the local unemployed centre and unemployed workers union from comrades over the last few months.

The reply concerns the Newcastle experience and doesn't apply to other areas though general conclusions will apply to most unemployed work.

Newcastle Unemployed centre is an official body of Newcastle Trades Council. It is funded by several grants including the City Council. This may explain its conservative approach to Direct action and the Right to Work Campaign.

The centre acts mainly as an advice centre to the unemployed, apart from a few chairs and tea and coffee there are no recreational facilities for the unemployed.

Only a small number of unemployed are ever to be found there, those that usually are, members or supporters of the militants who bureaucratically organise the whole operation.

The unemployed workers union is organised by the centre, and has approx 50 members at 5p a week subs. Most of these are paper members.

The activities of the UWU consist mainly of recruitment drives. Leaflets are given out on the doles urging people to join the UWU. Major national campaigns are not used as a focus. They have not supported the last three lobbies of the TUC, they have completely ignored October 10th. The RTWC has offered them 'places' on the coach to Brighton, the response at best could be called apathetic.

Locally they have made low key interventions around closures, they managed to get 6 people to a Save Consett Steel Rally, keeping the coach a secret. When the RTWC found out they managed to add another seven at 24 hours notice.

Not all this may sound rather dismal but reality has to be the starting point for getting to grips with the problems of organising the unemployed.

The dismal record has its basis in two objective factors:

- 1) the difficulty in permanently organising the unemployed.
- 2) The lack of focus and activity given by the organisers.

It is true that over short periods the UWU has mass leafleted the doles trying to encourage the unemployed to join a permanent organisation. Unfortunately it is true that the majority of long term unemployed are apathetic to this approach.

The propaganda offers little except the membership of a 'union', that union cannot negotiate the pay or conditions of any unemployed worker. Fortnightly signing, the lack of a benefit rate common to all, the fact the unemployed can't get out of the office quick enough leaves the unemployed isolated and atomised.

So in terms of immediate solutions the UWU offers little. In spite of that a few do join to discover that the only activity is giving out similar leaflets that caused them to join in the first place.

Direct action is not encouraged as it may alienate 'official' support. Trade Union leadership national or local is not criticised for the same reason. Most who join soon drop back into apathy caused by boredom and the failure of the UWU to achieve anything at any level.

The RTWC is avoided like the plague by the unemployed centre, contamination may lose allies. The RTWC is not part of the movement, it is also criticised because it doesn't seek to build a permanent organisation of unemployed.

However when the Tyneside RTWC record is compared with any other in the area it has been the most consistent and active campaigner on the issue.

Over the last five years we have had campaigns around the doles at least once a year, sometimes twice. On one occasion we managed to overcome the sectarian nature of the UWU and work jointly against the fortnightly signing.

All other attempts at joint work being rebuffed, the only basis they would work with us as if we dropped our campaign completely.

This year we worked the doles in 'glorious isolation', several times we have tried to keep the RTWC going after the marches, it isn't true that we just drop unemployed work, the accusation that we do is made by those who have no experience of unemployed work at all.

The experience to date has always been that without a national focus, or workers fighting unemployed locally, it is difficult to keep up a high level of commitment by the unemployed. Besides many marchers up till now have either found jobs or become demoralised by long term unemployment.

Dole work is usually done in July/Aug/Sept as part of the national campaign, which is fortunate because it is the best time for a good response. Its the time when the number of schoolleavers and unemployed sign on for the first time. Anger has not yet turned to apathy.

This is how the situation has been up to the present time, it may very well change. Constantly increasing numbers of unemployed, cuts in benefits, local fightbacks against closures could change the situation, if so of course we must relate to it. However constant phrasemongering about the need for permanent organisations of the unemployed is no substitute for doing what can be done at present. Apart from the RTWC initiatives there will be the National Labour Party

Demo in Liverpool in November, an excellent opportunity for united front work, and to mobilise the unemployed. Local activities and demos should be seen as focuses for involving the unemployed. Where UWU will work with us in genuine activity we must of course get involved in joint work, but not talking shops such as Newcastle Unemployed centre.

Of a necessity unemployed work is of a volatile and sporadic nature, at the moment 'official' style organisation is not a priority, activity that links the unemployed to the employed, and provides the socialist argument to the logic of the dole queue.

It was after an unemployed worker climbed over a shipyard wall that the action really started in Poland. There's a lesson for all us in that.

Right to Work by Privacy Blackburn

This article is written in a personal capacity, although much of it is based on discussions held and conclusions reached at a recent meeting of the North-East Lancashire District.

- (1) Firstly, there is the question of keeping the R. to W. C. going permanently rather than letting it drop every year until it is time to start building for next year's march. Last year, for example, our efforts to keep a local Right to Work Group going were not helped by the fact that Socialist Worker virtually dropped the R. to W. C. between last October and April of this year. I realise that keeping the campaign going all year round is difficult, but if we are going to try to do so (as we obviously should with two million unemployed), then we need a continuing national focus and coverage in the paper as well as local initiative.
- (2) Secondly, there is the question of the structure of the campaign. We rightly argue that while we are proud that the S.W.P. took the initiative of starting the R. to W.C., we want it to involve non-S.W.P. members in a broad-based united campaign. ("Unity in action"). But our opponents call the R. to W.C. an "S.W.P. front", and we must admit that there is some truth in this, even if it's not because we want it to be. Couldn't we help to broaden support for the Campaign if we "let go of it" a little? How about an Annual Right to Work Conference which would elect a National R. to W. Committee? Non-S.W.P. members might be more willing to work in the Campaign if they felt they had some say in how it was run.

In theory, of course, this means accepting in principle that we might lose control of the Campaign. But we should be prepared to take that risk. We should be able to ensure that the R. to W.C. takes the course we want it to by winning the arguments within it, not by controlling it "bureaucratically". In the short run, of course, any structure would be dominated by S.W.P. members simply because they form the backbone of the Campaign at the moment. But at least we would have the framework within which non-S.W.P.ers could get involved.

(3) This leads on to the question of the politics of the R. to W.C. In particular I want to talk about the question of import controls. This is obviously of vital importance at the moment, as we well know in Lancashire with the collapse of the textile industry. (At the local Trades Council I recently heard one textile union delegate say to another that he didn't care if they were living in the gutters in Hong Kong as long as we have jobs in Blackburn!)

Putting forward the arguments against import controls must be one of our top priorities. But the question is: should it be the S.W.P. or the R. to W.C. which is the vehicle for carrying the arguments against import controls? We are trying to get C.P. and L.P. members involved in the Campaign who at the moment support import controls.

So it seems to me that it might be best if it was as the S.W.P. that we argued against import controls within a broadly-based R. to W.C., with the R. to W.C. itself having a limited programme of fighting unemployment through "5 day's work or 5 day's pay", occupations, 35 hour week, organising among the unemployed etc.

Thus for a local Trades Council—organised demo and rally against unemployment it has been decided that there should be a R. to W. leaflet calling for a united fight-back against the Tories and unemployment etc., while the badly-needed arguments against import controls should be carried on a separate S.W.P. leaflet devoted entirely to that issue.

There are no easy answers to the questions I've raised here, but they are important questions to which I hope that the Party will pay serious attention.

Right to Work by Privacy

Comrades, with unemployment at the moment standing at 2½ million, the time has come I feel for us to build up and down the country, unemployed fight-back committees, to run in conjunction with the Defend our Unions committees that we already have. These bodies will organise separately yet work side by side in a two prong attack on the bureaucrats of the trade union movement and the class enemy the capitalist.

You see, we all know that retrogression gets deeper in our unions and throughout the movement. I feel it becomes necessary to change our strategy and direct our call for revolution not only to those rank and file members of the trade unions, but to the class in general. How can we ignore those unemployed people who have never been apart of the working class movement, let alone the so-called mass labour party.

Fine, it therefore follows that we cannot ignore 10% of the class by doing so little to politicise those members of society that find themselves unemployed. Lets not fool ourselves, the choice that confronts us is between the downhill road of human degradation, on the one hand, and human development on the other. The class itself, both unemployed and employed are the mass that can call a halt to retrogression and open the way to working class emancipation.

The thought of the transformation of society coming from the masses is an indispensable element of marxist theory fully expressed by both marx and Lenin. Those who dispute this have closed their eyes to the facts of history, as no doubt you will all agree, comrades lets not close our eyes to the 2½ million facts that confront us and do a little more to mobilise and politicise these people.

It may be argued and rightly so that the unemployed have no voice in the union that we should fight through our defend our unions committees to get them one. Fine, I agree, the main objectives of the party has got to be amongst the rank and file organisations of employed workers, who are the only people with the muscle to overthrow the state, eg Poland. But don't lets be condescending to those comrades and people who find themselves unemployed and not let forget the anger of youth, that has never been in a union, anger that was expressed on the streets of Bristol during the St. Pauls riots.

Marx's famous statement "Labour in the white skin cannot be free so long as labour in the black skin is branded." expresses well how I feel about unemployment. I would argue that there is a need for marxists to organise around the unemployed issue in a more constructive way.

On the question of resources and the numbers to sustain such a campaign, to this I say the unemployed will finance and organise themselves, hence no strain on our already stretched resources. We should not forget that we are not asking the unemployed to march away from home, but to work in and around their very homes. A few unemployed party members is all that's needed to organise and maintain such groups as we have done many times before, eg ANL. We also have the fact that every year we mobilise from scratch the Right to Work Campaign, this would be overcome by the continuity that a committee such as I suggest would give comrades. How many unemployed contacts slip away because they do not march on the day. I would say they are numerous and that not many districts follow them up at all, here we will have a ready made base from which the Right to Work march can grow every year.

It may be argued that the unemployed are not so easy to reach as they were in the past, true, but I would argue that meetings held on housing estates which have been leafleted beforehand on the issue of unemployment with pubs, clubs extras visited would mean us access to just such a group.

What could these committees offer to the more important rank and file organisation that we already have? On the one hand it will give numbers to help with the workloads, on the other it supplies as an ongoing argument put forward by comrades that they have nothing to say to these contacts, it does this because the argument that the unemployed should have a voice in the unions is an ongoing one, those giving a continuity to are contact work itself.

The fact that 2½ million could become a vast scab army used by the Tories is correct, what bother me is how and we stop this happening, if we stop this happening, if we cease to work around the unemployed question and the unemployed themselves. No, the pressure on the unemployed themselves must be kept up. In doing this, we will build bonds between the unemployed and the employed themselves and help to unite the class itself, "the workers united will never be defeated." The work that I see these unemployed fight-back committees undertaking is as follows. They will harrass the trade union bureaucrats for a voice on the local trades councils and within the trade union movement at TUC level, stopping the TUC proposals put forward this year from becoming yet another anchor to the class itself, yet another bureaucratic structure. I would like to point out that previous TUCs have promised such proposals before and have backedpeddled then as I feel they would now, given half a chance.

These committees will maintain attacks on the Tories at local councils and harrass any Tory notoriety that comes to call on their area. Mobilise with the rank and file around issues arising at workplaces showing their trade union counterparts that they will not scab, by helping to picket at the times of strikes. I would like to point out that a lot, if not the vast majority of unemployed are women, these committees will give I feel many recruits to our womens voice orngnaisation. I argue that for a very little commitment we will gain members into our organisation as we do around the Right to Work campaign every year also it will enhance all our work; blacks are hit harder than their white counterpart youth more than many; NUSS, this will I feel generally speaking gain for us a far wider audience to which we can expound our politics.

Comrades, unemployment is a scourge to be fought and eliminated by both the employed and unemployed and that united action is the struggle, seprate organisation will reach a larger audience hence we could gain success. Such a committee means something more than merely the joining together of the 2 groups it would have the psychological effect amongst the unemployed and the working class generally.

It would stimulate and inspire the unemployed with, a new confidence and new hope. It would ensure proper coordination in our rank and file work and generally it would draw the masses of anorganised into organised activity, and it would be the means of extensive recruitment of new members into the SWP and rank and file trade unionism.

How can we ignore such an objective? I say we do so at our peril. My strategy is not the only one. I only wish to stimulate action and discussion on this matter.

Endorsed by Bristol district SWP.

NALGO by Privacy North London

I found this year's Nalگو Action conference (Sept 27 and 28th.) boring, uninspired and unhelpful. To a large extent that follows from the 'objective situation'—the fact that a massive onslaught on jobs; living standards and union organisation is meeting with so little resistance. If the conference was flat, events in the real world are the main culprit. But—having said that—we seem as a fraction to be wallowing in the passivity rather than confronting it head on.

Two issues stand out sharply against the general trend. The Right to Work march and the Oct. 10th demo drew support from around 60 branches and 2 districts of NALGO. We have never reached those dizzy heights even with attempts to organsie flat-rate pay claims. Although the number of sponsors has increased a lot generally, NALGO backing has increased well beyond the average. The CP was split on the question of support and Militant (who have some influence in Scotland) were squeezed into sordid, infantile sectarianism.

Also amid the sea of passivity and demoralisation, the Typists Charter, another of our initiatives has borne fruit. There have been well-attended meetings of typists up and down the country, to discuss a claim which includes a substantial pay demand. Typists in Greenwich and Hackney have already taken industrial action and got enthusiastic financial support. It was obvious from reports at NAG conference that this is more than isoalted and exceptional activity. Typists are the low-paid women we are always paying lip-service to. They have industrial muscle and they are prepared to use it to fight for more money, surrounded as they are by Tory wages propoganda and the threat of the axe.

Instead of these two issues generating unbounded enthusiasm, as any half-baked revolutionary might expect, there was no discussion at all of the Right to Work Campaign. No session was organised. Although the Typists Charter was at least discussed, it was given no particular prominence. There was very little concrete said about generalizing the activity amongst typists themselves and even less about the important task of spreading the fight to other low-paid clerical workers.

THE DRIFT. The general empahsis at NAG conference corresponds with the contents of NALGO ACTION NEWS. Campaigns on Housing, nuclear Power, Gay Rights, C-x-ism, 'diversion', or 'a waste of time' but when they crowd out wage struggles and the fight against Thatcher they resemble the sort of politenial posing which we get from the Leveler and the fragments.

The overall impression is of a fraction which has 'gone soft'.

A few other details of the conference are important as illustrations (though not particularly significant in themselves). SWP members were publicly split on three issues—1. whether unconditional but critical support for the Irish Republican movement should; become a campaigning position for NAG. 2. on whether NALGO members who refuse to carry out and 3. on whether NAG members should take on full-time union positions.

Without going into the arguments over the specific issues (we could throw in the debate about dissolving workplace branches or around our approach to the Local Government in Crisis conference) I want to go nearer the heart of the matter.

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POLARIZATION

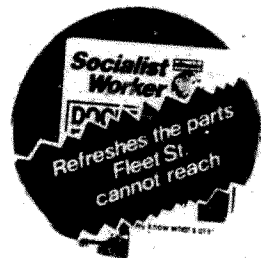
In a context of generalized passivity, we have on the one hand a tendency towards ultra-leftism and on the other towards incorporation into the union apparatus. Newer comrades who joined us because they identified with a string of ideas that seemed to fit, have not yet developed far enough to be able to generalize, to see the connections between each of those ideas. They are prone to the sectlets obsession with political purity and programmatic deamnds. The relationship between ideas and activity, between Party and Rank-and File, have not properly sunk in.

At the other extreme are the 'old men over thirty' who have been in the Party for years on end, for whom revolutionary politics has become routine. They are unadventurous, patient and they've seen it all before. They spend a lot of time in mind-numbing committees, working parties, negotiations at conferences and drift towards believing that because they are such an unpleasant duty, they must at least be achieving something worthwhile. On top of this, their 'expert' status intimidates less experienced comrades.

These two extremes are opposite sides of the same coin. The tiredness of the established comrades seems to spread very easily. The benefit of their experience and political understanding seems to be under lock and key. This is hardly surprising. 'No, we tried that once before,' communicates much more effectively than a detailed understanding of the United Front tactic.

Of course this is not just a NALGO problem. It's a reflection of the state of the Party as a whole. And when it comes to solving it, education in the branches is going to be much more important, for example, than any training the fraction can organise.

A 'programme of education' may be part of the answer but on its own it would be a purely tokenistic response. A variety of changes need to be fitted together.



Work in the Civil Service by **Privacy** Fraction Secretary

One of the planks on which Thatcher stood before coming to power was to cut out waste from public expenditure, and to cut the size of the Civil Service. To this end, Sir Derek Rayner, a whizz kid capitalist from Marks and Spencers was appointed part time to solve the Civil Service problem. On his recommendation, and after a lot of Cabinet in-fighting it was decided that the Civil Service should be cut by 100,000 posts by 1984. Already 25,000 have been lost in the last year alone, mainly by not filling vacancies, and to finance last year's pay settlement. This is all with official union agreement, as absolutely no cuts campaign has been mounted. The bureaucracy of the biggest Civil Service Union, CPSA, has pinned it's hope on an agreement calling for no compulsory redundancies (an undertaking the Government refuse to give) in spite of strong conference motions calling for no job loss and the other, smaller, unions have used this as an excuse to not mount their own campaigns. The official explanation is that the membership (of CPSA) will not be prepared to take action over such issues. What it really means is that the right wing leadership of the CPSA are not prepared to initiate any action within the membership lest it jeopardises their support from outside employers organisations (eg Treumid) and the tenuous hold they maintain with the union.

The two biggest issues facing Civil Service workers at the moment are pay and the introduction of new technology.

The attempt to negotiate a progressive, or even adequate new technology agreement is already doomed to failure. Although the relatively minor points of health and safety, ergonomics, specialist allowances etc. are dealt with, again the central question of jobs has been sold out yet again. The CPSA, unilaterally, has agreed to drop the conference demand of 'no overall job loss' and replace it with the now familiar 'no compulsory redundancies'. The General Secretary, Ken Thomas, is reported to be already negotiating the best possible redundancy terms.

On the question of pay Thatcher had made it clear that public sector rises would be limited to a single figure percentage, but in the tradition of the previous government she would 'honour' the PRU findings within strict cash limits. (The PRU—Pay Research Unit is a comparability study with outside public and private sector equivalents).

The PRU findings have now been unilaterally suppressed by the government as they were clearly a little too embarrassing. Whilst

we have long opposed PRU (which takes control of wages away from the membership) we shall be forced to defend the PRU findings against the government's breach of an agreement with the unions. The suppression of the PRU has already created a climate in which a fight over wages is more likely—and as both CPSA and SCPS are holding conferences on pay at the beginning of 1981 we have a chance of raising the stakes further. Our comrades will be arguing for a withdrawal from the National Pay Agreement, and that all future claims should be agreed at an Annual Pay Conference. For this year we shall argue for a flat rate £25 p week increase across the board.

The SCPS has already started a pay campaign of sorts, holding a series of regional pay seminars attended by area delegates who, in turn take the information back to their branches and thus spread the word. Although this sort of activity is to be welcomed it will be useless unless backed up by plans for action. The Council of Civil Service Unions has recognised that there will be a need for some form of industrial action in the coming winter and has called for a united pay campaign. But it only needs one union to opt out and the whole campaign will flounder. It will be up to the rank and file of the CPSA to ensure that their NEC are not allowed to let this happen. The arguments about pay should be brought up at the earliest opportunity. PRU and its shortcomings should be explained to the members (many do not understand it) and the need for flat rate increases put clearly, so that by the time the special pay conferences occur in January we may have a strong base of branches who may be willing to fight.

The two excuses most often used by the bureaucracies for not initiating industrial action within the civil services is that 'the union cannot afford it' and 'the membership is not willing'. Both these arguments have been negated by the events at Brixton. The policy of paying 100% strike pay no longer applies but even so it was possible to pay £40 p w (an unheard of sum in many more militant unions) to each of the strikers over a period of 8 and a half weeks in an *unofficial dispute*. With nearly £10,000 collected purely from donations and collections it was possible for the strikers to win the reinstatement of **Privacy** and **Privacy**.

That the membership is unwilling to take industrial action is a proposition yet to be tested. In general the Civil Service unions leaders have offered no leadership whatsoever on the questions of cuts, jobs, pay etc. Where there has been action is at the rank and file that have initiated it and carried it through. Even with limited activity gains have been made. For instance, the Medical Research Council National Staff Side, threatened with a 10% cut in funding mounted a campaign against the cuts. Dozens of telegrams were sent to the Minister concerned, pickets greeted every ministerial visit, local staff side committees insisted in talking with government representatives, support was culled from MPs and a general fuss was made. Even with this extremely low level of action the MRC received a 31% increase in

budget, an increase of approximately 5-6% in real terms. Other Research Councils, who did nothing, were, in real terms, cut.

Of course, the Medical Research Council is a small fringe body with a lot of kudos. However, Brixton UBO, an even smaller body with very little kudos at all, showed that it is possible to take on an intransigent, politically motivated management and win. The way the strike was organised, the way that the issue was taken to thousands of trade unionists around the country, the mass pickets attended by representatives from many bodies outside of the Civil Service, the amount of money collected, the way that thousands of civil servants made the strike their own by raising weekly levies, organising meetings and activities in the face of active opposition from the CPSA NEC all totally vindicated rank and file politics. For many an abstract theory became a concrete, pragmatic reality, even before the victory. Of the thousands involved in the Brixton campaign, many would be prepared to take mass action in defence of wages and from there perhaps for the defence of jobs.

This will only be achieved if the lessons of Brixton can be transmitted to the union membership convincingly, especially within the CPSA. If the battle can be won there then the other unions will follow. Central to this strategy is standing a credible left candidate in the CPSA presidential elections and the SWP Civil Service Fraction will be proposing that Redder Tape stand **Privacy** as the candidate on a firm rank and file basis (this proposal has now been accepted). We would also propose that the Broad Left adopt **Privacy** as a united platform. By doing this we can reach a far wider periphery within the rank and file and gain support for policies including the election of full time officials withdrawal from PRU, abortion rights, against import controls, for a proper new technology agreement, for integrated workplace union branches, the nationality act, Ireland, rank and file code of practice, Right to Work Campaign etc. Above all we have an opportunity to go part of the way to filling the vacuum left by the Broad Left in CPSA following the change to individual balloting when their electoral machine was seen to be unable to convince large numbers of 'non-activists' to vote for them in the face of the media onslaught of support for the moderates.

The Civil Service Fraction

Following a period of re-organisation the Civil Service Fraction has been reconstituted. The struggle at Brixton presented the opportunity to draw many Civil Service comrades into fraction activity joining the daily mass pickets, sending motions of support to the strikers and of censure to the CPSA NEC, taking workplace collections, organising meetings for the strikers etc. The measure of success was reflected in the amount of money collected for the strike (nearly £10,000) and the fact that many members of the Broad Left were drawn into action on the united front basis of unity in

action. The fact is that the intervention of the SWP enabled the strikers to escalate the dispute from a local issue to a general confrontation with the government over Prior's Code of Practice on picketing, a move that eventually played the largest part in the reinstatements of Privacy and Privacy

Privacy

The Fraction organisation has approximately 120 members, the strongest part in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh, with smaller groups in the midlands, Wales, the Southwest, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Although CPSA has the largest number of people in it (reflecting the CPSA's size) gains have been made in the Society of Civil and Public servants and the Inland Revenue Staff Association since the last conference season. Both SCPS and IRSF have their own bulletins issued at regular intervals and the aim of circulating a fraction bulletin every two months to all members has at last been achieved.

Recruitment over the last year has not been spectacular, but the signs are that there is a small move on the part of non-aligned activists towards the Party. Even though people are only joining in ones and twos, our periphery is slowly growing particularly under the impetus of the Brixton events, and in the campaigns coming in the winter we should be able to draw many people towards us. To this end we are producing a general pamphlet, aimed primarily towards CPSA members but relevant to the other civil service unions, on the lines of the successful 'Whats gone wrong in Engineering?' pamphlet done by Charter. This should be available at the end of November.

Solidarity with the workers in the Stalinist States

by Leyton

Privacy

Our reaction to the recent events in Poland has quite clearly differentiated us from the rest of the Left in this country, met with a very favourable response and provides us with excellent opportunities for the future.

I am of the opinion that Russia and Eastern Europe will in the long run prove crucial to the seizure of power on an International scale. The current issue of Socialist Review shows quite well the severity of the economic crisis and contradictions in these countries and while it is debateable whether Stalinism can, of its nature, permit the existance of Independant Worker's Organisations, it seems beyond question that the economic crisis is such that the Governments must do all in their power to smash such organisations, their only way out of the crisis being at the expense of the working class. Also, whichever of the analyses current in the organisation you adopt (and I differ from the majority) it seems generally agreed that the Stalinist States are inherently less stable than our own. All this points to tremendous possibilities for a Revolutionary situation in this part of the world.

Faced with this situation the SWP was the only organisation to push an adequate campaign of practical solidarity and I believe that it is now the time to take the initiative in putting organisational form to such solidarity, an organisation in solidarity with the Socialist and Working Class oriented opposition, leaving the Christians, Neo-Nazis, Zionists, Blackmarketeers, third rate scientists and the type of human rubbish typified by Solzenitskin to their friends in the CIA (after all I'm sure that a genuine Workers State would be harsh on such riff-raff).

What is there to commend such a course? Firstly it is our duty as Internationalists. The workers in Eastern Europe faced with the most effective Police Machine in the World need all the help they can get. Secondly Bolshevik-Leninist ideas are very thin on the ground in this part of the world, the worker's leadership being much stronger in courage than Marxism, if we are to influence the situation and help the construction of a Revolutionary Party in the East we must first prove that we are worth listening to, respect of our politics must be earned. Thirdly it will sort sheep from goats in this country, never a bad thing to happen. Put the C.P. and the left Bureaucrats in the Unions on the spot. Fourthly we can use such a campaign in the fight for democracy within our own Unions, many Bureaucrats try to run their Unions in the same way the Kremlin does Russia.

I am not for one moment suggesting the type of solidarity campaign we have often seen in the past, little tating with the IMG, the bar of the General Piction. On the contrary, an organisation based on the Branches, Shop Stewards committees, Trades Councils etc and avoiding public meetings in Bloomsbury like the plague. The response to the events in Poland seem to indicate that such an organisation is possible. I would suggest that it is also necessary and timely.

Privacy

Leyton SWP

Regional Party Councils

by Privacy

Cheltenham branch's article probably outlined a situation that is familiar to a large number of party members. The London orientation of Socialist Worker and the apparent inefficiency of the centre are frequently heard complaints. The centre is the whipping boy for everything that goes wrong. In fact the centre is quite seriously overworked. This situation results from a lack of information in many areas on what is happening elsewhere, a situation in which for many branches the centre is the only source of information so that the centre has to function as an information bank, and is overworked in the process.

One reason for the overwork of the centre is that many things relate to neither the national or the strictly local level of activity, at present the centre seems to be responsible for many of these things. Most prominent among these kinds of activity are mass pickets and nazi demos. The mailing seems to have at least one or two mass pickets in each week. The ones who are expected to attend are drawn from a certain clearly defined region. Yet as the letter in SW 699 (27th Sept) from a nurse at St Benedicts shows even a party of our size (relative to everybody else) can be unimpressive in terms of our ability to get people on picket lines. As the Central Ctee perspectives point out (pre Conf issue 1) "there will be numbers of small scale defensive strikes like those at Chix, King Henrys, Brixton dole etc". These disputes are precisely the kind where effective picketing can make the difference between victory and defeat. Pickets themselves need to be drawn from the same region as the dispute, such disputes don't justify national mobilisations.

Another area of regional mobilisation at present is anti-nazi work. The nazis are getting quite efficient at calling local marches with police collusion which we only have very short notice about. At the same time the number of nazi marches indicates that the various groups are competing with each other in activity. On quite a few recently we seem to have been outnumbered by nazis (despite SW's ability to conjure up armies of anti-fascists from nowhere). In Preston where there was over a weeks notice, Manchester and Liverpool cdes were noticeable by their absence. If we are not careful and don't improve our mobilisations then they could make some real gains in a number of areas.

Apart from mass pickets and anti-nazi demos many initiatives are taken at the regional level. This is particularly true in the unions, regional conferences organised by Trades Councils are common. The recent proposed General Strike in South Wales is an example of a much more important regional mobilisation. As the party grows we are likely to become involved in regional initiatives by unions and rank and file groups. From our side the North West Women's Voice rally points the way forward.

At present our ability to mobilise at the regional level is based on two things, first, the centre, and secondly, the old cdes network. Neither of these has proved satisfactory recently. How can the centre organise a mass picket in the north west, never mind Scotland? Acting as regional leadership for London cdes produces the kind of London bias in SW that irks so many of us out here in the sticks. The letter from St Benedicts seems to indicate that the centre doesn't make a very good regional leadership!

The old cdes network is quite simply undemocratic. Persons in the know can get in touch with people while most cdes don't get much opportunity to develop those kinds of contacts. Not only is it undemocratic, but it doesn't even seem to work. Quite a few years ago it seemed to be very common for cdes to move between towns going to demos and pickets, now that habit has declined. The last few years have worn down the old contacts, and inflation has pushed up the cost of transport. As the party grows the regional contacts will decline as cdes are more and more involved in building in their areas, small branches that are prepared to travel at the moment will become small districts that don't feel the need to travel to see other cdes. At the same time, the opportunities for and need for to take initiatives at a regional level could become a serious problem leading to lost opportunities for recruitment.

Before that situation becomes important we should start to build up the regional links.

As the party grows so the need for training and education will increase. The proportion of experienced members will decline so that education and training in many areas will be undermined. In most regions there are large numbers of cdes with a wealth of experience to pass on, we have to make sure these resources are used to the full.

Regional party councils may not be the whole answer but they may help.

Councils not ctees?

Party council nationally is based on delegates from branches and districts while the National Ctee and the CC are elected from the whole membership at conference. Regional organisation if it is to include the smallest branches must be based on a delegate system with each branch/district being represented, possibly in proportion to size. Such a body will be limited in its ability to discuss immediate interventions and mobilisations but will be capable of discussing regional initiatives and the specific problems and needs of individual branches and districts. In time, it may be necessary to have much smaller ctees elected from the regional council. At present the need for such small ctees does not seem to be very great except perhaps in London.

Concern about the relationship between these smaller ctees and the CC could also adversely affect the whole regional organisation experiment. A small ctee in London could be more easily supervised by the CC as part of an initial experiment. If comrades think a one year experiment in regional organisation could be worthwhile then a commission should be elected from conference to review the work of these bodies and report to the next conference.

Regional councils are not crucial at present, however, by the time regional organisation is crucial interdistrict and branch recriminations because people haven't turned up for things may lead to lost opportunities for growth that a small party like ours cannot afford.

Privacy Hull Town Branch.

Reply to replies

by **Privacy**
Bangor

Chwanner ar y tin sais

In my article calling on SWP to adopt a consistent policy on Welsh questions, I hoped to provoke debate. It seems that y chwanner has already bitten sufficiently deep to draw such a response from certain individuals in the capital. Messrs **Privacy** in their respective articles in the September JB, seek to disprove the necessity of a revolutionary Welsh policy for the SWP. But what their position's have in common with those of Lenin, Connolly, or the SWP is unclear. For as Cde Callinicos points out in the same issue, replying to Cde **Privacy**: "Our position is that developed by Lenin and the early Comintern; support for the right of self determination (including separation) of oppressed nations". And later "... the main enemy is the existing British state and in no circumstances will we defend the integrity of that state against the nationalists". Very true. And a million miles from Mr **Privacy**'s amazing statement that "Lenin's formulation... rested on a specific analysis of Eastern Europe and Russia, and was not intended to apply to the advanced capitalism of Western Europe. Today in Britain nationalism of any kind can only be reactionary". Cannot developed capitalist nations oppress others nations? **Privacy**? Or does Lenin's 'Imperialism' also apply only to "Eastern Europe and Russia? If English rule is to be fought in Ireland, can it not also be fought in Wales? It is the unemployed youth of Wales who are used by the English government as their hired thugs in the Irish war. There are a thousand signs that Wales is an oppressed nation. Welsh means of production are owned by English and multi national capital. Welsh standards of living are lower and unemployment is higher, than in England. Our language and culture are ridiculed and starved of resources by the capitalist media. Young workers in Welsh speaking areas cannot get employment: they are forced as tens of thousands have been forced in the past into emigration or service with the English army. The Welsh economy is based on the production and semi finishing of raw materials to service the English economy. Welsh communications serve only as links with England. Oppression need not be genocide to be real. And yet, as **Privacy** points out, a national consciousness survives in even the most anglicised areas. To ignore and ridicule it is to fail not Plaid Cymru, but the Tories and secret police.

To **Privacy** the division of north and south has no historical content whatever, seen not as a division established and fostered by capital, but as an absolute fact sent from above. **Privacy** "believes" that there is a once-for-all split into north, south, and ... Cardiff with no connection between them! Not to be outdone **Privacy** considers that as the division begins at the southern rather than the northern edge of the coalfield, and, as only 50% of Welsh workers live outside Glamorgan and Gwent, they may cheerfully be left to rot in preference to a spurious 'unity' of Welsh workers with English, evinced presumably by the fact that a small part of the Valleys working class came from the border counties. I use the word "small" advisedly: those of the English borders not drawn to Birmingham or London were drawn to their own coalfields in Mendip and the Forest of Dean. Only a small number came to the Valleys, far fewer than the number of Welsh workers driven from the land in Carmarthen, Brecon, and the north. It should not be forgotten that within living memory the Valleys were Welsh speaking. It is not the Welsh proletariat which has suppressed this. Indeed, it seems beyond my worthy opponents to notice that factories, steelworks and pits have been closed in the north, too, and that Welsh unemployment is highest not in the south, but on Deeside.

As far as the language is concerned, both of my opponents agree that to date we have done too little. But they have no answer. For **Privacy** the "distance of South Wales from the struggles over the language... simply cannot be wished away". But he does not stop to consider the reason the language has declined and the forces that have stifled it: forces a million miles from the workers themselves, whose contemptuous attitude is shared by **Privacy** slavishly. **Privacy** is still more confused. Our deficiency on the language question "can only be remedied by Welsh speaking comrades. Does he not know the Welsh speaking workers can speak English as well? Has he ever stopped to consider why so few of the Welsh speaking workers have been drawn to our politics? Precisely because SWP is identified with English rule. That does not need a mastery of Welsh to combat, merely a small knowledge of Marxian.

Privacy characterises the strength of Plaid Cymru as prosperous and Liberal; and has little thought for its direction. Yet Plaid strength has consistently come from strong Labour areas: Caerfyrddyn, Caerffili, the Rhondda, Caer-naifon, Merthyr. The party is becoming split between the old right and the social democratic left. When the split becomes open, are we to stand by while Plaid declare itself as Welsh social democracy, and wins the support of some of the best militants. While the line of **Privacy** pre-

vails we cannot but remain swp-sal to many workers who could little difficulty be won to our politics. For the Welsh workers have been strongly internationalist in the past; it is the failure of the English social democracy to deliver the goods that has made sections of them turn to national politics. This experience cannot but make them profoundly cynical towards appeals to international brotherhood which emanate from North London and which are articulated in Wales by arrogant anglicisers of the **Privacy** school. Despite their failure to pass **Privacy** acid test for socialists (participation in the Cardiff ANL) the WSRM cannot be discounted by comrades. As Cde Callinicos points out: "the nationalists could well revive in the right circumstances, posing us severe tactical problems". Especially if we have given no thought to them beforehand. And WSRM have in their rapid growth given us sufficient warning.

Both **Privacy** consider that a Welsh policy for SWP would lead to our becoming a little more than a wing of Plaid Cymru: this mechanistic attitude, which can see no difference between cynical anglicisation and revolutionary internationalism, is typical. Why should these persons assume that a Welsh policy will have any association with bourgeois nationalism whatsoever? For us to have a Welsh press, a Welsh structure, etc, makes it possible for the first time to adequately organise among Welsh workers and support their demands rather than pushing English policies where they are inappropriate. That is the 'distinctive revolutionary position' which will differentiate SWP from the separatists and unite all revolutionary workers in Wales around our demands. The future of Wales belongs to the Welsh proletariat only: quite right, but we will only make that future a revolutionary socialist one and defeat bourgeois nationalism through the adoption of a correct policy. Otherwise we betray the future of Welsh workers, north and south, to nationalism.

Draft policy and suggestions on a Welsh structure.

1) The English state has an imperialist nature, and its paramountcy in the UK rests on the economic and social oppression of the peripheral nations of Britain.

2) Despite to a significant extent articulating the demands of the minor nations, the national republican movements are of a bourgeois nature.

3) The right of nations to self-determination is fundamental to the party's work in the minor nations. It is due to our failure to prove that SWP is not an anglicising organisation that national issues in the oppressed nations are articulated only through the nationalist parties. But socialism requires the international organisation of the working class. Only if we can convince workers in the oppressed nations that socialism will mean the defence and extension of national and cultural rights can they be won to revolutionary politics.

4) The weapon of the revolutionary party in the struggle against bourgeois nationalism is its internationalism. But this internationalism can only be put into practice by fighting resolutely against all forms of English chauvinism within our organisations and supporting the struggles of the workers of the minor nations for social and national rights.

5) This may only be done by the adoption of a correct national policy. We must espouse the struggles of workers for social, economic, and national rights within the minor nations of Britain and demonstrate the failure of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties to effectively support such struggles.

Party structure in Wales

1) SWP propaganda must give full and immediate coverage of all Welsh struggles cultural, social and economic; not as now partial and belated coverage of all non-industrial events.

2) To this end, a periodical to be established in addition to improve coverage in SW. The periodical to contain material in both Welsh and English to carry the politics of SWP, to report on all events of relevance to Welsh workers, and to combat both the influence of social democracy and of reactionary nationalism. The periodical to appear at least 6 times annually, and more frequently as required.

3) Creation of a Welsh party structure comprising members of SWP normally or currently resident in Wales, to confer at least twice yearly, and more frequently at the request of Welsh branches or of any executive organ of SWP. This organisation to have sole responsibility for formulating all aspects of the SWP Welsh policy, and to elect one member to the Central Control Commission.

4) The establishment of a party office and press in Wales, and the appointment of at least one full time officer with responsibility for Welsh organisation, this person to be Welsh speaking.

Privacy

Proposal for Conference to be published in the next Internal Bulletin

During recent months the Welsh question has forced its way to a prominence which it has not had for many years.

The effect of the crisis of jobs, industry housing and Welsh culture, require the SWP to have in Wales an organisational structure which will enable Welsh comrades to respond to, and initiate actions in support of Welsh workers in struggle around these issues.

We therefore propose that an aggregate of comrades from all Welsh SWP branches to be held perhaps 3-4 times a year, to discuss and co-ordinate activities and policies on specific Welsh issues.

Privacy

On Revolutionary Unity

by

Privacy

Hemel Hempstead

Replying to Pete Goodwin's article on revolutionary unity. (IB August 1980). His main theme centres around the analysis that the IMG have not changed since the last conference, or over the last few years, on their tactical and political outlook.

This denies reality in that since their conference "Socialist Challenge has taken a definite change in format and direction, it is a paper which is now geared more directly to intervening in the class struggle, more an organisational workers paper, more like Socialist Worker, for instance!

Given this change in S.C. which compliments their turn to industry and unity offensive towards us, plus the fact that they have posed unity with us in a concrete way, i.e. the call for a recalled Defend Our Unions Conference, which both Pete and Chris forgot to mention. I repeat, it is our duty as revolutionaries to test out their unity proposals by discussion at national and local level. This should not be on the basis of abstract polemicising, but how in the short term we can unite: against Thatcherism, the right wing in the Engineering Union, etc., and yes in the long term having a perspective towards a united revolutionary party.

In his reply to me Pete then offers up a series of 'red herrings' on why we should not test out the IMG's proposals towards unity.

First of all he says that "it would utilise quite considerable resources which would otherwise be utilised elsewhere. It would inevitably shift the attention of all comrades away from other questions: for instance from unity in action with the CP and Labour Left." Wow Pete, I am not suggesting that *all* we should be doing is talking to the IMG. And rather than utilising considerable resources, it would do the opposite and compliment the resources we have already put in, in posing unity in action with the CP and Labour Left. It is ridiculous to say that comrades attentions would be diverted from the CP and Labour Lefts as it is the SAME question i.e. unity with people with whom we can have an AGREEMENT on certain issues which includes the CP, and Labour Lefts and the IMG. A more worrying aspect of Pete's article was his playing of what I will call the "numbers game". Alright, Pete, we are six times bigger than the IMG but we are not by any means an organisational alternative to the Labour Party. We are admittedly the biggest fish in the revolutionary pond, but we are not yet "The Party"! As such it is our duty to respond to other revolutionaries when unity is posed, and at least discuss it.

To say the disunity of the revolutionary left is:

1. "... not a crucial obstacle to our growth ..."

and
2. "... not a problem we have to solve ..."

is sectarianism of the worst kind. Precisely because we are the biggest fish in the revolutionary pond but *not* an organisational alternative to the Labour Party makes it our duty to respond to other serious revolutionary groupings to try and build that alternative. It should *not* be the case of simply building the SWP at all costs. Build, yes, but in the interests of the class. It is obviously in the best interests of the class at the moment to have some type of united revolutionary work, when there are so few of us about anyway.

Pete goes on to say "If [P] wants further proof of the lack of political movement towards us he should think through the examples he himself cites."

i.e. the disunity in Redder Tape and Rank and File Teacher. Now, I will accept that these are not just unfortunate examples of revolutionary disunity but do have a political and tactical base, but for Pete to say ... "the first signs of any political movement by them towards us would be a return to the R&F groups, so far we are still waiting." is again making the mistake of saying that because a group disagrees with our current tactical line and a certain amount of our politics then this precludes all talks of unity. This is obviously wrong as I am sure a lot of comrades reading this will agree. In certain areas, e.g. Ireland, NAC, the ANL, concrete unity does exist in the localities, and, yes, in trade union works as well. Discussion at local and national level would be a chance to pull these strands of united work together and make them more effective.

Lastly, Pete argues that although our tactical differences might be all right taken separately, "... heaped one on top of the other and coupled with very big differences in tradition, and you have a recipe for a permanent factional battle in a unified organisation." I would agree that if, at the moment, the SWP and the IMG instantly fused, yes, the tactical differences 'heaped one on top of the other' would make a revolutionary party impossible. However, that is not what is being posed by the IMG and what I am saying should happen. Instead, I am talking about unity in action with a long-term perspective towards a united revolutionary organisation. Pete also seems to see these tactical differences, "... heaped one on top of the other" as a static lump that will act as a wedge separating us forever. History does not work like that, and the fact that Socialist Challenge is changing, in my opinion, for the better and in line with their conference resolutions, shows the fluidity of the organisation.

In short "... the permanent factional battle ..." which Pete thrusts before the SWP membership is something he assumes will naturally happen if we ever unite with the IMG. This type of analysis has two main faults.

Firstly, the differences between our two organisations pale against what we both agree on, i.e. generally speaking, revolutionary marxism, and secondly it doesn't take into account that, like anything, organisations are capable of change.

In conclusion, I am against the current line of the CC in not responding to calls for discussion with the IMG on how we can unite. As a revolutionary marxist organisation all levels of the party should be willing to discuss our tactics and politics, not just with those that usually don't listen, but those that will. I reject what the CC's line implies, i.e. that we are already an organisational alternative to the Labour Party and therefore we can afford to shun the approaches of any other group. We can't.

Lastly what I have read so far by the CC, i.e. Chris Harman's article and Pete Goodwin's reply to my article, imply that there are so many differences between us to keep us apart for ever. This unmarxist analysis denies the reality that at the moment, because of the closeness of our politics we do work together in certain areas, in the localities. I would be gratified if the C.C. could give some lead in that sphere nationally.

All comrades that agree with the main points, in this article should move appropriate resolutions at conference and contact me through the centre.

Republican Faction Platform

'Aims of the Republican Faction'

The aim of the Republican Faction is to win a clear majority of the party to accept the following:-

1. That the nationalist movements in the UK are an historically progressive phenomenon.

2. Consequently, the Party should develop a broad strategy on the National Question which recognises this.

3. This strategy should be based on proletarian politics, (eg support for the international class struggle, Soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat.)

4. Tactically this implies that we take seriously the issues raised by the nationalist movements, (eg. reunification of Ireland, political status, language question, Home Rule etc...) Since our politics are distinct from the petty-bourgeois nationalist parties we bring to these issues our own orientation on the labour movement especially combating nationalist chauvinism.

The Republican Faction asks Party members to consider the above statement of our aims. The crucial point at issue is point 1. Because there are divided views on this in the Party, it is important that branches consider the issue we are raising in order that the Party can develop a united policy. The above statement can be turned into a motion...

'This branch/district accepts ... 1.' etc.

If any branch would like a speaker from the Faction we will do our best to provide one. You can contact the Faction by phoning the Centre and requesting my phone number or by contacting one of the faction supporters.

Privacy

Faction Secretary



1977 Thesis on the National Question — back to the drawing board.

Privacy

Alex Callinicos's reply to the Republican Faction contains a number of points. First, it appeals to the 1977 C.C. thesis on the National Question (I.S.J. 101) as our basic position. Second, it questions whether there is any connection between the Monarchy and the National Question. Thirdly, it takes up some theoretical points about the Marxist Theory of the State and throw in a red herring or two about the Nairn-Anderson-Thompson Debate. Finally Alex raises the issue of whether our position is based on stageism or permanent revolution. I am confident that we can deal with all the points Alex raises, but the next I.B. deadline means that we will have to deal with points 2, 3, and 4 in I.B. No 3.

This article is to take up the first point and argue that the 1977 thesis was destroyed and that we require a new thesis. If this is true Alex is skating on extremely thin ice in appealing to this thesis. I notice in passing that Privacy in attacking Privacy's position is skating on the same lake Privacy claims that the 1977 thesis gives us a 'distinctive revolutionary position'. Let us examine this 'distinctive revolutionary position' in the light of what happened since 1977.

To begin it is worth pointing out that everybody from the Republican faction at one extreme to the anti-Home Rulers at the other could find at least some points to agree with. (and some to disagree with) Hence it is not so much the individual parts but rather how they are put together, the broad overall line.

It is this that despite some correct points means that the thesis was *in essence* mistaken.

The thesis begins by taking a positive view of the National Question, pointing out that we should not confuse the unity of the working class with the unity of the British State (Para 1). Hence we are not opposed to home rule or independence (Para 2). However it is soon made clear that we are not in favour of it either (Para 3). This is because we do not recognise Scotland and Wales as oppressed nations (para 4).—except of course, for a small bit of oppression of a smallish number of people in Wales. This is reinforced by a correct characterisation of the SNP as a petit bourgeois nationalist Party with a reformist, electoralist, pro-monarchist ideology. It has failed (not surprisingly) to stir up the Scottish Working Class (para 5). The implication of paragraphs 4 and 5 are that we should not support Home Rule. But just in case you are not yet dizzy with zig-zagging, paragraph 6 assures that some future hypothetical situation might come about in which the SNP succeeded in rousing the Scottish Working Class. Then we would want to join in. But we are a 'million miles' from such a scenario. Hence the overall impression is that we are neither for or against it. The line is Revolutionary Abstentionism.

What happened to Revolutionary Abstentionism? Not long after, Labour Unionists and other hardline anti-home rulers in the British Parliament succeeded in putting through the 40% rule. The effect of this parliamentary trickery (apart from showing once again that you cannot trust the bourgeoisie if they feel their interests threatened) was to destroy revolutionary Abstentionism. The CC majority was forced to switch to the critical Yes position. But did this not lack credibility? Had they not previously argued that it was sufficiently unimportant for us not to take sides? Not surprisingly, it was our anti-home comrades, who had at least been consistent, who were able with the collapse of abstentionism to win the Conference.

So whilst the 1977 thesis argued that "under no circumstances can we be opposed to devolution" by 1979 the SWP was urging workers to vote against devolution. This total about turn was in practice the product of an unholy alliance of Parliamentary anti-home rulers and SWP anti-home rulers destroying a thesis built on sand. It remains an unpleasant fact that it was the 40% rule that finally sunk Jim Callaghan and gave us a General Election—and Margaret Thatcher.

Somewhere in the 1977 thesis there was a fatal flaw. This may have been an economic view of the class struggle. Economism takes a narrow view of class struggle as issues arising (spontaneously) in the factory. Economism tends to equate class struggle with trade union struggle. Issues arising outside the factory for example, issues of oppression, democratic rights, political and constitutional matters are not seen as class questions rather as outside class struggle or as a diversion from class (ie economic) struggle. On

the basis of the narrow view of class struggle, a democratic issue like home-rule would be seen as a non-class issue. Therefore to abstain in the referendum has no consequence in the class struggle. Leninism takes a broader view of class struggle. All issues of oppression, democracy, sexuality, race relations as well as wages and conditions of work affect relations within and between classes. Lenin makes the point that a Socialist Revolution, an intensification of the class struggle, "may break out not only in consequence of a great strike, a street demonstration, a hunger riot, a mutiny in the forces or a colonial rebellion, but also as a consequence of any political crisis, like the Dreyfus Affair, the Zaborn incident or in connection with a referendum as the succession of an oppressed nation." (On the National and Colonial Questions)

Even an issue like Gwynfor Evans proposed hunger strike can lead to a political crisis and a violent polarisation of class forces. The Tories of course understood this quite well and backed down. So too the devolution referendum around which class forces aligned themselves was not above the class struggle but an aspect of it. The ruling class of course fight for their line round every issue. Every issue is a skirmish and these skirmishes affect the course of the war. However the ruling class would prefer that the workers movement confined itself to trade unionism and not join the fight over "irrelevant", "non-class" or "side issues". This is why Lenin argued that Economism, this narrowing down of the class struggle was in fact bourgeois ideology entering the workers movement. Economism leading to abstention from certain aspects of class struggle was capitulation to the ruling class.

The National Question is a class issue involving both the relationships within a class within a nation and of classes across national boundaries. Concretely this means that we will have to take sides on issues like the language question, home rule and even independence. It means that we will have to put ourselves in the progressive-democratic rather than the conservative-establishment camp. We have at the same time, of course, not to submerge ourselves into such a camp but create a distinct proletarian position within it. Revolutionary abstentionism is an attempt to put off difficult decisions about taking sides. To abstain (except in exceptional circumstances) is like being a pacifist in the class war. That this would be a terrible mistake became obvious as soon as some event occurred to clear the fog. In this case the 40% rule showed that the bourgeois politicians were fighting for their interests. This is why the 1977 thesis, despite some good points, came to wrong conclusions. The 40% rule killed the thesis. We should bury it and resurrect it. My conclusion is that we do not have a credible thesis and the Party needs a new one. This among other things is what we will be discussing at the Republican faction meeting in Manchester on November 1st.

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Description	SHEETS OF STICKERS	BADGES
'SHE'S GOT TO GO! SWP'	X	
24 BADGES POLITICAL STATUS NOW! ARMAGH ROCK THE BLACKS	X	
	X	
'THATCHER DEGRADES WOMEN' Women's V. c.e.	X	
'NOT WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM!'	X	
'OUT' RndF'	X	
'80 YEARS A SCRAWNER SWP' (Queen Mother)	X	
'READ SOCIALIST WORKER PC Box B2, London E2'		X
'TROOPS OUT NOW SWP'	X	
'HELP THE POLICE - BEAT YOURSELF UP SWP'	X	
'FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK'	X	
'BUZZY SAYS WHO'S TAPPING YOUR PHONE?'	X	
'A GOOD POLICE FORCE ARRESTS MORE CRIMINALS THAN IT EMPLOYS!'	X	
'LIES DAMMED LIES SAYS THE DAILY MAIL' SWP	X	
'IN THE CLASS WAR, SOCIALIST WORKER HELPS YOU WIN'	X	
'KICK OUT THE TORIES! Socialist Worker'	X	
'STUFF THE 'EMPLOYMENT' ACT - DEFEND OUR UNIONS'	X	
'NO TO PRIORS LAW - I AM THE 7th PICKET, RIF'	X	
'BEWARE THE JOB CRUNCHERS SWP'	X	
'WORKERS POWER NOT NUCLEAR POWER'	X	
'NO TO NUCLEAR POWER LEAVE THE WEAPONS WITHIN REACH'	X	
'GET RID OF PESTS - STEP ON A TORY' SWP	X	
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SWP



Internal Bulletin DEC 1980

Pre Conference Issue 3 20p

United Front and Michael Foot's election Central Committee

1. Foot's victory in the Labour Party leadership election does not in itself signify any irreversible shift to the left by the Labour Party. It came about because a number of MPs on the centre and the right of the party saw Foot as able to achieve a compromise between left and right that was not possible under Healey. They also recognised that Foot was more acceptable to a number of key union leaders—including generally right wing union leaders like Basnett—because he was identified with compromises with them of the last Labour government, whereas Healey was identified with the cuts of 1976 and the unenforceable 5 per cent wage norm of 1978-9. These pressures were much more important than the possible effects of fear of reselection conferences in some years' time on a few MPs.

In terms of the traditions of the party, Foot was a far more likely choice than Healey: only one leader of the party has originated from the hard right in 60 years (Gaitskell) and that choice was followed by a long period of disastrous in-fighting, and one from the right centre (Callaghan). The usual pattern has been a leader with left credentials who has then persuaded the rest of the left to bend over backwards in compromises with the right (MacDonald, Lansbury, Attlee, Wilson).

Foot is already making those compromises. In his talk of removing cruise missiles he is careful not to put the full unilateralist position. His attacks on the government's 'monetarism' call upon the CBI to unite with the TUC and Labour. He is careful to defend the records of the Wilson and Callaghan governments in which he served. He has ensured Healey unopposed election as deputy leader. No doubt he will give important shadow cabinet posts to other leading right wingers.

2. The Foot victory has pulled the carpet out from the hard left in the party. The battles they were looking forward to over the constitutional issues—the electoral college etc—have faded into virtual insignificance. Benn is faced with being completely out or making promises of good behaviour to the right and centre in order to ensure election to the shadow cabinet. He has already indicated that he will not oppose Foot if an electoral college is formed.

Under such circumstances, it is possible that there will be a certain disarray within the newer, harder elements of the left (including some of the entryists) who saw the road to power as opening up for Bennism. This disarray can be even greater in certain localities, where the heroes of the left are presiding over

the imposition of the Tory cuts, the sale of council houses etc. However, the disarray is likely, for the time being, to be limited: one should never under-estimate the unbounded credulity of the Labour left.

3. The most important impact of the Foot victory seems to be outside the hardcore of established politicians. It seems to have aroused in many people the hope of a new sort of alternative to Thatcher. The fact that Foot is more aggressive against the Tories than were Callaghan and Healey; the fact that for decades he did come across as the incorruptible conscience of the left; the fact that he has been enthusiastic about the Liverpool demonstration over unemployment; the fact that he countenanced the disruption of parliamentary procedures over the announcement of council rent rises; the fact that he does denounce Cruise—all this is making more impact on the politically uninitiated than his quiet compromises with the right.

In politics, even the false hopes which spread among large numbers of people can be significant. They can stir the previously lethargic and apathetic into a new activism. The signs of this are present: the fact that twice as many people in opinion polls prefer Foot to Thatcher; the 40 per cent figure of those wanting unilateralism; the very large meetings and demonstrations over Cruise; the Liverpool demonstration; the continued proliferation of campaigns against local cuts.

As the United Front document in the last bulletin noted (before the Foot victory), there seems to be beginning: 'A degree of repoliticisation of a substantial layer of workers. The politics are reformist, but they are, by their nature, oppositional. This gives us an excellent opportunity to intervene with our ideas.'

4. If this new feeling were to crystallise out immediately into solid, entrenched, reformist organisation, it would represent a very real problem to us. Our numbers would seem puny compared to it, and we might well find ourselves forced to sit out a long period, waiting for disillusion to set in. But such solidity is unlikely in the short term. The Labour party in the localities does not have the hard left reformist *cadres* necessary to organise into its sort of activities those people who are stirred by the Foot victory. The fact that for much of the left politics has meant infighting and not even reformist activity in the class will make it difficult for them to respond to opportunities.

Their positions in councils that are enforcing cuts and their continued dependence on the trade union bureaucracy will further tend to paralyse them.

However, these are handicaps even they can overcome, if given time, *unless revolutionary socialists are working consistently among the newly politicised layer.*

5. This is where the United Front comes in. The Foot victory makes it more important than ever.

We have to go out of our way to find opportunities for joint activity with reformist organisations, as the way in which we can draw towards us people who might otherwise be attracted into hard reformist politics.

The very organisational weakness of the local Labour Parties represents a certain difficulty in this. It is no good simply arranging a united activity between us and them, since they themselves are unlikely to be able to turn out their passive supporters. We will usually have to go further, seeing any agreement for united activity as simply the go ahead for us going out and pulling the passive supporters of the Labour into action. For instance, if there is a demonstration over unemployment, there is little doubt that it will have to be the Right to Work Campaign that does the dole work or which takes on the task of visiting all the Labour Party members in a locality and to try to get them involved. In the workplaces there will be many individuals sympathetic to the new apparent leftism of Labour, to the anti-bomb campaign etc: they will not be drawn from sympathy into active politics unless we do the drawing.

If we do manage to get forms of united activity going, we have little to fear. The whole historical experience of the last sixty years shows that in united activity between reformists and revolutionaries, it tends to be the revolutionaries who win out in terms of ideas. That is because our ideas, based upon the self-activity of the class, fit in with the notion of fighting; the reformists, with their continual obsession with people relying on others to do things for them, are embarrassed and inconsistent when it comes to struggle. Hence in periods of activity, revolutionaries have the advantage; in periods of acquiescence, reformists.

6. One thing can, however, hold us back from taking advantage of the situation. That is the heritage of the last six years, in which all too often we found ourselves and our immediate periphery to be the only people prepared to fight and to argue back against the right. This has created a certain tendency towards ingrained sectarianism in our own ranks. We tend to adopt the attitude that unless we are the leadership of something, it is of little value. So many comrades were happier about working for October 10th, which was very much our baby, than for 29th November—even though at the time of writing all the indications are that 29 November will be much bigger. In our work against the Nazis, many comrades tend to write off any attempt at involving elements outside the party because these are seen, almost by definition, as 'soft'. And many, many opportunities have been lost of intervening in the Cruise campaign because comrades see it as a 'soft' issue—even though it is bringing many thousands of people (and not all them either middle aged or middle class) into the beginnings of political activity and is already providing one of the most embarrassing issues for Foot in Britain. We must not lose sight of the possibility of a united front with the right. UCPI000016148/105

There are many differences between the situation today and that of the early 1970s. But in one respect we can learn from then. We grew at that time from being a minute organisation to being a small one by systematic intervention in campaigns and struggle in which we were at first a small minority. In the relatively barren period of the late 1970s there were fewer—and usually smaller—campaigns and struggles, and we were a big minority or even a majority. Now we have to learn again to be a consistent minority as larger numbers of people are involved in activities. If we do this, in the increased atmosphere of political interest and political discussion created by the Foot victory, we can begin to grow once again. If we do not learn this lesson, we can end up sitting on the sideline being pure, while a much reinvigorated reformism entrenches itself between us and the active sections of the class.

Industrial Perspectives

Central Committee

1. The overall picture remains grim, but the possibilities for us are very great. Our analysis last year of the low state of morale and confidence in the working class, the weaknesses of organisation on the shop floor and the shift to the right in the official union machine has proved all too correct. Days lost through strikes are at their lowest for years, the numbers of workers taking strike action is equally low. Wage settlements are low in the private sector, while the 6% wage limit is already proving a daunting hurdle for most public sector workers (with hopefully the exception of the 'special case' of the firemen). On the jobs front only Gardners and the dockers provide examples of what can be achieved—the other side of the balance sheet on jobs is a list of disasters. But Gardners and the dockers' victories are all too specific, with insufficient generalised impact in the rest of the movement. Eight years ago in the fight against the last Tory government the impact of these sort of victories would have been widespread—today we are searching for a few ripples.

For most of the last 12 months protests against the cuts have mounted, but action has been minimal. Just recently there are some signs that at least in some sections there may be some resistance. But the loud calls for total resistance from Ted Knight as camouflage to hide the extent of the failure to resist at every level.

The attack on conditions and established rights is equally unchecked. Unemployment is having a further and very serious effect on shopfloor confidence and organisation. Lay

offs and the enormous extent of short time working throughout manufacturing is making it difficult and sometimes impossible for shop stewards and militants to organise members that they sometimes don't see for weeks at a time.

The Employment Act is not yet being used in a widespread way—partly because the Tories don't yet need to use it, partly because the Tories learnt at Brixton in the summer how easily their Code of Practice can get them into trouble. The lagers picketing at Pembroke (after Brixton) clearly broke the Employment Act and the Code of Practice and the Tories did nothing. The Government is moving with caution. We are likely to see more and more postal ballots as the Tories pick and choose when to use the Act. The Tories find it easier to justify postal ballots and it is far less damaging to them than TV pictures of large numbers of trade unionists defying attempts to enforce the Code of Practice on picketing. Nevertheless the Tories will use both the Employment Act and the Code of Practice. They have set the scene for some serious confrontations, and the Government can't control directly when a local police force will decide to enforce 6 on a picket line, with all the possible consequences. Their greatest ally in introducing the law and the Code stealthily has been the deafening silence of the General Council of the TUC and the rest of the trade union bureaucracy. Since the mess of May 14th the TUC has stepped aside—leaving the field of public protest and campaigning wide open to Michael Foot and Tony Benn.

The right within the trade unions is highly confident. Terry Duffy achieved an unprecedented first round victory in the AUEW Presidential elections—in spite of rumours throughout the Broad Left that Wright had done very well and that Duffy was in for a surprise. Frank Chapple is no longer as isolated as he was 10 years ago—indeed the lengths to which he seemed prepared to take the Isle of Grain row within the TUC suggests that he is highly confident.

As for the left in the TUC it is a total shambles. 10 years ago Jones and Scanlon were dragging the official movement into a fight—however weakened that fight sometimes was. Now Scanlon's successor Duffy has become a spokesman for the employers denouncing his own members. The left instead is represented by Moss Evans and even David Basnett.

The COMMUNIST PARTY has had a disastrous year. Except in Corby they barely figured in the steel strike—in Sheffield their main contribution was to give Real Steel News a meeting room for the strike. Their year began with the sacking of their leading convenor—Derek Robinson. The LCDTU Conference did them no good at all. Indeed it is now clear that the Right to Work Campaign is a far more credible organisation. The Isle of Grain found them highly embarrassed by their association with John Baldwin. The Wright catastrophe in the AUEW

was bad news for all of us, for the CP it meant the final end of a 25 year perspective in engineering. Around Gardners, in spite of the key convenor's nominal membership of the CP they hardly covered themselves in glory—there will be many rank and file CP members who will be under the impression that we lead the strike.

We shouldn't underestimate them. Their membership may be declining, they may be incapable of implementing the sort of campaign they pulled off around UCS 10 years ago, but they are still a serious force in some localities. They still provide a loose home for several thousand experienced militants. They still have considerable negative power in the localities. Their chances of recovery seem minimal, but in their lengthy death throws they can still give us a blow in the right conditions. The TGWU decision to lobby on 10th October did provide the CP with a way of operating against us for a period, although in the end the overwhelming publicity for the Right to Work march ended the difficulty.

2. THE MINORITY. The frustration and anger against the Tories is not finding much expression in terms of action but nevertheless there is a vociferous and growing minority who would like to take action themselves. Special circumstances, management or Government miscalculations, as with the steelworkers and now the firemen, can lead to rapid escalations. In any case the Government's policies are bound at some stage to provoke defensive actions on a considerable scale—the difficulty is that we are still it seems some way off from the stage. Gardners showed that there is a point beyond which jobs will be defended.

The steelworkers provide the best example of what over confidence from the Government can provoke. Whatever calculations the Government had made about the usefulness of a stoppage in steel and the delights of making an example of a traditionally peaceful group of trade unionists, the Tories were frightened by the strength of the strike, by the flying pickets, by the determination of the rank and file. As the Financial Times kept complaining, for weeks the strike was controlled in picket offices in the steel towns by local committees.

The smallest as well as the biggest disputes can shift events. The Brixton strike by 27 civil-servants ended up bruising Prior's picketing Code even before it was officially introduced.

ARrogance and miscalculation from the Government has now provoked the firemen. Others will follow. Even the BL workes could not be sold their wage deal on the first attempt—in spite of the incredible propaganda around the launch of the Metro.

The examples of small disputes which we can intervene in are numerous, the nature of strikes at the moment, they tend to be long, bitter and isolated, although they are usually official. The only likely change in the next 12 months is more similar disputes.

Henry's, London weighting in the NUJ etc.

There is no point in speculating much about whether other major disputes can be expected. No-one really expects the steel strike to happen—not Bill Sims, not Charles Villiers or the Tories and not the steel workers themselves. It is possible that as the cuts cut deeper into hitherto untouched areas of local government that there will be some resistance—more active like that in the housing departments in Manchester and Liverpool. Certainly there will more groups like the firemen who are driven to action by the Government.

It is too early to tell whether Gardners will have any overall spin off effect. Certainly the fact that has been on Gardners makes it possible that there will be more.

For us the growth of the minority, forced by Thatcher's policies and now the revised left of the Labour Party, is the key to what we now do. Whether there are strike or not, there will be conflict. Every vote—even if it is against any action—shows the bitterness that exists against the Government. Among the thousands of BL workers who voted for strike action even though the majority didn't, among the thousands who want to resist even though they are in a minority, the possibilities for us are considerable. We won't be operating alone; the ideas of this growing minority will on most issues have more in common with Tony Benn than with us. But the minority is growing and we are well placed to influence sections of it. We have come out of the last 18 months, since the June 23rd Rank and File Conference, with a much enhanced reputation both nationally, in many localities and in some unions. The combination of detailed and specific work around particular disputes and in particular unions and industries, hard slog inside and outside specific work places, combined with effective national campaigning, can take us further forward in the next 12 months.

THE RIGHT TO WORK CAMPAIGN

Unemployment is the dominant feature of every aspect of industrial work at the moment—of course issues will change; the Employment Act and Prior's Code may come to the centre of the stage at any time. But unemployment is there at the centre and it will not go away.

The Right to Work Campaign is now located firmly inside the movement. Its credibility is high it can provide the best cutting edge for united front approaches to the Labour party. It has provided us with a way in to areas of the trade union movement that we have never been able to reach before. The network of trade union support and contacts won around the South Wales march and the 10th October in most localities, is a major plank in all our industrial work. Among trade unionists the RTWC is firmly established. The strength of that network was shown around Gardners solidarity work.

The area where the Right to Work Campaign is weakest is among the unemployed. We are very successful in organising small

groups of unemployed in localities for a few weeks or even in a few cases a few months. We are very successful in mobilising the unemployed to march on national marches. But we are not able to establish serious, permanent unemployed organisation in any areas.

The reasons for this are partly to do with the nature of the unemployed, partly to do with the fact that many people still do find jobs within a reasonable space of time, partly because the SWP is too small to sustain and carry an unemployed organisation when our own membership is predominantly among the employed.

We can build and sustain unemployed groups for short periods, particularly in the two month run up to a march. At this stage it is difficult to do more. Even the experience of unemployed centres has proved unsatisfactory. For short periods intense activity we have maintained the centres. But not for longer.

Over the next year the Right to Work Campaign will have to take up the issue of forcing the TUC and major unions like the TGWU to accept unemployed members with full rights. All supporters of the last march have been circulated with a draft resolution calling on the next TUC to:

1. Establish a union for the unemployed
2. Have dual membership of that union with the union of any worker who loses his job.
3. Ensure that all unions give full rights to all members who lose their jobs. We need to take this up as a campaign through all the unions, so that we push the burden of providing for the unemployed to the whole trade union movement. We cannot substitute ourselves.

Keeping the Right to Work together after the 10th October and the 29th November will not prove the impossible task of past year; the unemployment figures will see to that. But for a couple of months at least the burden of keeping up the initiative of the Right to Work will fall on the localities. Every area needs to have a local Right to Work secretary—nothing more ambitious. Committees will either fall apart or become sectarian battle fields. Instead we need a secretary who will correspond with all the trade union bodies in the area who support the Right to Work and who will ensure that we keep up:

1. A presence on the dole, particularly through SW sales, leafletting for meetings and demonstrations, and where possible dole bulletins.
2. Stunts, discos and other activities for the unemployed.
3. Keeping trade union supporters informed and involved and providing some money
4. Pushing local union branches to push their unions to raise at the next TUC the question of a union for the unemployed.

LOCAL NETWORKS

The greatest success of the Right to Work Campaign has in fact been as a trade union operation. It has forced us to widen the net-

work of shop stewards committees and trade union branches that we know to a far greater extent than even the June 23rd Conference. Looking after and expanding this rank and file network is key to industrial work. In every area we can now get to talk to most of the militants. They won't all listen, but at least they now have to say hello.

Nursing these contacts means ensuring in every area that they are followed up. It's easy to follow up 10th October with Gardners collection sheets, or transport details for the 29th. But we need to do far more. Every group of workers taking action has to be taken round the network, the firemen must be introduced to the public sector workers, but they should also be taken round the private sector. Part of building a rank and file movement is establishing this network so that our visits and our letters and our phone calls about solidarity become part of the normal scenery of the movement.

STRIKE INTERVENTIONS

The test of the local network and the national network it is part of, comes in strikes. The present pattern of smallish, defensive, long, strikes should be easier for us to intervene around than the much larger national disputes in which we can be swamped. Our intervention in the steel strike is documented elsewhere, but we should also consider our interventions in the smaller disputes. The key to such interventions is the health of the local Geographical SWP branch, the use of SW, and the involvement of existing rank and file organisation. In respect of the latter the RTWC is often a crucial vehicle with which to intervene. We are often still too slow off the mark, and then in other instances our efforts tail off as the strike drags on. We must be the first down to any picket line—offering support, raising collections, organising printing, reporting the strike in SW, taking delegations round the RTW network, getting unemployed comrades to DAILY help on the picket line, and so on. Only by such honest acts of solidarity do we have the right to comment on how to fight and how to win. And then we must be persistent, and even if the dispute is heading for defeat we must hang on in constantly arguing for the necessary tactics to avoid defeat. We must be the last ones to leave the ship! Such work around strikes can be done from the outside as well as from the inside. Where we have comrades involved in the dispute then obviously the task is much easier, and those comrades should, by principled argument and example, be fighting for leadership of the strike. But even in the minority of instances where we do exist on the inside the credibility of our members in the strike is very dependent on the performance of the rest of our Party in the local branch. Every member can be involved in such work—you don't have to be an experienced industrial 'expert' to collect money for Gardners, we can all do it. The way we respond to national strikes is not so dissimilar. On a national scale, we need more d

tion from the centre (largely through SW)—but at the end of the day it is still down to the local branches to make the all important personal contact. And in making that contact we must never shy from our politics. We do need to argue the socialist alternative, we do need to counter racist arguments, indeed discuss any issue that comes up on the picket line from Poland to what's on the local pictures. Again it is here that the use of SW is vital as our national link between the specific local dispute and our general political commentary on the world at large.

THE FRACTIONS AND THE RANK AND FILE PAPERS

(Some of the individual fractions have reported in previous IBs). The expansions of the local networks and the success of some of our strike interventions owes something to the success of some of the individual rank and file groups. But it is clear that three major difficulties of varying degree have arisen as a result of a previous few years.

1. The rank and file groups are not very much bigger than our own membership in the particular union in very many but not all cases. The need to shift and open ourselves up to new layers of people, many of whom are becoming militant for the first time in their lives will become more pressing in the coming months. Many of the habits and approaches of the past will not prove adequate. The exclusivity of the rank and file groups extends even inside our own Party—in every union there are SWP members who simply ignore the rank and file paper of their union. It is worth asking in each case how much that is a mistake on the part of the individual member and how much a problem, because of the narrowness of the rank and file paper. Attempts to widen our approach, like NAG typists Charter, are now essential.

2. The second problem is another one of exclusivity. There is no reason at all why rank and file initiatives should be pushed just by members of the relevant union. The 15.5 campaign in the AUEW to recall the executive was most successful where it was taken up by AUEW members and members of the local SWP branch, whether they were teachers, students, unemployed etc.

3. Many of the papers are still far too narrow in the politics they contain. Especially in a period of widespread passivity and general and rising concern about all sorts of issues we can't stick just to narrow issues around the union—some of our rank and file papers have from time to time managed an issue without barely mentioning employers, never mind the Tories, so keen are they to deal properly with the trade union bureaucracy. The Collier by contrast managed to deal with Poland by reporting on the strike by Polish miners in Silesia and in the next issue had a debate between a miner in the Labour Party and an SWP miner about the importance of Michael Foot's election as Labour leader.

Narrowness can also extend to not taking up national rank and file initiatives—like June 23rd or the Right to Work marches or 10th October. It is clear that the groups and

papers can contribute to the success of all these initiatives, but equally they can all build successfully out of them. The issue of unemployment and the need to support the Right to Work Campaign (and take up the resolutions to the TUC) has to be part and parcel of regular content of all our rank and file papers.

There are other issues which should also be taken up. On women's rights the rank and file papers can win a reputation as the consistent hard campaigners. Issues like abortion can stimulate a great deal of debate and argument within the papers—there is no reason at all why supporters of a rank and file paper are going to agree with the SWP on abortion. Around nuclear disarmament again we can win new readers by debating out the issues—and we can begin to win the argument within the trade unions that it is not a 'middle class issue' but a campaign that must be carried in the whole trade union movement.

And throughout the years of this Government the centre-piece of the content of all the papers must be the Tories and their policies and the campaign against them.

There is an additional problem for the fractions and rank and file papers—that of imitation. Most of the problems from union to union and industry to industry are different. More than that, our strength in each is so different (for historical and largely accidental reasons) that most attempts by one group to imitate another are fraught with dangers. It is clear that a small group of members in a small tightly knit union like the FBU can make a considerable impact while a far larger number of members in a wide, disparate and complex union like the TGWU can do very little as a national group. Because soem of our groups and papers are successful it creates an obvious danger of others attempting to imitate them when the resources in terms of SWP members on the ground simply don't exist and will take years to build up. Fraction weakness is on the whole a result of our numerical weakness rather than lack of effort.

UNION CONFERENCES—For the first time this year we had successful interventions outside (and sometimes inside) most of the major union Conferences and many of the smaller ones. The interventions from the outside were organised during the Spring, but the interventions from the inside have to be done well in advance. We can now win a few delegates to almost any union Conference if we put in the work well in advance. Every fraction needs to plan in advance (which means now) how to get resolutions through and where it is realistic to fight for delegates. It is a small task now but it can provide increased credibility for our groups.

GROWING OLDER—Although our main problem is still our lack of muscle, it is clear that some of our members are winning positions on executives, or taking on elected full time or nearly full time union jobs at work. The process is inevitable. But we have to do it in a controlled way. Conference will be asked

to vote on the proposals outlined in the first IB that anyone standing for a full time position locally or nationally and anyone standing for an executive position in a union can only do so after full consultation with the fraction/district and with the permission of the CC. This isn't just formalism. There are dangers as well as opportunities for us as we expand beyond being a sect. The excellent arrangements in the NUT fraction whereby our two EC members meet with members of the fraction executive before every NUT executive will eventually have to be introduced by other fractions.

The Role of the Branches

BUILDING ON THE INSIDE—In all our efforts to build within a specific workplace the order of the day is that patience and persistence pays off. Everything that has been said in last year's Conference perspectives and throughout the last year about patiently building up a reputation through bulletins, through being the most active supporter of workers outside as well as inside, through the use of Socialist Worker is true now.

The key though in most cases is the relationship between the one or two members we have inside a particular workplace and the support they receive from the branch and strict outside. It is difficult to get very far in most factories at the moment—it is probably easier to make some progress in schools and offices—of course progress can be made in the most unlikely and depressing circumstances. But a narrow economism—bulletins concerned just with the workplace, nothing ever raised that doesn't deal with the immediate problems of the workplace will not help to break the relative isolation of militants at the moment.

That is why our bulletins need to take up Poland, Abortion, the Yorkshire Ripper, the Tories, CND, Ireland etc etc. Every issue needs to be raised sensitively. But they do need to be raised. At the same time the local branches need to redouble their efforts to support members in workplaces—SW sales outside, meetings arranged so that they aren't impossible for shift workers and hard for someone who has to clock in at 6.30 am.

WORKING ON THE OUTSIDE. In the majority of cases, we are still on the outside of most major workplaces and thousands of smaller factories and offices. For us the problem is partly building where we already have something but it is very often building from the outside so that we can establish our first small base inside a workplace.

The expansion of our rank and file network is part of this process. But the real hard slog that will win us members inside workplaces where we have nothing consists still as it has done for years in three related activities, a. Regular selling of SOCIALIST WORKER outside workplaces. It is worth hanging on for months by or two SWs. The

us getting members inside the factory.

b. Regular contact work. We know shop stewards and rank and file workers inside most major factories. And all of these contacts can in turn lead us on to others, some of whom may be potential members. It is a slow laborious task, visiting contacts every week, offering them SW, finding out what the issues are inside the workplace, trying to involve them in other activities of the SWP and raising other political issues like Poland, CND etc. We may recruit, we may meet other people, we may just gain information. But this sort of detailed work is till the absolute key to breaking into more factories.

There is no substitute for it. Branches districts that carry it out effectively will grow and those that neglect this work will not make the industrial gains that are possible.

c. All this activity can provide us with the knowledge about what is going on inside to launch a bulletin. As long as we understand the issues inside we can produce bulletins even if we have no members inside. And workers who are not members will often help us write the bulletin anyway. The bulletin can in turn lead us onto more contacts and more potential members.

This activity can be carried out by anyone—whatever job they do. For us to succeed it needs to be carried out by most members. Students can be as valuable and important as anyone else in carrying out this work and making it possible for us to break into new factories. We certainly cannot afford a narrow specialisation that restricts every member to his own workplace, or college, or union. Because we are still on the outside most of the time, we all need to become experts on our local factories, workplaces, docks, offices, pits, councils depots, hospitals etc. There are literally thousands of workers who will at least listen to our ideas and there are many hundreds who will join us—if we can reach them. Breaking down the sectionalism that locks us into our own area of work will be to key to making these gains in the next year.

Industrial work is the key to all our activity and key to our success in building a revolutionary party. The only way we can root ourselves firmly in the workplaces is if each and every SWP branch sees the business of working around local industry, around local workplaces, as the key activity. Whatever else is happening, whatever exciting campaigns have just been launched, the process of visiting the industrial contacts, of making new contacts of pushing Socialist Workers is still the key to our future strength

Fighting Against the Missiles

Privacy

In the aftermath of the huge October demonstration against the missiles we can now begin to assess the state of the movement and the response of our own organisation. First of all the movement itself.

CND, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, has emerged as the only real national body for coordinating the movement. It was nearly overtaken by the Labour Party and by Edward Thompson's END (European Nuclear Disarmament) in the Spring and Summer, but the 80,000 plus October 26th demo has put it right back in the driving seat.

CND is run, basically, by pretty soft Euro-communists. The disadvantage of this is that they have no real idea how to run a mass movement; indeed they seem quite incapable of realising that they must give the hundreds of thousands who support the campaign passively something to *do* if we are to win. And of course the CND leadership refuses to see the connection between the bomb and hospital closures, the bomb and the right to work, the bomb, nationalism and the nazis and so on.

Yet at the same time CND has two great strengths. The first is its present refusal to be tied to the Labour Party's coat-tails, its commitment to build an *independent* campaign. The CP in the CND leadership are unlikely to change this, they would gain nothing by doing so, and they also claim to have learnt from the lessons of CND's failure in the 1960s when it collapsed for precisely this reason. The second is the extreme openness of CND to fresh ideas and answers. Even at its November annual conference, where the negligence of its leadership led to a scandalous underrepresentation of the thousands who have recently been flooding into the campaign, the dozen or so SWP comrades who were there managed to make a big impact: our speeches were applauded, we sold a reasonable amount of literature and so on.

In previous issues of the IB (August and November) Pete Goodwin and I have stressed how important the struggle against the missiles is, how when we were the International Socialists in the early 1960s we were built out of the CND, and how uniquely our politics fit the question. I shall not repeat that here. But several new features have emerged which strengthen the argument significantly. First of all the local committees (mainly CND but also END, ANC, local town against the missiles) are incomparably stronger than in the early 1960s, with well attended meetings, film showings, pickets, leafletting etc. Secondly CND has a dis-

tinctly wider appeal now. Recent public opinion surveys have been registering 40%-plus support for its aims, an impression that accords well with the experience of many local committees.

Finally there is the crisis itself. In the 1960s the fear of the bomb was mainly technical—the dangers of accidental war and so on. Today it is different. Many people now believe that nuclear war is probable as a result of the deliberate path being taken by Whitehall, the Kremlin and the Pentagon. It is this rather than the qualitative change in the new weapons system (like the cruise missile) which has undermined the credibility of the deterrence theory. More importantly the crisis has sharply posed the alternatives in the form of missiles and *therefore not* hospitals, bombs and *therefore not* jobs. It is important to remember that no such link existed in the 1960s; then we had *declining* sums spent on bombs amidst *rising* sums on welfare. In other words then it was much more possible to see—and to attempt to combat—the bomb in isolation from the class society that produces it. Now that is no longer the case. The bomb is immediately and directly connected with the preoccupations of ordinary working class people—unemployment, low wages, bad schools, hospital closures etc.

This means that the potential for a really massive campaign is very considerable. If done right we could be seeing demonstrations of half a million people in the next year or so. But to do so will require a radically different approach to the question than that of CND either now or in the past. It would mean taking up a campaign around demands such as 'Jobs not Bombs', 'Hospitals yes! Trident no!' and so on. How exactly can this be done?

To begin with it is important to admit how slight has been the involvement of SWP members in the various local CND and other groups. I would guess that no more than 40 or so comrades have regularly attended or helped to build their local committees. Those who have found a remarkable openness and interest in what we have to say and in our literature. We have, by and large found it fairly easy to argue our case, and as often as not to win agreement over strategy. The CP and Labour party members in the local groups have largely dissolved themselves within them, and with the exception of the IMG (which has totally isolated itself through its defence of the 'workers bomb'), the sects have ignored the campaign dismissing it as petit-bourgeois. Unfortunately this is an attitude shared by all too many of our own comrades; this is a luxury we can no longer afford.

part two

Within each of the local groups we need at least a few people to play a regular and continuing role. Within the general work of building the groups, our comrades have three distinctive tasks:

1. Regularly and openly selling SW and other literature. At my own local END group for instance, I usually arrive at meetings 15 minutes before they are due to begin to chat to people and sell them SW as they arrive. About 10 of the 40 regular attenders buy a copy each week.
2. Arguing for an orientation toward mass involvement—local demonstrations, mass leafletting and so on.
3. Arguing for the campaign to orient itself above all to the youth and to the working class.

The latter needs spelling out in greater

'Once they talked about a balance of terror, about how each nuclear power could inflict so many megadeaths on the other that the use of nuclear weapons would be unthinkable. Now it is all different...

The new weapons systems are the centrepiece. They are talked of not as part of the strategy of deterrence... to be held back as the ultimate guarantor of world peace, as an unused threat. They are there to be used'.

In the minds of our political leaders Armageddon, nuclear annihilation, has become thinkable. It is time something was done...



MISSILE MADNESS
THE NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND HOW THEY THREATEN YOUR LIFE

MISSILE MADNESS, SWP pamphlet by Peter Binns on the new weapons systems and how they threaten your life. 40p (plus 10p postage). Bulk orders £3.25 for 10 post free from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

detail. On the one hand in spite of its largely petty-bourgeois composition, a majority of CNDers probably now recognise that an important source of weakness in the campaign is the lack of working class involvement. Nothing would be easier than to raise the question of the working class in the slogan in these circumstances. And the danger here would be an end result which produced a purely formal link with a few TU bureaucrats, a link which once established could be used against alternative links with the rank and file.

The links that we need to make should be first of all ones, one and rank and file in character, behind which we should only then attempt to drag the official union machinery. This can be done in several ways.

1. We should immediately and on our own initiative launch campaigns against the bomb via our existing rank and file contacts. We should initiate e.g. Hospital Workers Against the Bomb, Engineers Against the Bomb, Teachers Against the Bomb and so on. As in the ANL groups these need involve no great effort. A leaflet saying where we stand, and a purely nominal supporters card plus a badge for 50p is all that is needed. It could be an excellent way of extending our RAF periphery—especially with imaginative badge design. Many comrades still don't realise how popular the anti-bomb message is. This should not be seen as a chore to earn us credibility in CND, but rather as a new and fruitful way of building the party and our periphery.

2. Local Right to Work committees should immediately begin agitating around the 'Jobs not Bombs' issue. They should, e.g. pocket the local army recruiting office, appealing to the local CND to make this a joint venture. In short we should be doing the work both inside and outside CND. Our task is to create a genuine rank and file focus for anti-bomb activity to draw people toward, inside to involve the best elements there in these activities. This should be backed up by national activities of the RTWC—leaflets, statements, contingents on CND marches, making sure that there is an anti-bomb content on RTW marches (we should march not just via factories but also via secret bunkers, army recruitment offices, air bases and so on).

3. In addition to the RTWC, both the ANL and especially the NUSS have an important role to play too. For the NUSS the theme 'We won't die for Thatcher/Jobs not Bombs/The army's even worse than school/Schoolkids against the Bomb' could be a winner. For the ANL it could be 'Don't blame the blacks/It's Maggie who's chosen bombs not jobs/hospitals'.

4. In these respects the Labour Movement Conference against the Missiles, organised by Manchester against the Missiles, is very important. It is due to take place at the end of March. If by then we have not already begun to get these various 'Jobs not Bombs' campaigns off the ground in a pretty serious manner by then we will have missed a golden opportunity to extend them. It is certain already that the conference will be huge, far too large to be a working conference. It can

either be a talking shop, or a forum for extending activities that have already begun to bear fruit, and it is our job to see that it will be the latter.

If we follow this approach we stand a reasonable chance of keeping to build a bigger mass movement than anything seen since the war, of orientating it firmly toward the working class, and of winning significant numbers to the SWP.

To back this up we will also need the following: a regular page of coverage in SW and at least one major feature in each *Socialist Review*, day/weekend schools in every region, a 'Jobs not Bombs' pamphlet (written by Foot or Cliff if possible), and regular meetings—branch discussions and public. The latter should be carefully thought about. Our experiences so far tends to suggest that while people outside our periphery are interested in our literature and in what we have to say, it is still difficult to get them to come to SWP public meetings on the missiles. On the other hand a number of other meetings which have had SWP speakers have gone very well, with lots of literature sold and many new contacts made. Where we have already initiated activity through, e.g. the RTWC, it might be worth proposing joint CND/RTW meetings on 'Jobs not Bombs' and so on. We must be flexible on the question, but we may well find that a combination of SWP day school plus big jointly organised public meetings are better than SWP public meetings.

Finally, let us be quite clear about what we are proposing. We are saying that our existing activities—all of them?—must be given an anti-bomb component, doing so could strengthen our penetration in all these areas. It will also strengthen and deepen CND. But more importantly it could provide an essential bridge from more opposition to the bomb to involvement in rank and file working class activity and from there to the SWP itself.

Youth Perspectives

Central Committee

1. Over the last 18 months our youth work has been more successful than for many years. But the reason for our success is the limited and restricted area of work we have concentrated on. We do not have a perspective for or an organisation for most youth, instead we have concentrated on school students, usually aged between 14 and 16.

2. As a result of the work of the last 18 months we have now a small cadre with considerable influence in those localities that have taken up the work. Many areas have made no attempt to use the experience we have and have made no attempt to approach school students in a systematic way—the result is of course unnecessary weaknesses in some parts of the country, while in others our ideas are influencing large numbers of school students.

3. Struggles among school students rise and fall very dramatically. School strikes are in fact commonplace, although they often begin and end in a matter of a few hours or a few days. In the brief time they last it is easy to approach large numbers of young people on a wide range of topics—the question of school uniform can easily turn into a discussion about the bomb, Russia and the need for socialism. But all too often we ignore or are simply unaware of what is happening.

Every SWP branch needs to look at the school secondary schools and learn from the experience of areas that have achieved something. We can recruit some school students and we can certainly mobilise many others if we work properly.

4. The NUSS is the school students union. For 18 months it has been dominated by the SWP although the LPYS, the YCL etc are involved in it in some areas. So is the WSI in two towns. The IMG's 'independent' youth organisation, Revolution, seems to have abandoned the schools for somewhere else, although Revolution is in any case badly split between those who support the IMG and those who hate it. None of these organisations are at the moment any serious problem for us in the schools; most of the time we don't come across them although there are problems in some areas.

The NUSS has nearly 10,000 members. It is divided up into branches some of which work better than others. It is very easy to recruit large numbers of school students to NUSS simply on the grounds of 'the right to have our own union' and 'opposition to petty rules etc'.

But because schools are highly authoritarian, any attempt by school students to organise in any way at all tends to provoke violent over reaction by teachers and headteachers. This in turn leads to strikes and large scale walk outs.

Under effective leadership, these strikes can for short periods be devastating; the ideas of all those involved develop dramatically in the space of hours. It becomes very easy to raise our politics.

5. Continuing our presence in NUSS is the key to our work among school students. The school is the natural place for us to organise. It brings hundreds or even thousands of schools students together in one place; it subjects them to petty restrictions on what they wear, when they can talk etc etc Arbitrary rules, wild and sometimes brutal punishments are handed out. For revolutionaries not to operate permanently in these hot houses would be insane.

And NUSS is the best way for us to keep a permanent presence in the schools. It is impossible to say whether NUSS will grow into a large, permanent body or will continue as a hard campaigning organisation in schools which rises and falls with the struggles. Whatever happens it is where we are developing an effective youth cadre for the first time and it is where we are learning to carry our ideas to a larger audience of youth.

6. But the success of NUSS and our youth work will depend on the ability of NUSS to involve itself in other, larger movements on more specific issues—in particular the fight against nuclear weapons and the fight to get the British Movement out of the schools. **CND**

It is clear that many thousands of school students are entering politics for the first time through CND and the missiles issue. We have to win as many of these to us as we can, but there is no point pretending that we have the sort of youth organisation that can dispatch thousands of cadres into the CND.

Instead we are organising a NUSS speaking tour called **SCHOOLS AGAINST THE BOMB**, using the small base we already have to win more school students both against the bomb and into NUSS. There is now a special NUSS/Schools Against the Bomb leaflet for wide distribution. NUSS must be visibly present on all CND marches. **BM**

It is now clear that the BM is biding hard in some schools in some areas. NUSS has produced a joint NUSS/ANL national leaflet against the BM to go into schools. Whenever there is local BM activity we are trying to produce local leaflets to go into schools arguing against the BM.

The ANL and NUSS are organising a joint Conference around the theme of getting the Nazis out of the schools in February as part of the campaign. We have to campaign consistently against the BM in the schools. If we don't push socialist politics, we will leave many schools wide open for the BM.

7. **REBEL**—All the issues discussed together need to be linked together so that we can go from NUSS etc to discussing all our politics in a way that is acceptable to school students. To do this successfully the **REBEL** paper need to be much better organised. We are now attempting to put it on a firmer footing and produce it twice a term.

At the NUSS Conference some 80 delegates acted as members and supporters of **REBEL**. Somewhere around 100 youths came to the Rebel Weekend. It's a very small base. We are still learning what we are doing.

But two lessons are absolutely clear so far:

1. We got what we have by concentrating on schools. Everything we have done that has gone wrong was a result of overextending ourselves and taking on more than we could achieve. Whenever we have concentrated the result have been good.

2. The local SWP Branches are crucial to our success. If we are going to win numbers of schools students around us in every area (and we can do it) we need the local branches to be prepared to leaflet schools, spend some time visiting local NUSS members, involving them in all the local Right to Work, ANL, CND activities.

And we need the local branches to be the sort of places where school students who join will feel immediately at home, valued members of the revolutionary party.

Over the next year we need to put more effort into getting **REBEL** out regularly. We need to carry on with NUSS and use the base we have to win more school students around us, particularly on issues like the **BM** and the **CND**. And it's worth everyone remembering that as the Right to Work marchers went through Brighton towards the Tory Party Conference, 200 school students marched out of one of the Brighton's schools to join them. There are schools like that in every city.

Some Suggestions

Every SWP branch should draw up a list of the secondary schools in the area. Use the NUSS leaflets (whether straight NUSS, or anti BM, or CND or Right to Work depends on circumstances). Leaflets the schools to invite all school students to a meeting. Have just one speaker, a local member of NUSS or one of the NUSS full-timers to speak and no adults (particularly no teachers). It's amazing how many school students will turn up from just one effort and if they don't, all you've lost are some leaflets. If we don't try it everywhere we are leaving the field wide open to the **BM**.

Anti-Race work Perspectives Central Committee

and invariably end up making concessions to the racists in the hope that this will stop racist agitation. Hence the way they play the 'numbers game' over immigration, tolerate racism in the police, and refuse to confront racist practices in their own organisations.

2. The fight against racism is of central importance for revolutionary socialists. It is the fight to prevent the division of the working class through acceptance of oppression of a whole section of workers. It is the fight to stop 'native' workers becoming the tool of the enemy class.

It is a fight that *cannot* be consistently waged by reformists. Not because they are necessarily racists (some are, some aren't) but because they are committed to working within a system which, in its present stage, breeds racism.

The onus of the initiative in the fight against racism thus lies with the revolutionary organisations.

But this does not mean that the fight should be waged by revolutionaries alone. There are contradictions in the positions of the reformists, and we have to exploit these. We have to draw followers of the reformist organisations behind our initiatives. In this way, we can have an impact in the fight against racism out of all proportion to our numbers.

3. In the fight against racism, it is necessary to distinguish between:

a. Racism as an ideological influence within the working class. Anti-racist propaganda has a role to play in combatting this. But it would be crudest idealism to imagine that racism can be fought by propaganda *alone*.

Workers holding racist ideas nearly always have other ideas as well, that stand in contradiction to these. Such ideas are the result of experiences that cut across racist notions—eg allegiance to unions, opposition to Toryism; even a general liberal humanitarianism.

Whether racist or non-racist notions seem like an irrelevance or even a danger when expressed, say, on a picket line, to people who would expect them say, in a pub. Skinheads who will join a BM march because they relish the excitement, might also identify with a RTW march.

As revolutionary socialists, we have to do our utmost to draw workers and youth influenced by racist ideas into struggles which cut across these ideas. This does not mean dropping our open hostility to racism—it means expressing it on the terrain where it is likely to have most effect.

b. What is often called 'state racism'—immigration controls, deportations, police harassment etc. This represents an attempt by the national state to reconcile apparently contradictory needs—on the one hand a large population of immigrant labour, on the

other the need for capitalist politicians to establish a base for themselves among large sections of the white population by cultivating racist attitudes. If the state can balance one need off against the other to the right degree, it gets a pool of immigrant (and locally born black) labour that is denied the rights enjoyed by 'native' workers and which is likely to accept lower pay and worse conditions because of racist harassment.

'State racism' is felt as a permanent reality by large numbers of black workers. It is most clearly expressed in the attitude of police officers and immigration officials to them. Their response is hostility, especially to the police—which occasionally explodes into open confrontation.

A revolutionary socialist organisation will never gain a hearing among the black population unless it is prepared to stand fully with them in this aspect of the struggle—backing fully their right to fight back against the police regardless of tactical disagreements with methods used.

However, it would be wrong to draw the conclusion, as some activists do, that 'state racism' is the only real enemy black people face, and that nothing could be worse than it. 'State racism' represents the attempt by the state to balance off its need for the black workforce and its need for racism. It involves the attempt to subordinate and oppress black people as a group, combined with the token admission of certain privileged blacks into relatively high positions as a safety valve for the rest (hence equal opportunities legislation, etc). It does not at present involve the physical extermination of the whole black population.

c. This physical extermination is the goal of the fascists. They stand for the extermination of the black population (under the euphemism of 'repatriation'), as part of a drive to power that would also involve the destruction of all working class organisation.

Of course, the influence of the Nazis over sections of the white population cannot be separated by a Chinese wall from 'state racism'. The more powerful the Nazi organisations become, the more the state makes concessions to them by increasing its own attacks on black people. But that does not mean that the present forms of state racism are the same as fascism, or that the Nazis are 'less of a problem than the police'. Even if the police are the major source of racist violence experienced by black people at present, it has to be remembered that it is the Nazis who are making the running for 'state racism'. The more successful the Nazis are with their notions of exterminating the black population the more vicious will be the attacks of the forces of the state on black people.

Hence, our anti-Nazi work is a central component of our anti-racist work. In the last bulletin there was a document on our ANL work. Suffice to say here that we must reject the notion that somehow the ANL has been and is irrelevant to black people. Because the Nazis are a central problem for black people, the fight against them must be a central issue. In practice many blacks, especially black youths, have joined in the

1. Racism is endemic in modern capitalism.

a. The combined and uneven development of the world system means that economic growth tends to be concentrated in certain countries and regions, leaving most of the world's population in economies which stagnate, growing no faster than the population, with resultant massive levels of unemployment and underemployment. Many of those who suffer; necessarily move to the industrial countries and regions seeking employment. In conditions of global economic crisis, the ruling classes of the advanced regions and countries, while continuing to benefit from an influx of new labour no longer are willing to bear the cost of paying services that old established 'native' workers have won for themselves through struggle. The immigrant labour is driven into the lowest paid job, with the worst conditions is often (eg under the Common Market immigrant labour system) denied full welfare rights, and suffers higher than average levels of unemployment. At the same time, capitalist politicians find that they can establish a political base for themselves among established 'native' workers and petty bourgeois by blaming the immigrants for the general decline in services, living standards, housing etc that results from the crisis. Agitation for immigration controls becomes a means of dividing the working class (from Birmingham to California, from Acton to Assam).

b. In Britain, superimposed on all this is the ideological heritage of imperialism—existing nationalist, racist ideas among whole sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.

c. Crisis conditions mean that reformist politicians and trade union leaders are incapable of resisting such pressures, even when they themselves are anti-racists. They have no alternative to offer those who turn to racism in reaction to deteriorating conditions.

anti-Nazi mobilisations (Wood Green and Lewisham in 1977, Southall and Leicester last year, West Bromwich this year).

Let us repeat—these state under present conditions oppresses black people, the Nazis seek to exterminate them. There is a difference.

Fascism flourishes in so far as it is able to mobilise masses on the streets, creating a feeling of excitement in which white workers, petty bourgeois and youth turn against black people rather than looking at the real problems they face. An essential part of the fight against fascism is to keep it off the streets, to stop it providing this surrogate incitement.

Such counter-mobilisation cannot be achieved by revolutionaries alone. It requires every effort to involve those influenced by reformist ideas—even by ideas that make concessions to certain racist notions.

Such counter-mobilisation cannot be achieved by revolutionaries alone. It requires every effort to involve those influenced by reformist ideas—even by ideas that make concessions to certain racist notions.

We are for the widest possible mobilisation against the fascists, at the same time as continuing to put across our own 'revolutionary, internationalist ideas.'

Fascism cannot be stopped by small squads of revolutionaries shutting it out in alleyways and pubs with small groups of fascists. It will be stopped by mass mobilisations alone. It is these that demoralise the

Nazis. Of course, anti-nazis have to be prepared to use force and to organise accordingly. But that use of force has to be subordinated to the mass mobilisation, not be seen as an easy substitute for it.

4. A central role in the fight back against racism has to be played by the mobilisation of black people themselves. Those who are on the receiving end of oppression are always the most effective force in spearheading the fight back against it.

Often the ideas with which they begin the fightback will be hazy and confused. But this should not lead us to underestimate the significance of their actions.

Here it is vital to understand that black nationalist and similar notions are not at all to be equated with white racism.

White racism is an ideology which seeks to perpetuate oppression. Black nationalism is an ideology which mobilised people against their oppression, but in a confused, contradictory way. In this respect it has some similarities with reformism—it can begin to mobilise people for action even though those who propagate it have no idea how to finish the mobilisation. Just as we do not equate Moss Evans or Wedgwood Benn with Margaret Thatcher, so we should not equate black nationalism with white racism.

Insofar as black nationalism encourages black people to stand up for themselves to cast off old racist stereotypes, to resist the harassment of the police, to challenge the subordinate positions assigned them in the unions, to that extent it plays a progressive role.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that we can simply be uncritical of it. Any sort of nationalism, even the nationalism of an oppressed group, provides a confused, limited view of the world which does not come to terms with the central problems facing the proletarian element within that oppressed group. It cannot locate the real sources of their oppression, teach them who are their real friends and their real enemies, show them the real road to liberation. It inevitably plays, at certain points in the struggle for liberation, a diversionary or even a counter-revolutionary role.

The liberation of black people will never be achieved if the only political current that grow up in the black communities are nationalist ones. Liberation means confronting the whole world system of capitalism—and that means the building of a party of all the exploited, an internationalist, multiracial proletarian party. Such a party will work alongside black nationalists and reformists to mobilise black people against particular aspects of their oppression, and it will support their right to go as far as they wish in this struggle—but it will also insist that final success for such mobilisations is only possible if they become linked up with the general struggle of the working class. And that means recognising, that in the final analysis, the revolutionary organisation of black workers as workers is the key to struggle of all black people for liberation.

5. In concrete terms, it is useful to distinguish two phases in the fight back against racism in Britain.

(a) The first phase was very much a fight of white people (chiefly students and youth) against racialist mobilisations by sections of the white population (eg the demonstrations against Powell in 1968, the earlier struggle against the NF as at Red Lion Square). In this stage, the only mobilisations of black people themselves were token demonstrations against immigration measures, in the main from the old established IWAs etc.

This was a reflection of the fact that most black people still felt of themselves as 'immigrants' in the literal sense of the term. They had only relatively recently arrived in Britain, felt 'lucky' to be here, were usually able to get better paid jobs and higher living standards than they had known before, were anxious not to cause 'trouble'—and so would put up with an enormous amount of shit.

In this period, the only substantial organisations within the black communities were the IWAs etc; black liberation groups of any sort were small groups of highly politicised individuals.

(b) A new phase started in the mid-70s. Those on the receiving end of racism now included large numbers of black youth who had been born in this country, did not feel like 'immigrants' felt entitled to the same rights as the white kids they had been at school with, and who faced certainly higher

levels of unemployment, and probably higher levels of police harassment, than their parents had.

In this phase there was the first large scale willingness of black people to take to the streets against the racists and the police (the anti-Powell anti-racist killing demonstrations of 1976, the 1976 Carnival, Wood Green and Lewisham in 1977, Brick Lane 1978 etc). There were also the growth within the Asian communities of new organisations, the Youth Movements.

But the main feature of this phase has been that huge and unexpected upsurges of struggle (eg Bristol this year) have come and gone without leaving behind any substantial, consolidated political organisation (whether black nationalist or revolutionary socialist) on the ground.

The sudden changes from apparent apathy to mass insurgency and back to apparent apathy is not an experience unique to the black communities in Britain. It is the historical experience of all community based movements—from the black struggles in the US in the 1960s to the unemployed struggles in Britain in the 1930s. Communities are made up of people who share a common oppression, but whose other experiences (of their jobs housing conditions, etc) can vary enormously. They can be fused briefly into struggle—but rapidly fall back into fragmentation and apathy.

6. We can expect the pattern of this second stage to recur over and over again among black people in Britain. As the crisis gets nastier, so will racism. Even the most conservative, religious etc elements in the ethnic minorities will be forced to react. But the reaction will only spasmodically have a mass character.

What will matter then is whether a minority—maybe a very small minority—in each community can be brought to some permanent form of organisation, and the political character of that organisation. The best outcome would be the politicisation of a minority which brings it to understand how best to respond in the next upsurge within the community, but which also enables it to

relate to continuing non-community struggles—especially to the class struggle in industry. The worst outcome would be dominance of individualistic tendencies (whether of an opportunist or a tit-for-tat terrorist sort) which rise and fall with the movement.

Our Experience

7. What is the experience of our organisation so far?

At one level it has been very positive. We have again and again intervened to support black struggles—whether you talk about black strikes from Woolfs rubber back in the mid-1960s to Chris this year, or of the fight back against the Nazis, racist attacks and 'state racism'. As a result, we have won the respect of many black workers and, on occa-

sions, had whole groups willing to join our organisation.

But we have not been able to hold more than odd individuals from these groups. The high papers sales we have built up in black areas at high points of struggle have fallen rapidly as the struggle has subsided. We have recruited a steady trickle of black members over the last couple of years—but it has not been, in many cases, directly out of our anti-racist work, but out of a 'normal' industrial and student work.

The result is that when we intervene in support of black struggles, we still appear as an overwhelmingly white organisation with only a few black members.

Within the black communities we are much, much smaller than the old-established more-or-less reformist Asian organisations (IWAs) and, generally, smaller also than—although not that much smaller—than various black nationalist, third worldist or 'Maoist' organisations.

This is a reflection of the fact that until recently, even among the white left, various forms of 'third worldism' were more prevalent than our ideas. There have been great bourgeois nationalist victories—in Vietnam, in Angola and Mozambique, in Zimbabwe. The proletarian victory is still to come. The nationalists in particular try to isolate our comrades from the communities by claiming that we are a white organisation—and our small number of black cadres often makes it difficult to deal with the argument. You have to be fantastically hard and committed to the party to stand up to that sort of nationalistic blackmail.

Hence our comrades can easily find themselves in a vicious circle. Because we have so few black comrades we can be presented as a 'white organisation'—but because the nationalists present us like that, it makes it difficult to recruit more comrades.

8. There is no easy way out of this situation in the short term. It is no good making concessions to the nationalists' arguments—that does not overcome the gulf that separates even the nationalism of the oppressed from proletarian internationalism, that separates an Angola or a Zimbabwe from a workers' state, that separates class struggle from community struggles that cross-cut class lines.

The Way Forward

The key to this lies in a three fold approach. (a) Our normal party activity must continue to have fighting racism as a central priority. This means not only combating the Nazis but also support campaigns against deportations, the 80 S laws, police harassment in the localities etc. If we are to keep respect in the black communities we cannot afford to be seen to be downplaying such activity in favour of some other 'priority'. In particular, all our industrial and student members should see a campaign of resolutions against the new, racist Nationality Bill as of central importance.

At the same time, we must continue to put particular emphasis on support for strikes in which the majority of the participants are black. This enables us both to build solidarity across ethnic lines inside the trade union movement and the class, while approaching black workers on the terrain most favourable to us and least favourable to the reformists and nationalists.

This is where the winning of revolutionary cadres within the black communities becomes crucial. If they exist, the spasmodic community insurgency can become a powerful contributing factor to the general struggle against the system; if they do not, the upsurges can be isolated and turn in on themselves, allowing the ruling class more easily to divide the black community and to increase hostility to black struggles among white workers.

(b) We have to seek to build up black members and who join us through industrial, students, work in to a cadre capable of taking on the reformists and the nationalists in the black communities. This cannot be simply a matter of telling a black student, say, that they have to 'sink or swim' in community agitation. The difficulties of community agitation on the one hand (with its up and down nature), and the hostility of nationalist third worldist activists on the other, would rapidly demoralise many of our members. It is a question of comrades developing confidence and political understanding through work in the area in which they were recruited, but also taking part in particular campaigns oriented on the communities (eg over a particularly outrageous case of police harassment).

Important here is the organisation of training schools that can encourage people to learn the political skills they need for such activity and how to deal with the arguments they come across. *We intend to organise the first of these early in the new year.*

In the past we have tried to produce issues of an agitational paper, *Flame*, (and for a time *Chingari* as well) to help organise our agitational activities in the black communities. It was the felling of the last black caucus meeting that the experience of *Flame* this year shows we do not have the resources to produce a viable national agitational paper, but that local publications (as in Brixton and Southall) have a role.

There was a feeling among some comrades, however, that some sort of modest semi-theoretical/discussion publication should be produced. This would aim at arming our comrades with arguments and information to assist in discussions with black people. It would provide a forum for discussing the problems of organising in the black communities and among black workers. Such a publication would also aid the development of a black cadre and assist in building the confidence of our black members, by providing a focus for our black work.

(c) On this basis we can slowly move to a situation where we have a few SWP branches in black areas whose membership is predominantly black. That would make the slanders from nationalists etc about us being a 'white' organisation much less credible. It would also make it much easier for us to initiate as well as support struggles against oppression. However, it is important not to remember that the volatility of community based political action makes it impossible to build a viable basis through that alone. 'Routine SWP work'—especially work around strikes, but also union work, anti nuclear work etc—is essential if comrades are to build stable organisation that itself does not go up and down with the black community based struggle.

There is no objection in principle to comrades working in activity and discussion groups (like the old *Flame* groups) with people not yet prepared to join the party. But these it is important to blur over differences with the nationalists and our commitment to class politics. And it is important that the commitment to class politics is not an abstraction alone, but means the SWP members arguing and organising for support for struggles of white workers as well as black.

We should also be clear that there is no objection in principle—at some point in the future—to comrades trying to establish broader based organisations in particular communities. But we have to recognise that we do not have the cadre to begin to do this at present.

9. Most of us in the party in the past—have exaggerated returns that are available to the party in the short term from our work among black people. In reaction to this there has been a certain tendency to write off the need for any special concentration on the problems of such work. This perspective rejects both such approaches. There are going to be spasmodic explosions of discontent from black people, whether we relate to them or not, and these can be of key importance to the configuration of class forces as a whole. We have to have a perspective of building a black cadre capable of leading in these. But we also have to recognise that there are no short cuts to achieving this goal, that we are still talking of sustained work over years rather than quick rewards in a few weeks.

Over leaf we print the latest document from the ANL Steering Committee.

The SWP's perspectives for our work in the ANL appeared in the last IB.

THE WAY FORWARD

THE EXTREME RIGHT IN BRITAIN

1. *For nearly a year after the General Election of May 1979, the National Front was in a state of confusion.* They had hoped to secure political respectability as the "third political party" in Britain by contesting local and national elections. They were defeated in this aim as their very poor polling record shows. In part, this was the result of the Conservative Party's adoption of a harsher policy on immigration. Chiefly, it resulted from the demoralization of the NF's membership through the systematic work of the Anti Nazi League and other anti-fascist organisations. The charge that the Front was led by Nazis stuck and effectively prevented the Front from breaking out of fringe politics. The electoral results completed the demoralization, and generated a series of collisions within the Front leadership, fragmenting the Front in a series of competing and isolated groups.

2. *However, since the early summer, this situation has begun to change.*

i) The Front has been able to renew its capacity to hold public demonstrations – at Southwark, Lewisham, Corby, Central London, Brighton, Halifax, Tonbridge Wells, Preston, Glasgow, Blackpool, Nottingham, Nuneaton, Hoxton. Furthermore, the organisation which benefited most from the internal feuds of the National Front, the overtly Nazi British Movement, has now gained sufficient strength to hold demonstrations in Dewsbury and Welling; and they are planning to hold a national march in Central London on November 23rd

ii) The extreme Right has focussed much more sharply on the problem of unemployment at the same time as national unemployment figures have risen alarmingly. Leaflets proclaiming: "British jobs for British workers" have been distributed widely at Labour Exchanges. The tone of regular publications on the extreme Right is increasingly anti-semitic.

iii) There has been an upsurge in assaults on black people, many of them traceable to those in or around extreme Right wing

organisations. In Newham and Leeds, assaults have ended in the death of the victims. There have also been a number of anti-semitic outrages, as well as a resumption of assaults on gay people and socialists, and attempts to break up meetings and prevent the sales of minority press.

3. *The Nazis attempts to recruit white working class youth are meeting with some success.* There has been a resumption of work at football matches, where racist abuse and slogans have increased. On the popular music scene, there is now much more overt Nazi and racist propaganda, and a weakening of the counterattack.

4. The extreme Right has also taken comfort from the remarkable spate of incidents in Europe, with their revelation of the widening scale of overtly Nazi influence. *The appalling bombing incidents in Bologna, Munich and Paris are only the more outrageous symptoms of this mood.* The comfort derived by cadres of the Front and the British Movement is transmitted through links with neo-Nazi organisations of Europe – through the exchange of publications and visits by respective leaders, through the now increasingly well supported annual festival of the extreme Right at Diksmuide in Belgium. It is here that the cadre of the British Movement, the National Front, the League of St George, Column 88 and others meet their opposite numbers in the Italian NAR, the French FANE, the German "military-sport" group Hoffman, etc.

5. *The present trend in the British economy provides the extreme Right with fearful opportunities to trade on the growing anxieties of many thousands of people.* Unemployment is approaching the 2½ million level. The decline of, for example, the West Midlands; the housing problem (with the suspension of public housing programmes); cuts in educational, health and welfare spending; all in sum contribute to a growing sense of despair and a demand for answers to explain why such trends exist. This is the soil for the growth of fascism, for the allegation that "Jewish finance" is conspiring to crush all honest natives, using black people as their battering ram.

THE ANTI NAZI LEAGUE

After the General Election the ANL necessarily had a low profile. This was because the Nazis themselves were not very active, and as was discussed at our conference last year, the ANL is essentially an organisation that reacts to the level of fascist activity. With the NF trying to regroup and make an impact once more, we must also reorganise and step up our own activities. Whether the Nazis will be successful will depend on two factors. Firstly, the scale of response to the Tory government's attack on working people. If the response is muted and fragmented, it is going to be easier for the NF to exploit feelings of powerlessness and frustration. Secondly (and quite separately) it depends on what anti nazis themselves do. It is not envisaged that the scale of anti nazi campaigning will be at the level of 1977-79, but it will be significantly higher than it has been over the past year. This will require the ANL nationally to cover three different areas.

1. *Historically, marches on the streets have been the way fascists have gained confidence and support, and therefore wherever the nazis attempt to march they must be opposed.* The recent mobilisations around Dewsbury, Nuneaton and Southwark in particular show that given a reasonable amount of time, a large and effective counter demonstration can be organised.

The official policy of 'blanket' policing on Nazi marches also means that it could be a frustrating and inconclusive exercise on many occasions. In spite of this, it is absolutely vital that the counter-mobilisation is always fully organised so that a clear opposition is always seen to be present. How the march or meeting of the NF makes an impact on the local area and/or nationally through the media is entirely dependent on the level and spirit of opposition. We must continue to deliver the demoralising lesson that they cannot march without massive police protection.

2.
 - i) *We urgently need a new range of counterpropaganda to answer the extreme Right.* The arguments connecting unemployment and immigrants must be defeated, and for that, the factual ammunition, presented in a popular form, is vital.
 - ii) Our propaganda also must identify the links of the British extreme Right with their European associates - if the extreme Right

here extract comfort from that association, we must in turn utilize the sense of outrage produced by the recent incidents as a weapon against them. As part of this process of 'internationalizing' the issue, the ANL will be holding an *international meeting* in London with representatives of the main European anti-Nazi movements.

- iii) A primary target for the extreme Right is youth, whether in school, at work or unemployed. Our propaganda must be there first, or must be available to counter the arguments. In order to make this work much more systematic, the ANL will be seeking to convene a *youth conference* to focus the campaign against the nazis in the schools, on the terraces, and in the discos and clubs.

3. The ANL organisation needs full rehabilitation to make these aims possible. The strengthening of branches, the restoration of branches that have ceased to exist, as well as re-establishing a stronger national office with full time workers, properly funded (through regular affiliations and bankers orders) and capable of producing a regular bulletin to keep all in touch of what is happening; all these constitute the main internal tasks for the immediate future. As part of this work, we will aim to hold a *national conference* in the New Year to sum up our experience and redefine our strategy to counter the growth in the extreme Right.

Anti-fascist organisations and the ANL need as a matter of some urgency to consider and counter the growing threat of the extreme Right. The Nazis are growing again in Britain. In particular the poison of fascist ideas and the menace of their violence is beginning to affect young people. We must mount a massive campaign in opposition to this resurgence.



Women and the Ripper by Lindsay German

The Ripper

The latest Ripper killing has focussed attention once again on womens right to walk the streets without fear of violence.

The issue has become a political one over the last few years. Womens' relative economic and social independence, resulting from a much greater entry into the workforce, has come into conflict with many of the traditional ideas about a womans place being in the home, (especially after da k) or with a man.

Women of necessity have to go out at night. Many work evenings or nights—not just as nurses or cleaners but as twilight shift workers, catering workers etc. Having any social life at all means going out at night. The destruction of old communities plus the centralisation of shopping centres and entertainments often means a bus ride or long walk to the cinema, bingo hall or pub, even in big cities.

Even if women are married to/live with a man (and there are millions who don't), there will be many times when they *cannot* go out together, even assuming that they all want to. And of course many women do not want to mix socially with the men in their home. (most teenage girls will not want to have to go everywhere with their fathers)

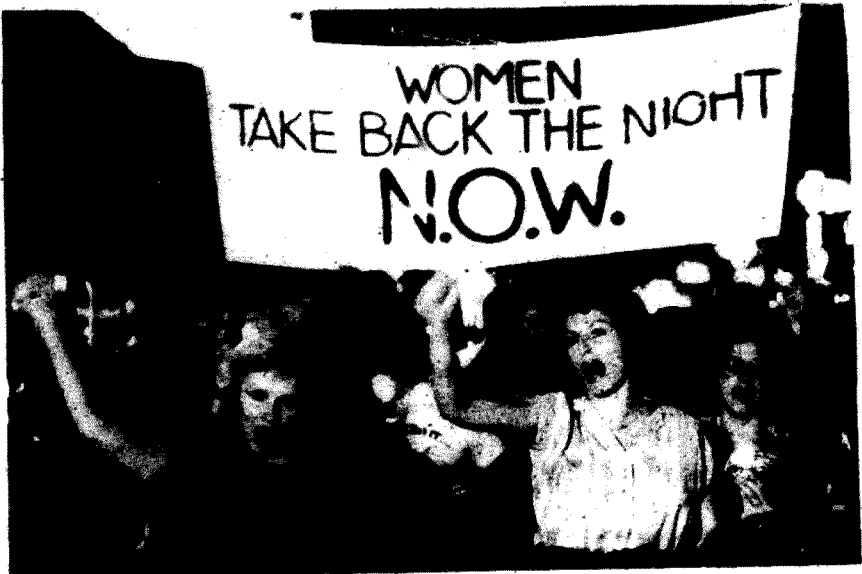
In short there is no way women can stay indoors over any period of time, even if they wanted to.

The problem we are faced with in confronting issues like the Ripper and other sex attackers is exactly what we are doing about it. It is all very well saying these people are a product of a sick capitalist society but this does nothing to allay the real fears women feel about these attacks. We have to try to propose something a bit more concrete.

One solution put forward by radical feminists and supported by some women around SWP/WV is that of a curfew on men

This originated in response to police warnings to women to stay indoors. Their answer was why should women stay indoors? Men carry out the attacks, why don't they stay indoors? This is perfectly understandable, but is both impractical and doesn't get to the root of the problem. Women have to be able to walk free from fear even when there are men around

There are a few things we can put forward which help us to achieve this. The first is that collective action of women can play a very important role in helping to overcome the fear instilled into women from early childhood (eg constant warnings not to take sweets from strangers). Reclaim the night



and other protest demos, plus pickets of films like Dressed to Kill can help do this

We can put demands on the authorities to provide, or not to cut, services and amenities which make life easier and safer for women. The most obvious of these are: not cuts in lighting; no cuts in transport; cheap transport, adequate lighting in all areas. In colleges we can campaign for these plus the demand that all residences are mixed, as single sex residencies attract the attackers.

Thirdly we can raise adequate safeguards in workplaces eg transport home for shift workers, cover for nurses working in small numbers.

Finally we must stress as central that self defence is no offence. Women must have the right to defend themselves, carrying weapons if necessary, without harassment from the police, as happened in Bradford.

All these demands are ones we can organise round, building womens self confidence, while showing up the hypocrisy of spending cuts

I have not taken up the question of domestic violence, although it is important to get into perspective that the majority of attacks on women come from men known to them. Perhaps other people would like to develop this.

We should not be surprised, that such violence takes place in a society where women are commodities and treated as such. Nor should we expect things to get better. Battering of women and children has worsened noticeably as the recession deepens. Unemployment has the effect of making many people internalise their problems and take them out on other individuals rather than on the system which caused them. The cuts mean that the physical fabric of society gets worse and so puts more pressure on us from that direction.

The above demands are ones which enable us to have something relevant to say about violence against women, while at the same time arguing that only a society where women and men are free from alienation will end the problem permanently.

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Employment Bill stickers — save our maternity leave 20p including p & p

Plain Womens Voice posters 2p each

Employment Bill fact sheet 3p each + 10p p & p (orders over 10 free)

Pamphlet — Job Massacre at the Office 40p including p & p

4 copies £1 post free

Liberation Game (stiff card) 50 p each + 20p p & p

Doodle poster 50p each + 20p p & p

Socialists Unlimited and SWP Publications

Peter Marsden

Socialists Unlimited and SWP Publications

Most of the past year has been spent establishing and expanding SWP publications, pushing to one side the 'agitprop' side of Socialists Unlimited activities—the badges, recordings, films, etc. These have not been totally ignored, however—one new cassette and six badges in the year—and SW Printers and their badge machine have compensated somewhat by bringing out a rash of badges during the summer.

Since last conference, however, the following pamphlets and books have been produced:

December 1979: *Defend Our Unions* (8000 copies)

January 1980: *Workers' Power, not nuclear power* (3500)

Marxism and the collectivisation of agriculture (500 copies)

April 1980: *Russia: How the revolution was lost* (2000 copies)

May: *Budapest 1956* (200 copies)

Never Again! The Hows and Whys of stopping fascism (1700)

June: *Steel Workers' Power* (1000 copies)

Sartre and the myth of practice (300 copies)

July: *Rosa Luxembourg* (1700 copies)

October: *Why we say: Troops Out of Ireland* (1700 copies)

Missile Madness (3000 copies)

November: *To the bitter climax of death, if necessary; The H-Block hunger strike, Sisters and Workers*

The figures indicate the number of copies distributed up to 14 November—it is impossible to know how many are still unsold in branch bookstalls.

These publications fall into three different categories, and it is our policy to treat each differently. First there are the campaign pamphlets—such as *Defend Our Unions*, *Missile Madness* and the *H-Block* pamphlet—which are connected with campaigns or events of the moment. These are generally produced 'ad hoc', when called for, and in a hurry. They receive first priority.

Secondly, there are 'basic' pamphlets, those which set out or politics on a particular subject without being connected with a particular campaign but are needed for our day-to-work political work. Examples are *Russia: How the Revolution was lost*, *Troops Out of Ireland*, and *Sisters and Workers*.

Thirdly, there are 'theoretical' contributions, which fall into two groups: the ISJ 'reprints'—*Marxism and the Collectivisation of Agriculture*, *Sartre*—which are produced only in small numbers, and the *Bookmarks Publications* series—so far

Never Again! and *Rosa Luxemburg*.

Titles in the pipeline:

On the campaign front, with *Missile Madness* and the *H-Blocks* pamphlets recently published, there are no others immediately foreseen, but it depends what happens in the outside world ... it only needs the Tories to throw some pickets in jail ...

Two basic pamphlets will appear in January—on the Labour Party and on Import Controls—and the next two on the 'theory' side will be reprint of Tony Cliff on *Permanent Revolution* (from ISJ12), and Chris Harman's book on the German Revolution of 1919.

There are many other titles in various stages of preparation for later in 1981. Choosing which titles come first—apart from the campaign pamphlets—depends largely on what comrades feel inspired to write. We get far too little feedback from branches and districts as to what publications are particularly wanted. If you have suggestions, comrades, please make your voices heard.

Finances: It undoubtedly causes problems for branches to be asked for money in advance for publications, but the two exceptions made in the past year show that this is generally the only way of working. The third edition of *Defend Our Unions* was sent out on credit, and £400 is still owing. The same applies to *Steel Workers' Power*, on which £180 is still owing. Socialists Unlimited gets no subsidy from national subs and has to be entirely self-supporting. The only possible alternative to cash with-order would be to make the pamphlets much more expensive.

Pamphlets and books are an important part of our political intervention, because they keep our politics and our arguments on particular issues 'visible' all the time. The periodicals, *SW*, *Socialist Review*, *Women's Voice* and *ISJ* cannot always repeat the basic arguments every time an issue comes up and to have a pamphlet available to meet questions from new contacts and new members is very valuable.

Ideally, every SWP branch and district should have a bookstall that includes all our publications and others—which can be there at all meetings, a table for 'training' sessions, for selling alongside the paper when a particular issue is in the news. It has been proven over and over again that where a comrade takes responsibility for a branch bookstall there is a continual interest from new and old members. Apart from being another way in which we can put our politics before those around us on the left, it can also be source of extra funds for the branch—which is why we give branches discount for bulk orders. This last point is particularly true in colleges, where *Marxism* is often on the basic reading list of politics and sociology courses but local bookshops don't stock the books.

For large meetings, *Bookmarks* in London provides many broader bookstalls from its own stock on sale-or-return. A good

size bookstall adds interest and credibility to a meeting. All left bookshops should operate similarly, and if your local one doesn't then go and ask them to.

Finally, Socialists Unlimited operates not just as another 'department' of the centre, but hopes to draw together all those in the party who have ideas for putting forward our politics in written form, in designs for badges, posters, calendars, for recordings, for anything 'agitprop'. We try to act as a channel to get these ideas into action. If any members (or on-members) have ideas or projects in these fields, please contact Socialists Unlimited. The more of us there are, the more unlimited will be the impact of SWP politics. SOCIALISTS UNLIMITED, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 (phone 01-802 6145)

Why we Need a National Bus Fraction

Privacy

Bristol

Over the next few years there will either be a huge confrontation with the employers, or public transport will be massacred. As someone said, 'If you carry on like this you won't need Berkeley House, you'll be running this company from a bloody nissen hut'. The government and the employers are aiming at a profitable, non-union public transport system.

NBC (National Bus Co.) are planning 25% cut in the bus fleet and full OMO operation. At Bristol Omnibus up to 1,000 jobs are to go by next August. The squeeze is being enforced by strict cash limits, but cuts are to be imposed even on profitable sections of NBC. The Transport Bill which passed with token opposition from the TGWU, means that private operators can now be used as scabs to break union organisation. This year's pay claim was sold out, partly because there was no opposition organised between branches, since 1978 no further reduction in conductors work has been allowed, until last month when Bill Morris sold thousands of jobs for two extra cleaning tokens a year.

Yet within the bus industry there is a huge potential opposition the rank and file. There are many small defensive strikes carrying on. In Bristol Omnibus for example Stroud depot has had two one day stoppages this year, one over victimisation. Bath depot had one two day stoppage over suspensions, all Bristol City services stopped for six days over the victimisation of our branch secretary. All were successful. Disputes over schedules occurred at United Counties and other disputes have occur.

Midland Red recently. It is up to us to build on these, since no broad left/CP organisations exists we have a clear field.

What you can do

All members in the industry should send us as much information as possible on their local companies/corporations plans, any opposition to them (ie. Save York buses campaign) any leaflets put out by them. We will circulate any information we get to anyone who cares to make contact. In the New Year we will aim for a national meeting of SWP members & close contact, by then we will have clear perspectives to put. Please contact us through Phil Marfleet. (Ind. Dept) or direct

Privacy

Privacy

Promotion

Scottish Teachers Fraction

Motion to conference

There should be consultations between (industrial dept/C) and the fractions about promotion.

The fractions should be asked their line (if any) and the problems which arise for their members in the workplace.

These discussions should take place with a view to giving guidelines for interpretation by the fractions.

Why this motion

The Scottish Teachers' Fraction (STF) feel that the Party should discuss the question of promotion with a view to formulating policy guidelines for interpretation by the fractions.

The reason we are raising the issue now is that it became apparent at a National Committee, where the Scottish teachers' position was attacked as 'ultra left', that there are disagreements within the Party.

We felt that this issue mainly affects the white collar sections of the Party because the industrial comrades seem to have little difficulty in deciding who is a boss and who is not.

We are conscious that there are many different circumstances facing comrades up and down the country but this is an issue that we have to face up to and make some decisions about.

The ultra-left position of the STF is that no member should apply for or accept the offer of a promoted post without the permission of the fraction. The fractions will only give permission in the limited circumstances of someone who needs to move from one geographical area to another when the only way to accomplish this is to apply for a vacancy in a promoted post.

The fraction ultimately derives this position from our analysis of the nature of education in capitalism and the structures that are necessary for education to fulfill its function.

What has made its abstract position a more concrete question is mainly two-fold. Firstly, as the Party gets older, more and more comrades come into positions where they can apply for, or are offered, promotion. Secondly, the crisis deepens with more and more attacks on education spending. This means a tightening of the structures inside education and the previously hidden managerial functions of even the lower promoted grades become more manifest. Increasingly the pressure is for line-management with a conscious attempt being made by Heads to use Principal Teachers and assistants as 'middle-management'.

The arguments we have heard in favour of going for promotion from LP and CP members are all throughly reformist. There is the argument that a post can be 'used', and anyway it is not really management. The reformist root of this position should be obvious—it shares the same source as the 'if only we could elect good MPs' argument. Those who have thought they could 'use the system' in times of boom have been found to be very different when the boot goes in as the cuts are put into practice. This is education's equivalent of the Parliamentary Road.

One important argument we have heard from at least one leading comrade is that our position is a block to recruitment in that we will be seen as 'loony' and our workmates would not join the Party.

Our argument is that our position is important for our credibility and is certainly no drawback.

The development of our position illustrates this. In Scottish teaching there used to be much cynicism about young action groups—their leading members would soon be found in promoted jobs and militancy was in danger of being seen as a route to promotion. Many comrades will recognise this description in their own jobs. We differentiated ourselves from this and are now seen as a credible militant force.

The long-term stand of our comrades (several of whom have been teaching for ten years or more) means that they are seen as principled people who are not 'in it for themselves', and who can be trusted. This is an important counter to the argument that we cut ourselves off from possible recruits. For SWP members anywhere it is important to be seen by our workmates as always principled—this will lead us sometimes to be seen as a bit 'daft' by our workmates, but stands us in good stead when the action starts.

Ultimately, we think our stand has been proved in practice by the leading role many of our members played in the waves of unofficial strike action which shook Scottish education in recent times.

Obviously we are aware that there are many different circumstances: jobs with automatic promotion; jobs where entry qualifications mean a promoted post (should the minimum entry grade be the stopping point?); what guarantees do we require from possible recruits in promoted posts?; how do

the comrades in jobs with supervisory or disciplinary powers over their workmates operate? The vast majority of our white collar members are employed in the education and administrative structures of the state machine. We feel that we need to be more conscious of our role in what is 'the soft arm of the state'.

We hope the discussion (in the fractions) of the question of promotion will be part of this.

We are arguing for an airing of the question with a view to the formulation of some general principles, (like the ones on standing for full-time union posts). The issue cannot be ducked, it will become more pressing as the Party gets older and larger

Scottish Teachers Fraction

Working in Cuts Campaigns

Privacy

Haringey and Enfield

Many comrades it appears, have despaired of local cuts campaigns, abandoning them. True, many campaigns have either always been, or have slid into, not beds of sectarianism or useless talking shops. At the same time however, they *have* been a focus particularly for labour lefts. Our experience in Haringey is one whereby consistent work, even if it has meant that busy comrades have been bored once a month, does pay off. But gains have not been made overnight, we have had to win our spurs.

Background

Haringey Campaign Against the Cuts was an old CP body, revived by labour lefts in October 1979. Haringey is a labour controlled borough with a lefty reputation sprawling across the end of the Lea Valley industrial belt. The campaign consists of 110 delegates which breaks down into about 30-40 L.P. organisations/wards; 20-30 trade union bodies and ourselves (a few union, trades council and SWP branch delegates); the CP; womens groups; Parent Teachers Associations etc., the labour party is locally based and active.

Early months

The campaign started against a background of unofficial action by NUT members in 4 or 5 schools, (organised by R&F), against threatened redundancies. Obviously we argued for support within the campaign and only just won the position against the CP and Labour right who argued that we should wait for official sanction. Even though it was our members who were involved in the action, I got the impression that the majority of the campaign did not somehow recognise the SWP delegates as part of the legitimate Haringey labour movement. As regards the teachers' action their attitude to us was cold, even though their principles said support us.

The next point of polarisation was around a local hospital closure. Again it was ourselves and the 'labour lefts' versus the rest. We won our 'activist' position in contrast to the 'wait and see' attitude. However, all sorts of other factors meant that the campaign never really got off the ground, even though pickets etc. did take place and we were at fault in letting the matter slip in the cuts campaign itself. The attitude of the majority of the campaign was still unfriendly towards us.

Pamphlet and rates

During this period we produced a local pamphlet, which not only sold over 500 copies, but helped to show

a) that we were serious

b) that we had a local base. (the pamphlet included 'interviews' with members of ours

who were also active trade unionists).

c) the contrast between ourselves and the labour party—(it worried the labour party because despite all their resources they had done nothing like it).

We also took up the question of rates. When it came to a vote we actually made a tactical compromise, moving slightly away from the 'no rates increase' platform to that of a 'cuts can't be fought by rate increase'. We did this so as not to be left isolated and took the labour lefts with us against the CP Comrades may argue that this was a climb-down, but to those of us involved at the time to have done anything less would have been seen to have been sectarian and narrow minded.

Throughout this period we always argued for widening the trade union support taking the arguments to the workplace etc. e.g. we obviously took up this argument in the lead up to May 14th and argued for a local demonstration on that day which was taken up.

The Breakthrough

Our real success came over the Right to Work Campaign and October 10th. Without going into too many details we are now in the position to be able to circulate our material throughout the campaign, ie to every labour party and trade union organisation plus the rest. Our members are now seen by the EC of the campaign as the spokeswo/men on unemployment and the fight against the Tories, and even labour councillors take Right to Work collections for us saying that we can get more money that way! It seems that we are now considered by the labour party as a legitimate part of the local labour movement. I was told by one labour party member that in his ward, when discussing activity they try to take the initiative before the SWP. Now, we are not only a threat for them but people they *have* to work with. To a limited extent we have pushed them into activity. We also managed to get down to October 10th, a group of local public sector workers with whom we have not had any real contact before.

Conclusions

The last year has been hard for those of us in the Cuts Campaign. However, we are now beginning to reap the benefits of sticking it out. I have dwelt on our experience because I think it shows that where comrades put in the effort, where they are seen to stand the pace, when they go along with the ups and downs and are not seen as a 'poaching mission', (which I believe is how they first saw us), then real gains can be made.

Finally, we have come almost full circle. At our last Cuts Campaign meeting we discussed the proposed closure of schools. This time, our ideas on how to fight back, ie involving all school workers, parents etc., had not only percolated the movement, but were listened to and more importantly agreed upon. We were seen as having the right arguments and ideas.

Stick it comrades. We can make gains from Cuts Campaigns and they can play a role in arguing for fight back.

The Right to Work Movement

Privacy

Norwich

Now that unemployment has reached the two million mark and economic surveys suggest no amelioration, the party's attitude towards the right to work campaign seems overdue for re-examination. This article attempts to begin that process.

The issue of unemployment is more alive now than at any time since the RTWC's inception. Not since 1935 have the figures been as bad and some workers are beginning to remain on the dole for long periods.

"By April 1980 over 600,000 people had been unemployed for over 6 months; 334,000 had been unemployed for over one year and 105,000 had been out of work for over three years... by the end of 1981 over 500,000 will have been unemployed for over a year." Advance to Decline -SCPS pamphlet.

This omits the regional concentrations or the full extent of youth and female unemployment. The Youth Opportunities Programmes (YOPs) take at least 100,000 off the register while many women unentitled to benefits don't bother to sign on. Ethnic employment is also an unmeasured, but considerable problem.

We are also faced with large scale closures or lay-offs which cannot be disguised as 'streamlining'. The ripples in the class caused by a large local employer closing is far greater than the incomprehensible national totals. These closures, like the steel shut-downs, produce clearly definable areas with unemployment levels far higher than the already doctored national figures. They also result in a pool of experienced trade-unionists who face an indefinite stay on the dole. The chances of re-employment for workers over the age of 50 is slim and the latest (October) figures indicate a rise in adult employment. What is the Party's present response?

Judging by the September 'Socialist Review' it's a more of the same approach so far. The annual marches and work to win the T.U. support, has been quite successful in establishing the RTWC as an organisation doing its best to keep the unemployed in the political foreground. Its been able to secure this year considerable TU support, with more support coming from the Labour Party than ever before, in organising an effective picket of the Tory conference and involving dozens of young marchers.

Since October 10th, the emphasis has been on supporting the Gardner's occupation and attempting to get people on the Liverpool demonstration. Obviously this is an important and should be

around individual sit-ins and marches cannot have any long term effect unless part of an overall approach to unemployment.

But the actual demands of the RTWC seem almost forgotten especially in the coverage in S.W. Protest activity is essential, but it cannot counter the economic nationalist of some sections of the left. Nor can we any longer expect ex-trade-unionists, with experience of union democracy, merely to tag along behind the RTWC, without much say in its operation and activities. Our present attitude seems too "take it or leave it," to be healthy.

The idea of organising the unemployed on a long term basis has not been considered seriously yet, and the September S.R. article does its best to bury the idea. But as the quote above shows, there is a growing core of popular who have been on the dole for more than a year and it seems foolish to merely try "involve some at least of them in demonstrations and protests"; this smacks of seeing the workless as some stage-ally.

The Need for a Right to Work Movement

We need to expand from a campaign to a movement and this is a realisable objective. The last 4-5 years have created a credible record on unemployment for the RTWC and this could be the basis of an unemployed workers movement. Our targets should be modest, but an active operating RTW committee involving both unemployed and employed delegations, is surely possible in every major city.

Such a movement could degenerate its true, into a sectarian battleground for a lifeless refuge for unemployed TU officials. These dangers were avoided in both the ANL and the ANC. The last few years have taught many comrades how to operate in non-party organisations. We need to combine the imaginative tactics of the RTWC to date, with a solid core of organisations. We need to combine the imaginative tactics of the RTWC to date, with a solid core of organised unemployed workers; we want to attract punks, kids on YOPs, ex-stewards and the women who don't want to be relegated to the kitchen.

The movement could work around both local issues (better facilities at UBO's, Council funded centres, mass refusals to accept poorly paid seasonal jobs, raids on factories working overtime etc), and national campaigns (return to index-linked benefits, full T.U. rates for YOP places, 35 hour week, no overtime etc.) It could also produce local 'Dole News' leaflets and generally put the real causes of the crisis out to the unemployed.

Finally, the Movement would have to come to some working relationship with Claimants Union branches where they exist or begin to produce its own guides to the benefits maze. Where possible joint work should be tried with CUs and when necessary the RTW committees would have to take up individual cases.

Clearly, such a movement would not be built in the next fortnight, but a reasonably

sized founding conference, based on genuine local groups should be an objective within the next 12-18 months, while national marches could maintain a national presence.

This type of organisation, uniting many political strands within the class, around a minimum programme, would also enable us to talk to a larger audience about the socialist answer to unemployment. It would also be a way to achieve unity in action, giving some credence to our claims to being in favour of left unity.

There are no direct parallels between the eighties and the thirties. The situation today is different in many respects; the YOP schemes, the depth of racialism, the fortnightly signings make it harder to organise the unemployed today. But the relative strength of the TU movement and the higher centralisation of benefits points. Toward the need for a national movement, rather than a few isolated groups trying to go it alone.

This article doesn't fully develop the argument, but the main points should be clear. The Right to Work Campaign is facing a changed environment and needs to change its style of working quite drastically or become largely isolated from potential support. We need a movement, not just a campaign.



Unemployment and Social Security Benefits

Privacy

Wandsworth

There is a danger of failing to fully estimate the impact and scale of unemployment during the next two to three years. It is generally agreed by most observers (official and unofficial) that registered unemployment will reach 3 million in the depth of the recession, and even when the recession 'bottoms out' and the economy begins to expand (with profits) that a base level of 1 to 2 million unemployed will be a legacy. What is not fully appreciated is that the nature of unem-

ployment is also changing. According to the latest Dept of Employment statistics 40 per cent of the unemployed have been on the dole for six months or more. In mid-1975 (when the RTWC was launched) one quarter of those on the dole had been there over 6 months. In absolute numbers 620,000 of the current unemployed have been registered for 6 months or more compared to 570,000 in July 1978 and 276,000 in July 1975. It is likely that both the numbers and proportion of long-term unemployed will continue to increase as the new downward turn in the recession over this summer works its way into the statistics by next spring.

Youth unemployment is also beginning to be a crucial factor. The statistics are obviously subject to seasonal change but the trend is nevertheless apparent. In July 1980, for example, (a 'high point' in the year) there were nearly 300,000 registered unemployed school leavers. One year ago the total was 215,000 whilst in July 1975 it was (only) 62,000. The youth unemployment figures look even more drastic when they are compared to vacancies. A study in the Inner London Borough of Wandsworth, for example, showed that in September of this year there were only 22 vacancies for 1320 registered youth unemployed (that's 1 vacancy for every 60 unemployed).

Longer term unemployment and youth unemployment are here to stay (at least for the next couple of years) and this must have far-reaching consequences for work amongst the unemployed. The perspective of anybody losing their job now must quite soon change from one of 'I'll get another job in 5 or 6 weeks at the worst - and meanwhile I'll go on holiday/buy a new car with the redundancy pay' to one of 'I'll probably be unemployed for months - and I'm bloody angry about it'.

The upward surge in the level of unemployment is partly a deliberate result of Government policy (who needs an incomes policy with 3 million unemployed?). What is not so widely anticipated, however, is the concomitant attack on unemployment and social security benefits started by the Tories. A brief summary of the major legislative changes speaks for itself:

Unemployment benefit will now be reduced to a level 5 per cent less than projected inflation. In November, for example, UB increased by 11½ per cent rather than a previously predicted 16½ per cent rate of inflation. This will have a cumulative effect and proposals have now been made to further reduce the real value next year.

- Earnings Related Supplement is to be scaled down from January 1981 and abolished altogether in January 1982.
- Unemployed school leavers will not be able to draw benefit until the end of the school holiday after they leave school.
- Future proposals will mean that redundancy payments will be used to offset supplementary benefit.

In addition the Tories have begun to erode aspects of the Redundancy Payments Act and Employment Protection Act. Periods of notice have been relaxed and you have to work for 12 months rather than 6 months at a firm before you can claim unfair dismissal. It does not now seem unlikely that sooner or later a 'vanguard' employer will refuse to pay the legal minimum Redundancy Payments - the question is whether or not the Tories will challenge the employer (in the same way the Labour Government let George Ward and Grunwicks ignore ACAS). The central aim of the Tories is therefore to remove the "safety net" of the welfare state from underneath the feet of the unemployed. They wish to instill fear and as a result 'life on the dole' will become that much more reminiscent of the 1930s. The major difference being that queues outside the labour exchange (you had to sign on 2 or 3 times a week in the 1930s) will be replaced by the fortnightly visit and the computerised girocheque in the post.

Anti Nuclear Work

Privacy

and

Anti Nuclear Work

The recent success of the October 26th CND rally has at last opened the eyes of many comrades to the possibilities of anti nuclear work in drawing people to our views. Unfortunately in many quarters this will be seen as pure opportunism—and with little appreciation of what the small number of comrades who have been involved in anti nuclear work have been doing over the past year. We should be careful not to be carried away by the euphoria of this particular event. After all national rallies alone will not change state policy. To a large extent CND only exists as a badge and a memory. There has been a rapid increase in individual membership over the past few months, a reforming of some groups—but little organised structure or democracy. Membership of CND, and in particular the large turn out on the Oct. 26th rally is a symbol of people's concern rather than an expression of any single organisation's strength. Much of the hard work in building for the rally was in fact done by other groups—the various anti missile alliances, peace groups and the ANC.

Over the past year a small number of comrades have been working—often in isolation and little sympathy (hence a little bitterness in this article over the sudden interest)—in building the Anti Nuclear Campaign, a broad based effective national campaign with the emphasis on action not armchair speeches. In particular we have taken a lead-

ing role in developing the Trade Union Group of the ANC, for the first time the anti nuclear movement has a real chance to reach the grass roots of the labour movement—and we in the SWP have a tremendous opportunity in being part of that. There is also an active group trying to reach youth in 'No Nukes Music'.

The ANC is the only national anti nuclear organisation that actively opposes civil and military uses of nuclear energy. As such it reflects SWP policy exactly. Its constitution is designed to allow maximum participation in national policy by the member groups and is probably the most democratic of the existing organisations. For both reasons the ANC deserves our fullest support. We should be careful not to be drawn down the limited path of just opposing nuclear weapons (or worse, as some groups do—just 'Crüse'). We in SWP are opposing the whole nuclear cycle as being an essential bulwark of state and capitalism. Opposition to nuclear weapons is obvious. Any comrades with doubts as to nuclear power should read 'Workers Power Not Nuclear Power' (SWP). Often we wonder if comrades are happier in just opposing nuclear weapons (and therefore are now all for switching resources into CND) because they haven't done the groundwork on the full issue.

Like the ANC (and as part of it—SWP is represented on the National Steering Committee) we should work as closely as possible with CND and other weapons groups but should not compromise our perspective. We have a base in ANC with a real chance to achieve something and draw people to socialism. This has to be our priority in the anti-nuclear movement, we should work to influence CND through this position.

Nalگو Fraction Report 1980

Whether NALGO will ever thrust itself into the forefront of the fight against capital and the state is, in the light of the experience of the last 12 months, still an open question. The war of attrition that is the attempt to cut public spending has gone on more intensely than under Labour. But, while it is true we have had no major successes in rolling back the cuts, still they have not happened at the sort of level Heseltine and Thatcher want. And while most of the membership has declined the challenge of opposing the Housing Act, our first ever national industrial action over pay achieved what it set out to: payment of an (abject lousy) comparability award.

2 Fraction Organisation

a Nationally
There are, probably, something in excess of 200 members in the Fraction. Over 150 of these have, since May, received a regularish fraction bulletin whose production is dictated more by pressure of events than by calendar but of which there have been 5 so far.

In fact the assembly of a decent mailing list, so that comrades can be contacted personally rather than just through the hit and miss medium of the paper has been my main preoccupation. Combing through other comrades' address books produced the better known activists; when a bulletin's main aim is to reach the isolated or less active comrades. They were found by rigorously collecting and logging the addresses of everyone who came to any national meeting. A meeting at Skegness was particularly fertile in unearthing unknown people. Only one (of mainly known) people was received from the Centre throughout the year.

There have been 2 national meetings: one the annual conference in March, the other a day school in Manchester on the Rank and File tradition. Both were attended by about 50 to 60 (mainly the same) people. But effectively things are decided and run, at national level, by a London based executive of 7 people meeting monthly.

Our intervention at NALGO conference was well organised and vocal and, if sometimes politically under prepared, nevertheless one of our best ever, with successful SWP and NAG meetings. The CP on the other hand went even nearer to disintegration as an independent political force, aligning themselves ever more closely with the right wing social democrats. We have no members holding national office in the union.

b Locally

In at least 12 areas—all in London or the major cities—comrades are organised in workplace cells. (Incidentally the CP only claimed 10 in a recent Marxism Today article). In other areas there are occasional meetings of comrades who are otherwise organised in geographical branches. NALGO Action Group bulletins have been produced in 35 authorities and SWP bulletins in an estimated third of these.

In the workplace our comrades are found in a huge variety of jobs, grades and union positions. The largest category is probably that of males in middle grades (ie, earning more than 60% of the membership) who are senior stewards at Departmental level. The rest of our membership is spread out working as everything from highly paid professionals and managers(!) to temporary clericals and, in the union while some of our members are lying low through their first six months, others are full time branch secretaries.

3 NALGO ACTION GROUP

NAG activity has spread and increased this year, with more areas showing than for some time. NAG conference was twice as big and markedly better than the previous year. Privacy in the last IB says he found it boring, uninspired and unhelpful. He must

have been suicidal in 1979. The truth is of course that it is very difficult to be sparking in the teeth of a gale. There is not that much thrilling debate because, on the whole, much of our policy is generally accepted as right for the period. The problem is that we are not setting the world alight with it at the moment. However, NAG is just possibly emerging from a pretty barren period of being little more than a SWP rump into being a national focus in a wider way. Certainly it is the only national organisation with aspirations to being more than just an electoral machine.

4 Privacy and a 'Soft' Fraction

In the last IB, Privacy paints a picture of the Fraction as being divided into tired old hacks who sit on initiatives and vital, young (if somewhat unschooled) tyros. He even invests a sociological concept—POLARIZATION (his capitals)—to describe it. Now whether Privacy has got his analysis of the social psychology of the Fraction right and whatever his description of the Fraction as having gone 'soft' might actually mean, I do not really know. What I do know is that, in truth, the Fraction has not 'gone' anything: hard or soft. Sure, there are real dangers of routinism; comrades should be selling more papers, writing more bulletins, having livelier educational programmes—just like the rest of the organisation. But anyway these are quantitative changes. Let us not confuse things in a difficult period by inventing qualitative changes when there are none in reality.

5 Conclusion

In the downturn NALGO, while not being savaged like BL, have not won anything resembling the Dockers' victory. Against a general failure to go on the offensive against the cuts or on pay must be balanced a steady increase in shop steward organisation and a marked jump in local grading disputes. Perhaps less of a downturn than a general but of course starting from a poorer tradition than many.

Conference Issues Steve Jefferys

CONFERENCE ISSUES

This Conference is free of major debates. Basically this is because on balance we've done alright through the last year. Yet there are areas where we could have done better, and Privacy's article on the steel industry in the November IB has raised an important subterranean controversy about rank and file work.

United Front

Privacy's article makes the case for (a) Working around an industry or factory before a dispute breaks; (b) Using SWP bulletins to get our politics across; and (c) Intervening in disputes as the SWP and not as "rank and file" groups.

The first two points are not controversial, the third clearly is. However disarming Privacy may hint that perhaps steel is an exception, the reality is that there is a lot in common for our members in other industries and unions. So Privacy's theory—first build the SWP, then the rank and file—does prompt the question: if it's right for steel is it right everywhere else? Where we haven't got a "genuine" rank and file organisation should we fold up our rank and file papers and simply produce SWP miners', engineers', firemen's, electricians', teachers' etc bulletins?

The answer to this question, and to Privacy's question, I believe to be found in the CC's document in the same bulletin on the United Front (Although the answer is not quite as clearly spelt out as I believe it should be.) Whether this lack of clarity is an oversight or a reflection of CC support for Privacy's conclusions is not clear: "United front work is going to be exceptionally important in the period ahead ... in principle all our rank and file groups are based on the united front tactic ... in present circumstances the fractions need to be on the lookout for opportunities to broaden rank and file appeal".

Our starting point has to be how do we centre ourselves organisationally among those wanting to fight the Tories and the right-wing in their industry and union? Clearly, if we assume that the only people ready to get involved in either fight are potential SWP recruits, then we argue for the SWP itself to be the organising focus. But, of course, we do not make that assumption: instead we identify sections of the Labour Party, a tiny minority of CP members, non-party 'radicals', and, most important of all a small minority of angry workers who do wish to fight back. And so, the united front.

It is certainly true that this principle was very difficult to put into practice during the shift to the right after 1974. But that difficulty should not blind us to the fact that there are real opportunities for us now under a Tory Government. I go much further than the CC. I believe "looking out for opportunities to broaden rank and file appeal" is not nearly enough. We should systematically attempt to transform each rank and file grouping into the recognised organising centre of the anti-Tory alliance in its constituency—if necessary by going so far as to change the name of "our" grouping or establishing a new programmatic basis for it. We should also add the "rank and file argument" back into our political armory: Socialist Worker, Socialist Review, the weekly National circular, every means possible needs to be used to advocate the primacy of united front rank and file work as the way by which the class can defend itself against the present attacks. Many more of our members can be involved in genuine uni-

ted front work in this area than can actually play a systematic part in the other, important applications of the same principle, the RTWC and the ANL.

Of course, as the CC document points out, building united fronts is not an exercise separate from building the Party. When the Comintern advised the young CPGB to build the Minority Movement, they wrote: "the aim must be to create, to marshal, to integrate the opposition forces, and the Communist Party will itself grow concurrently with the growth of the opposition".

I believe that the fears of Privacy hints at of "rank and file" work somehow leading to fewer chickens coming home to roost are identical to those expressed by comrades reluctant to get involved in a local CND or anti-missile or anti-cuts organisation set up by someone else: if it isn't ours, how do we raise our politics within it? Let me give a current example.

In the Haringey and Enfield District the Labour Council has just moved to close several secondary schools. A Rank and File Teacher initiative (of our comrades) led to the formation of a broad Campaign Against School Closures in Haringey (led by our comrades) and the local SWP has given out their leaflets outside schools, has put up SWP posters mobilising for a picket, and has distributed our SWP/WV leaflets in shopping centres calling for the picket and denouncing the Labour Council for implementing Tory cuts. So we're supporting and trying to build both "rank and file" and "Rank and File" and letting anyone around who wants to know see that the SWP are the best campaigners with the most political insight.

Privacy's general argument I believe, is therefore wrong. But it does raise the important question of how far our various rank and file groups are already anti-Tory alliances or how far they are attempting to transform themselves in that direction. And it also raises the question of how important this transformation is seen for to our industrial perspective in 1981.

Women and Blacks

I disagreed with last year's Conference decisions against Womens Voice and Flame Organisations. But I believe in 'sucking it to see', and as far as our women's work is concerned, it seems to me we have to wait another year before passing judgements. The evident loss of morale that occurred after last year's Conference has to pass out of the system before a fair appraisal can be made.

But the successful resolution on Black Work and Flame argued "unfortunately the perspective of building Flame as an independent revolutionary organisation is an obstacle to developing our black work. It provides an excuse for white members not to engage in black work and fails to tackle the serious problems of recruiting more black people to the SWP and building up a level of black cadres within the Party". The value of that obstacle UCPI000016148/124

according to the CC's own reckoning (it was the CC which campaigned against Flame) have at least led to a modest improvement in our black and anti-racist work.

In fact, as was argued would occur at the time, last year's decision has actually led to the abandonment of both black and anti-racist work by the party: if you don't believe in the independent organisation blacks then why bother producing special leaflets, newspapers, or paying special attention to their demands or to their oppression? And if the CC isn't delivering the tools and doesn't push anti-racist/black work as a priority, then why should local districts and branches have race work organisers or bother with systematic work? The recent revival of the ANL is to be welcomed, although we will probably require another vehicle to campaign against the Nationalities Act and further tightening of immigration rules. But it is not a substitute for ongoing black work. Let's have some honest accounting.

National Committee

This has met six times—with most NC members who attend finding three meetings interesting and three pretty dull. A one year trial is not long enough to make a final judgement, but so far it appears to me that the NC has not operated in any way to widen the national leadership beyond its full-timer core. If, as I believe, last year's Conference thought that this was an important aim, then the failure should be recognised and some thought given to how it can be remedied over the next year.

When is a downturn a downturn?

Since we are now in a period of low working class combativity, in which the impact of unemployment has given fantastic strength to the employers to put the boot in on wages, conditions and organisation, and has frightened workers into accepting it without a

fight-back, we can now see what a downturn actually is. I cannot resist, therefore, submitting the following chart so last year's argument can be placed in its historical setting:

Combativity and Unemployment, 1974-1980

(The 'combativity curve' represents a ratio of the number of strikes to the numbers of workers involved and the number of days lost. It is a very rough measure of the relative frequency, size and length of officially recorded disputes over time. Like all strike statistics it is distorted by large, official one day strikes as in the low pay and engineers' disputes of 1979. It also misses out the May 14 1980 stoppage altogether.)

For all the qualifications about statistics the chart shows that between 1977 and early 1980 (the period of the debteon the nature of the period up to the November 1979 SWP Conference) hundreds of thousands of workers were doing things they aren't now and didn't in 1975 and 1976. It is silly to go on pretending that the period from 1974 to date is one unified whole. The employers' offensive of 1977-1979 met with resistance. Since the steel strike that resistance has virtually disappeared.

with a questionnaire to find out what jobs, unions and organisations they were in. The Industrial Dept. offered to send a full-timer to Brighton to discuss plans and perspectives with the four railway workers in the Branch. A meeting was arranged but the promised full-timer failed to materialise. Inspired by this show of support I went ahead and circulated the questionnaire to 70 contacts I had gathered via an ad in SW. the Defend Our Unions conference in Manchester and the Rail Against Nazis mailing list. About 30 of these people have shown interest in working with us—this includes about 12 who are already SWP members.

In April I convened a fraction meeting in London to which 8 comrades turned up, including to our delight our elusive full-timer. We discussed the pay negotiations with BR and London Transport, and two productivity deals which the NUR had recently signed with BR. On the BR pay claim we decided that as they were close to a settlement there was no worthwhile interven-

The political shift to the right and doubling of unemployment under Labour led to a downturn in combativity in 1975 and 1976 followed by a rise in the level of struggle between 1977 and 1979. This renewed struggle was highly sectional and defensive. Although it led to living standards for those in work being restored to the 1974 level, none of the struggles from the firemen in 1977 to the steel workers in 1980 generalised solidarity action.

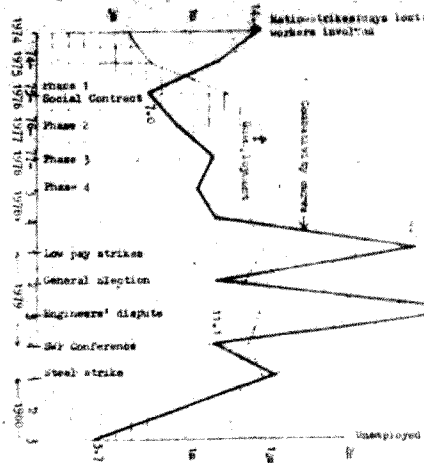
Today, facing the Tories with right-wing national union leaderships and politically organisationally compromised rank and file organisation in the biggest recession since the 1930s, fragmented resistance has generally appeared hopeless. The present downturn is now significantly deeper than in 1975 and 1976. This is despite the existence of a Tory Government which, while generating considerable anger has not yet generated wide-scale active resistance. There is a feeling that the Tories are breaking with "consensus" on unemployment and trade union rights: Our task is to win the angry minority to fight—not for a return to a new consensus but for clear working class interests.

Rail Fraction

Privacy

The last year has seen a great increase in our activity in the railway industry. This is mainly in four areas, Brighton, London tubes, the London Railworker group, and attempts to launch a national R&F movement.

In September last year I wrote to the Industrial Department asking for help with the last-named project. I had drafted a letter which I proposed to circulate to contacts



from them. The prod deals were rejected by the grade conferences and later by the AGM, and the NEC now has to renegotiate both deals. It is no credit to us that the deals were rejected—the majorities for rejection were overwhelming—but hopefully our intervention made more people aware of the political implications of prod dealing.

The fraction meeting decided that we didn't have our ideas sorted out well enough to start having open R&F meetings (except in London where they were already under way—of which more elsewhere) but that we could usefully invite some close contacts to the next fraction meeting which was held in May in London. Eight people turned up including 2 non-SWP members—and no full-timer.

It was agreed that we should produce two issues of a national R&F bulletin in the next three months and then call a national R&F conference which would hopefully draw in contacts made through the bulletins, and elect an editorial board to take over its production. The first two issues would be produced by the London Railworkers group. This arrangement has proved less than satisfactory—as the contact's file lives with me in Brighton and lack of finance meant only 200 copies of the bulletins could be produced, its distribution outside London was very sparse. Liaison between Brighton and London has been poor, for which I must accept most of the blame, and we have not yet organised our planned R&F conference.

Meanwhile in Brighton we have produced a local SWP bulletin which we called Live Rail, the response was underwhelming and so far we have not felt sufficiently inspired to produce no. 2. We have a modest degree of credibility in our NUR branch. Two of our comrades are on the editorial board of the official branch newsletter which was launched at our instigation and has led to a modest increase in attendance at branch meetings. We got £50 from branch funds for the Right to Work march. In our different workplaces we have all brought about a marked increase in the political content of tea-break conversation—not all hostile!—though we have yet to establish any regular paper sales.

To sum up: we have learnt over the year that wheresoever two or three are gathered in the name of the SWP, significant gains can be made. Two important lessons have yet to be learnt (1) how to involve and support isolated members and contacts, (2) how to get some support from the industrial dept.

I believe if we could only answer the second we would find the answer to the first! The Industrial Dept. seems to operate on the basis "unto them that hath shall more be given"—railway workers have potentially great industrial muscle and the strategic importance of the railway industry ought to be obvious to any revolutionary party worthy of the name, but it seems to be the healthiest fractions that get the most attention from Centre.

Underground

by Privacy
North London

PAYCLAIM

The eventual outcome of the LT payclaim was 20% on basic plus 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ % on London weighting, although agreement was made to look at one man operation of trains and other productivity aspects. As we knew from previous years, all these measures are blocked in our machinery of negotiation. Hence the almost annual clearout of LT board and the sacking of the chairman. The ASLEF EC has even declared the productivity proposals dead. This happens every year, we were first paid for OMO in 1968 and a couple of times since, and they still haven't got it.

RANK AND FILE PAPER

The underground Rank and File Paper 'Picc up on the east' (PUOTE) has grown substantially since the report in issue five (1980) of Socialist Review. It originates in covering H&S over three depots on the East End of the Piccadilly Line and has now expanded to cover all aspects of underground train crew pay and conditions. Issue 15 has just gone into all 38 depots and we have supporters in all of them, on the violence issue we were instrumental in getting our 8 demands for protection adopted and forwarded by the unions to LT, without giving an inch to the 'Hang 'em and flog 'em' brigade. Our lead in organising the early shutdowns on Sundays and Saturdays forced the unions to defuse the situation by making two weekends of this action official and even calling an official all day Saturday strike. In December of last year we organised and led a strike over a backpay issue which was 95% effective in our base, 75% effective on the Bakerloo, Jubilee and Northern lines, 60% effective on the Central with lesser success on the other lines. This was against complete hostility from the unions HQs.

THE FUTURE

Of course we are still a long way from pushing for a strike on the pay round. We've had success on early shutdowns, token action blackings and the one day strikes, but the base is there. The only unfortunate note is the total lack of interest in the industrial department (is there still an industrial department?) There is also the total impossibility of getting coverage in the industrial section of the paper (or any section). About 40 papers are sold to train crews from one source or another, which is only 1% of the workforce but whenever we say that we've put something in the paper it never turns up.

Are we serious about building a rank and file movement

Privacy

North London

Privacy

Kings' Cross

Privacy

Kings' Cross

Privacy

Brighton

Privacy

North London

The one consistent political orientation that distinguishes the SWP and its predecessors—from either the reformism of the Broad Left or the sectarian posturing of the tiny Trot groupings is the commitment to the rank and file in the trade union movement. Many of us joined the party because we found that it was impossible in practice to build a rank and file movement without the assistance of a national political organisation.

At a time when the trade union movement as the main defensive organisation of the working class is coming under the most co-ordinated attack by the British State since the 1930's, it is important to look carefully at how far the organisation is in touch with its trade union activists in their attempts to implement a rank and file strategy.

1. The United Front Argument because of the success of the ANL in dragging the SWP out of the sectarian wilderness and on to the national political stage and because of the total nature of the attacks by the Tory Government on workers, there has been a great deal of emphasis recently placed by the C.C. on approaches to the CP and the Labour Left.

It is an unfortunate fact that most rank and file groups have had to be built in spite of the sabotage of particularly the Broad Left and the CP. Their main objective is still to get 'leftwingers' into leading trade union positions and then to attempt to use the rest of the union as a stage army to support them whatever they do.

Rank and file groups and initiatives over single issues will only draw those C.P. and L.P. members who are not totally infected with reformism or careerism by uncompromising opposition to that political analysis.

The deliberate attempt by the C.P. and other Broad Left stewards to prevent trade unionists on the separately organised 'official' march from joining the majority of other trade unionists on the Right to Work picket of the Tory Party Conference is only the latest and most blatant example of the sectarian depths to which their fear of rank and file activity is leading them.

Perhaps it is still valuable to make national approaches to the 'almost defunct' L.C.D.T.U. by 'Defend our union or the R.T.W. in order to expose this but at rank and file level we will be wasting our time.

2. Building the Party—The other side of the coin to the proffered olive branch 'lets bury our differences' approach is, of course, the hardline objective of recruiting 'as many members as possible. However it must be said that this is not the prime objective and certainly not the initial objective of genuine rank and file activity. For revolutionaries the rank and file group is a halfway house toward the building of a revolutionary party which can overcome the unevenness of development of the class in different workplaces and different industries. But the potential periphery we have in the trade union movement far outweighs the potential party membership, nor is that an unhealthy situation. It means that the small party that we are can have an influence far greater than our membership and at the same time be kept in touch with the feeling and movement at the grass roots of the working class.

Within a rank and file group it will therefore be an unhealthy situation if the majority of members are S.W.P. or if the only activists are S.W.P. (though initially this may have to be the case.

The place where comrades in the same industry talk with each other is of course not the rank and file group but the fraction.

3. What we require from the centre—industrial dept.—full-timers.

What we don't require is a blueprint of advice on how to organise in our industry, which in most cases would be insulting to the experience and intelligence of comrades who spend their working lives there.

What rank and file groups need is

a) up to date lists of all the party members in a particular industry, so that they can be contacted for rank and file and fractional activity. Full-timers and District Secretaries can also play their part by chasing up those

comrades who come into an industry and either through ignorance or idleness never attend their fraction meetings or their rank and file meetings.

b) Through the education and training facilities of the party the point must be got across that every single member who is working can make a contribution to rank and file activity even if they are never in a position to be a shop steward and that this is the first priority for a member of the SWP especially in a period of recession. The pessimism that has resulted from much loose talk about 'down-turns in the struggle' obscures the fact that with the virtual collapse of the Broad Left alternative we have a golden opportunity if we do the hard and consistent work in branches, through stewards committees and safety reps. to tap the strength of a class which is ready for a fight but lacks leadership.

If we are to fill the enormous and dangerous vacuum that exists in the trade union movement as a result of the collapse of the Broad Left we must take seriously, the question of the involvement of the vast bulk of the passive union membership and coordinating their activity in the life and death struggle which faces us. This will not be done solely on the basis of publicity seeking initiatives, marches and demonstration, but by building a rank and file movement.

Comment on the Republican Faction

Privacy

Liverpool

The document 'The Draft Position of the proposed Republican Faction' raises a number of issues beyond that simply of the national question. 'The demand for a republic differentiates revolutionary marxism from other political tendencies. Without a democratic republic there can be no socialism.' It raises the whole question of revolutionary marxism's view of bourgeois democracy. For Cde Callinicos to reduce this to a timely reminder of the 'significance of national movements' and introducing 'some discussion of the place of civil liberties issues in our work,' is to miss the point. To be sure particular campaigns on civil liberties and a consistent attitude towards national movement may result from a reappraisal of the importance of constitutional politics in a revolutionary socialist practice, but they are the result of a major review of outlook.

To say no democratic republic equals no socialism is not a description of historical process as Cde Callinicos makes out (IB Sept 1980 p.15) when he parodies the need for a democratic republic. The relation is in terms of consciousness and mobilisation of these forces capable of introducing revolutionary socialism onto the historical agenda. A working class movement mobilised and fighting is a prerequisite for a revolutionary overthrow. So is the ideological smashing of the existing consensus. In this task the working class is joined by all those social elements excluded or oppressed by the existing state structure. It is here that the importance of mobilising on constitutional questions lies.

To illustrate this let me refer, as I write this November 5 to an article written three years ago in the Economist, 'Blowing Up a Tyranny'. The article begins with this comment: 'Guy Fawkes was discovered 372 years ago before he could blow King and Parliament up. Today he would be right to renew a democracy this time rather than a religion'. Even the high priests of the liberal bourgeoisie are concerned that the present system is a component part of the crisis. The flight of the petit bourgeoisie and some higher than that, Fraser for example, to nationalisms has been part of that, the concern in the political centre over proportional representation and other constitutional changes. Thatcher on gaining the leadership was immediately pressed by an impressively representative group from the city and business to take up PR whilst in the ranks of the high Tories Quentin Hogg has been hawking a notion of a Bill of Rights.

Constitutional change is a necessary element in any restructuring of British capital. Revolutionaries need to be concerned because our opponents are. Any attempts by them to restructure will be on such terms as to restrict the powers of the working class movement. Our intervention should be to prevent that and to maximise the openings

for working class mobilisation. It is also noticeable that radical business pressure has moved from the lunacy of private armies in 1974 to NAFF and the use of the law to hobble the trade union movement. The establishments geriatric grip on the higher judiciary and the setting of law by precedent has made a mockery of labour attempts to adjust Labour Law to remove the TU's disabilities. Without a radical attack on the existing judiciary there can be no safe legal haven for a right wing conciliating trade unionism. Taff Vale lurks round every corner and the whole working class movement has an interest in changing the judicial structure.

The pressure towards a limited reform in liberal bourgeois circles takes place against a general beefing up of the state that has long concerned the Revolutionary Left.

The lessons of Ireland are soon applied here courtesy of Brigadier Kitson and friends. Chief Constables reveal the political role hidden in their administrative positions, developing new riot controls, extending police powers and speaking out for the right on a wide range of issues. The basis for a Campaign in Defence of Democratic Rights has long since been laid, but such a campaign should be part of a wider concern than just to react to shifts in the relation of capital to the state.

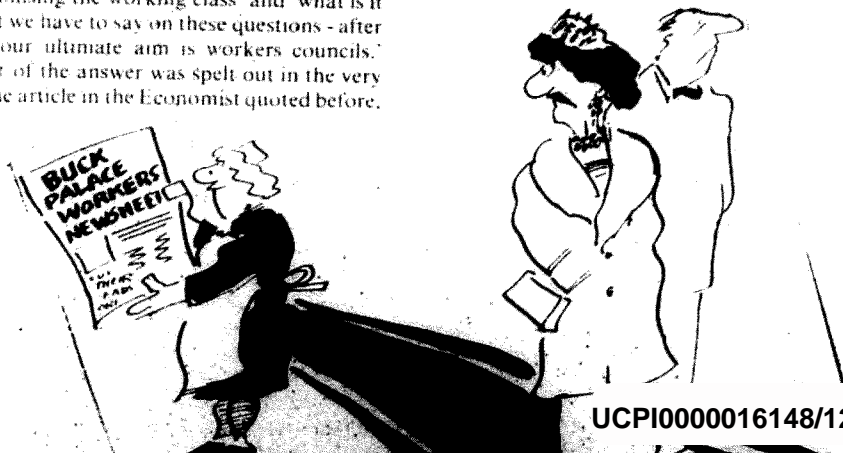
Within the alternative strategy of the left of the Labour Party there is a constitutional critique. Michael Meachers concern with the deaths in police custody accompanied by articles on 'Whitehalls Short Way with Democracy' and deals with 'Open Government, The Unions, The Armed Forces, The Media, A new Role for Political Leaders'. The memoirs of the Wilson Generation of cabinet misters have been full of graphic illustrations of the impotence of Parliamentary democracy being vividly described by its supporters. In our discussions with those sections of the working movement influenced by the new Labour Left we not only discuss import controls, the EEC and nuclear disarmament. We are almost immediately plunged into an argument about the possibility of a Labour alternative, and most importantly a parliamentary alternative. Any serious Labour Left strategy will have to confront the whole question of constitutional reform, we must equip ourselves ready so we can answer from our own standpoint.

The two questions we are likely to face inside the revolutionary left are 'how these issues contribute to the key question of mobilising the working class' and 'what is that we have to say on these questions - after all our ultimate aim is workers councils.' Part of the answer was spelt out in the very same article in the Economist quoted before.

'Britain's very stability the beguiling flummery attending its institutions, hold most of its citizens in a trance of acceptance. Britain's apparent democracy is dignified first by the golden cloak of its constitutional monarchy whose usefulness as a guarantor of stability in a time of change its politicians abuse to change nothing. The failure of Britain's democracy is further disguised by the numinous hails and the hallowed procedure of the place of Westminster itself.' One of the ideological barriers to be broken by the working class is the continuity of Britain's institutions, the appearance of 300 years of placid evolution. A coherent and concerted attack on the forms of British bourgeois democracy, the monarchy and Lords and the unitary nature of the 'United Kingdom', all help us to break down the sham. More than that many of the reforms are in our own interest and cannot be carried through by the liberal bourgeois or nationalist petit bourgeois for fear of overturning the whole apple cart of British capitalism.

Proportional representation could open up the parliamentary arena for use by small revolutionary parties. Reform of the media for open access programming of TV and Radio and even the Press should provide openings for working class and revolutionary intervention. The revelation of the parliamentary impotence on top of the already developed electoral disillusion can with a broad progressive intervention open up ground for real discussion of what sort of state the working class needs. Without such an intervention we leave disillusion to feed the fantasies of the far right and the call for strong leaders and the insipid liberalism of the centre.

The republican faction is a timely reminder of a long Marxist tradition of concern with the forms of the state not just the broad categories of bourgeois and workers states. We accept that fascism and dictatorship inhibit the working class movement but so do other forms of bourgeois rule. Part of the change from IS to SWP is the taking on of the role of a small party, the embryo of future growth. A serious view on the constitutional question is part of that, as is the agitation on issues concerning democratic rights and national questions. The education in the working class of its role in history as a ruling and governing power, begins in intervention in political questions of the present state. Through such agitation we learn and make ready for the 'Birth of our Power'.



National Question

—Republican Fraction

Privacy

REPUBLICAN FACTION—DRAFT THESIS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

1. **Scotland, Wales and Ireland are nations.** Defining a nation is not always easy. Most people would consider Scotland, Wales and Ireland to be nations whereas many would not recognise Cornwall to be a nation, yet, some Cornish people do claim that it is a nation.

The Bolsheviks had a more difficult problem in the multi-national Russian Empire. Stalin suggested the standard criteria to help recognise a nation. These were:

- a community of the settled territory
- a common historical fate
- a close economic association binding different parts of the nation
- a common language
- a national consciousness in the minds of individuals.

Scotland, for example, is clearly a nation, despite racial and regional differences and rivalries. There is a national consciousness in the minds of individuals. People recognise themselves as Scottish rather than north British. There is a clearly defined territory called Scotland, with a definite border. Scotland has its own history, including that as an independent nation, until the union with England. In the case of Wales and Scotland, not only is there a national consciousness but this is recognised internationally. Scotland and Wales are accepted as nations in international sport, both having, for example—national football teams.

The significance of recognising Scotland, Wales and Ireland as nations is that we distinguish them from regions like Yorkshire and Tyneside when we consider the rights of nations to self-determination. This has special significance in discussions about Ireland where British Imperialism has tried to create two nations as a means of continuing to dominate Ireland.

2. **The right of nations to self-determination.**

The right of nations to self-determination is a general principle of marxism. It provides the foundation for a democratic working class policy on the national question. When nations are combined under the rule of one state, regardless of whether the union was voluntary or forced, those nations have a right to separate and form their own states. The right to divorce is a safeguard against oppression, but it does not mean that as marxists we always advocate divorce in particular circumstances.

To apply this to Britain means that Scotland, Wales and Ireland should have the right to form a state separate from the dominant nation, England. The English working class should support the democratic rights of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish working clas-

ses. This means that the English working class should oppose any attempts by the English (or British) The English working class should support the democratic rights of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish working classes. This means that the jenglish working class should oppose any attempts by the English (or British) ruling class to deny these rights. It is the task of English marxists, (ie. marxists living in England,) to urge English workers to support this policy.

However, although this principle gives clear guidance to English marxists, it does not give a clear position for Scottish and Welsh marxists. It does not say whether separation would be a progressive or reactionary development. Therefore it gives no guidance as to whether Scottish and Welsh marxists should support or oppose independence.

If Scottish and Welsh marxists simply argue that it is up to Scottish and Welsh workers to decide a policy, then these marxists abandon their vanguard role on the national question. In practice this would mean abandoning the working class to the policy of another class. In other words, if marxists say 'make up your own minds' then workers will listen more to the Scottish and Welsh nationalists or the British nationalists.

Therefore it is absolutely necessary that a party, which unites English, Welsh and Scottish marxists in a single organisation, must develop a policy for Scottish and Welsh marxists. Failure to do this will undermine the party's ability to grow and could ultimately lead to splits. We must go beyond the right of nations to self-determination to decide whether the movements for independence should be seen as historically progressive or reactionary. This is essential if the party is to develop a consistent strategy and not change course with every event.

3. **The nationalist movements are historically progressive.**

The Republican Faction considers that the nationalist movements are historically progressive. There are at least three ways in which we could examine this issue.

(a) **The class nature and ideology of the nationalist parties.**

Marxists should never fail to expose the petty-bourgeois nature of the nationalist parties, but this cannot be used as the basis for deciding whether particular nationalist movements are historically progressive or reactionary. All nationalist parties, without exception, have been based on the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois class politics. But, we must not conclude from this that all nationalist movements are reactionary. This would clearly be at odds with our policy on Ireland, Zimbabwe and Palestine. Therefore, we should not decide our policy on a united Ireland by analysing the class nature of the S.D.L.P. (Social Democratic and Labour Party). If we do, not only is it likely to lead to error, but also to vacillation. The politics and tactics of nationalist movements are not fixed but evolving though experience. At a moment intime they may be more right

wing or left wing, more passive and reformist, more militant and revolutionary. If we use this as our benchmark of 'progressiveness' then our policy would change as the nationalist tactics alter. Recently it has been claimed that the I.R.A. has moved to the left. Whilst we might welcome such a shift, it should not affect our policy on a united Ireland.

(b) **National Oppression.**

A struggle by an oppressed nation is seen by marxists as progressive. The struggle for self-determination may develop into a struggle for workers' self-determination as imperialism is defeated. The S.W.P. recognises Ireland to be oppressed by British imperialism but, at present, we do not recognise Wales and Scotland as oppressed nations. What criteria should we use to assess whether a nation is oppressed or not.

(i) **Discrimination.**

Discrimination can manifest itself in a variety of ways: economic, social, cultural and political. Economic discrimination, for example, should be examined both in terms of the individual and the nation. As individual Scottish and Welsh workers *do not appear* to be discriminated against in terms of jobs, whether Wales and Scotland are discriminated against in terms of the distribution of state funds (and hence jobs,) requires further investigation.

Some investigation must also be focused on discrimination within the nation. For example, the oppression of Ireland not only affects the relations between English and Irish people but also affects relations between Irish people. Religious divisions are a manifestation of imperialist aggression. Therefore consideration should also be given to the nature and causes of divisions within Scotland, and Wales.

(ii) **Military Force.**

The history of the Celtic races shows that the Welsh, Irish and Highland Scots were ruthlessly suppressed by English military force. The result of this barbarism was the depopulation and near death of Celtic language and culture. Consequently, rooted in the history of the Celtic peoples is a justifiable resentment against the English aggressor. Whilst the position of the lowland Scots was different, it must be acknowledged that military force played an important role in forging the Union on which British state rule was built.

The open use of military force does not characterise the relations between England, Scotland and Wales at present. Ireland, which has sought to exercise its right to self-determination, has been met with armed force, which continues. Whether Wales and Scotland might have to confront military force if they sought to exercise their right to self-determination, only the future will tell.

c) **Marxist theory.**

The nationalist movements could be seen as a progressive force which undermines existing British democracy. The movements are progressive in that by undermining the existing Constituti

forward some reasons for not ignoring the monarchy, as a counterbalance his theory.

a) The record of Socialist Worker

Alex points out that the Monarchy has a very powerful ideological role. Consequently SW attacked the monarchy a couple of years ago. If we ask why it was attacked the answer is revealing. The bourgeoisie began praising the monarchy at the time of the Jubilee. Even the most tolerant of liberals could hardly have kept silent under such provocation. The record of SW in consistently attacking the monarchy seems to boil down to saying that if the bourgeoisie keeps silent about it so will we.

b) Eventually we may be forced to abolish the monarchy if it starts interfering

The second reason that Alex suggests for ignoring the conclusions of his theory is that situations could arise in which the monarchy starts interfering. This would force all liberals and the CC, to start campaigning. Unfortunately if the monarchy was used at some decisive political juncture it would be probably too late to start campaigning. Once you've been stabbed in the back it is a bit late to complain that your attacker had a knife.

c) 'It may be that the monarchy will be abolished before the overthrow of capitalism.' (Alex)

Alex now moves to recognise that we may be forced to abolish the monarchy. There is, according to Alex, a 50-50 chance, ('equally likely') that the 'monarchy will be abolished before' the overthrow of capitalism. Yet Alex refuses to draw the conclusion that if the monarchy is abolished and capitalism still exists then it must be a democratic republic.

But is a democratic republic a step forward. Yes or No? Alex doesn't make it clear.

d) Confining ourselves to what is reasonable

Finally, whilst conceding that a democratic republic may come about before the working class takes power, he nevertheless ends up with a final appeal for tolerance. Alex, who calls for world socialism tells us that our aim of abolishing the monarchy is 'grandiose'. He appeals to us to confine ourselves to what is reasonable, closer to reality etc.. We agree that the S.P.G. campaign and defence of trial by jury are important but we cannot confine ourselves to this without, in practice, abandoning marxism for reformism. No, we will not tolerate the monarchy, ignore it or keep silent. We will take our attitude instead from Lenin the Intolerant, (Two Tactics) who describes the revolutionary path as one of 'rapid amputation, the path of the immediate removal of what is putrescent, the path of least compromise with and consideration for the monarchy and the abominable, vile, rotten and noxious institutions that go with it.'

4. To Conclude

Soft Republicanism is based on the liberal-bourgeois theory of tolerance. This theory uses stageism and revisionism backed up with straight liberal arguments like non-interference and confining ourselves to what is reasonable etc. It stands in the tradition of

the 2nd International and Menshevism who tended to "forget to say a word about the Republic. This is incredible but it's a fact." (Lenin)

Only short-sighted people would consider such a revelation as having no consequence. If this is not repudiated it must lead the Party to make political errors. In particular it could lead the Party to underestimate the significance of the national question not only in Wales and Scotland but perhaps also in Northern Ireland.

The CC must put this beyond doubt ... Does the Party support the immediate abolition of the Monarchy. If the Party opposes this formulation the only other possibility is the reformist notion of eventual abolition, eventual socialism etc.

The Monarchy and the Republic

'Only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between 'shades' of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of the Russian Social Democracy for many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or other 'shade'. (Lenin—on the importance of theoretical struggle—in 'What Is To Be Done?')

The Republican Faction seeks to convince the party that the nationalist movements in the UK are an historically progressive phenomenon. It should be recognised that the Party is divided on this matter between those who oppose that view, those who are not sure and those who support that contention. These divisions may disappear but will reappear around concrete political issues, (eg. Home Rule referenda).

The method we have chosen to argue our case is to found our position on theory and then consider the practical consequences of that theory. Because we take this approach some comrades may think that the discussion is 'abstract' and 'removed from the present practice of the Party'. Such a view would be mistaken. All theories have practical consequences. From Alex's reply it becomes clear that the C.C. is already operating with a theory about the Monarch. It is not simply that the Republican Faction is suggesting a theory. We are also dragging into the light of day the implicit theory of the C.C.

The R.F. approaches the question in the following order:

1. The Monarchy and the Republic
2. How this relates to the National Question
3. Practical consequences of this.

At this stage, the debate and hence this article, must centre on point 1. When this issue is clear then 2 and 3 will follow logically.

1. THE MONARCHY AND THE REPUBLIC

This issue now reveals two theories or 'shades of opinion'. On one hand the view of the Faction which we will call *Militant Republicanism*, as against that of *Soft Republicanism*, held by the C.C. We choose these labels to signify the attitudes and practices which follow from the two theories.

We formulate *Militant Republicanism* as follows:

We support the *immediate* abolition of the Monarchy and its replacement by a Republic. Our aim is a socialist republic in which power is exercised by the working class. But a democratic republic would be a step forward. A democratic republic is a republic in which power *has not yet* decisively passed into the hand of the working class, (eg. as between February—October 1917 Russia.) Parallels can be drawn from our politics on Ireland. First, we say Troops Out Now or *immediately* not Troops Out *Eventually*. 'Eventually' is the reformist position based on so-called 'practicality'. Secondly, we support a united socialist republic. But even a united democratic republic (i.e. ending partition) would be a step forward. To recognise that Britain might withdraw and Ireland be re-united before the Irish working class has taken power is not 'stagist' or 'Stalinist'. It is simply to acknowledge that all events don't occur on the same day. If it is *possible* that ending partition occurs *before* the armed insurrection (rather than after, which is also possible) then it is possible to see that ending partition, by changing the balance of class forces, may be one way to open a revolutionary path in Ireland and Britain.

2. THE LIBERAL BOURGEOIS ATTITUDE TO THE MONARCHY

As Marxists we must investigate the class-nature of both theories of militant and soft republicanism. Alex implicitly adopts this method in claiming that our position is stagist and Stalinist, (i.e. non-marxist or bourgeois theory). By implication, soft republicanism is a proletarian or marxist theory. Our argument aims to show that in fact, soft republicanism is a bourgeois-liberal theory of the monarchy dressed up as 'socialism'.

Whilst the Tory loyalists worship the monarchy, the more progressive liberal tolerates it. This affects the thinking of millions in Britain today through the Press, schools, TV etc., and the Liberal Party. The Labour Party is the vehicle of the liberal-bourgeoisie. Hence it is the reformist Labour leadership and trade union bureaucracy who advocate the theory of tolerance. Tolerance appears in reformist socialism. Ultra-leftism also adopts notions of tolerance from the liberal bourgeoisie, but covers this up with 'revolutionary' phrases. What arguments, therefore, do the reformists and ultra-lefts put forward to support tolerance towards the monarchy?

a) Non-interference.

Commenting on Britain's Labour leaders, Trotsky ('On Britain') notes 'The Royal Power, they declare, "does not interfere" with the country's progress and is cheaper than a President if we count all expenses of elections etc... These speeches of the Labour leaders are characteristic of their peculiar (ie English) nature, which cannot be called by any other name than conservative stupidity'.

Of course, the very existence of the monarchy is an interference with the attitudes and ideas of millions of people in Ireland this

rather than retard, the development of democracy. Hence, issues like Home Rule, minority rights, independence and republicanism are all democratic questions.

These issues should be examined in the light of the marxist theory of the state; the basis of which is set out in Lenin's 'State and Revolution'. This theory needs to be applied to the British State and then tested against actual political developments.

In 'State and Revolution', (p68), Lenin argues that marxists must take note of the differing forms of bourgeois democracy. The centralised democratic republic is the most advanced form. Lenin claims that a 'fundamental' idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat... These words are the 'forgotten words' of marxism, forgotten, that is, by the reformists and mensheviks.

A federal republic is seen as less advanced and a hindrance to development. But in certain special circumstances a federal republic is a step forward. These special circumstances include the National Question. Hence, Engels declares that a federal republic 'would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands (Britain and Ireland) are peopled by four nations, and in spite of a single parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side'. The link between a republic and the National Question is further elaborated. Marxist, says Lenin, must examine the forms of state 'in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case'. This must be done with 'the utmost thoroughness' in order to understand the way in which the particular state was evolving... 'from what to what the given form is passing.' Lening notes that a federal republic is a step forward in the 'transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic under certain special circumstances.' And, 'among these special circumstances Engels puts the national question to the fore. Hence both Lening and Engels connect together three nations; the monarchy, the transition to the republic and the national question.

To illustrate this further, Lenin quotes the following prediction made by Engels: 'Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have 'put and end' to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a step forward.'

These passages provide marxists with a clear theoretical insight as to how we can understand the political significance of the National Question. The British State has developed as a Constitutional Monarchy founded on four nations. (one part of which is now the Irish Republic). To break the Union, undermines the Constitution and threatens the position of the Monarchy. Therefore republicanism is a progressive

demand likely to develop through the smaller nations seeking to determine their own future.

In 1978 the Queen made a speech to Parliament. This speech had special significance because 'she broke with custom by inserting a baldly political passage into her speech' (Guardian). For good reason British monarchs have always attempted to appear non-political. The issue which caused the Queen to depart from tradition was devolution and separatism. The Queen made 'a personal plea for the preservation of the United Kingdom of which she was crowned monarch 25 years ago.' In her speech the Queen reminded 'us that I number kings and queens of England and Scotland and the Prince of Wales among my ancestors, so I cannot forget that I was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.' Her reminder was greeted with applause from a substantial number of her audience.

Other political observations in terms of the development of republicanism in the small nations tend to confirm the views of Marx and Engels and Lenin. In the G.N.P. for example, there has been the growth of a republican 'LEFT', THE Group 79 etc. etc.

It is this approach that leads us to argue that the nationalist movements are historically progressive despite the petty-bourgeois ideology. To recognise this is the first step in developing a theoretically sound and consistent policy on the national question.

4. Internationalism.

Some comrades fear that if we accept that the nationalist movements are historically progressive this could lead us to abandon internationalism for petty bourgeois nationalism. Does our analysis imply that we should give up our hostility to nationalist ideology and politics?

(a) United Front.

If the nationalist movements are historically reactionary the Party must give a lead in forming united fronts against them. British nationalism, for example, is 'reactionary ideology adopted from fascism.' The S.W.P. has sought to form united fronts against it. However, because we argue that the nationalist movements are historically progressive, the Party must seek to form united fronts the republican nationalists.

Is the united front with republican nationalists a capitulation to nationalism? The answer is definitely not. Neither a united front with reformist socialists is a capitulation to reformism. The united front is a revolutionary socialist weapon. One of the aims of the united front is to win the rank and file reformist socialists or republican nationalists to revolutionary socialism. The united front is a continuation of our hostility to nationalist ideology by other means. (* or reformist)

(b) Independence.

If we are prepared to form united fronts with republican nationalists over unemployment, cruise missiles, anti-Thatcher, language issues, Home Rule etc. will this ultimately undermine the unity with the English work-

ing class? Scotland and Wales may eventually choose to exercise their right to self-determination. But this would not necessarily undermine unity with the English working class. On the contrary, it even strengthen it. Lenin illustrated how their right to self-determination. But this would not necessarily undermine unity with the English working class. On the contrary, it could even strengthen it. Lenin illustrated how these cession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 actually strengthened the unity of Norwegian and Swedish workers.

The Swedish workers supported Norway's right to self-determination against the policy of the Swedish bourgeoisie and aristocracy. The solidarity by the Swedish workers enabled the Norwegian workers to see clearly which class was opposed to their democratic rights, and which class was friendly.

These and other examples illustrate that Marx, Engels and Lenin saw a centralised democratic republic as the most advanced form of bourgeois democracy. Yet in Alex's article, we can only find the view that bourgeois democracy is the most advanced form of bourgeois democracy.

Alex does acknowledge the demand for a democratic republic. But this is presented as applying only to Russia because the Tsar was autocratic. Because Britain isn't ruled by an autocracy or 'quasi-feudal aristocracy' such a demand cannot apply here. If the demand for a republic applied only because the Tsar was an autocrat then presumably the Bolsheviks would have abandoned this demand if he had been more reasonable and become a constitutional 'democratic' monarch. No, the fact is that the Bolsheviks were fundamentally opposed to the monarchy, even if it had become a 'democratic' monarchy.

c) Non-interference

Having the view that the possibility of democratic advance has ended and supporting that with the revision of basic principles, Alex now turns to liberal arguments for support. Bagehot, a Victorian bourgeois expert, supports his view that the dignified (!) parts like the monarchy and the House of Lords do not interfere with the efficient democratic parts, the cabinet and the Commons. Bagehot, of course, was explaining to the bourgeoisie why it was in their interests to tolerate the 'dignified' parts, (ie 'putrefying' parts) of the constitution. By uncritically quoting Bagehot, Alex is urging on us the policy of tolerance, that is, the policy of mystifying and deceiving the workers.

(ii) Soft Republicanism (part two — How Alex rejects the logic of his own argument.)

The theory of soft republicanism has now gone down the liberal road. The conclusion of Alex's theory is that we should ignore the monarchy. But Alex begins to feel uncomfortable. He says of his theory, 'This does not mean that anti-monarchist propaganda may not sometimes (or occasionally) be important.' The fact is that his theory does mean that we should ignore the monarchy. So he now urges us to ignore his theory. The argument moves in oppos-

provides an ideology for reactionary loyalist politicians and a justification for the murder of Republicans. The monarchy interferes in other ways. It doesn't govern and has only limited constitutional powers, but it meddles continuously in the political affairs of the country. The Royal Family are multi-millionaires who employ an army of servants, secretaries and advisers to meddle in politics. On the whole this is secret, but occasionally incidents come to light. To believe that multi-millionaires don't exploit their very special position in the State is either extremely naive or trusting. Secret meddling can become, in times of political crisis, the open use of constitutional power. As Trotsky noted 'in case of need, the bourgeoisie will make use of royal power with great success as a concentration of all non-parliamentary, (i.e. real) forces aimed against the working class.'

Putting off abolition, or eventual abolition

Clement Attlee (1937) summed up this argument:

'I wouldn't raise a finger to turn a capitalist monarchy into a capitalist republic.' This view was first formulated by John Wheatley, the Red Clydesider or left reformist. On joining the 1924 Labour Government our tolerant 'Red' was observed on his hands and knees kissing the King's hand. The theory that there is no difference between a capitalist 'democratic' monarchy and a capitalist republic suggested by Wheatley and Attlee, (and now by Alex C.), is in contrast with the view of Marx, Lenin and Engels.

Attlee, of course, would have us believe that he was concentrating all his efforts on fighting for socialism, not 'merely' abolishing the monarchy. The same tolerance preached by the ultra-lefts who are fighting for (world) revolutionary socialism, not wasting time 'merely' abolishing the monarchy. Neither our tolerant reformers or ultra-lefts would 'raise a finger'. If pressed they would no doubt admit to favouring abolition—but not now; later, at some specified date in the future, eventually when the revolution comes etc. etc.

c) Confining ourselves to the issues of the moment

Typical of the reformist (and ultra-left) desire to tolerate the monarchy is their concern that we should confine ourselves to other more immediate issues. We are urged to concentrate on what is 'reasonable' and 'practical'. The 'real' issues, they say, are the issues of the moment, those thrown up spontaneously, like economic conditions. The average English worker, we are told, isn't interested in the abolishing of the monarchy. Therefore, we should base ourselves on the views of the average (English) worker. All these arguments illustrate once again, the link between reformism economism, worship of spontaneity and abandoning marxism for the viewpoint of the average worker.

d) Silence

The practical consequences of tolerance is political silence. If abolition is put off to the future and tolerance is the order of the day then it follows that there is no need to campaign against the monarchy. It is no surprise to find that 'never in its whole existence has the Labour Party debated the monarchy at any Annual Conference'. One attempt was made in 1955, causing a fierce row in the local party, and was stifled. (Hamilton p118).

3. THE CLASS NATURE OF SOFT REPUBLICANISM

Alex begins to attack the militant Republican position by saying that we go 'haywire' when we claim that we cannot have socialism without a republic. 'A republic is a necessary but not sufficient condition for socialism'. This formulation is directed against the left reformists who prattle about democratic socialism, yet never mention the republic. In practise, Benn's democratic socialism is 'democratic monarchist socialism'. Engels made a similar attack on the reformist wing of German Social Democracy who were also silent about the Kaiser. In his attack on 'honest' opportunism, Engels argued that 'if one thing is certain, it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic.' (State and Revolution p68).

That Alex objects to our formulation makes us both puzzled and suspicious. Even from a logical point of view, a republic, 'necessary but not sufficient' cannot be denied. Is Alex saying that a republic is *not* necessary, or that it is sufficient for socialism? Surely not.

The reason that Alex defends the reformists and seeks to deny logic in the name of marxism is that he is unhappy about the political implication. He fears that a (democratic) republic may be established before the working class has taken full power through popular insurrection. In attempting to prove this impossible, Alex develops a theory of soft or tolerant republicanism.

This falls into two parts: the first suggests arguments for tolerance, some marxist, some 'liberal'. The second part is where Alex realises that he doesn't like the theory of tolerance and adds some republican arguments. Indeed, he goes so far down the republican road that he admits, 'it might be that the monarchy is abolished before the overthrow of capitalism', (ie a democratic republic,) 'but it is equally likely', etc. etc. We are told that there is a 50% chance of what we claimed was possible, and Alex set out to disprove it.

(i) Soft Republicanism (part one -- reasons for tolerance)

(a) Stageism.

It is difficult to find a definition of stageism. But its essence can be illustrated both by the politics of Menshevism and Stalinism. The Mensheviks sought to delay the taking

of power by the working class arguing that there had to be a stage of industrialisation which could only be carried out by the bourgeoisie. The Stalinists urged that in backward countries democratic advance was necessary and that in order to achieve this the workers should put off their own struggles for better economic and social conditions. The key feature seems to be that some task, (economic, social or political), is being put off until some unspecified future. In practice, this benefits the bourgeoisie. Whilst our demand for the immediate abolition of the monarchy cannot be said to be putting off anything or benefitting the ruling class, the same cannot be said for soft republicanism.

What underlies the soft republican position is the view that we have already passed through the bourgeois democratic stage. Consequently all democratic issues have been solved. Democratic rights can be removed, but they cannot be extended. This is despite the fact that Home Rule, Proportional Representation and the House of Lords are political issues of major constitutional implications. Alex's stageist view means that neither he nor the C.C. can 'recognise' these issues except in a very token fashion. (i.e. we should ignore these issues but have a formally correct position. Hence we can begin to see a connection between stageism and economism or abstaining from politics.

This notion that we have passed through the democratic stage also affects the C.C.'s view of strategy. There can be defence of democracy but not a democratic offensive against the ruling class. It is significant that Alex mentions the S.P.G. and defence of Trial by Jury, both important defensive issues. So while Trotsky says (quoted by Alex) "that the struggle for democratic reforms could lead directly to workers power", Alex believes this cannot apply to Britain.

If we ask when did Britain's democratic stage come to an end Alex could probably find it difficult to answer. Britain, of course had a bourgeois revolution and civil-war in the 17th century. Whilst this destroyed absolutism it hardly established democracy. The right to vote in Parliamentary elections was extended bit by bit in 1832, 1867, 1884, and 1928. There were also Parliament Acts in 1911 and 1949 and a home rule referendum in 1979. The right to vote has still not been extended to the Head of State, Second Chamber, Judges and State Officials. These institutions are officially reserved for the rich. Unless you believe that every democratic right achievable under capitalism now exists in Britain, there is no logical reason for believing that 1928, 1949, or 1979 marks the end of the 'democratic stage'.

b) Revision

Alex would have us believe that Britain, with its monarchy, its House of Lords, first past the post system, Official Secrets Act

unelected judges standing army and without any clear definition of our supposed democratic rights, is the most advanced form of democracy achievable under capitalism. Why more countries aren't struggling to achieve these 'heights' must be puzzling. Perhaps workers who are struggling to rid their societies of feudal institutions and to extend democracy should demand their own monarchy and House of Lords in order to reach British level? This is close to the complacent and arrogant attitude of the British who always consider themselves to be teaching others about 'democracy'.

In order to maintain the view that Britain has passed through the democratic stage and secured the most advanced form of democracy Alex has to go down the revisionist road. Revisionism takes basic marxist principles and then tries to deny their relevance to the present. The revisionist uses phrases like ... this principle only applies to Russia or absolutist states etc... The revisionist tries to turn general principle, (like Soviets), into the nationally specific, (eg Russia only).

According to Alex, the US, France, West Germany and Britain all have the same basic form. They are all bourgeois democracies. Whilst this is true, Alex ignores, or is unaware, that in 'State and Revolution' (p65 Criticism of the Draft of the Effort Programme), Lenin spends seven pages explaining differences in forms of bourgeois democracies. Using examples from the German constitution, the French Republic, the Swiss and US Federal Republics and Unionist Britain. Lenin explains the importance of differences between Federal and Centralised States, Monarchies and Republics. Alex ignores all this and merges all differences into the general category of 'bourgeois democracy'. If he was right then these pages in 'State and Revolution' should be torn out as having no relevance. It is also quite clear that Marx and Engels saw the democratic Republic as the most advanced form of democracy under capitalism. There are many quotes which put this point beyond doubt. For example, 'The republic is one possible form of political superstructure of capitalist society and moreover, the most democratic form.' (Lenin-On Imperialist Egomism). Or in 'State and Revolution' Engels repeated here in particularly striking form, the fundamental idea which runs through all Marx's works, namely that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat ... (p68). Or in 'Two Tactics' where Lenin notes, 'The stress that the Congress resolution lays on the slogan of a democratic republic is necessary both as a matter of logic and in point of principle.' Here Lenin emphasises that this slogan is directed not only against the Tsarist tocracy but also against the Constitutional or 'Democratic' monarchists in the Cadet Party. Later in 'Two Tactics' Lenin attacks the Mensheviks, whose 'revolutionary spirit has abandoned them ... and ... (us) is most vividly shown by the fact that in their resolution they, of all things, forgot, (silence), to say a word about the republic. This is incredible but it is a fact.'

The National Question

Privacy

Cambridge

The National Question

This article doesn't necessarily reflect the views of Cambridge SWP.

Nations are pens used to keep the population in (and others out). This isn't new, but it is a very small step for the ruling class to take for them to use the concept of a nation for nationalist purposes. The belief that people are different because they come from different countries is encouraged by language and immigration control barriers. Hence, the bosses try to convince the workers to work harder and sacrifice 'for the country's' in fact, for the country's bosses. e.g., Edwardes plea to BL workers to work harder against Japanese imports.

Nations are used by the ruling class to create nationalism and persuade the workers to submit to capitalist exploitation. As Marx put it

'The bourgeoisie finds itself ... in a constant battle ... with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In ... (this) battle it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat'

From this appeal comes nationalism and racism which, in its worst form, is used to persuade workers to 'fight for the country'. For the size of a country is not determined rationally, but by the squabbles of different ruling classes which resulted in wars fought by the proletariat, but for the ruling class.

The so-called right of self-determination is a misconception. Nations have, to varying degrees, their politics dictated by the economic system. Third world countries have their policies shaped by multinationals investing there, and the strings attached to the so-called aid.Reformist policies, eg. a minimum wage, are stopped by this foreign stranglehold. Hence, the leaders become puppets.

And all countries are dominated by the major economic powers. The EEC was created, in part, to resist the economic power of the USA. Even strong economic countries like Britain and Germany had to unite.

If economic pressures are not great enough then military is used. Sometimes openly, sometimes under cover of secret service, military might has been used to change the government.

The Kurds, Palestinians and Eritreans are but three examples of national struggles against oppression. Naturally we support their struggles against oppression. Naturally we support their struggles, but what of their aims? To establish their own country is not enough. They would be plagued by economic and military pressures—look what happened in Hungary. The same continues all over the world today. We should, the-

efore, wholeheartedly support their struggles whole making it clear that short-term gains can only become long-term through a world-wide struggle. We should disassociate from any nationalist racism they may preach. For example, the Palesunians are fighting oppressors who happen to be Jewish. That they are Jewish is utterly irrelevant. To pretend otherwise is anti-semitic and racist.

Nearer home language and culture and culture are rallying cries of the Welsh and Scottish nationalist movements. However, just because a ruler doesn't speak your language does not mean that he will suppress it. And even if he does it can be fought, as the Welsh TV channel success proved. Franco suppressed the Catalan language so that it was even banned in telephones! But the language and its extensive literature remains.

Only under international socialism and workers' control can people truly determine how their country is run. At that time countries can simply be units divided rationally, and not on the basis of military might. As a spirit of international fraternity prevails, racism and nationalism will die long-awaited deaths.

But nations under capitalism can neither be determined by the people, nor benefit them. They will be used to encourage nationalism to the benefit of the ruling class. Socialism has nothing to do with nations, and I hope comrades recognise that.

Privacy

CAMBRIDGE SWP

ORDER FORM

BRANCH: _____



Description	SHEETS OF STICKERS	BADGES
'SHE'S GOT TO GO! SWP'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
POLITICAL STATUS NOW! ARMAGH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	ROCK THE BLOCKS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
THATCHER DEGRADES WOMEN WOMEN'S VOICE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'NET WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM?'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'OUT' 'IF'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'80 YEARS A SCRAMBLER SWP' (Queen Mother)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'READ SOCIALIST WORKER PC Box B2, London E2'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'TROOPS OUT NOW SWP'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'HELP THE POLICE - BEAT YOURSELF UP SWP'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'BUZZ! SAY WHO'S TAPPING YOUR PHONE?'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'A GOOD POLICE FORCE ARRESTS MORE CRIMINALS THAN IT EMPLOYS?'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'LIES, DAMNED LIES, AND THE DAILY MAIL' SWP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'IN THE CLASS WAR, SOCIALIST WORKER HELPS YOU WIN'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'KICK OUT THE Tories! Socialist Worker'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'STOP THE EMPLOYMENT ACT - DEFEND OUR UNIONS'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'NO TO PRIORS LAW - I AM THE 7th PICKET, RIP'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'BEWARE THE JOB (RUNNERS)' SWP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'WORKERS POWER NOT NUCLEAR POWER'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'NO TO NUCLEAR POWER LEAVE THE WEAPONS FACTORY!'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'GET RID OF PESTS - STEP ON A TORY' SWP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'SOCIALIST WORKER - REFRIGERATES THE PARIS FIREFIGHTERS' CANNET REACH'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'IF THE Tories GET UP YOUR NOSE, PICKET!'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	STICKERS	BADGES
TOTAL QUANTITIES Sheets
STICKERS: 12p a sheet or 20 sheets for £2 or 110 sheets for £10	↓	↓
BADGES: 20p each or 10 for £1.50 (can be mixed)	£ : p	£ : p
Cheques/PD to "SWP"		
TOTAL ENCLOSED	→	£



Socialist Workers Party

Conference 1980

SWP Conference 1980

AGENDA

HOW CONFERENCE WORKS

COMMISSIONS—At the end of each session delegates elect 'drafting commissions' of a few comrades to write up the general sense and specific proposals made in the session. This commission report is then presented to Conference, circulated in written form and voted on. If there are two or more positions on any subject then more than one commission can be elected. There is in theory no limit to the number of commissions as long as at least 5 delegates support the setting up of a commission. All the commissions are circulated to delegates and then voted on. This system ensures that points made in the discussion but not necessarily contained in resolutions can be voted upon by Conference; it avoids the Conference having to proceed from resolution to resolution regarding how delegates see the priorities in any discussion.

RESOLUTIONS—It follows from this procedure (which has worked very well for 6 years now) that resolutions are not very important at our Conferences. In the course of a session the chair will call a speaker from any district or fraction that has a resolution on the order paper. Usually the sense of a resolution is put into a drafting commission, although it is possible for delegates to put their resolutions to the vote when the commissions are voted upon.

SPEAKERS—There are speakers' slips. The advantage of these is that it enables the chair to get a reasonable balance of views from delegates. Stewards will collect the slips during the sessions.

NOMINATING COMMISSION—Delegates will be asked to elect three people to sit on a 'nominating commission' together with two from the Central Committee to draw up a recommended list for the National Committee. All nominations go to the Nominating Commission (there are forms provided). The Commission will present several lists during Conference. All delegates are free to go and argue what they think about the lists with the Commission as they are published. The final list will be presented to Conference by the Commission on Tuesday morning and can then be debated, amended and voted upon.

Members of the Commission will be available in the Conference Arrangements Committee room before and after every session and during the lunch breaks, and at other times which will be announced as Conference proceeds.

COFFEE and tea and biscuits are available in the small hall. In the break on Sunday evening there will also be rolls and sandwiches. Due to inflation prices will be announced at the start of Conference in the coffee room.

Saturday

9 00-10 30 Registration.
10 30 Conference Arrangements Committee Report. Standing Orders
10 45-11 30 **National Secretary's Report** this is a factual report on the number of members, branches etc to provide information for the rest of the Conference
11 30-1 00 **Political Perspectives**
1 00-2 00 Lunch
2 00-4 00 **The United Front and the Labour Party**
4 00-5 30 **Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons**

Sunday

9 30-10 00 Control Commission Report
10 00 Industrial Perspectives
Fighting Peduncancies at Work
Building Shop Stewards and Shop Floor Organisation
1 00-1 00 Lunch
2 00 Unemployed work and the future of the Right To Work Campaign
3 45 Resisting the Cuts
4 45 Working in the Unions, the Fractions, the Rank and File Groups
5 45 Summary of Industrial Discussion
6 00-6 30 Break
6 30-8 00 Women's Perspectives

Monday

9 30-10 00 Commissions
10 00-1 00 **Building the Party** the branches, the districts, training, the state of the Party on the ground and how to implement the perspectives discussed in the previous two days in the branches and districts
Socialist Worker Sales Branches and Districts Youth
Summing up the Sessions
Lunch
Anti Race Work
Anti Nazi League
Party Finance

Tuesday

9 30-10 00 Commissions
10 00-11 00 Election of Leading Bodies
11 00-1 00 Ireland
1 00-2 00 Lunch
2 00-3 00 Socialist Worker
3 00-4 00 The National Question
4 00-5 00 Crisis in Eastern Europe
Conference Summing Up

PROPOSED STANDING ORDERS

1. The Chair of the session shall be appointed by the Central Committee.
2. At the beginning of the opening session the chair shall call for the election of six tellers who shall be elected delegates.
3. The agenda and order of business will be presented to Conference in its initial session.
4. All proposals to alter the agenda or order of business must be taken up, in the first instance, with the Conference Arrangement Committee. Direct approaches to the chair or motions from the floor will not be in order. Proposals may be made only by elected delegates or the Central Committee. The Conference Arrangements Committee will report on such proposals, together with its recommendations, at the earliest convenient opportunity. Conference will decide, by vote, whether to accept, reject, or refer back the recommendation.
5. At the times specified in the agenda, drafting commissions will be elected to draw out the sense of each discussion in the form of a motion. In event of different points of view emerging, two or more commissions may be elected. A minimum support of five delegates shall be required to establish a commission.
6. Commission drafts will be put to the vote in a subsequent session. In the event of any delegate believing that a particular commission does not adequately represent the views of its supporters, the reference back may be moved. Amendments may be presented to the Conference Arrangements Committee which shall rule whether they be put as amendments or as a separate commission motion.
7. In the event of directly conflicting motions, the Conference Arrangements Committee shall rule on the order in which they be taken, and which fall in event of others being passed.
8. All those present at Conference may speak. Speakers from the floor shall be allowed five minutes.
9. Speakers may speak more than once during a session at the chair's discretion. There shall be no automatic right of reply.
10. A delegate from every district or branch which has submitted motions shall have a right to be called in the relevant session provided they notify the chair (by slip) of their wish to do so.

11. Where differences of view on an issue are apparent, the chair shall take account of the balance of debate when calling speakers.

12. Voting will be taken by show of delegate's card.

13. Election to leading bodies will be decided by Conference. Delegates must vote for a full committee in each case (whatever number is decided by Conference).

14. No point of order will be accepted from the floor unless it refers to a specific, stated standing order (or orders). All other complaints must in the first instance go to the Conference Arrangements Committee.

15. A motion for the suspension of a specific Standing Order or Standing Orders may be taken and carried by a simple majority.

Resolutions to Conference

Full time/executive positions

A

1 No one should stand for any executive/full time national or local union position without the agreement of the Central Committee.

2 No one should stand without full discussion in the relevant fraction (or district in the case of local full time positions).

3 All candidates must produce fraction addresses. These should be drawn up by the relevant fraction or district committee and submitted to the Central Committee for approval.

4 If a fraction is elected, each fraction must set up in consultation with the Industrial Department a series of regular meetings between the elected member and other experienced members of the fraction.

5 The decision to stand someone for re-election needs to be discussed and decided in the same way each time the question comes up.

Central Committee

Right to Work

B

Conference believes that the prospect of 2 to 3 million unemployed for the next 2 to 3 years makes it imperative that work with the unemployed is a central task for the SWP.

The unity of the employed and the unemployed is essential to prevent the demoralisation and isolation of the unemployed and to help build resistance to further job losses through redundancies and 'natural wastage'.

1 Conference therefore calls upon SWP Industrial fractions etc to campaign in conjunction with the Right to Work Campaign for individual trade unions to retain unemployed members in membership and to encourage unemployed members to attend existing trade union branches. On the one hand the presence of unemployed workers at union meetings will strengthen the fight against job losses—particularly through the acceptance of voluntary

redundancies, and natural wastage. And on the other the strength of employed workers can assist the unemployed to campaign against unemployment, obtain improvements in the level of state benefits and fight for the Right to Work.

2 To further the organisation of the unemployed the SWP should campaign through TU Branches, Trades Councils etc for the establishment of unemployed workers' centres (with finance for rents, telephone, duplicator etc). These centres should be organised and controlled by the unemployed themselves with an accent on campaigning activity rather than just welfare rights work.

South West London

C

Conference believes that the RTWC offers the best prospect for building an influential united front against the Tories. SWP comrades should therefore build local RTW committees composed where possible of union/stewards delegates and unemployed.

We should seek to make the local RTW committees a liaison committee of the local Defend Our Unions Committee and the local unemployed.

Hammersmith and Kensington

Workplaces

D

Conference reaffirms its view that SWPs main emphasis is building a socialist organisation rooted in the workplace. It considers that this must remain our perspective despite current difficulties.

It agrees:

- to organise a meeting in the new year of workplace branches to discuss common problems and issues.
- that members working where there are workplace branches must be members of that branch and subject to party discipline. Exceptions can only take place with the agreement of the workplace branch and district committee.

- DCs to assist members on producing workplace rank and file and SWP bulletins dealing with local everyday issues and general political issues. Bulletins to be noted in the IB.

NALGO Fraction Executive

Socialist Worker

E

This conference feels that Socialist Worker needs to improve the coverage of the arguments against import controls.

We feel that the arguments too often remain on an ideological level and do not relate to people's experience in the workplace. We feel that the coverage could be improved by including regular articles from people in industries affected by import controls, countering the arguments that are being raised in their workplaces and trade unions.

South East Essex

F

This district is critical of the frequent seemingly arbitrary changes in the editorship of Socialist Worker over the year. This seems to have produced a weaker paper with too often repeated front page slogans against the Tories.

We would like to see a much harder more political line being put forward by the paper with more articles on such issues as import controls.

Kent District

G

Conference considers that 'Socialist Worker' must be a paper written by workers for workers. It believes there is a tendency at the moment to aim to produce a 'good' paper produced by fulltimers. It feels that there must be a major campaign in the party to produce worker writers for the paper by:

- day schools for SW writers in all districts.
- meetings between members of fraction committees and jour

- fulltimers should help persuade workers to write articles on their disputes rather than writing accounts for them.
- a quarterly account in the IB analysing articles and authors in SW to see if SW is developing along the desired lines.

NALGO Fraction Executive

Internal Bulletin

H

This conference notes that despite the undertaking at last year's conference a regular IB has not appeared, and requests the CC to ensure the production of a regular six-weekly internal bulletin. This should contain fraction and area reports, comments on the work of bodies such as Irish sub-committee, international committee etc as well as more general contributions.

Responsibility should be given to a particular member of the CC to encourage contributions which reflect the main activity of the party.

NALGO Fraction Executive

Race Work

I

Conference recognises the wholly inadequate level of race work carried out by the party over the last year both amongst the black communities and in combatting the growth of racism amongst white workers. Further it believes that this was partly due to:

1 The rejection of the SWP black caucus perspective for race work last Conference. This not only meant that many active black members left the party but in addition that the accepted conference policy for the production of a regular Flame paper for Asians and Afro-Caribbeans was not carried out.

2 Post ANL complacency in the face of growing fascist organisation. This in turn stemming from the

downgrading of all aspects of race work and anti race work in favour of an almost exclusive orientation on 'industrial struggle.' This, and the subsequent downturn in the struggle, left many members and geographical branches with no focus for activity.

3 A resulting inability to take up nationally campaigns that had popular support eg

Privacy	Bristol	Privacy
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Though it is late in the day Conference welcomes the rejuvenation of the ANL and stresses the importance of building local groups once again. Nevertheless our race work must encompass much more than the ANL. Conference therefore resolves:

1 To re-establish Flame in its old form as a means of building and holding black cadre with its own periphery. This to be achieved through the perspective of turning the local publications in South London and Southall into a single national Flame paper for Asians and Afro Caribbeans. We recognise that this would require the appointment of a national black organiser to ensure, unlike last year, that the perspective would be carried out.

2 In order to achieve last year's perspective, Socialist Worker should carry a regular page devoted to black/anti racist issues.

3 That branches and fractions take up as a matter of urgency the fight against the Nationality Act and immigration controls. Concretely in: banning police presence in workplaces, monitoring black workmates who are vulnerable to harassment, picketing police stations where potential deportees are held. Rank and File papers must once again take up racist issues both inside and outside their unions/industries.

South London

Youth

J

This Aggregate expresses concern over the lack of co-ordination of the various parts of the SWP and its periphery, particularly with reference to Youth Work.

Co-ordination of Anti-Nazi youth work, the Right to Work Campaign and Rebel seems to have virtually ceased, and indeed Rebel itself seems to have been virtually scrubbed in favour of NUSS.

Whilst this may work when we are in a majority in NUSS, this majority itself will cease to exist if we abandon the separate organisation of Rebel.

To this end, Aggregate proposes the following:

1 Rebel

- There should be a conference of Rebel before the end of January 1981 to decide tactics/orientation and to elect a Steering Committee (5-10) and an Editorial Board for Red Rebel (5-8).
- Red Rebel should be brought out at least bi-monthly. If 'Revolution' can manage a regular paper so can we.
- Full branch 'Back-Up' by SWP should be available on request.

2 Co-ordination

- Rebel comrades should work towards a conference of Youth against the Nazis, involving other left groups, NUSS, etc.
- Unemployed comrades and students should give greater priority to work linking Rebel, RTW, and NUSS—on school gates etc *Selling Red Rebel as a priority.*
- Districts should organise RAR gigs wherever possible, well stewarded and using 2-Tone as a wedge into Fascist support.
- DC's should elect one DC member with Youth responsibilities.
- R&F Teacher and Rebel Groups should co-ordinate wherever possible and keep in touch through two 'contacts'.

Central London Civil Servants

K

This District Aggregate expresses concern at the nature of some recent SW headlines and demands

- 1 that SW be double-fronted (ie has headlines and logos both front and back)
- 2 that if there is a highly specific headline on one side, there should always be a general one on the other

L

Amendment to Draft Policy on Standing Candidates for Full-time Union Positions.

Point 1:
For local full-time elections candidates should be approved by the fraction executive alone

Section 3.
All members should put in their election addresses that they are members of the SWP.

Central London Civil Servants

M

Secret Ballots

This district is disturbed at hearing that a CC member had proposed that a secret ballot be held at the Gardners occupation by the strike committee. We wish to express our opposition to any secret ballots, an opposition which, we thought, was party policy. We feel this is especially important in view of the fight against the Employment Act. We consider it very bad that any CC member could propose such a move, which could be so damaging to the party's credibility, and propose a full explanation be given of the CC position on all aspects of secret ballots.

Kent