

S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

Special Report }

SPECIAL BRANCH

6 pages

SF 703-7

11 day of June 1973

SUBJECT

International

Socialists

1. On Saturday, 26 May 1973, International Socialists held a London Regional Aggregate at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. This meeting was primarily intended to discuss perspectives for the re-organisation and future work of the London Region of International Socialists.

Reference to Papers

406/73/103

BOX 500

2. Although due to commence at 10 am, the start of the meeting was delayed as a result of the late arrival of delegates and poor organisation. The aggregate meeting eventually got under way at 11 am with the chairman, Privacy, opening the proceedings by criticising those responsible for the late start.

3. In addition to Privacy, other platform speakers were Privacy, London Regional Committee Education organiser; Privacy, London Regional Organiser; and Tony Liff for the National Committee. During the course of the meeting they introduced various aspects of the LRC proposed programme and later opened discussion to the floor.

4. Privacy stated that the purpose of the meeting was to enable London IS branches to re-think their perspectives and future activities and to convey the suggestions of the London Regional Committee back to branches and institute positive action. There would be no voting on the issues discussed as it was up to all comrades to follow the broad decisions of the March National Conference. He hoped that by comrades discussing their political and industrial roles at the meeting a more positive approach to work in London could be achieved through the interchange of experiences.

5. Speaking for the London Regional Committee, Privacy stated that the time had come for the London Region seriously to reconsider its physical constitution and mode of working. Up to now, branches in the London area had grown up as a result of geographical accident; there was no planned IS structure that ensured branches existed in areas of greatest benefit to the Organisation, ie areas of dense industrial development. A large proportion of London branches existed in the inner London residential areas of the city whilst the new suburban industrial areas such as West London with Slough and London Airport and the Lea Valley conurbation were devoid of any effective IS presence. It was vital that London IS branches should stop thinking of themselves as geographical units and set to work in the areas of greatest industrial importance. Comrades should be prepared to travel to these areas and make a determined effort to establish a presence, and wherever possible,

be urged to move physically and set up home in those areas offering the greatest potential. London IS branches must break with their present parochial attitudes and set to work in earnest building a viable and credible organisation amongst the working class.

6. The London Regional Organiser, Privacy was the next to speak. He gave a report on the present membership of the London branches and stated that last year's growth in membership was extremely disappointing, increasing by only 9% a figure below that for the rest of the country. 13 branches had lost a total of 85 members during the year and 17 branches had gained a total of 136 members. The development of IS in London was extremely uneven and reflected the inconsistency and lack of co-ordination within the Region.

7. He went on to say that the Organisation is at present extremely weak in the key areas of Croydon, Slough, Gravesend, Watford, Luton and Wembley, and that, as a matter of priority, comrades should think about moving into these areas. As a measure of the effectiveness of the proposed re-orientation of branches, the LRC had set the following targets which branches should attempt to achieve as a minimum over the coming years:-

- (a) The setting up of 20 stable 'SW' factory discussion groups
- (b) Doubling the number of regular and effective factory bulletins
- (c) A target of 1,000 IS members in London by the next regional conference
- (d) Sales of 10,000 'SW's in the London Region
- (e) Building of 4 factory branches in the next year
- (f) Movement of IS members away from the overwhelming residential areas with a view to building effective branches in the key industrial centres

8. Privacy reiterated many of the previous speaker's points and stressed the necessity for branches to break out and re-assess their local industrial work then place more emphasis on it. Trade Union and factory involvement must take priority over branch meetings and other routine activities of the group.

9. On the subject of 'Socialist Worker', Privacy sounded a more optimistic note. He stated that sales were rising and it was hoped to achieve a weekly circulation of 10,000 in London by 1974. Sales could be increased by getting more non-members and industrial contacts involved

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[REDACTED]

in selling the paper and where ever possible, getting contacts to take out a subscription to the paper. On demonstrations it was essential that comrades sell the paper more aggressively to other political contingents and, in particular, Trades Union representatives.

10. Full details of the membership and 'Socialist Worker' sales of each London branch were circulated to the delegates present, and these details are set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

11. Recent turnouts on demonstrations supported by IS had been far from satisfactory and, [Privacy] stated, it was essential for London branches to increase their discipline and support fully all functions directed by the Centre. On occasions, IS would wish to have only a token presence and thus two or three branches would be directed to attend on a rota basis. [Privacy] meant that those branches directed to do so should ensure a full turnout in order to avoid the ridiculous situation of having only a handful of IS comrades present on a demonstration at which the organisation was officially represented. He also stated that IS appeared to be, over recent months, receiving requests from an increasing number of political organisations for support on demonstrations. The National Committee were therefore to meet and fully discuss this situation in order to ensure that IS branches were not being mobilised merely as a show of strength to assist the remote aims of dubious political organisations who appear to be using IS for their own ends.

12. Tony CLIFF spoke on the same theme as [Privacy] and [Privacy]. He stated that the London area had fantastic potential as far as IS were concerned, if only the London branches would realize it. London had a very militant tradition amongst workers, especially dockers, and had vast industrial suburban areas waiting to be tapped. Many London branches seemed to think that industrial potential existed only in the Midlands, Wales and the North East because of the successes of IS in these areas. The London Branches must break with conservatism and have a revolution within every branch in order to find a radical way forward.

13. Workers had to be recruited into the organisation not as individuals but in groups, CLIFF said, for a lone IS member in a factory was likely to be persecuted or drop out of the organisation as a result of industrial isolation. Meetings should be held on subjects that related to the everyday problems of the working class in simple language and with easily identifiable titles. Recruiting should be left to the new working class members of the organisation who would speak to prospective members on their own level and about working class problems even though they would inevitably make some political mistakes. The present system of introducing contacts to political rhetoric was one that frightened off many excellent industrial workers close to the group as they were unable to understand or identify with the organization's aims.

[REDACTED]

14. [redacted] Privacy then made a contribution from the floor in line with [redacted] Cliff's comments and relating to the re-organisation of Hackney branch. She said that a decision had been taken that gave industrial worker-members the running of the branch. They now decided what subjects should be discussed by the branch, what public meetings were to be held and also formed the branch committee and the majority of the education committee. The branch had also agreed that only the afore-mentioned comrades would be allowed to ask questions at branch meetings in order to keep the discussion at a basic level and thus answer fundamental problems of the working class members. Hackney branch had also decided to stop recruiting all but industrial workers to the branch for a period of six months. She held this re-organisation up to the aggregate meeting as an example of what positive steps could be taken by branches to fall in line with the ILO recommendations. Her interjection appeared to be strategically timed to follow [redacted] Cliff's speech.

15. There followed a number of short contributions from the floor mainly in support of IS branches continuing their work around white-collar unions concerned in the recent militant rise in CPBA (Civil & Public Services Association) and NUT activities. It was felt that in London particularly there were great gains to be made in these fields and that this work should not be completely abandoned in favour of industrial membership.

16. [redacted] Privacy gave a short report back on the failure of IS to make any effective intervention during the recent tenants struggles against the Tory government's Fair Rent Act. However, he stated IS had learned from their mistakes of working through local tenants committees, most of which were reformist by nature and stifling to IS activity. In the coming Autumn campaign IS branches should by-pass all such tenants organisations and work on the estates as International Socialists, setting up 'SW' discussion groups and making a positive intervention during the next round of proposed rent increases.

17. The chairman, [redacted] Privacy then made some comments on Immigrant work being carried out by the group. IS, he said, had up to now had no great success at recruiting immigrant workers. This he felt was due to language difficulties and the poor standard of education received by the majority of such workers in this country. In order to rectify the situation it was proposed that predominantly black branches be set up in Brixton and Southall. This would enable the black comrades to communicate on the same level, discuss their particular problems and be guided by just a few experienced cadres. The proposed East Indian branch in Brixton was seen as having more potential than the Southall area with its [redacted] cultural difficulties. The Centre were thus printing leaflets and pamphlets in Urdu and Panjabi to be aimed at such groups of



immigrant workers. The Immigration sub-committee hoped to have completed this task and have the publications available for distribution by July of this year.

18. After a break for lunch from 1 - 2pm [Privacy] opened the afternoon session on Industrial perspectives. He gave a short address stressing the need to have more members inside factories in order that IS could have more credibility with other workers and supply accurate information for factory bulletins. The short term aim of IS was now to replace the Communist Party as the leadership of the militant working class in this country. IS had already proved itself as the leading left wing political group in the country and, it was felt, could shortly overtake the Communist Party with its reformist policies. The CP at present had 4,000 card members in the London area compared with some 700 IS comrades. Thus, with the present state of the CP, they were seen as having an almost equal number of active members in the Region, with the balance tipping steadily in favour of IS.

19. The discussion was then opened to the floor and most of the afternoon session was spent with leading comrades speaking on industrial experiences in different parts of London. This part of the meeting was of little interest as it consisted in the most part of optimistic forecasts to the future. The speakers in this session included [Privacy], [Privacy], [Privacy], [Privacy], [Privacy] and [Privacy]. During the contributions [Privacy] stated that IS were now close to establishing a busman's branch in London and [Privacy] prophesied a more effective IS influence at Fords Dagenham Plant as the group had been gaining credibility at the factory over recent months.

20. It was generally agreed in the discussion that followed, that the London branches should be re-organised in line with the recommendations of the London Regional Committee. Thus the present system of co-ordinating committees would be replaced by a number of district committees responsible for the overall organisation and leadership of their respective areas.

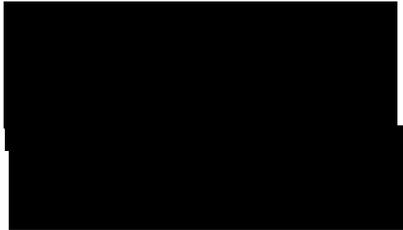
21. These District Committees would be composed of leading members from individual branches and each branch would elect delegates to the Committee on the basis of one district member for every twenty branch members. The District Committee once formed would co-opt an Industrial co-ordinator and an Education co-ordinator who would sit on the District Committee and work under the supervision of the London Regional Committee co-ordinators.

22. The following District Committee groupings are thus envisaged:-

NORTH LONDON

Tottenham, Edgware, Hendon, Harlow, Haringey, Hornsey.





EAST LONDON

Newham, Ilford, Tower Hamlets, Basildon

CENTRAL LONDON

Angel, Holborn, Paddington, Camden

NW LONDON

Colindale, Harlesden, Kilburn, Watford

WEST MIDDLESEX

Ealing, Hounslow, Fulham & Hammersmith, Slough, Uxbridge, Chertsey

SW LONDON

Croydon, Tooting, Battersea, Lambeth, Kingston

SE LONDON

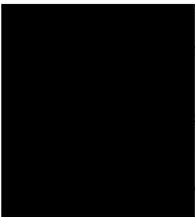
Southwark, Lewisham, Woolwich, Bexley

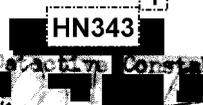
23. Before the close at 4.30 pm elections were held for the posts of Tenants, Education and Industrial organisers to the London Regional Committee. Privacy was elected Tenants co-ordinator and Privacy as Education co-ordinator for the Region. As there were no nominations for the post of Industrial co-ordinator this position remains vacant until such time as the IRC can appoint a suitable candidate.

24. This meeting once under way ran smoothly with very little disagreement or interruption. The fact that discussion had finished half an hour before the scheduled end of the meeting is remarkable and an indication of the harmony that existed at this section.

25. The measures proposed at the Aggregate meeting appear to have been induced to some degree as a panic measure over the poor growth in membership during the past year in the London area. Nevertheless, the proposals are completely in line with IS policy nationally and their success will no doubt depend on the ability of the leadership to induce members to move out of the residential areas of London.

26. Approximately 200 members of International Socialists were present at the meeting and the names of those known to have attended are set out in Appendix I to this report.



Submitted ²  ¹ HN343  Detective Constable
Chief Inspector 
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

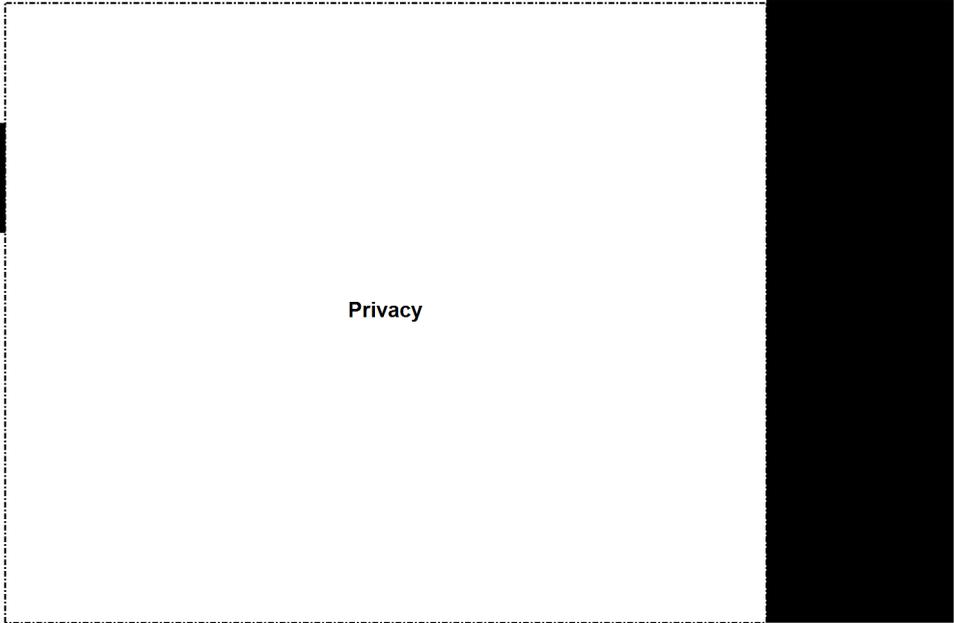
APPENDIX 1

Privacy

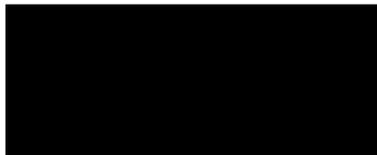
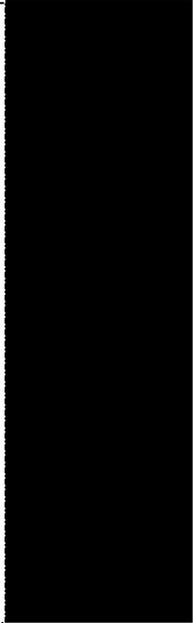
Tony CLIFF

RF 108/56/38

Privacy



Privacy



APPENDIX 2.

LONDON REGION. MEMBERSHIP & S.W. SALES REPORT.

*Extracted
TO ALL
FILES
MENTIONED*

	<u>Membership</u>		<u>S.W. Sales</u>	
	<u>Feb. 72</u>	<u>Feb. 73.</u>	<u>Feb. 72</u>	<u>Mar. 73</u>
✓ Bexley	10	13	80	80
✓ Camden	46	52	250	500
✓ Chertsey	5	7	200	150
✓ Croydon	15	14	150	150
✓ East London	16	18	200	200
✓ Tower Hamlets	-	13	-	200
✓ Enfield	20	28	200	250
✓ Acton	23	-	250	-
✓ South Ealing	10	-	80	-
✓ Greenford	16	-	120	-
✓ Ealing	-	37	-	350
✓ Fulham	26	40	250	300
✓ Guildford	9	16	100	100
✓ Hackney (Now Split into two Branches)	47	56	450	645
✓ Harlesden	-	24	-	250
✓ Holborn	-	7	-	120
✓ Hornsey	43	36	290	250
✓ Hounslow	11	17	200	250
✓ Ilford	28	24	250	450
✓ Kilburn	17	10	125	110
✓ Colindale	-	24	-	140
✓ Harrow	15	-	100	-
✓ Kingston	32	20	350	250
✓ Lambeth	33	18	400	260
✓ Southwark	-	10	-	100
✓ Lewisham	19	16	100	125
✓ Paddington	26	23	200	350
✓ Slough	14	5	125	75
✓ Tottenham	39	41	250	350
✓ Walthamstow	21	23	175	200
✓ Merton	19	-	150	140
✓ Wandsworth	26	39	180	220
✓ Woolwich	9	10	70	100

		2			
Watford	7	6	50	35	
[Uxbridge	-	6	-	80	
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Comrades will be able to see from the figures that the rise in membership is extremely disappointing. The figure works out at 9%. However if we break down the figures further we find that the overall performance was extremely uneven. Some branches grew whilst others actually LOST members. The overall position was 13 branches lost a total of 85 members during the year 17 branches gained a total of 136 members during the year. As we can see it is the poor performance of the 13 branches who actually lost members which depresses the overall figure. If they had grown at the rate of the 17 branches who gained, we would have increased our membership by nearly 250 members.

On the bright side the SW sales grew by 27% and is now at the desired level of 10 per member. This should not however allow for complacency, but bodes well for us to achieve the target of 10,000 by next year.