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S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

S.D.S.

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

30th day of June 1982

SUBJECT

Reference to Papers

Socialist Workers Party

1. Submitted herewith is a copy of the weekly information sheet, dated 29.6.1982, together with a copy of a document agreed by the Womens Committee which were circulated on a restricted basis to all Branch/District Secretaries, National Committee members and full time organisers by the Central Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

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CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

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DOX 502

M.P. 75

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

PO Box 82, London, E2.

Branch secretaries/SW organisers
NC, organisers

29.6.82

SOCIALIST WORKER -front page on the collapse of the rail strike.

HEALTH SERVICE:- The action on the 23rd was very big; the call for action on the 19th for 3 days makes it possible for us to carry on arguing hard and for us to build a permanent network of health workers who take Socialist Worker. In the run up to the 3 days, every branch needs to step up regular sales of SW and regular leafletting. -there will be a national leaflet nearer the date. We need to take up the argument that it will be harder to hold 3 days than one, and therefore shop stewards need to argue hard with their own rank and file. We need to visit all hospital shop stewards committees, NUPE branch secretaries etc, including those who haven't been friendly before, offering to organise delegations around local workplaces to get support for the 19th.

RAIL STRIKE:- The disastrous collapse of the strike will lead to considerable bitterness among the thousands of NUR members who wanted to fight. We need to follow up all rail contacts with SW; we need to organise special sales at NUR branches, in rail canteens etc.

SHOP STEWARDS SCHOOL:- Saturday 10 July central London. Phone in now with names and addresses of everyone you think should be there. Time is now short so please do this now. It is for members and contacts who are shop stewards or branch office holders or think they will be soon.

Tube strike in London:- The impact of the collapse of the rail strike on the tube strike and the London buses isn't yet clear. We need to keep up sales and details of an all London leaflet will go out to branches later this week when the situation is clearer.

MARXISM 82:- This is just days away now. Don't post registrations but turn up and register on the door. You can come for the whole week, the weekend, a day, or even particular sessions.

Internal Bulletin includes articles on branch building and the Rank and File.

BRANCH _____

Number required _____

Cash with orders. 30p each £ _____ enclosed.

Orders sent out with SWs.
Send to 18, PO Box 82, London E.2.

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

PO Box 82, London, E2.

The document below was agreed unanimously by the Womens Committee and will be discussed by the July meeting of the National Committee. It is being circulated to branches as a supplement to the last Internal Bulletin.

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Our work round women has developed since last years conference. The abandonment of our attempts to build WV groups and organisation, along with the general recognition that all our party work has to be centred on and directed from the geographical branches if we are to make any gains in the present period, has allowed us to acheive a number of things. We intervened quite successfully in the abortion campaign earlier this year, producing 10,000 factsheets, covering it extensively in SW, holding meetings up and down the country, and mobilising for demonstrations and local activities. It showed that the party as a whole was prepared to take up an issue which a couple of years ago would have been left to a minority of women.

Similarily women inside the party have begun to take on more leading roles. It is still very patchy and certainly in some areas there is still a great deal which needs to be done. Where women members have difficulty developing, it usually means that the branch as a whole is stuck in a rut. The March party council was evidence of just how many women are now taking on leading roles in branches - half the speakers were women, talking on the whole range of issues that came up.

We have begun the slow process of ensuring that women members play a leading role in every area of the partys work, ensuring that the defence of womens rights and the arguments for womens liberation are taken up by the whole party, and by taking up and campaigning on all issues that afect women. We need to conduct those campaigns with all the periphery of the party using all the resources of the party. We can't artificially create 'issues'. We can take them up as they arise - which will be spasmodically - and campaign hard and distinctively as revolutionary socialists on the particular issues.

But one thing has become clear in the 7 months since conference. Although the perspective was 100% right in general terms, we didn't discuss much of the detail, or draw the logic of what it would mean. For example, we talked about the geographical branches being the key to all our work, but we never really thought through what that would mean for Branch meetings. So for months branches have been having meetings on 'fighting the Tories', or some other agitational title which didn't really fit the period, instead of having programmes which encompassed marxist theory, our general perspectives and various topical subjects. It is only recently that we have begun to rectify this.

The last five months have been a time of difficult adjustment for the whole party. We have had to learn how revolutionaries can operate and intervene in the conditions of the downturn - what the limits are to our work and what the very considerable possibilities are. We have adjusted very fast, and learnt that there are real gains we can make inevery area of our work - as long as we constantly assess the reality outside the party and the most effective way for us tointervene. cont

That has been true of every area of our work. More importantly, the political situation has changed in the past few months. We talked at conference of an industrial downturn coupled with a political upturn. That political upturn - which we knew could not be a permenant feature given the continued industrial downturn - has all but disappeared. In many areas our attempts at united front have resulted in us joining with forces no bigger or sometimes even smaller than ourselves. We have to recognise that at present our periphery differs little in size or politics from our members. There is not a massive periphery of militants we can win on specific issues. That is not a situation which is permanent, but it is one we have to recognise at present if we are to operate realistically.

It means our work around women cannot be separated from party work as a whole. It also means we have to look at what fits in the present period. One thing which clealry has not fitted since then is WV magazine. Since conference orders for the magazine have fallen drastically, and sales nearly everywhere have gone down. We rarely receive articles for it, and most of the articles are written by two or three people at the centre. Letters are rarely spontaneous and are either solicited or again written from the centre.

Why is this ? The answer time and again comes back that it doesn't fit. Because the periphery is so small, and because people interested in our politics want to know about the general politics and not just how we relate to women, there is really no audience for the magazine. The Falklands war only pointed this out even more starkly. What is there to be said specifically about women and war? Very little, which means that the role of the magazine was marginal. The last publication anyone would have given a contact on the matter would have been WV.

This is borne out in practice. Time and again comrades say they can sell SW to most women who once might have bought WV, and that many of their women contats prefer it. If back up ad analysis is needed, Socialist Review can play amuch more useful part. Both hae increased their covrage round women in the past months. In the hospitals dispute it is SW that ha been sold to women on pickets and demos, not WV. In most plaes comrades hwa not even bothered to take it.

The last womans committee discussed all these questions and decided that the mgazine does not relate to the situation that we are in. On the contrary, it is a drai on the resources of the womens organiser, and on the party and printshop financially, and on the limited resourcesof the branches. We do not believe that having a magazine about women is a question of principle, but rather is a tactic. The tactic at present clearly does not fit. We are therefore proposing that at the next National Committee (July 17) that we should cease production of the magazine.

We belive that the vast majority of party members will accept this move as the logic of the present political situation. We just want to reiterate that we see this as a step towards the further integration of our work round women into the branches.

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