

THE SOCIALIST PARTY
of Great Britain

82nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE - EASTER 1986

Friday 28th., Saturday 29th., & Sunday 30th of March

-: PRELIMINARY AGENDA :-

- NOTES:
- (a) Branches are reminded of the requirements of RULE 8 and should submit their half-year Form 'C' (to 31st December 1985) to the General Secretary immediately).
 - (b) Any amendments to these Amendments to Rules and Resolutions, and Items for Discussion, must be in the hands of Standing Orders Committee at H.O. by 9 p.m. Tuesday 4th February, 1986. Please identify your amendments/addendums clearly by reference to Section Heading, Section No. and the item/number and Branch as they are listed on the Agenda.
 - (c) Whilst brevity in Items for Discussions is desirable, a number of Branches have complained that some are too 'cryptic' to impart the Branch's drift - a few more words may be all that's necessary to avoid this.
 - (d) To avoid items going astray, DO NOT include items for S.O. Comm. in letters to other committees or Party Officers: mail separately or use a separate sheet clearly headed 'FOR STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE'.

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

- RULE 2: EAST LONDON Br.: "Delete the first three sentences up to and including the word 'dues' on line seven (including the Conference 1981 and 1984 Amendments) and replace with:
'Each member shall pay £1.50 per calendar month, except the unwaged, who shall pay 50p. per month towards Party funds; the Branch Treasurer to acknowledge receipt by signing the member's card. The payment of dues may be waived for any reason deemed satisfactory by the Branch'.
- The Rule then to continue (line seven) as at present: **'A member . . . '**
- RULE 10: S.W. LONDON Br.: "In the last line, between the words 'Executive Committee' and 'excepting', insert the words 'or the New Pamphlets Committee','."
- RULE 12: SWANSEA Br.: "On line one, delete 'twelve' and replace with 'fourteen'."
- RULE 18: CAMDEN Br.: "In line two, between the words 'speaker' and 'shall' (deleting the comma), insert the words 'relating to statements made by the Speaker on the Party Platform','."
- RULE 18: HAMMERSMITH Br.: "In line two, between the words 'speaker' and 'shall' (deleting the comma), insert the words 'relating to that speaker's public conduct or statements','."
- RULE 18: N.W. LONDON Br.: "In line seven, after the words 'the E.C.' insert, as the commencement of the next sentence, the words 'Once the committee has been appointed,' (The sentence then to continue as at present with (small 's') '....,such speaker.....')."
- RULE 22: SWANSEA Br.: "Delete the whole of the final sentence commencing 'Where Branches.....' on line five. (See note ~~over~~ , appended to RULE 23: SWANSEA Br.:)"

RULE 23: SWANSEA Br: "Delete the whole of the final sentence commencing 'Branches shall' on line nine and replace with:

'Branches shall hold at least one specially summoned meeting before the Conference when instructing their delegates on the Conference Agenda and at least one after the Conference to hear their delegates' reports and to vote on the Amendments to Rules and Resolutions which were on the Agenda.'"

(N.B:

The above two proposed Amendments to Rules in the name of SWANSEA Br., namely to Rules 22 and 23, are to be considered in conjunction with the Resolution (a) under Section heading 'ANNUAL CONFERENCES & A.D.Ms.' (first section under 'RESOLUTIONS') in the name of SWANSEA Br. Such Amendments to Rules would be appropriate should this Resolution be carried. **S.O. Comm.)**

RULE 26: N.W. LONDON Br: "In line four, between the words 'requisition' and 'stating', insert the words 'supported by votes in favour totalling a minimum of 10% of the total Party membership,'"

PROPOSED NEW RULE:

ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br: "All meetings shall be kept free of personally preventable atmospheric pollution, medically recognised as harmful to health."

-: END OF AMENDMENTS TO RULES :-

RESOLUTIONS

1. ANNUAL CONFERENCES & A.D.Ms:

- (a) SWANSEA Br: "This Conference resolves that with effect from 1986, voting on Conference Amendments to Rules and Resolutions shall take place not at Conference itself but in the Branches afterwards; the results of the voting shall be communicated by the Branches to the Standing Orders Committee within the four weeks following the final day of Conference. These results shall be passed to the E.C. for communication to all Branches and Central Branch members."

(N.B:

The above Resolution relates also to the proposed Amendments to Rules 22 and 23 -see the note appended to 'RULE 23: SWANSEA Br.' **S.O. Comm.)**

- (b) S.W. LONDON Br: "This Conference affirms that although A.D.M. recommendations are not necessarily binding on the E.C., they are more representative of Party opinion than E.C. resolutions. Therefore the E.C. should take cognisance of such recommendations and give reasons for its failure to put such recommendations into effect."

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PARTY OFFICERS & SUB-COMMITTEES:

re LITERATURE :

- (a) ISLINGTON Br: "This Conference instructs the E.C. to cease the traditional Party convention of including a dated preface signed in the name of the E.C. in all Party pamphlets. In future, all such prefaces shall be un-dated and signed in the name of the Party."
- (b) BRISTOL Br: "This Conference resolves that the N.P.C., while continuing to be a sub-committee of the E.C., should have the authority to produce pamphlets and leaflets on subjects which have been approved by the E.C. without having to submit the texts to the E.C. for editing; quantities and expenditures to be agreed by the E.C."

- (c) S.W. LONDON Br: This Conference lays down a new procedure for the issue of all pamphlets and leaflets in accordance with Rule 17 as follows:-

PAMPHLETS

- (i) A decision to issue a particular pamphlet shall be made by the E.C.
- (ii) The N.P.C. shall organise the work, including the issue of a detailed synopsis to Branches and the E.C. Comments on the proposed contents must be received within a deadline set by the N.E.C. and will be taken into account by the writer or writers in preparing the draft.
- (iii) The resulting draft shall be presented to the E.C. which, at its discretion, shall either amend the draft at the E.C. table within a time limit of eight weeks, or ask E.C. members to send their individual comments within three weeks to the N.P.C. for its consideration prior to the issue of the pamphlet by the N.P.C.

LEAFLETS

Stock leaflets shall be edited by the E.C. Short topical leaflets and branch leaflets shall be edited by the N.P.C."

re FINANCES - BRANCHES & GROUPS:

- (d) NORTH EAST Br: "This Conference instructs the E.C. to make available to all Branches and Groups, at their request, a grant, the amount to be agreed by this Conference, and that Branches and Groups shall report to the E.C. half-yearly on their expenditure."

re INVESTIGATORY AD HOC COMMITTEE:

- (e) N.W. LONDON Br: "This Conference deprecates the action of the E.C. in setting up a committee to investigate alleged factional activity by some un-named members of N.W. London and Camden Branches, and refusing to produce the alleged prima facie evidence, both to the two Branches concerned and to the Party in general."

re PARTY PROPERTY / LETTING:

- (f) CAMDEN Br: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. in the following: that NO Party money be invested in house property for the purpose of receiving rent."

- (g) N.W. LONDON Br: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to conduct a Party Poll on the following question:-

'Should the Socialist Party of Great Britain become Landlords?' " *where ~~no~~ rent is ~~not~~ required?*
4-0. ~~if~~ rent is ~~not~~ required?

re ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS:

- (h) HAMMERSMITH Br: "This conference reiterates that, in line with Rules 1 & 11, enrolment into Party membership is only through a Branch or, for Central Branch members, the E.C. via the Forms 'A' Scrutiny Committee. "] *3-1.*

(The Branch will be issuing a short statement nearer Conference explaining the background to, and reasons for, this Resolution).

re REPLY OF PREVIOUS E.C. TO A BRANCH:

- (i) S.W. LONDON Br: "That this Conference finds that in its reply to Edinburgh Branch, dated 25th October, 1977, the 74th E.C. put forward false evidence that [REDACTED] had taken a reformist position."

3. PUBLICITY & PROPAGANDA:

- (a) ISLINGTON Br: "This Conference resolves that the propaganda of the Socialist Party should refer as often as appropriate to our membership of 'The World Socialist Movement.'"
- (b) ISLINGTON Br: "This Conference resolves that while retaining as our official title 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain', it is now official policy to refer to ourselves wherever suitable as 'The Socialist Party'."
- (c) EAST LONDON Br: "This Conference resolves that as the Party has been bequeathed so much money for the propagation of Socialism, ^{Publicity} a committee ^{the} [be set up to investigate and formulate a publicity campaign with a budget of £50,000; the committee to report back for the next A.D.M." - 5,000 .

4. CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE :

S.W. LONDON Br: "This Conference instructs the E.C. and Branches as follows:-

1. That allegations concerning the socialist integrity of members may only be made publicly in the form of specific and formal complaints to Branches or to the E.C., accompanied by evidence.
2. That such allegations otherwise made publicly shall be deemed action detrimental to the interests of the party and therefore subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33.
3. That in the event that formal complaints are dealt with by Branches or the E.C. and found to be unsubstantiated, any public repeat of such allegations shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33, unless they are again brought forward to Branches or to the E.C. on the basis of new evidence.
4. That provision is made for such formal complaints to be subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33 where they are deemed to have been brought forward in an irresponsible manner."

-: END OF PRELIMINARY AGENDA :-

Standing Orders Committee

20th, December 1985

THE SOCIALIST PARTY
of Great Britain

FINAL AGENDA

82nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE - EASTER 1986

TO BE HELD at CHISWICK OLD TOWN HALL, Heathfield Terrace (corner of Sutton Court Road), Turnham Green (Gunnersbury), London, W.4. (Map, Bus routes, Underground stations etc., will be sent out later).

FRIDAY, 28th March - commencing at 10 a.m.
SATURDAY, 29th " - " " 1 p.m.
SUNDAY, 30th " - " " 10 a.m.

- NOTES:
- (1) Branch nominations for Chairman and Deputy Chairman should be sent to the Standing Orders Committee at H.O. or presented at Conference.
 - (2) Completed credentials must be sent to S.O. Comm. or presented by delegates before taking their seats.
 - (3) Branches which failed to submit Forms 'C' in accordance with Rule 8, shall have previously written to the EC explaining why this was so, and must obtain the permission of Conference before taking their seats.
 - (4) Requests for delegates' expenses should be made as soon as possible before Conference.
 - (5) Please note that all references to the line number in amendments and addendums refer to the lines as they appear on the Preliminary Agenda and may not necessarily coincide with the position of the words on the line in every case as they appear on this re-typed Final Agenda.
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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- (1) Election of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Tellers.
 - (2) Permission for Delegates to sit :-
 - (a) Failure or late Forms 'C' - Rule 8.
 - (b) New Branches (six months) - Rule 22.
 - (3) Order in which items on the Agenda are to be taken.
 - (4) Report of the Standing Orders Committee.
 - (5) Executive Committee's Report for 1985 including reports of Officers and Sub-Committees.
 - (6) Reports of Branches to Conference.
 - (7) Amendments to Rules.
 - (8) Resolutions.
 - (9) Items for Discussion
 - (10) Any other business.
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AMENDMENTS TO RULES

- RULE 2: EAST LONDON Br.: "Delete the first three sentences up to and including the word 'dues' on line seven (including the Conference 1981 and 1984 Amendments) and replace with: 'Each member shall pay £1.50 per calendar month, except the unwaged, who shall pay 50p per month towards Party funds; the Branch Treasurer to acknowledge receipt by signing the member's card. The payment of dues may be waived for any reason deemed satisfactory by the Branch'. The Rule then to continue (line seven) as at present: 'A member ...'"

- RULE 10: S.W. LONDON Br.: "In the last line, between the words 'Executive Committee' and 'excepting', insert the words 'or the New Pamphlets Committee,'."
- RULE 12: SWANSEA Br.: "On line one, delete 'twelve' and replace with 'fourteen'."
- RULE 18: CAMDEN Br.: "In line two, between the words 'speaker' and 'shall' (deleting the comma), insert the words 'relating to statements made by the Speaker on the Party Platform,'."
- RULE 18: HAMMERSMITH Br.: "In line two, between the words 'speaker' and 'shall' (deleting the comma), insert the words 'relating to that speaker's public conduct or statements,'."
- RULE 18: N.W. LONDON Br.: "In line seven, after the words 'the E.C.' insert, as the commencement of the next sentence, the words 'Once the committee has been appointed,' (The sentence then to continue as at present with (small 's') '...., such speaker ...')."
- RULE 22: SWANSEA Br.: "Delete the whole of the final sentence commencing 'Where Branches' on line five. (See note appended to 'Rule 23: SWANSEA Br.')"
- RULE 23: SWANSEA Br.: "Delete the whole of the final sentence commencing 'Branches shall....' on line nine and replace with: 'Branches shall hold at least one specially summoned meeting before the Conference when instructing their delegates on the Conference Agenda and at least one after the Conference to hear their delegates' reports and to vote on the Amendments to Rules and Resolutions which were on the Agenda.'"
- (N.B.: The above two proposed Amendments to Rules in the name of SWANSEA Br. namely to Rules 22 and 23, are to be considered in conjunction with the Resolution (a) under Section heading 'ANNUAL CONFERENCES & ADMS.' (first section under 'RESOLUTIONS') in the name of SWANSEA Br. Such Amendments to Rules would be appropriate should this Resolution be carried. S.O. Comm.)
- RULE 26: N.W. LONDON Br.: "In line four, between the words 'requisition' and 'stating', insert the words ', supported by votes in favour totalling a minimum of 10% of the total Party membership,'."
- (N.B. See also Item for Discussion in the name of GUILDFORD Br. (No.18) which relates.)

PROPOSED NEW RULE: ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "All meetings shall be kept free of personally preventable atmospheric pollution, medically recognised as harmful to health."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "In line one, insert the word 'indoor' between 'All' and 'meetings'."

Addendum - GUILDFORD Br.: "Add at the end 'and furthermore, smoking will not be allowed.'"

END OF AMENDMENTS TO RULES

R E S O L U T I O N S

1. ANNUAL CONFERENCES & A.D.M.s:

- (a) SWANSEA Br.: "This Conference resolves that with effect from 1986, voting on Conference Amendments to Rules and Resolutions shall take place not at

Conference itself but in the Branches afterwards; the results of the voting shall be communicated by the Branches to the Standing Orders Committee within the four weeks following the final day of Conference. These results shall be passed to the E.C. for communication to all Branches and Central Branch members."

(N.B.: The above Resolution relates also to the proposed Amendments to Rules 22 and 23 - see the note appended to 'RULE 23: SWANSEA Br.: - S.O. Comm.)

Identical Amendments in the names of BOLTON, MANCHESTER & ISLINGTON Br's.:
"In line one, delete '1986' and replace with '1987'."

(N.B.: - See also Items For Discussion in the name of BOLTON Br. (Nos. 1 & 2) which may relate.)

- (b) S.W. LONDON Br.: "This Conference affirms that although A.D.M. recommendations are not necessarily binding on the E.C., they are more representative of Party opinion than E.C. resolutions. Therefore the E.C. should take cognisance of such recommendations and give reasons for its failure to put such recommendations into effect."

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PARTY OFFICERS & SUB.-COMMITTEES:

re LITERATURE:

- (a) ISLINGTON Br.: "This Conference instructs the E.C. to cease the traditional Party convention of including a dated preface signed in the name of the E.C. in all Party pamphlets. In future, all such prefaces shall be un-dated and signed in the name of the Party."

Amendment - HAMMERSMITH Br.: "From line two, delete the word 'dated'. From line three, delete the words 'un-dated and'."

Amendment - S.W. LONDON Br.: "From line three, delete the part word 'un-'. In line three, delete the word 'and' and replace with 'but'."

(N.B.: See also Item for Discussion in the name of N.W. LONDON Br. (No. 15) which relates.)

- (b) BRISTOL Br.: "This Conference resolves that the N.P.C., while continuing to be a sub-committee of the E.C., should have the authority to produce pamphlets and leaflets on subjects which have been approved by the E.C. without having to submit the texts to the E.C. for editing; quantities and expenditures to be agreed by the E.C."

- (c) S.W. LONDON Br.: "This Conference lays down a new procedure for the issue of all pamphlets and leaflets in accordance with Rule 17 as follows :

PAMPHLETS

- (i) A decision to issue a particular pamphlet shall be made by the E.C.
- (ii) The N.P.C. shall organise the work, including the issue of a detailed synopsis to Branches and the E.C. Comments on the proposed contents must be received within a deadline set by the N.P.C. and will be taken into account by the writer or writers in preparing the draft.
- (iii) The resulting draft shall be presented to the E.C. which, at its discretion shall either amend the draft at the E.C. table within a time limit of eight weeks, or ask E.C. members to send their individual comments within three weeks to the N.P.C. for its consideration prior to the issue of the pamphlet by the N.P.C.

(Resolution cont'd p. 4...)

LEAFLETS

Stock leaflets shall be edited by the E.C. Short topical leaflets and branch leaflets shall be edited by the N.P.C."

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "Insert in line two of the introductory sentence, between the words 'and' and 'leaflets' the word 'stock'."

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "In clause (i), between the words 'pamphlet' and 'shall', insert the words 'and stock leaflets'."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "In clause (i), delete the words 'issue a particular' and replace with 'produce and publish any'. Insert between 'the' and 'E.C.' at the end, the words 'Annual Conference or the'."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "In clause (ii), on lines two/three, insert between the words 'a' and 'deadline' the word 'reasonable'."

Amendment - N.W. LONDON Br.: "From clause (iii), line one, delete the words 'at its discretion' and the word 'either'. Delete all after the word 'weeks' on line two."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "From clause (iii), line one, delete the words 'at its discretion', and the word 'either'. In line two, between the words 'table', and 'within' insert '(bearing in mind any comments from the writer/s)". Delete all after the word 'weeks' on line two."

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "From clause (iii), delete all after the word 'which,' in line one and replace with (deleting the comma) 'shall read the draft at the E.C. table and send its suggestions for amendments to the N.P.C. within four weeks. E.C. members may send individual suggestions to the N.P.C. within the same period.'"

Addendum - GUILDFORD Br.: ADDITIONAL CLAUSE -

"(iv) The E.C. shall make final decisions about quantities and expenditures."

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "From the 'LEAFLETS' clause, line one, delete all of the first sentence, from 'Stock' to 'E.C.' inclusive."

re FINANCES - BRANCHES & GROUPS:

- (d) NORTH EAST Br.: "This Conference instructs the E.C. to make available to all Branches and Groups, at their request, a grant, the amount to be agreed by this Conference, and that Branches and Groups shall report to the E.C. half-yearly on their expenditure."

Amendment - BOLTON Br.: "From line two, delete the words 'agreed by this Conference' and replace with '£500'."

Amendment - BOLTON Br.: "From line two, delete the words 'agreed by this Conference' and replace with '£250'."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "From line one, delete the word 'instructs' and replace with 'recommends'. From line two, delete the words 'at their request'. From line two, delete the words 'a grant', and replace with 'any reasonable grant'. From line two, delete the words 'the amount to be agreed by this Conference'. In line three, between the words 'report' and 'to', insert the word 'promptly' and delete the word 'half-yearly'."

re INVESTIGATORY AD HOC COMMITTEE:

- (e) N.W. LONDON Br.: "This Conference deprecates the action of the E.C. in setting up a committee to investigate alleged factional activity by some un-named members of N.W. London and Camden Branches, and refusing to produce the alleged prima facie evidence, both to the two Branches concerned and to the Party in general."

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "Delete all after the word 'Branches' on line three."

re PARTY PROPERTY/LETTING:

- (f) CAMDEN Br.: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. in the following: that NO Party money be invested in house property for the purpose of receiving rent."

Addendum - CAMDEN Br.: "Add at the end the words 'and that the Party shall not become landlords.'"

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "From line two, delete the word 'house'. From the end of line two, delete the words 'for the purpose of receiving rent' and replace with 'where rent is required.'"

- (g) N.W. LONDON Br.: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to conduct a Party Poll on the following question :- 'Should the Socialist Party of Great Britain become Landlords?'"

Amendment - GUILDFORD Br.: "Delete the words 'become Landlords?' from end of line three and replace with 'let property for rent under any circumstances?'"

Addendum - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "Add at the end (deleting the existing question mark) 'where rent is required?'"

re ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS:

- (h) HAMMERSMITH Br.: "This Conference reiterates that, in line with Rules 1 & 11, enrolment into Party membership is only through a Branch or, for Central Branch members, the E.C. via the Forms 'A' Scrutiny Committee."

(The Branch will be issuing a short statement nearer Conference explaining the background to, and reasons for, this Resolution.)

Addendum - HAMMERSMITH Br.: "Add at the end, after the word 'Committee' (deleting the full stop) the words 'and not through Groups.'"

Amendment - S.W. LONDON Br.: "From line one, delete the word 'reiterates' and replace with 'affirms'."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "Delete all after 'E.C.' on line **three**"

(N.B. See also Items for Discussion in the names of SWANSEA and ISLINGTON Br's. (Nos. 3 & 4) which relate.)

re REPLY OF PREVIOUS E.C. TO A BRANCH:

- (i) S.W. LONDON Br.: "That this Conference finds that in its reply to Edinburgh Branch, dated 25th October, 1977, the 74th E.C. put forward false evidence that [REDACTED] had taken a reformist position."

3. PUBLICITY & PROPAGANDA:

- (a) ISLINGTON Br.: "This Conference resolves that the propaganda of the Socialist Party should refer as often as appropriate to our membership of 'The World Socialist Movement.'"
- (b) ISLINGTON Br.: "This Conference resolves that while retaining as our official title 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain', it is now official policy to refer to ourselves wherever suitable as 'The Socialist Party'."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "From line two, delete the words 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain' and replace with 'THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain'. From line three, delete the words 'as 'The Socialist Party'' and replace with 'as 'THE SOCIALIST PARTY' or 'The Socialist Party'""

- (c) EAST LONDON Br.: "This Conference resolves that as the Party has been bequeathed so much money for the propagation of Socialism, a committee be set up to investigate and formulate a publicity campaign with a budget of £50,000; the committee to report back for the next A.D.M."

Amendment - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "From line two, delete the words 'a committee be set up to investigate and' and replace with 'the Publicity Committee be asked to'. From line three, delete '£50,000' and replace with '£5,000'."

Addendum - ENFIELD & HARINGEY Br.: "Add at the end, after 'A.D.M.' (delete the full-stop) 'on this proposal and possible larger campaigns.'"

(N.B. See also Items for Discussion in the names of HAMMERSMITH and ISLINGTON Br's. (Nos. 10, 11 & 12) which relate.)

4. CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

S.W. LONDON Br.: "This Conference instructs the E.C. and Branches as follows:

1. That allegations concerning the socialist integrity of members may only be made publicly in the form of specific and formal complaints to Branches or to the E.C., accompanied by evidence.
2. That such allegations otherwise made publicly shall be deemed action detrimental to the interests of the party and therefore subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33.
3. That in the event that formal complaints are dealt with by Branches or the E.C. and found to be unsubstantiated, any public repeat of such allegations shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33, unless they are again brought forward to Branches or to the E.C. on the basis of new evidence.
4. That provision is made for such formal complaints to be subject to the provisions of Rule 31 or Rule 33 where they are deemed to have been brought forward in an irresponsible manner."

Addendum - CAMDEN Br.: "Add at the end a further clause: '5. That allegations made by the E.C. against members or Branches be subject to the above provisions.'"

END OF RESOLUTIONS

I T E M S F O R D I S C U S S I O N

1. BOLTON BR.: "The necessity for Standing Orders Committee to run the Conference in accordance with the needs of provincial Branches (more in line with actual

Party membership) and, specifically, that the Saturday morning slot not be left blank."

2. BOLTON Br.: "The need for the structure and organisation of Party democracy to be changed in line with the provincial development of the Party's actual membership."

3. SWANSEA Br.: "Should prospective Party members be allowed to join Central Branch through their nearest 'local' Branch, rather than through the Questionnaire and the Forms 'A' Scrutiny Committee?"

4. ISLINGTON Br.: "The future of Central Branch."

5. BOLTON Br.: "The Party must consider the production of propaganda which is directed specifically at introducing the socialist case."

6. EAST LONDON Br.: "Are there positive ways of supplementing our propaganda, with a view to an immediate increase in membership?"

7. ISLINGTON Br.: "What do members think of the idea of the Party transferring a proportion of our funds, say £10,000, for use by the W.S.P. (Ireland) in their steadily advancing propaganda work?"

8. BOLTON Br.: "The need for a members' 'Trades Union contact list', whereby members of the same, or similar, unions can get in touch."

9. ISLINGTON Br.: "At public meetings, should priority be given to introducing the Party's ideas to non-members; and should questions be dealt with by the speaker(s) when put, rather than all together at the end?"

10. HAMMERSMITH Br.: "The advisability of paying for professional literature promotion."

11. HAMMERSMITH Br.: "The advisability of the Publicity Committee, in consultation with the New Pamphlets Committee, SSPC and Propaganda Committee, preparing for discussion at 1986 ADM a comprehensive publicity campaign - primarily to promote our literature - on a considerably enlarged budget."

12. ISLINGTON Br.: "Is the Socialist Standard an adequate journal?"

13. BOLTON Br.: "The need for an Index for the Socialist Standard to be produced annually and included in the January or February issue as a pull-out supplement."

14. ISLINGTON Br.: "Does the Party need the give-away journal 'Escape'?"

15. N.W. LONDON Br.: "The need for the Party to retain the present dating and authorisation in the publication of Party pamphlets."

16. EAST LONDON Br.: "Ballot Returns - can they be improved?"

17. ISLINGTON Br.: "Should Party Ballots be secret?"

18. GUILDFORD Br.: "re the proposed Amendment to Rule 26 in the name of N.W. LONDON Br.: Would not a minimum requirement of - 'supported by one-third of the total number of Branches' - be preferable and sufficient for the requisitioning of a Party Poll, rather than - 'supported by ... a minimum of 10% of the total Party membership' - as N.W. LONDON Br. proposes?"

19. HAMMERSMITH Br.: "The Party's attitude to black racism."

20. N.W. LONDON Br.: "Does this 1986 Conference accept the Statement on Violence issued by the E.C. in January 1977?"

21. GUILDFORD Br.: "Is it acceptable for Party members to take it upon themselves to question acquaintances of a new comrade - i.e., that comrade's friends, work-mates, business associates, club members, employers or ex-colleagues in a former political party - about his or her former political activity?"

END OF ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

END OF AGENDA

11th February, 1986

Standing Orders Committee

Computer Investigation Committee Report.

This report is submitted by one of the two members of this committee - D.Deutz.

The committee was set up with only two members and, by the nature of it's task, this has proved most unsatisfactory as the two members came to different conclusions and cannot make even a majority recommendation to the E.C..

I have read Comrade Chesham's report and I do not disagree with his comments on the manner in which a computer can function for the Party.

The case for using a computer by the various committees on analysis is either one of speed in circumstances where speed is not basically important and the committees currently function satisfactorilly, or that it can do a job which is not done at present, which means there is little need for it to be done anyway.

The exception is the S.S.Subscribers committee as they could use a computer regularly with greater efficiency than with the existing Addressograph machine, but while this continues to work OK this committee can carry out it's function satisfactorilly. Should the machine ever require repairs or replacement then it would be worth considering investing in a computer.

I was not present at the informal discussion on 12th. Nov. with the Printing Committee and the S.S.S.C. so I cannot comment on how a computer could be of use to them.

Although the Party is currently well endowed through bequests the cost of H.O. administration is running some £9000 below the income from dues and donations etc. and I do not think the purchase of a computer for some £1500 is justified. If the SSSC's list of subscribers were much larger then there must be a point where a computer could be justified, and I think consideration of buying should be looked into again in say three years time.



Derek Deutz.

27/11/85.

(9)

SWANSEA BRANCH

To All Branches and Central Branch Members

STATEMENTS CONCERNING A RESOLUTION AND AMENDMENT TO RULE ON 1986
CONFERENCE AGENDA (agreed at branch meeting of 17-2-86)

- ++ RESOLUTION 1 (a). 'This Conference resolves that with effect from 1986, voting on Conference Amendments to Rules and Resolutions shall take place not at Conference itself but in the Branches afterwards; the results of the voting shall be communicated by the Branches to the Standing Orders Committee within the four weeks following the final day of Conference. These results shall be passed to the E.C. for communication to all Branches and Central Branch members.'

Swansea Branch suggests that it would be a more democratic procedure if voting on the Conference agenda did not take place at Conference but in the branches, after Conference. Branches would hold pre-Conference meetings as now at which the agenda would be discussed and delegates instructed as to how to speak on behalf of their branch. Conference would be discussion and exchange of ideas on the resolutions and the amendments to rules and delegates would report back to their branches on the different points of view expressed. We would then have all the information we needed before voting. We would feel that, as individual members, we were informed voters and decision-makers instead of having instructed our delegates without hearing all the arguments.

If we used this procedure, the branches would assume more importance as they would become unmistakably the centres where all important decisions were made. Each branch would hold a special voting meeting after Conference of which all members would be notified. Swansea has proposed changes to Rules 22 and 23 (see Agenda) to accommodate this.

Central Branch members would also vote after Conference with the same individual vote as now having had the chance to attend Conference and hear the discussion.

New members to the Party would be impressed, we feel, by such a highly democratic procedure and one that emphasized the branch as the true unit of Party organisation.

AMENDMENT TO RULE 12. 'On line one, delete "twelve" and replace with "fourteen".'

Swansea Branch would like to see a 14-strong E.C. again. This is the number the Party has had for most of its history and when 14 members were needed, it was rare that they were not found. It is only since the number has been reduced (first to 10 and now 12) that there have been serious difficulties in getting members to stand. We think that, as has always been the case with the Party, members will do the work that proves necessary for the Party to function properly and Swansea thinks a 14-strong E.C. is necessary for this to happen. Above all it is desirable for reasons of democracy, as the more members that take decisions on behalf of the Party the better. It is not desirable that a small number of members be called upon (as has happened in recent times) to make decisions which are important to the Party as a whole. Even if we do not always manage to get 14 members or more to stand for the E.C, 14 should still be the number we should aim at.

- ++ The date in this resolution, 1986, is an error. The branch intended the date to be 1987 and will therefore support the amendment on the Final Agenda in the name of Bolton, Manchester and Islington branches.

1.

RECEIVED
1986

82nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1986

Enfield & Haringey Branch

PROPOSED NEW RULE: "All meetings shall be kept free of personally preventable atmospheric pollution, medically recognised as harmful to health."

AMENDMENT: "In line one, insert the word 'indoor' between 'All' and 'meetings'."

This proposed new rule (and the amendment) recommended by Enfield & Haringey Branch is based upon the medical information contained in the report from the "New Scientist" (10th Oct. 1985, page 21). This report is itself derived from earlier reports published by the "British Medical Journal", the "New England Journal of Medicine" and a quotation from a statement issued by the Surgeon-General in the United States.

Also, there is the "New Scientist" editorial of 16th. Jan. 1986 which comments on the latest reports on this subject from the U.N. World Health Organisation and the Worldwatch-Institute in Washington D.C.

The Party is directly involved in this unpleasant subject on a question of principle, as the party rightly claims that all its meetings are open to the public. It is now obvious that if we continue to allow smoke pollution at our indoor meetings we are effectively banning the attendance of fellow workers who are put at risk by being forced to inhale tobacco smoke.

Unfortunately, this is not a matter that can be dealt with by taking a vote at any particular meeting, as a vote in favour of pollution would contradict our claim that ALL Party meetings are open to ALL.

It is important to note that the medical research described in the current reports shows that the inhalation of other people's tobacco smoke is harmful, even to people who are considered to be in good health. However, in similar circumstances, the damage done to the health of people who are not in perfect health has not been disputed within the medical profession.

If this new rule is not adopted we will have to qualify our "ALL welcome" invitation with a warning to members of the working class that their health would be at risk if they attend the advertised meeting.

Enfield & Haringey Branch

January 1986.

82nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1986Enfield & Haringey Branch

The branch has submitted several amendments to the resolution in the name of S.W.London (page 3, item 2(c) - PAMPHLETS & LEAFLETS).

For the sake of clarity, here is a re-written version with our amendments incorporated:

PAMPHLETS

- (i) A decision to produce and publish any pamphlet shall be made by the Annual Conference or the E.C.
- (ii) The N.P.C. shall organise the work, including the issue of a detailed synopsis to Branches and the E.C. Comments on the proposed contents must be received within a reasonable deadline set by the N.P.C. and will be taken into account by the writer or writers in preparing the draft.
- (iii) The resulting draft shall be presented to the E.C. which shall amend the draft at the E.C. table (bearing in mind any comments from the writer/s) within a time limit of eight weeks.

Enfield & Haringey Branch.

March 1986.

52, Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UN
16-2-86

Ref: 200

1986 ac

Hamish Gibson
Secretary
N.E. Branch

Dear Hamish,

Re: Branch resolutions at your meeting 3rd February.

The Executive Committee at its 7th meeting 18th February instructed me to reply to resolution (ii) 1 and 2 in accordance with the facts.

(ii) 1. Groups in the past, not attached to branches, did not account for their finances because their requests were small and were accounted for by the Party Treasurer in the reports to Conference and ADM. During the last few years larger grants are being requested but not in all cases, Eccles branch, during the 12 months it was a group did not call upon the general fund at all. The case of Seaham and Newcastle Groups is unique because both are large enough to become branches and both belong to the same branch. The EC is having to ask for financial statements because the grants asked for are equal to and sometimes greater than those requested by branches, and in the case of 1985 are greater than the branch to which the groups belong e.g. £70 grant to the branch and about £650 to the two groups. The branch has to send in a form C.

(ii) 2. At what point does a grant become a substantial grant? Surely when it is substantially greater than that normally requested by other groups or branches. In 1985 the largest donations called for by Islington Branch was £315 and the Cardiff West County Tour £390 compared with the total for the two groups I think you will agree that yours was substantial. I would point out in conclusion that the EC wishes to encourage the activity in the North East and is asking for financial statements every three months purely for accounting sake.

Yours fraternally,

General Secretary. A.G. Atkinson.

Extract from Minutes of 9th Meeting of the 83rd E.C. held at H.O. on 4.2.1986.

SEAHAM GROUP wrote sending a circular which they requested the E.C. arrange to be sent to all members on the matter of grants and other topics.

RESOLUTION - P. Lawrence and Easton "That the letter be noted and the document circulated to branches as requested."

ADDENDUM - L. Cox and Grant "The relevant part of the North East Branch Resolution and the EC's Resolution in response (Item 16(d), 3rd meeting) are as follows: 'In a telephone conversation with NE Branch Sec. the treasurer(?) said that "The EC do not like sending grants to Seaham group as funds are not being accounted for." This branch considers this to be a serious defamation of character and we request an apology and an assurance that the Cde. concerned be seriously reprimanded' NE Br. 'That the EC endorses any statement the Treasurer may have made to the effect that the EC is unwilling to make grants without accountability'" (EC res.)

ADDENDUM! AGREED: SUB-RESOLUTION CARRIED 5 - 0

RESOLUTION O Chesham and Hart "That the Treasurer's reply to North East Branch (Item 2 8th meeting) endorsed by the EC last week, be circulated with Seaham's Group circular"

AGREED.

To all Members

On 21st January 1986, (3rd mtg of 83rd EC), the EC confirmed its agreement with the Treasurers statement that:

"The EC does not like sending money to Seaham because funds are unaccounted for"

Despite requests, the EC has been unable to supply concrete evidence to support such a serious accusation. Over the past 2-3 years the EC has been sending Seaham Group grants to Newcastle or Hexham, about 50 miles from Seaham, without offering any explanation, and in the eyes of our comrades throughout the party we are stealing party funds.

We reiterate statement 5 of the NE branch circular, quoted by SW London branch in their unprecedented attack on an EC nomination, and to this end we are preparing a case against members of the EC and of course in defence of ourselves. We therefore request a copy of the past 5 years EC minutes, plus all correspondence to and from NE & S/Land branches and Seaham & Newcastle groups.

Another matter of serious concern to Seaham group is the accusation that some members & branches in London are acting as a party separate from the rest of us. This serious accusation remains unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, in the eyes of many comrades these two branches have become at least doubtful and at most working against the socialist movement. To them we extend our best wishes and our assurance that, until there is concrete evidence to the contrary, they remain comrades.

This ability of the EC to be used as a vehicle for attacking members, and making libellous and defamatory statements about them, is a dimension of power which, we believe, requires the urgent attention of the membership.

Yours fraternally,

Seaham Group, 18.2.1986

52, Clapham High Street
London SW47UN
21-2-86

Hamish Gibson
N.E.Branch
Secretary

Dear Comrade,

Re: Accountability

It may be useful if I set out what I understand by accountability in this context. If my understanding is misconceived then any attempts I make to be guided by it will lead towards confrontation rather than to the comradely co-operation I hope for.

The EC acts on behalf of the Party. All members are accountable through the EC to the Party for their use of Party funds. The Treasurer is the Party's officer and is answerable to the Party for his actions and will normally act in co-operation with the EC.

Branches are, as apart of the Party constitution and procedure, required to account to the Party through a Form 'C' on a regular basis, for any money they raise or receive in the Party's name.

Groups are authorised by the EC in consultation with the Central
Organiser and/or Groups organiser. They are expected to account
for any money they receive or raise directly as there is no
provision in the constitution for such groups to report to the
party at large through a form C.

In the matter raised by Seaham Group I think that the members of the group and of the N.E. Branch and of Newcastle Group would be willing to recognise that, whatever difficulties they may have had in their relationship with HO., the EC and Party Officers, they have been through an uncertain period with several changes in the administrative set up in the North East in the last couple of years.

If any confusion from this has affected the following report, some of the explanation may be traced to these administrative uncertainties.

According to EC minutes 19-3-85, Meeting II, item 7, a telephone request for a grant of £100 to obtain a stand at the Seaham Ideal Homes exhibition was given urgency and approved. The EC asked the Group to report back on how the event went. On the 18th June, 1985. (24/7) A N.E. Branch letter on various matters was dealt with by the EC. It included a request for £50 for 1 member of the branch to attend the Party meeting on the State. The EC requested the Treasurer to seek information from the branch on the use to which the grant for the Ideal Homes Exhibition had been put. On the 23rd July (29/22) NE Branch replied and referred the Treasurer to Seaham Group directly for details of the Exhibition grant.

On the 23rd August (33/37) urgency was granted to the Seaham Group for a telephoned report. It was explained to the EC that the Group had not participated in the Ideal Homes Exhibition, that £50 of the grant had been spent on 1 member attending the special meeting on the State, (note the EC had not granted the N.E. branch request for this at the meeting on the 18th June) and £20 had been spent on a rubber stamp. The remaining £30 it was proposed to put towards the cost of a stencil cutter and the EC was asked

stencil cutter and the EC was asked to make a grant of £90 to com-

(cont.)

plete the purchase of this equipment, for use with the Boneo the Group had already obtained with their own resources. The EC agreed to a grant of £90 and accepted the Groups reply on the matter of the original grant of £100. Subsequently the following grants have been made to Seaham Group. - /3rd Sept.85 (36/16) £101 for a series of fortnightly meetings, handbills, leaflets, room rent. 8th Oct.85 (40/12) £71-50 for 2 debates on 26/11-85 and 10-12-85 paper, room - hire and stamps. 5th Nov.85 £25-00 paper supplies (amount as requested) although the group were advised that paper could be obtained in London at something near half the cost that they had quoted.) There has been no report made to the EC on these subsequent grants, but the group may have reported the fortnightly meetings arranged in Sept. or the two arranged later, to the Propaganda Committee on the Form E.

I believe on the basis of the information in this report the Party would not feel that accountability for funds placed with this Group is yet on a fully satisfactory basis, and would expect the Group, the EC and Treasurer to establish better communications and well grounded mutual confidence. (Only with the establishment of better communications would the Party expect further requests for grants to be made or considered. Members of N.E.Branch should know that the following grants have been made to Newcastle Group in 1985.

| | | | | |
|---------|-------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| Meeting | 3/12 | 22-1-85 | Adverts | £97-00 |
| " | 7/15 | 19-2-85 | Feb, mtg. | 15-00 |
| " | 11/14 | 19-3-85 | March " | 20-00 |
| " | 19/28 | 14-5-85 | May " | 15-00 |
| " | 22/14 | 4-6-85 | June " | 20-00 |
| " | 23/11 | 11-6-85 | 6 mtg. leaflets | 10-00 |
| " | 37/12 | 17-9-85 | Sept.mtg. | 10-00 |
| " | 41/13 | 15-10-85 | 4 meetings | 60-00 |
| | | | Total | <u>£159-00</u> |

Either Newcastle Group should report on these meetings directly to the EC or North East branch should do so through Form C. There have also been made grants to N.E.Branch as listed below.

Summary

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Newcastle Group as above- | £159-00 |
| Seaham Group | £100 |
| | 90 |
| | 101 |
| | 77-50 |
| | 25-00 |
| | <u>393-50</u> |
| | £393-50 |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| N.E.Branch | |
| 1984 Grant- | £30-00 |
| 2 delegates | |
| to Conf. | 50-00 |
| Quart. Brch. | |
| Newsletter | 30-80 |
| 6 mths rent | 30-00 |
| leaflets etc, | 20-00 |
| | <u>160-80</u> |
| | £160-80 |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Grant towards Telephone | |
| installation - | £ 64-00 |
| | <u>777-30</u> |
| refunded | 25-00 |
| | <u>752-30</u> |

P. Wilson
Party Treasurer

Endorsed by the E.C. 25-2-86

See. A.S. Arthur

Analysis of Grants to Branches + Groups 1985

BRANCHES

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| DORMINGHAM | - | - |
| BOLTON * | - | - |
| BOURNEMOUTH | 126 | 50 |
| BRISTOL | 100 | 00 |
| CAMDEN | - | - |
| EAST LONDON | - | - |
| EDINBURGH | - | - |
| ENFIELD/HARINSEY | - | - |
| GLASGOW | 110 | 60 |
| GUILDFORD | 20 | 00 |
| ISLINGTON | 315 | 00 |
| HAMMERSMITH | - | - |
| LANCASTER * | 141 | 33 |
| MANCHESTER * | 50 | 00 |
| N.W. LONDON | - | - |
| NORTH EAST (incl. NEWCASTLE + JERHAM) } | 767 | 30 |
| S.W. LONDON | - | - |
| S. YORKS | 150 | 00 |
| SWANSEA | 109 | 00 |
| NORTH WEST * BRANCHES | 51 | 30 |

1941 03

GROUPS

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|----|
| CARDIFF | 40 | 00 |
| DUNDEE | 50 | 00 |
| WEST COUNTRY TOUR | 350 | 00 |
| CORRESPONDENCE CLUB | 10 | 00 |

2,391 03

150 00

2,241 03

ben refunded / GLASGOW '84

At audited
Accounts
P. Wilson

Please return to Br. Secy *Ref 200*

RECORD OF E.C. and BRANCH RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO THE EVENTS LEADING TO
THE FORMATION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CAMDEN and NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCHES

The following items, 1 - 4, deal with the guidelines laid down by the EC for the running of meetings in close proximity on the same date:

1. Special Meeting 82nd EC - 2nd March, 1985:

Item 11 ISLINGTON BRANCH DEBATE with L. Spiegel, Labour prospective candidate for Finchley: title "What is socialism and how can it be achieved?" - 4th April - proposed Party Speaker Comrade S. Coleman.

(Resolution approving the arrangements was agreed.)

CAMDEN BRANCH MEETING 4th APRIL:

RESOLUTION - "The EC deplores the fact that Camden and North West London Branches, in jointly organising a public meeting on Thursday 4th April, within walking distance of Islington Branch, which meets on that night, have not contacted Islington Branch at any stage."

RESOLUTION - "The EC is concerned that in view of the fact that for several years, Islington Branch has organised a public meeting on the Thursday prior to Conference, Camden and North West London Branches must have been aware of the likelihood of a clash arising from their plans."

2. 10th Meeting 82nd EC - 23rd April:

Item 27 CAMDEN BRANCH Resolution dated 9th April: "The EC be informed that this Branch was unaware that Islington Branch was holding a meeting on the same evening, 4th April as Camden and North West London Branches were holding a Lecture meeting. THIS meeting was arranged in January 1985. The Branch note that both meetings were successful and it is our intention to hold a meeting next year on EVE OF CONFERENCE at the branch venue."

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That the resolution be noted and the attention of branches be drawn to the need for liaison with the Propaganda Committee when meetings are being planned to be held in the same locality."

3. 29th Meeting 82nd EC - 23rd July:

Item 4 - ISLINGTON BRANCH Resolution dated 11th July: "That the EC be written to and informed of Islington Branch's intention to hold an Eve of ADM meeting."

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That the resolution be noted and the Propaganda Committee be informed."

(Subsequently the September SS announced a Camden and North West London Branch meeting to be held on the same night. The arrangements for this meeting ignored the guidelines laid down by the EC.)

4. 36th Meeting 82nd EC - 10th September:

Item 8 - ISLINGTON BRANCH Resolution dated 5th September: "Having noted from the September issue of 'Socialist Standard' that Camden, North West London, and West London Branches are running a joint public meeting on Friday, 11th October, in close proximity to Islington Branch, we will not be running a meeting ourselves on that night, as we had previously informed the EC, but on Thursday, 10th October instead. In spite of our having notified the EC of our intentions some time ago, the Branches in question have made no contact at all with us over this."

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That the matter be deferred one week."

Simultaneously with these events, the EC was in correspondence with Camden and North West London Branches about their plans to organise meetings in the area of S.W. London Branch at Head Office.

5. 28th Meeting 82nd EC - 16th July:

Item 16 - NORTH WEST LONDON Branch wrote that they and Camden Branch "are organising a series of meetings and want to hold three of them at HO on 24th November,

26th January and 23rd February." They requested permission to use H.O.

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That the two branches be requested to give further information regarding the proposed series of meetings, as Lambeth seems at some distance from their area of activity.

6. 30th Meeting 82nd EC - 30th July:

Item 8 - NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH Resolution dated 18th July: "That the EC be advised of the three meetings at Head Office. We are surprised that the EC should withhold permission. If we cannot have the use of H.O. then we shall cancel these meetings. Can we please have a reply before our next Branch Meeting (August 8th) as preliminary arrangements must be finalised."

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That consideration be deferred one week."

7. 31st Meeting 82nd EC - 6th August:

Item 4 - CAMDEN BRANCH Resolution dated 23rd July: "The E.C. be informed that this branch, over a period of years, has had the use of Head Office for Weekend Schools and occasional propaganda meetings, the last of which took place in 1984. The branch therefore wishes to know whether the E.C. is pursuing a new policy which would confine branches to their own areas. The branch has instructed its organiser to supply details of the meetings which are yet to be finalised."

E.C. RESOLUTION on deferred item from previous week - "That North West London Branch be advised that the EC requires an explanation on three points as follows :

- (1) Are the proposed meetings to take the form of education classes/seminar type meetings or are they propaganda meetings?
- (2) If they are to be propaganda meetings, why North West London and Camden Branches are organising propaganda in the area of South West London Branch, which is outside their own area and already covered by the local branch, and,
- (3) Why this is being organised in a manner which is completely separate from South West London Branch activity?"

8. 34th Meeting 82nd EC - 27th August:

Item 9 - NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH Resolution dated 22nd August: "N.W. London branch have received your letter of 10th August. In view of the EC not granting the use of H.O. for the three meetings, these have been organised elsewhere."

E.C. RESOLUTION - "That the EC notes the decision of N.W. London Branch not to hold the three meetings at Head Office, but insists that it should still answer the questions put to it by the EC."

9. 37th Meeting 82nd EC - 17th September:

Item 15 - NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH Resolution dated 12th September: "That the EC be advised that as the three meetings in question are no longer to be held at H.O., the branch see no reason to answer the questions."

These events combined on the night of the 17th September when the EC reached a point of impasse in its correspondence with the two Branches.

10. 37th Meeting 82nd EC - 17th September:

Item 4 - E.C. RESOLUTION re Item 8, 36th meeting, deferred one week: (See Item 4, p.1) "That the Resolution be noted and that an ad hoc committee of three members be appointed to investigate the possible extent to which some members of Camden and North West London Branches are operating as an internal Party faction separate from the Party at large, and that the Central Organiser be asked to serve on the Committee."

Subsequently, the following EC RESOLUTIONS were passed:

11. Item 10, 47th Meeting 82nd EC - 26th November: "That the EC is acting on the basis that there has been a breakdown in Party co-operation, culminating in the failure by the EC to secure the co-operation of the Branches concerned in running meetings at the same time and in the same place as other Branches. The work of the ad hoc committee is aimed solely at achieving democratic comradeship in the united work for socialism. The EC trusts that North West London Branch will give its full support to this objective and that branches be informed that the ad hoc committee is already in touch with the branches concerned."

and

12. Item 9, 3rd Meeting 83rd EC - 21st January, 1986: "In the light of the Committee having provided the information requested by the Branches, and this being adopted by the EC, the EC urges Camden and North West London Branches to meet with the ad hoc committee in line with Party co-operation and with a view to establishing the united work for socialism."

All Branch Secretaries

49th EC Minutes Item 9. EC resolution-
"That a copy of the Explanatory letter
of the Ad Hoc Committee to the N.W.
London Branch be sent to all branches".
Gen. Secretary.

Branch Copy Read
52, Clapham High St.,
London SW4 7UN. *Re K. B. ...*

6th. December 1985.

North West London Branch,
SPGB.

Dear Comrades,

The committee thanks North West London Branch for its resolution of 28th. November, and notes that the Branch has raised the question of the prima facie evidence relating to the present matter. We remind the Branch that the position has arisen from a breakdown in Party Cooperation, which is the cause of present concern.

The immediate matters which have brought the situation to a head are broadly as follows.

The running of meetings in close proximity on the same night. Following some correspondence after this had taken place before Conference, the EC laid down guide lines as follows:-

" .. the attention of Branches be drawn to the need for liaison with the Propaganda Committee when meetings are being planned to be held in the same locality." (EC 23/4/85.)

Subsequently, Islington Branch complied with these guide lines in organising an Eve of ADM meeting. Camden and North West London Branches again organised a meeting in close proximity with this on the same night. As this further meeting, and the manner in which it was organised outside the EC's guide lines repeated the pre Conference position, this presented itself as being activity separate from the Party at large.

Simultaneous with these events, Camden and North West London Branches were organising propaganda in the area of South West London Branch at Head Office. The issue was the practice of two Branches combining to operate in the area of another Branch without any formal contact or even informal cooperation with that Branch whatsoever. This practice seemed to go against the vital importance of socialist cooperation. It was important therefore that there should be an explanation for this and accordingly the EC put 3 questions to North West London Branch, ~~xx~~ two of which were as follows:-

- i. " .. why North West London and Camden Branches are organising propaganda in the area of South West London Branch, which is outside their own area and already covered by the local Branch, and
- ii. Why this is being organised in a manner which is completely separate from South West London Branch activity?"

North West London Branch declined to give this information. This produced a further position of stalemate, which again presented itself as activity separate from the Party at large, with these questions still outstanding.

It is also the case that some members of Camden and North West London Branches who were previously active, seemed to have now withdrawn from the mainstream of Party activities and to have dissociated themselves from the essential administrative functions. This appears to have occurred as a result of resentment at certain democratic decisions which have been made within the Party.

There is also evidence that strong views exist in Camden and North West London Branches that many members of the Party are sympathetic to ideas which are in opposition to socialism, and have 'reformist attitudes' and are engaged in moves against socialist principles. There can be no objection to any attempts made to substantiate such allegations, (indeed criticism is vital to the life of our Party,) but until any substantial evidence is offered, these allegations are indicative of a broad political division between Camden and North West London Branches and the wider Party. A further indication of this division is the rejection by some members of the Branches of much literature published by the World Socialist Movement.

The events and attitudes which we have mentioned, taken together, can be seen as being prima facie evidence that members of your Branches are engaged in factional activities organised separate from the Party at large.

North West London Branch ask for the 'names of the members concerned', but the committee is in no position to offer such conclusions, as our task is solely to report on whether or not, and if so, to what extent, some members of Camden and North West London Branches are operating as an internal party faction separate from the Party at large.

But we do emphasise that by working in full cooperation through our joint discussions, Camden Branch, North West London Branch and this ad hoc committee, now have an opportunity to deal with these questions which have arisen in a frank and comradely manner. As we have already said, we would aim to clarify any possible misunderstandings which may have arisen with a view to establishing a stronger basis for the united work for socialism. Our hope is that our report will be a means to this end.

We have put to you the matters which we wish to discuss, and we emphasise our point that the sooner the work of our committee is completed the better it will serve our common objective of getting on with the work for socialism. We therefore ask you again to fix an early date for our discussions.

Yours fraternally,

The ad hoc Committee.



28th January 1986.

Camden branch's reply to E.C. allegations.

Preliminary .

In November 1985 the E.C. set up an Ad Hoc Committee to investigate the extent of the allegations made in their resolution of 17th Dec. 1985 against Camden & N.W. London branches. This Committee, without conducting any investigation of the matter, made a series of allegations against both branches which the E.C. subsequently endorsed. The E.C. had, therefore, prejudged the issue.

The branch objected to these allegations, and in the circumstances felt justified in putting its case direct to the membership as follows:-

In September 1985 the E.C. made serious allegations about some of our members, without naming them. These allegations claimed among other things that they had formed a faction within the Party separate from the Party. This, in the view of the branch, amounted to a charge that these members were disloyal to the Party and were working against its interests.

On being called to produce the evidence, on December 14th 1985 the E.C. circulated all branches with what was described as an explanatory letter which had been drafted by their Ad Hoc Committee. This letter not only repeated the allegations in a different form, again without any evidence to support them, but also included the branch in the allegations.

The letter claimed -

1. That we ignored the guidelines laid down by the E.C. by arranging a meeting on the eve of the Autumn Delegate meeting when Islington branch were holding a similar meeting.
2. That we were organising meetings at H.O. in the S.W. London branch's area without consulting them.
3. Some unnamed members of our branch have withdrawn from the mainstream of Party activity and disassociated themselves from the essential administrative functions.
- 4; The E.C. has evidence that N.W. London & Camden branches hold strong views that there are members in the Party who have reformist attitudes and are involved in moves against Socialist principles.
- 5; That some members of the two branches reject much of the literature published by the World Socialist Movement. These members are not identified.

This pathetic collection of half truths and pure gossip represents the prima facie case of the E.C. and is supposed to be taken seriously by intelligent members of the SPGB.

Concerning (1). Had the E.C. taken the elementary precautions of first establishing the facts they would have found that Camden branch did not arrange a meeting on the same night as Islington branch; i.e. 25th Oct. 1985. Islington branch arranged a meeting on the same night as ours. Arrangements for our meeting were discussed in May 1985, and Islington branch's meeting was arranged later. We do not imply any motive to Islington branch; they, or the Propaganda Committee, never consult Camden branch about their propaganda arrangements, but they complain that we do not consult them. Islington branch, the Propaganda Committee and the Central Organiser contain the same personnel. Well might the E.C. in its explanatory letter say that Islington branch complied with the guidelines and liaised with the Propaganda Committee. In short, they informed themselves that they were running a meeting. We see nothing calamitous about two entirely different type meetings being held on the same night twice a year. The last occasion when this took place both meetings were highly successful: i.e. eve of Conference 1985.

Concerning (2).

Contrary to the E.C.'s claim, we did not organise propaganda for the simple reason that the E.C. made it impossible for us to organise anything by depriving us of the venue. We asked for the use of H.O. in July 1985 for two meetings which were to be held early in 1986. Instead of helping the propaganda effort, the E.C. procrastinated and kept deferring the item, and raised the red herring about our alleged non co-operation with S.W. London branch. They also raised the

ridiculous issue about the branch carrying on propaganda activities outside its area; so much for the Executive Committee of the World Socialist Movement, which frowns on members travelling from Camden to Clapham to carry the Socialist message to the workers of S.W. London. The E.C. would simply not co-operate with us and we were forced to abandon the proposals. Had the E.C. wished to assist this propaganda they would have replied along the lines of their letter and resolution of 7th August 1984 when they dealt with our request in a matter of days; viz:-

"Re your request for the use of H.O. on Sunday 25th November (afternoon) for the purpose of holding a public propaganda meeting, your letter 4th Aug. 1984. The E.C. at its meeting 7/8/84 carried the following resolution:- "That the request be approved and that Camden branch be advised to liaise with S.W. London branch over local publicity". We co-operated with S.W. London branch then, and we will co-operate with any branch when the situation arises. Our meeting could only have helped S.W. London branch. We wished the use of H.O. because it held twice the number of our branch room, and the subjects of the meetings "Socialist future" and "The Abolition of the State" would have been of interest to a large number of members.

Concerning (3).

Whilst we cannot speak for unidentified members we suggest that the present uncomradely attitude of the E.C. to this branch and its members is hardly likely to encourage them to flock to H.O.

Concerning (4). & (5).

Wn the absence of any evidence we cannot comment.

The explanatory letter originated from the E.C's Ad Hoc Investigation Committee - [REDACTED] - hardly an impartial body as these were the people behind the accusations. This is a grotesque travesty of Party procedure. If this matter is to proceed let it be investigated by an impartial Committee of members who are not party to the complaint.

The E.C's view that we are acting outside the Party is utter nonsense. The branch is the unit of organisation and all our activities take place within the organisation; propaganda, selling literature, holding open branch meetings, Delegates to Conference, and generally conducting our affairs within the Rules of the Party. We do not have secret meetings and engage in any activity outside of the Party. The E.C. speaks of a breakdown in co-operation, but it is they by their actions who are causing this breakdown.

CAMDEN BRANCH.

(2.5.86)

Reply address - C/o Head Office,
52 Clapham High Street SW4 7UN

3rd March, 1986

To: ALL BRANCHES AND MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

We refer to the resolution of North West London Branch (Item 2(e) on the Conference Agenda) as follows :-

"This Conference deprecates the action of the EC in setting up a Committee to investigate factional activity by some un-named members of North West London and Camden Branches, and refusing to produce the alleged prima facie evidence, both to the two Branches concerned and to the Party in general."

The reasons for setting up the Committee were known throughout the Party. These were clear from exchanges between the EC and the two Branches and were available to every Party member from EC minutes. These related to failure by the EC to secure the co-operation of Camden and North West London Branches in the organisation of propaganda.

The ad hoc committee set out the reasons for the work in a letter dated 6th December and this was adopted by the EC and distributed to all Branches and members. It would therefore be false for Conference to deprecate the EC for refusing to produce evidence for setting up the ad hoc committee.

It is also popular feeling, which has prevailed for too long, that the Party in London is divided. In his statement "What is Wrong with the SPGB", Com. J. D'Arcy said the following :-

"You've got a Party which is divided at the present time against itself."
(Page 5, para. 6 of the report of the statement which is available on request)

Where co-operation has clearly broken down, the EC is obliged to take action, and this should be supported.

The position should not be judged solely on the wording of the single EC resolution which set up the committee. It should be judged against the fact that a division exists; that Party co-operation broke down and that this must be re-built as soon as possible. This object was clearly expressed by the EC in its resolution of 26th November, 1985, as follows :-

"That the EC is acting on the basis that there has been a breakdown in Party co-operation, culminating in the failure by the EC to secure the co-operation of the Branches concerned in running meetings at the same time and in the same place as other Branches. The work of the ad hoc committee is aimed solely at achieving democratic comradeship in the united work for socialism. The EC trusts that North West London Branch will give its full support to this objective." Agreed

The EC's object was made clear by the ad hoc committee in its letters to the two Branches dated 6th December as follows :-

"But we do emphasise that by working in full co-operation through our joint discussions, Camden Branch, North West London Branch and this Ad Hoc Committee now have an opportunity to deal with these questions which have arisen, in a frank and comradely manner. As we have already said, we would aim to

clarify any possible misunderstandings which may have arisen with a view to establishing a stronger basis for the united work for socialism. Our hope is that our report will be a means to this end."


This object was again affirmed by the EC at its meeting on 10th December, 1985.

The effect of passing the North West London Branch resolution at Conference will be to abolish the ad hoc committee. This will destroy what is now an EC initiative to encourage the united work for socialism and destroy the patient work which has been applied to this object by the members of the ad hoc committee. It would mean the continuation of the present divisions and undermine what should be the united work of our movement.

It is fully accepted that we, the undersigned, have been involved in disagreements with some members of the two Branches. But so also have most other active members; from this point of view, a totally 'impartial' member would be impossible to find. We are well placed to represent those who wish to look forward to achieving both the vital objective of party unity and the most effective use of our resources.

Branches should vote against the North West London Branch resolution and support the attempt to ensure some kind of reconciliation between Camden and North West London Branch members and the rest of the Party. In all, three written approaches have been made to persuade the two branches to talk with the committee. Although these have not been successful, we should not give up now.

We emphasise most strongly that the resolution is not in the interests of members of Camden and North West London Branches. It is in their interests to rebuild a comradely atmosphere, conducive to the work for socialism. Given that it is their desire to see a united Party, working in full co-operation with high morale, they must have everything to gain in joining with the committee to achieve this object.



To all Branches

March 7, 1986

Comrades,

The ad-hoc committee established last November has held its meetings, if any, in private. The only outcome of its deliberations has been an "explanatory letter". This does not seem to support the EC's original allegation that certain unnamed members of two branches had formed a faction within the Party. The committee has not made it clear whether its own allegations relate to all members of these branches or merely to some of them. If the matter is held by the EC to be serious, I for one would expect the EC or its sub-committee to have named the comrades they are accusing, and brought charges under appropriate Party rules. Either they should name names, or drop the matter.

My second point concerns the choice of members selected for the ad-hoc committee. Camden Branch, in their circular, comment that the 3 members were hardly impartial "as these were the people behind the accusations". I would go further. I consider that there are serious charges of disloyalty and factionalism which ought to be placed on record.

[redacted], after expulsion from the Party, he set up an organisation with a journal, written by him, which was distributed among certain Party members and some sympathisers, and others outside the Party. In this journal, One World, he attacked the elected EC and aspects of Party policy. Most of the members he singled out for attack are now in Camden and N.W. London branches. His activities, though relatively unsuccessful at the time, did have a damaging effect on some Party work. Later he rejoined the Party, at a time when its unity and effectiveness were under threat from the Weidberg faction. Weidberg's targets, the people he wanted to get rid of, were mostly the same EC members and Party officers that [redacted] had attacked in One World.

[redacted] was a member of the Weidberg faction. He attended its closed meetings. He manoeuvred with others (most of whom have since left the Party) deliberately to exclude those who did not support his line from any active role in Party work. As a consequence, a few formerly active members have left the Party from frustration, not from disagreement, and a considerable number who remain in the Party have become inactive, or find their opportunities as Party speakers or writers severely restricted.

I consider that an honest and thorough investigation of factional activity within the Party is long overdue. It must include an impartial, unpartisan examination of the allegations I have made in this letter.

There is evidence to support these allegations.

Yours for Socialism,

[redacted] (Central branch)

1285 0 41

re Resolution - Section 2. 'ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS', item (h) - page 5 of Final Agenda :

To: All Branches and Central Branch Members.

From: Hammersmith Branch.

The EC has been granting permission to Groups to examine and admit applicants to membership. The argument has been that most Branches appoint an examination committee of two or three and, as the EC has stipulated that only members should examine applicants, this puts Groups in the same position. This overlooks the fact that, when a Branch examination committee have any doubts or reservations, the whole Branch discusses these points with the applicants. Also, should a Branch committee have missed something on which the applicant has insufficient knowledge, this will soon emerge in discussion with other members of the Branch. In a Group, new members only have contact with the members who examined them. Branches are the unit of the Party and the difference in responsibility of Branches and Groups was clearly drawn for very good reasons; **it** should not be thoughtlessly eroded.

1. We suggest the procedure is against the **Rules**, which state that applicants must be approved by a Branch or, in the case of Central Branch, the EC (via its sub committee, the Forms 'A' Scrutiny Committee).
2. The first time permission was given, it was stated on the EC that members of that Group were experienced, of long standing, had detailed knowledge of our case and were therefore qualified to carry out the examination. This argument does not always hold good and, as all members are equal, once permission has been given to one Group it cannot be withheld from another. Take a Group which has, say, four members, three of whom have recently joined. Do these have sufficient knowledge to examine applicants? Like a driving test, the examination proves that new members have acquired a basic knowledge of our case. However, quite often they are advised to study one or other aspect of our case further; they are obviously not ready to examine other applicants.
3. Groups are important places to learn and discuss our case. Applicants who have attended a Group should have sufficient knowledge to answer easily the **questionnaire** of the Scrutiny Committee. This avoids delays caused by lengthy correspondence when the committee are unable to accept, or need to have clarification of, original answers. Thus Groups fulfil the task of imparting socialist knowledge, but the safeguard of examination by the EC sub committee, through whom admission to membership continues to be obtained, is retained.

Yours fraternally :

HAMMERSMITH BRANCH

25th February 1986

RE HAMMERSMITH BRANCH CIRCULAR OF 25th FEBRUARY, AND THEIR RESOLUTION
ON "ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS" - Conference Agenda, page 5, item (h).

To : All Branches, Central Branch and Groups

Comrades,

Dundee Group would like to express its disgust at the attitudes expressed in the above-dated Hammersmith Branch circular. This is not primarily because we are a group. We would ask Conference to reject this resolution and the amendments for two basic reasons :

1. Knowledge and Experience

"Take a group which has, say, four members, three of whom have recently joined. Do these have sufficient knowledge to examine applicants ?"

What is their criteria for measuring such knowledge ? Is it length of membership ? Or perhaps, the ability to write articles, speak, or sell the Standard ? or talk at length about the theories of Hegel ?

It is noticeable that they do not call into question the capability of a Branch of, say, six members, in examining new applicants.

2. The Whole Branch Can Decide

In stating that if a Branch examining committee has any doubts about an applicant, "...the whole Branch discusses these points with the applicant", we feel that Hammersmith Branch is trying to construct an argument of numerical superiority of branches over groups which is not always the case. For instance, a glance at EC minutes will show that branches pass resolutions, often with only a handful of members present.

We would also like to point out another aspect that this resolution would have, if carried. If someone comes along to our meetings wanting to join, are we to instruct her/him to get on a train or bus to Glasgow, Edinburgh or Newcastle ? And for what reason ?

In writing this it was not our intention to personally attack Hammersmith Branch, but we do feel that their resolution is both condescending and insulting to Party members, and could not avoid taking it as an insult.

From: SOUTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

To: ALL BRANCHES

NOTES ON CONFERENCE 1986 ITEMS

4th March, 1986

RES. 2(c) - ISSUE OF PAMPHLETS & LEAFLETS

S.W. London Branch feels that the present procedures are confused and cumbersome. They are laid down in several Conference and ADM Resolutions. For the guidance of the EC and the NPC we feel that the procedure should be made clear within a single resolution.

The procedure we propose meets two important requirements. These are the need to produce the best quality pamphlets in a democratic manner, with some participation of members. Secondly, the need for speed of issue. The essence of the proposals is that members and the EC will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed contents, and following this, the EC will have the discretion to either edit the draft itself within a definite time limit, or leave it to the NPC.

RES. 4 - CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

S.W. London Branch feels that this Resolution would be the most simple and immediate way to create an improved atmosphere in the Party where issues can be debated without the destructive effects of members being able to freely question each other's socialist integrity. This practice has caused immense damage in the past.

The existence of this Resolution would strengthen the hand of the chair in Party debates, discussions at Conference, ADM, Branches, and in all other places. Members will be constrained from abuse etc., and will be encouraged to focus their arguments on the issues involved. At the same time it will not prevent responsible disciplinary action being taken against members where this is justified.

RES. 2(i) - THE OFFICIAL EC RULING THAT COM. A. BUICK HELD A REFORMIST POSITION WHICH IS STILL OUTSTANDING IN THE NAME OF THE PARTY

S.W. London Branch feels that comrades should remove this official Party slur against [REDACTED] which is a discredit to the Party.

In addition to the information sent out by the General Secretary, we supply overleaf* important material which relates to item 3 of the EC's reply to Edinburgh Branch. Members will note that item 3 reads "Letter to the SSPC 17/5/77; he [REDACTED] made the statement 'advocating reforms and reformism are not necessarily the same (even if the one is likely to lead to the other in the long run) - otherwise Marx would have to be regarded as a reformist!'"

It was laid down by the EC on behalf of the Party that this statement was evidence that Buick held a reformist position.

We supply the full text of the letter. Members will note that the EC completely disregarded the clear statement on reforms by [REDACTED] in the first paragraph of his letter. They chose to select a sentence from the last paragraph which referred to the position of Marx over a hundred years ago. They also ignored the final sentence of the letter which put this statement in its historical perspective. This was manipulation of the text of [REDACTED] letter to the SSPC for the sole purpose of discrediting him and to claim he was a reformist. This action remains as an official ruling, made by an executive committee on behalf of the Party. It is therefore important that the Party should now reverse this unacceptable ruling.

S.W. LONDON BRANCH

(*Text of letter overleaf)

TEXT OF LETTER FROM [REDACTED] TO THE SSPC DATED 17/5/77:

"NOT FOR PUBLICATION"

"SSPC,

Dear Comrades,

It seems to me that the May issue of the SOCIALIST STANDARD blurs the traditional SPGB distinction between reformism (the policy of accepting capitalism and trying to improve it by reforms) and reforms (legislative measures adopted and implemented by the State.) The basic SPGB position has always been that we do not advocate reforms; and that we are opposed to reformism rather than to reforms (in fact we have even committed ourselves to voting for certain reform measures under certain circumstances, unlikely though those circumstances might be to occur in practice: a minority of socialist MPs in Parliament faced with a measure judged by the Party to be in the interest of the working class and the socialist movement.)

On page 94 Horatio writes:- "A revolutionary Party is committed exclusively to Revolution and cannot support reforms - which are anti-revolutionary." - (emphasis added.) Now if reforms are anti-revolutionary, then the SPGB, as a revolutionary Party, would have to be committed to opposing them. But in fact we are not opposed to all reforms on principle and have always recognised that some may temporarily benefit sections of the working class and as such cannot be opposed by us, even if this does not mean that we should advocate such reforms. What we are opposed to on principle - and what can legitimately be described as "anti-revolutionary" - is reformism, ie, the policy of accepting capitalism and seeking to improve it by reforms.

Then, in writing "Reformism ... is reactionary. It belongs to a past era. It is a transitional stage of political development and is now a hundred years out of date," (page 92), JD suggests that up until a hundred years ago reformism was a correct policy, ie, that the working class at that time were right to accept Capitalism and seek only to improve it. But this can't be right. I suspect that what JD meant to say was that up until a hundred years ago it was correct for workers and socialists like Marx to have advocated and campaigned for certain reforms (eg. Universal Suffrage, and elementary factory legislation) in order to be in a stronger position to struggle for socialism. But this was not necessarily reformism since it need not have been linked with acceptance of capitalism (as it wasn't in the case of Marx.) Advocating reforms and reformism are not necessarily the same (even if the one is likely to lead to the other in the long run) - otherwise Marx would have to be regarded as a reformist!. The SPGB case is not that reformism was right until a hundred years ago, but that up until that time Socialists were justified in advocating certain reforms, a justification which disappeared once political democracy had become established and once capitalism had developed, in a world economy capable of providing plenty for all, the material basis for socialism.

Yours fraternally,

[REDACTED]

Proposed item for Conference Agenda:-

"This Conference finds that in its reply to Edinburgh Branch, dated 25/10/77., the 74th. Executive Committee put forward false evidence that [redacted] had taken a reformist position."

Item 3 of EC letter to Edinburgh Branch dated 14/7/77:-

"Letter to the SSPC 17/5/77 he [redacted] made the statement "advocating reforms and reformism are not necessarily the same (even if the one is likely to lead to the other in the long run) - otherwise Marx would have to be regarded as a reformist." "

Text of letter from [redacted] to the SSPC, dated 17/5/77:-

NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

S.S.P.C.

Dear Comrades,

It seems to me that the May issue of the SOCIALIST STANDARD blurs the traditional SPGB distinction between reformism (the policy of accepting capitalism and trying to improve it by reforms) and reforms (legislative measures adopted and implemented by the State.) The basic SPGB position has always been that we do not advocate reforms; and that we are opposed to reformism rather than to reforms (in fact we have even committed ourselves to voting for certain reform measures under certain circumstances, unlikely though those circumstances might be to occur in practice: a minority of socialist MPs in Parliament faced with a measure judged by the Party to be in the interest of the working class and the socialist movement).

On page 94 Horatio writes:- "A revolutionary Party is committed exclusively to Revolution and cannot support reforms - - which are anti-revolutionary" - (emphasis added). Now if reforms are anti-revolutionary, then the SPGB, as a revolutionary Party, would have to be committed to opposing them. But in fact we are not opposed to all reforms in principle and have always recognised that some may temporarily benefit sections of the working class and as such cannot be opposed by us, even if this does not mean that we should advocate such reforms. What we are opposed to on principle - and what can legitimately be described as 'anti revolutionary' - is reformism, i.e., the policy of accepting capitalism and seeking to improve it by reforms.

Then, in writing "Reformism .. is reactionary. It belongs to a past era. It is a transitional stage of political development and is now a hundred years out of date," (page 92), JD suggests that up until a hundred years ago reformism was a correct policy, ie, that the working class at that time were right to accept capitalism and seek only to improve it. But this can't be right. I suspect that what JD meant to say was that up until a hundred years ago it was correct for workers and Socialists like Marx to have advocated and campaigned for certain reforms (eg, universal suffrage and elementary factory legislation, in order to be in a stronger position to work for socialism. But this was not necessarily reformism since it need not have been linked with acceptance of Capitalism (as it was 'nt in the case of Marx.) Advocating reforms and reformism are not necessarily the same (even if the one is likely to lead to the other in the long run) - otherwise Marx would have to be regarded as a reformist! The SPGB case is not that reformism was right until a hundred years ago, but that up until that time Socialists were justified in advocating certain reforms, a justification which disappeared once political democracy had become established and once capitalism had developed, in a world economy capable of providing plenty for all, the material basis for socialism.

Yours fraternally, [redacted]

From [REDACTED] 15/11/85
17th. November 1985.

To South West London Branch.

Dear Comrades,

I wish to move that the following item be placed on the Conference Agenda:-

"That this Conference finds that in its reply to Edinburgh Branch, dated 24/10/77, the 74th. Executive Committee put forward false evidence that [REDACTED] had taken a reformist position."

I would ask the Branch to accept that that this is an important matter. I work a good deal with Comrade Buick and I feel that it is entirely wrong that this matter should be left outstanding.

You will see from the accompanying notes, that the EC took a personal letter from [REDACTED] to the SSPC, and used it as so called evidence that [REDACTED] was a reformist, or took a reformist position.

The so called evidence was false. The EC completely ignored [REDACTED] statement on the Party position on reforms. It selected a sentence from the letter which made an academic point in a purely historical context, which had nothing to do with the Party position on reforms. The point was about the position of Marx and not the position of the SPGB, which [REDACTED] had dealt with in the first part of the letter.

By ignoring its general contents, by selecting one sentence, and by these means manipulating the text, the EC used the letter with the effect of discrediting [REDACTED] as a ~~reformist~~ socialist.

I bring this matter forward for two strong reasons which I hope the Branch will support:-

1. This discrediting action was taken by the EC in the name of the Party, and therefore stands in our records as an official Party action. This position should not be allowed to stand. It should now be corrected by the Party so as to restore integrity to the record of Party administration. This is vitally important for the Party.
2. It is entirely wrong that any member such as Comrade Buick, should be involved in the work for socialism, under this continuing Party slur which is outstanding against him in the name of all members.

I trust that the Branch will support me in trying to remove this official Party slur against [REDACTED]. I suggest that this arises from the ordinary obligations of comradeship, and also from the need for socialist pride in the record of our administration. In my view this can be achieved by the simple and straightforward resolution which I have proposed, on the basis of the evidence I have put forward.

Yours fraternally,

[REDACTED]

Dear Comrades,

Numerous accusations of reformism and anti-socialism have been made publicly and privately against several of the members signing this statement. Despite this the Executive Committee have declined to circulate the statement which attempts very briefly to re-affirm our adherence to socialist principles, whilst outlining some of the differences in approach which we have with some other members. We are therefore distributing it ourselves in the hope that it will reassure comrades who might otherwise doubt exactly what our views are:-

WHERE WE STAND.

1. For a worldwide society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production, and the consequent abolition of the whole market economy, the wages system, money and the political state, with free access to goods and services according to individual wants.
2. Only within this framework can people live in harmony with each other and the world about them, and have the opportunity to fulfil their human potential, as individuals and as a community.
3. Socialism involves major changes in everyday life - in education, work, the family - as well as in the ownership and control of the means of production; the new, free, non-authoritarian social relationships being formed in the course of the struggle for socialism.
4. Socialism can only be established by the revolutionary transformation of society through the conscious action of the working class, democratically organised in all areas of political, economic and social activity.
5. The working class are all those who have no ownership and no control of the means of production and who rely for their livelihood, either directly or indirectly, on a wage or salary, and so includes office, shop and farm workers as well as industrial workers, and their dependents.
6. The working class gains the knowledge, confidence, and democratic organisation necessary to carry out the socialist revolution in the course of their struggle to assert their needs, in every sphere of social activity, against the profit-seeking needs of capital and its functionaries, the ruling class.
7. The task of socialists is to encourage, both by revolutionary propaganda and, where appropriate, active participation, working class struggle, with a view to the emergence of socialist consciousness, the democratic self-organisation of the working class and the militant defence of working class living standards.
8. An organisation of revolutionary socialists must always maintain its independent identity and must not itself put forward any programme of reforms to be implemented by the capitalist state.
9. Anti-racism and anti-sexism must form an important part of socialist propaganda and other activity. A revolutionary socialist alternative must be built to counter the divisive separatist ideologies of black nationalism and radical feminism.
10. Socialists must oppose all governments as representing capitalist and ruling class interests, including those of state capitalist Russia, China, Yugoslavia, Cuba and other such

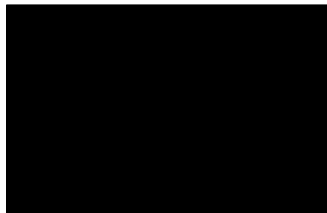
- II. Socialists must oppose reformist movements which seek government power to modify capitalism, or which rely on the capitalist state to deal with working class problems.
- I2. Socialists must oppose the ideology of state capitalism propounded by Bolsheviks (Leninist, Stalinist, Trotskyist, Maoist) and Social-Democrats.
- I3. Socialists must oppose all imperialism, and also so-called "national liberation" movements as reactionary movements seeking to establish new ruling classes in power and to re-divide the world into different, but equally irrelevant frontiers.
- I4. Socialists must oppose all wars as conflicts between rival ruling classes over capitalist interests not worth the sacrifice of a single working class life.
- I5. An organisation of revolutionary socialists must be a fully democratic and free association of people, and must always be on guard against the emergence of forms of organisation and relationships that help perpetuate capitalism.

SIGNED BY:



OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1973.

Further copies obtainable from:



4
Reply to Edinburgh Br Resolution of 14/7/77 (see mins of 74th EC, 35th Meeting Item 6.1), adopted by the 74th EC at its 43rd Meeting on 25th Oct

Dear Comrades,

Re [redacted] and Reformist statements

In reply to your resolution on the above matter we enclose the information as requested.

1 The statement "Where We Stand" signed by [redacted] which was considered by the EC at its meeting of 3rd Dec 1974 to be damaging to the interests of the Party.

2 Non-socialist contributions to the reformist and anarchist journal of which he was co-founder, latterly known as "Libertarian Communism". Misrepresentation of the class struggle in an article "TU Consciousness" in no 4 issue. Attribution of Socialism as the objective of non-socialist groups, "Revolutionary Communism" no 4, Jan 1973, "Solidarity, the Market and Marx."

3 Letter to the SSPC 17/5/77 he made the statement "advocating reforms and reformism are not necessarily the same (even if the one is likely to lead to the other in the long run) - otherwise Marx would have to be regarded as a reformist."

4 April SS 1969. "The Socialist Party supports the efforts of workers to improve their housing conditions under capitalism - even by squatting." This is a reformist argument which would commit the Party to supporting housing reforms. It did not refer to individuals but workers as a whole and was stated against the background of reformist squatter movements.

5 May 1971 SS article: Another Anti-strike Bill. "The Government Social Security Bill is a vicious anti-working class measure which is intended to hurt the wives and children of workers in order to discourage strikes and force strikers back to work. Like the Industrial Relations Bill it will strengthen the overall position of the employing class in its struggle with the working class over wages and conditions. For this reason the Socialist Party of Great Britain is opposed to this bill."

6 Sept SS 1972 article: Five Jailed Dockers. It refers to strikes aimed at getting the dockers released. "This was a successful defensive action by the working class and one which the Socialist Party of Great Britain welcomes just as we would have supported the One Day TUC General Strike."

7 SS Editorial article 1968: Politics of Czechoslovakia. "The Socialist Party of Great Britain wishes workers there every success in establishing the framework in which a genuine socialist movement can grow, namely political democracy."

The Executive Committee.

The statement "Where We Stand" may have been ambiguous in parts but those who issued it acted quite within the Rules in communicating their views to other members by means of an internal circular. In fact it was issued precisely to repudiate accusations of reformism and contains the following unambiguous statements: a socialist organisation "must not itself put forward any programme of reforms to be implemented by the capitalist State" (Clause 8) and socialists "must oppose reformist movements which seek government powers to modify capitalism, or which rely on the capitalist state to deal with working class problems (Clause 11)".

2. "Non-socialist contributions to the reformist and anarchist journal of which he was co-founder, latterly known as 'Libertarian Communism'". A typical exaggeration in which the repeated use of emotive words is designed to cover up the fact that in none of the articles I contributed to what was during the period I was involved with it an unofficial internal Party discussion journal did I advocate reforms or support for reformist movements or that the Party should do so. The fact that no specific passages from these articles in which I am alleged to have "expressed reform positions" have been produced is a tacit admission that none exist. I may or may not be guilty of "misrepresentation of the class struggle" and "attribution of socialism as the objective of non-socialist groups" but, whether I was or not, neither of these amounts to "expressing reform positions".

3. The passage quoted has been taken out of context in order to try to suggest that I held that today a socialist could advocate reforms without being a reformist. The reference to Marx is a clue to its real context: the last century, before capitalism had finally triumphed over feudalism. I stand by every word in the letter, the full text of which is annexed.

4. This statement was not composed by me though of course as a member of the then SSFC I accept full responsibility for its appearance in the SOCIALIST STANDARD. Its publication was a mistake as it did not express clearly the point we were trying to make, viz., that the Party is not opposed to workers taking action, e.g., through tenants associations bargaining with landlords or through squatting, to try to protect or improve their housing conditions. Such an error of editorial judgement, however, is not the same thing as "expressing reform positions" as the EC of the time recognised when it approved before publication the final reply that appeared in the October 1969 SOCIALIST STANDARD.

5. This statement is quite in accord with the 1969 EC Policy Statement on Reforms, paragraph 3 of which commences "that with regard to reform proposals advocated by other parties and groups we explain how capitalism gives rise to the evils the reforms are designed to remedy, analyse their probable effects, favourable and unfavourable..." Since the Party has always held that the strike is an indispensable weapon for waging the defensive class struggle over wages and working conditions, clearly we regard a legislative measure designed to render this weapon less effective as "unfavourable" from a working class point of view and had to say so.

6. The Party has always distinguished between reformism on the political field (which we oppose) and action ~~on the~~ on the industrial field aimed at defending wages and working conditions (which we endorse). When strike action has political implications it is not always easy to make this distinction, but in the opinion of a majority of the then Editorial Committee and of half the membership (see 1973 Annual Conference Report) the strikes to get the 5 jailed dockers released was basically industrial and not reformist. This remains my opinion and, I

Wed. 5.3.86

Tuesday 25.3.86

LECTURES & MEETINGS

WRITING FOR TV, VIDEO AND PRESS

1 and 2 day courses London SW1 TV Comedy - Barry Took TV & Radio Drama - Jill Hyem. Introduction to Video and corporate video. Magazine articles. London Media Workshops (Admin) 101 Kings Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ. Tel: 0474 84676

HUMAN NATURE is not good or bad but adaptable. Public meeting HUMAN NATURE. The Millstone, Thomas St, Manchester. Wed. 26 Feb. 8 pm. FOR FREE SOCIALIST STANDARD AND WORLD SOCIALIST write: Socialist Party, Freeport, London SW4 7BR.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR 1987? Come and sort out your career ideas in SAMURAI, the career course for creative people. Ring The Actors Institute, 01-251 8178, 137 Goswell Rd, London EC1.

Wed. 6.3.86

LECTURES & MEETINGS

BILL OF RIGHTS?

Central Hall Westminster Tuesday, 11 March, 8.15 for

SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

will debate whether to incorporate European Convention on Human Rights

Principal Speakers: Paul Sieghart, Richard Holmes, Prof. John Giffith and Prof. David Yardley

ADMISSION FREE

WE CAN SECURE a peaceful world for ourselves and our children only if we have a clear practical alternative to our vicious competitive society. Public Debate between

Mass Beresford (C.N.D.) and Steve Coleman (Socialist Party)

THE DANGERS OF THE ARMS RACE: DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW: Friday, March 7, 7.30 pm

Lambeth Town Hall (Brixton Tube) For FREE SOCIALIST STANDARD AND WORLD SOCIALIST write: Socialist Party, Freeport, London SW4 7BR.

MAITREYA THE CHRIST IS IN LONDON and awaits recognition. Lecture by Benjamin Creme, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1, Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m. Inquiries: 01-485 1739 or 956 4355

THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO KINNOCK. Speakers PAUL FOOT & TONY CLIFF. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, Thursday, 6 March, 7 pm. A Socialist Worker Rally - All Welcome.

Friday 7.3.86

LECTURES & MEETINGS

THE DANGERS OF THE ARMS RACE: DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW. Public debate between

Mass Beresford (CND) and Steve Coleman (Socialist Party) Lambeth Town Hall (Brixton Tube) Fri. March 7, 7.30 pm. FOR FREE SOCIALIST STANDARD AND WORLD SOCIALIST write: Socialist Party, Freeport, London SW4 7BR.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. Tawney Memorial Lecture (free), Sat. Mar. 15, 10.45 a.m. Lambeth Mission, 1-5 Lambeth Road, London SE1. 1 Cadric Mayson. LIBERATION AND THE WINESKIN BUSINESS. Inquiries: 48 Parliament Hill, London NW3 2TN.

MAITREYA THE CHRIST IS IN LONDON and awaits recognition. Lecture by Benjamin Creme, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1, Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m. Inquiries: 01-485 1739 or 956 4355

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION OR LIBERAL REFORM? Public Debate between Liberal and Socialist Parties, Orpington Village Hall, Orpington High St., Fri March 7, 8 pm.

LECTURES & MEETINGS

THERAPISTS' WORKSHOP

with Dr Hugh Gunnison, USA

Client centred and Milton Erickson, June 20-22, Berkshire.

Anorexia and Bulimia, June 27-29, Norwich.

Tel 0603 810988

D. W. WINNICOTT THE SQUIGGLE FOUNDATION STUDY DAY ON

Infant & Mother Observed Sat. April 12. Six annual public lectures. Annual journal WINNICOTT STUDIES, regular seminars, courses, etc. For further details please send s.a.e. to: The Secretary, 19 Chalcut Rd, London NW1 8LL

MARXIAN THEORY aims not to resolve "economic problems" of capitalism but to show them to be insoluble. Public Debate "SOCIALIST REVOLUTION OR LIBERAL REFORM?" with

Liberal Party, Orpington Village Hall, Orpington High Street, Friday, March 7, 8 pm. For free Socialist Standard and World Socialist write: Socialist Party, Freeport, London SW4 7BR.

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THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO KINNOCK. Speakers PAUL FOOT & TONY CLIFF. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, Thursday, 6 March, 7 pm. A Socialist Worker Rally - All Welcome

Confusion with Other Parties

Friday 21.3.85

Monday 24.3.86

ONAL

LECTURES & MEETINGS

WHAT IS INSIGHT?

And why do people say it changes their lives for the better?

Come along and find out

Introduction to Insight

7.30 pm on Monday, March

24 at The Columbia Hotel,

95-99 Launceston Gate,

London W2

ADMISSION FREE

Insight Seminars, 01-222 0130

"IS BRITAIN A FREE COUNTRY?"

Public debate on Capitalism, Socialism, and Freedom, between Philip Vander Elst, editor of The Free Nation (newspaper of the Freedom Association) and

Ron Cook of the Socialist Party, 8 pm, Thurs, Mar. 27, at The Duke of York (First Floor), York Way,

Kings Cross, London N1.

THE MARXIST ANALYSIS OF CAPITALISM

Public Meeting, Thursday, March 27, at 8 pm. Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, W.C.1 (5 mins. Russell Sq. Tube Stn). Adm. free. All welcome. The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

DOES YOUR CAREER NEED A SPRING CLEAN?

Come and sort out your career ideas in SAMURAI, the career course for creative people. Free introductory sessions: tel the

Actors Institute, 01-251 8178, 137 Goswell Road, London EC1.

PERSONAL

on Saturday, April

Details from

Convocation Secretary,

UNIVERSITY OF

NOTTINGHAM,

Nottingham NG7 2RD

SOCIALISM MEANS: Common

(not state) ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution, work will be co-operatively organised on a voluntary basis and the produce of it will be freely accessible to all. Public MEETING

WORK. Wed. March 26 at 8 pm. The Millstone, Thomas St, Manchester. For FREE

SOCIALIST STANDARD and Socialist Party, Freeport, London SW4 7BR.

THE MARXIST ANALYSIS OF CAPITALISM

Public Meeting, Thursday, March 27, at 8 pm. Marchmont Street Community Centre, Marchmont Street, W.C.1 (5 mins. Russell Sq. Tube Stn). Adm. free. All welcome. The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

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Confusion within the Party

Bolton Branch circular in support of item for discussion 2.

The democratic structure of the Socialist Party has not significantly altered since the time of the Party's formation. At that time, the democracy reflected the geography and membership which actually existed. In reality, it was at first the Socialist Party of London. The EC, as a democratic body, was constituted in response to that situation: a place on the EC for each (London) branch. In practical terms, this meant that most Party members could attend EC meetings, and nearly all branches had one of their members on the EC. There was, then, a clear link between the make-up of the Party and its democracy, a link which is not demonstrable today.

During the last twenty years there has been an increase in the proportion of membership based outside London. This has also meant an increase in the number of branches outside London, while there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of London branches. Meanwhile, the structure of our democracy is still firmly rooted in London, reflecting a situation that no longer holds. The EC, Party Officers and most of the sub-committees still essentially operate from London, partly because this is the way it always has been operated.

It is surely dangerous for any socialist organisation that such a position should exist or continue, given the type of democracy that we put forward for the Party and for Socialism. Our claims to be completely democratic do not appear convincing alongside the reality that most Party members play little or no part in that democracy. As an example, less than a third of Party members even vote in the elections of our EC. And yet it is clearly of great importance that members should have a sound understanding - preferably experience - of how our democracy functions, and as far as possible take a full, active part in its running. A socialist democracy should be dynamic, responsive and participative, within the Party now, acting as reference point for the development of democracy within a socialist society.

We need to examine, formulate and bring about a method of internal organisation and democracy that will more accurately reflect the composition of membership, one that will successfully satisfy the criteria of socialist democracy. This needs to be done now, before any increase of numbers outside London causes the situation to be even more imbalanced.

The need, then, is for members to administrate democracy themselves, in as direct a manner as is practicable. For the purpose of clarifying debate, we would put two main suggestions forward for discussion and consideration.

The first would be for there to be two further delegate meetings in addition to the existing Conference and Delegate meetings. This would give a more widely representative and democratic meeting point for all the membership every quarter. Their function would be to oversee and monitor the work of committees and to initiate schemes of activity for these committees.

These quarterly meetings could be at variable locations, as agreed at 1984 Annual Conference.

The second suggestion involves raising the question of whether our democracy would require an Executive Committee in the circumstances of extra delegate meetings and other organisational changes. An EC does not necessarily represent the most efficient and relevant available form of administering our democracy. Our suggestion would be that a different type of committee, operating in a different way be formed - a Co-ordinating or Standing Orders Committee. This would include Party Officers (General Secretary; Assistant Secretary; Treasurer; Central Organiser) and representatives from the various committees (Propaganda; Publicity; Media and Tapes, NPC, SSFC). The aim would be for this Co-ordinating/Standing Orders Committee to be a functional body, providing a practical meeting and liasing point for these officers and committees which are the organs of our democracy. Such a committee would meet monthly at Head Office between the quarterly delegate meetings (ie 8 meetings a year). The various committees could be organised in such a way to include members from wider geographical areas, a good example of this being the NPC.

This document is put forward to stimulate constructive discussion which will lead to the development and improvement of socialist democracy within the Socialist Party. We hope that members will approach this issue in a positive manner.

REPORT ON
PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO VIOLENCE

(1) 1976 Conference Resolution

A floor resolution was carried (18-12) as follows:-

"That the E.C. be requested to prepare, in the light of present conditions, a more detailed statement of the Party's attitude to violence subsequent to the establishment of Socialism, for submission to the 1977 Annual Conference."

At its meeting on 20th April, 1976 the E.C. carried a resolution:-

"That the E.C. draw up a statement along the lines of the Conference recommendation."

Note on Floor Resolution

This floor resolution was on the Agenda as an addendum to a Glasgow resolution. (See Para. 2 below.) Because an amendment to Glasgow's resolution was carried, this addendum (moved by Camden) was not voted on as an addendum, but was then moved as a floor resolution.

(2) Other Relevant Resolutions at 1976 Conference

The final Agenda contained a resolution moved by Glasgow, and an amendment moved by Lewisham. The amendment was carried (27-17).

Glasgow Branch Resolution:-

"That this Conference re-affirms the statement on violence approved by the 1965 Annual Conference, viz:-

'This Conference re-affirms the Party's attitude to violence viz:- ' .. That only a democratically elected Socialist majority can introduce Socialism after the capture of the machinery of government; violence will only be used in the event of a recalcitrant minority attempting to forcibly overthrow Socialism'.

Amendment, Lewisham Branch

"Delete all after the word 'Conference' on line one and replace with the words ' .. affirms that only a democratically elected Socialist majority can introduce Socialism after the capture of the machinery of government. Should an anti-Socialist, undemocratic minority attempt to sabotage or disrupt social organisation and administration, a Socialist Society would necessarily take such action as was requisite to ensure social harmony."

(Carried 27-17)

(3) Introduction

The possible use of violence by a minority in the post-revolutionary period is quite distinct from the issue of the overthrow of Socialist society and restoration of Capitalism.

The first of these two hypotheses can be accepted, but the second does not follow as a matter of course. Acts of violence, sabotage or any other form of anti-social activity will not be tolerated at any stage. Assuming that we are mainly dealing with acts of violence during the immediate post-revolution period, obviously force would be used if argument and reason failed.

The second hypothesis is untenable and utopian. The barriers to the establishment of Socialism exist in the minds of the working class, and capitalist control of the machinery of government is a consequence. When the working class have emancipated themselves from the ideology of a society based on private property, their conquest of political powers and the subsequent dispossession of the capitalist class would follow.

To reverse the process the vast mass would have to be reconverted to capitalism by means of propaganda. The capitalist class would already have lost the battle of propaganda and would no longer control the organs of propaganda. Their social influence will have gone, together with their property.

To suggest that at some point individuals will be able to appropriate socially owned property and force members of the community to work for wages is a complete abandonment of logical reasoning, and to argue that the same result could be obtained by violent minority action is playing with words. The fact that a recalcitrant violent minority could act in unawareness of the utter futility of their action does not justify describing it as an 'attempt' to destroy Socialism and restore capitalism.

Socialism could not be forcibly overthrown; neither could it be 'attempted', any more than we would describe the action of the lunatic who jumped from the top of St. Paul's Cathedral as an 'attempt' to fly to the churchyard below, although we had his word for it.

(4) Conditions for the Establishment of Socialism

The Party's principle governing the establishment of Socialism has always been, in the terms of Clause 6 of the Declaration of Principles, that the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that the machinery of government, including the armed forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation. Implicit in this conception has always been recognition that, in the period of changeover, control of the armed forces would be continued for as long as necessary in the light of conditions then existing. It has never been the Party's case that simultaneously with gaining control the armed forces would at once be wholly dismantled.

(In Engel's words:- "The State is not abolished. It dies out.") (Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. Page 77 in the Allen and Unwin edition)

This has not meant that the armed forces would have to be used. As was pointed out in the Statement drawn up by the E.C. and published in the S.S. in April, 1955 - "The control of the armed forces during this period will be an effective deterrent .. without these forces having necessarily to be used." (This Statement is reproduced in full as an Appendix.)

The main determining conditions that will have been met by the time of the establishment of Socialism are predictable. That is to say the long, arduous process of making the socialist case known, of meeting and defeating the capitalist case, and of winning over the mass of the workers, will have been completed and the democratic conquest of the powers of government will have taken place.

In the words of the 1955 E.C. Statement "The overwhelming mass of the people will participate, or fall in line with, the process of reorganisation (in other words that while the workers will participate in the movement and probably individual capi-

talists, the capitalists as a whole will realise that the game is up, as they have lost the power of effective resistance)".

P3

It is against this background that the hypothesis of possible violent obstruction by an undemocratic minority has to be considered.

(5) The Question of Re-establishing Capitalism

After the process of establishing Socialism has been completed the idea that capitalism might be re-established is remote from reality, nevertheless, opponents of the Party ask us to consider how Socialist society would deal with an attempt to achieve this by force.

This has to be considered against the predictable conditions existing at that time as already described.

The state machinery, including the armed forces, will have passed out of the control of the capitalists and come under social control; Socialists will constitute the majority in all occupations in which the working class predominate - in production, transport, communications, police and armed forces. The supporters of capitalism will have been reduced to a minority and the mass of society will be made up of people who either want or accept the new system.

A minority who may wish to return to capitalism will be free to propagate their views and to organise democratically to win over the majority, but they will operate against the tremendous disadvantage that they will already have lost 'The battle of ideas'. Those who take the line of propagating capitalism's return will present no problem to Socialist society. They will be a minority even of the minority who would have preferred capitalism, because the bulk of the capitalists will already have been convinced that such a movement has no future and it is inconceivable that any number of workers will support such a movement. The worker's economic problems will have been solved by Socialism - a return to capitalism could have nothing to offer him. And not all of the hypothetical minority working to restore capitalism would be prepared to take violent action for that purpose.

(6) The Question of Sabotage and Disruption

There remains the hypothesis of a small minority who might attempt to sabotage or disrupt social organisation and administration.

It is necessary to set this in proper perspective for what it would be, not a threat to the existence of Socialist society though a threat to the well-being of other people. To the extent that this violent minority had as their purpose to force a return to capitalism, it would be necessary to convince them that they could not succeed because of their total isolation from society (including isolation from those opponents of Socialism who limited their action to democratic propaganda and organisation).

If the hypothesis includes a residue of people 'At war with society' who make mindless attacks endangering the well-being and lives of other people then the means to deal with them would exist and would be used as necessary.

Such situations already exist under capitalism, but with this difference, that while capitalism has no solution because capitalist conditions create the problem, for socialist society the problem - a hangover from capitalism - would be a passing phase of short duration.

After the Conquest of Power

We have been asked to give an interpretation of Clause 6 of our Declaration of Principles on the ground that a part of it has been taken to imply an authoritarian suppression of all opposition, actual or potential, including freedom of expression, by armed force - after the fashion of the Bolsheviks and Fascists.

This clause has already been gone into at length in our Pamphlet "The Socialist Party: Its Principals and Policy". However, we will give a brief interpretation of it in relation to the point raised.

The State is the governmental power that makes and enforces the laws and regulations of society. Since it developed it has always represented the social class that is dominating. The armed forces of this State were organised for the purpose of defending the interests and the social arrangements that suited the dominating social class.

Every rising social class has had to struggle for control of, or influence in, this State power in order to abolish or modify the existing political arrangements that hindered the further development of the rising class.

In present society this holds true of the working class movement which seeks to overthrow the domination of the Capitalist class; a domination that keeps the working class in a subject position. The fact that most of the workers do not yet recognise the source of their subjection, or only vaguely do so, does not effect the question. Thus, before the workers can throw off this domination they must obtain control of the State power in order to take out of the hands of the dominating class the power that defends this domination.

Parliament is the centre of state power in modern 'democracies' and the workers, who comprise the great majority of each nation, vote the representatives to these parliaments. Therefore, when the workers understand the source of their subject position and the action they must take to abolish it, they can do so by sending representatives to Parliament to take control of the State power for this purpose. By doing so they will take out of the hands of the Capitalist class the control of the powers of government, including the armed forces.

Once the workers have obtained control of the governmental power what then? They will proceed to reorganise society on a Socialist basis. Now we come into the region of conjecture. While we hold the view that the overwhelming mass of the people will participate, or fall in line with, the process of re-organisation (in other words that, while the workers will participate in the movement and probably individual Capitalists, the Capitalists as a whole will realize that the game is up, as they have lost the power of effective resistance) we make allowance for a theoretically possible attempt in some form of violent sabotage during the revolutionary reorganisation. The control of the armed forces during this period will be an effective deterrent to any such violent attempt without these forces having necessarily to be used. Should a violent minority attempt to destroy Socialism they would have to be forcibly dealt with. While at full liberty to advocate a return to Capitalism, no violent minority could be allowed to obstruct the will of the majority. Hence the phrase in the 6th Clause "in order that this machinery including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation.". There will be no suppression of speech, opinion, or peaceful organisation.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Socialist Standard, April, 1955)