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S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

S.D.S.

29th day of September 19 8

SUBJECT

Subject:
Socialist
Workers Party

Reference to Papers
L00/83/123

BOX 600

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

2. "On Sunday 18th September 1983, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) staged a national Student aggregate at St Ermins Hotel, Caxton Street, SW1. The meeting commenced at 11am, terminated at 5pm and 320 persons attended.

3. The aggregate had previously been booked to take place at Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, SW1, but due to a lack of communication between Westminster City Council and Caxton Hall's management, the venue had to be changed on Sunday morning to St Ermins Hotel.

4. The meeting was chaired by Pete CLARK, SWP national secretary, and the speakers were Lyndsey GERMAN and Chris HARMAN, both SWP Central Committee members.

5. A major part of the Party's perspective for the coming year includes working with and recruiting students. The SWP are instructing branches to make the building of a Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS) in their local colleges a priority. This is a decisive shift in emphasis and the Central Committee has recently written a paper outlining its reasons. The content of this paper was the theme of speeches by HARMAN and GERMAN and is reproduced as follows:-

"The SWP's politics emanate from the working class and from the fact that we aim to build a workers' party which can lead the class. This is because the working class is the only revolutionary class. From this it follows that our orientation as a party is towards the work place. Whatever the issue we always try to relate it to the work place.

This does not mean that we will always get immediate results from the work place. We know for example that the present period is one where, both because of the industrial downturn and the general political shift to the right, it is hard to win and hold people to revolutionary politics. This is particularly true of workers. Therefore,

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12 OCT 1983
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there is a gap between our intention to build a mass Workers Party and the reality. So the industrial sales we do now are very much sowing the seeds for the future, rather than reaping the benefits now. In such a situation we also have to recognise that we cannot pick and choose who we win. The individuals who come towards the SWP at present will do so on a random basis, and not usually as a result of collective struggle. This does not matter as long as we use the opportunity to build for the future. But it does increase the importance of recruiting students. The reasons are simple and straight forward. First we want to build among students now so that we can use those students to recruit [illegible]ers in the upturn. They can play an important [illegible]e too in the present, in rejuvenating branc[illegible] encouraging a new approach and helpin[illegible]revitalise the older members.

Secondly we need to establish an ideological and activist presence in the colleges. At present we only have SW Student Societies in a fairly small number of colleges. By increasing that number we can build a presence for marxist politics in most of the major universities and polytechnics. This is important both in terms of building the SWP and in combatting the ideas of the Labour clubs and other currents in particular within the colleges.

Building a revolutionary presence among students means understanding how students can be won to revolutionary politics. The position of students in society contrasts with the position of workers. In Marxist terms they are a transitional grouping. They come from all class backgrounds - though disproportionately from the upper and middle classes - and during their time at college its not at all clear to which class they will belong upon graduation. The majority will become skilled workers or technicians (in jobs like teaching). A minority will become members of the ruli[illegible]lass or functionaries for them. But this transitory [illegible]sition means students have no common interest. In addition their experience - unlike that of workers - does not force them to act together. In fact the whole notion of individual success, or academic competition and the threat of failure in exams, atomises and divides them. These two factors mean students are not automatically on the side of the working class in time of struggle. Because of the changed nature of students in the last twenty years or so and the fact that they are no longer a tiny, privileged elite means they are much less likely to side openly with the ruling class as they did when they scabbed on the 1926 General Strike.

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Since the 1960's they have been more likely to support strikers - although students who have tried to do so in the last couple of years will verify that it is not a foregone conclusion.

But support for workers' struggles requires that students break consciously from their backgrounds and their individual ambitions. That is something they do not automatically do and that is where the vital importance of arguing socialist ideas is central. The intervention of the revolutionary organisation is necessary for students to make that break fully.

The centre of such politics has to be the SWSS. This is the basis for our organisation inside colleges; not simply for organising paper sales or the occasional meeting. SWSS's have to hold regular, weekly meetings of all the members and their contacts inside the college. It is from these meetings that we organise our paper sales, interventions in union meetings, the visits and work round local strikes.

It is worth explaining what the SWSS's are, because some people have queried their value - arguing we can recruit directly into the SWP. But far from being a barrier to recruitment the SW societies, if organised properly, should be the way to attract a periphery. The weekly meetings are where we can integrate and recruit the best of those students who move towards socialist ideas. The very nature of the student milieu explains why such organisation is necessary. Students arriving at college are faced with a number of political options and to most the SW society will be indistinguishable at first from other groupings. It gives them an opportunity to join if they agree with our general ideas, but disagree on this or that issue, or are not prepared at that stage to give a fuller commitment.

This is not normally a permanent state of affairs. We do not organise SW societies so people can spend three years at college having cosy political chats. We see the SW societies as a means of political clarification - where the best students can be won to joining the SWP in that process. This can only happen if the groups are clearly based on the politics of the SWP.

In one or two colleges over the past couple of years this has not always been the case. While retaining a formal attachment to SWP politics some groups become catch-all's for sections of the 'Swamp'. The reason for this is simple. In a number of colleges the rest of the 'left' has collapsed in an organisational sense. A number of people have, therefore, joined SW societies who might not have done so if a Labour club had existed or whatever.

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Of itself there is nothing wrong with this - on the condition we are pulling them towards us and not the other way around!

Building a successful SW society is not just a question of numbers. It also involves putting across our politics, clarifying the problems of all the members and constantly through our activity testing these politics.

Any SW society needs to distinguish itself from the Labour Club or the rest of the left through our ability to put across our ideas and by our activity. By arguing constantly for the centrality of the working class, by building support for strikes, the SW society will be built in conflict with the politics of the Labour Club, of NUS and left reformist bureaucrats. What then should we be doing? First every member who attends a college has to work in that college. We approach this in the same way as we do with our members in industry. This also applies to the former workers who go to college as a result of redundancy etc. Failure to become involved in political work at college means they are not working where they are - something which is crucial to our perspective at present.

Secondly students from the same college have to be in the same branch. This is to increase accountability within the organisation, all branch members - students and non students - can discuss our work at that college. Many of the general problems will be familiar to all comrades (e.g. discussion of our differences with the Labour club or how we function in student struggles). It is through such sharing of different experiences within the branch that a cadre can be built.

The SW societies have to hold weekly meetings which start with general political discussion or Marxist politics. It is there we can argue our politics and take on the ideas which many of our contacts will come into contact with.

It is through these meetings that we can organise our weekly political activity. This will clearly vary but every effort must be made to organise round workers' struggles. Many students join the SWP through involvement in visiting picket lines, gaining support for strikers in the college etc. It is there too that we must organise our intervention into student union meetings.

Obviously regular meetings of SWP comrades are also necessary to discuss contacts, to look at our work overall and to plan our interventions in line with the party's perspective.

Each SW society has to have a perspective within the college. That starts with the organisation

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of regular, weekly SW sales involving all comrades and SW society members. It is through these sales that we can extend our periphery in the widest sense and develop a general presence in the college. Weekly SW sales have to be the starting point for our week.

Finally student comrades should organise to take our contacts on SW sales outside the college, particularly on industrial sales. Each college group should work out sales the students can do at local stations, shopping centres, and in particular, work places. This is important. In the most direct way it involves our periphery in the SWP's general work and brings them into contact with the local branch. Often students join as a result of industrial sales.

This perspective is not some short term venture aimed at picking up a few students. The geographical branches have to see work round the colleges as a long term perspective. That means ensuring the student comrades are backed up and their work is discussed by the branch. Often it will be a matter providing guidance and support to one or two SWP students in a particular college. It is important in these cases that the branch does not expect too much of the comrades - an attitude that can only demoralise young and isolate members. The branch should also ensure that in each college we have to have a planned programme of meetings, sales, and discussions on events in which we need to intervene.

In those areas where we have built in the colleges it has immensely strengthened our industrial work. We have been able to build a new cadre with an experience of arming our politics and intervening. It is in those areas where we have not built in the colleges that our ability to work round disputes, to win workers out of them has been harmed. Our ability to build in the colleges can only aid us immensely in the creation of a revolutionary Workers' Party."

6. Attached to this report is a leaflet headed 'Socialist Worker Student Society, printed by the SWP for distribution in colleges, a 'meetings and activities' form and an SWSS membership card. Appendix 'A' to this report shows which branches sent delegates to the aggregate and the college which the member attends. A list of members, together with their identifying particulars who attended the aggregate will be submitted when available within the near future. Appendix 'B' to this report lists those persons that were identified as having attended.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

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M.P.79(E)

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Appendix 'A'

to Special Branch report dated 29th September 1983, concerning National Student Aggregate, organised by the SWP at St Ermins Hotel, Caxton Street SW1, on 18th September 1983.

UCPI0000019542/6

STUDENT AGGREGATE Sept. 18 1983.

BRANCH	MEMBERS	BRANCH	COLLEGE	Students
		LONDON		
1		BROMLEY	WESTMINSTER	1
		CAMDEN	BEDFORD (London U)	1
			N. L. P.	4
			KINGSLAY PRINCETON	1
		CENTRAL LONDON	O. C. L. Fins. Park. Tottenham	6
			L. S. E.	3
		FINSBURY PARK	N. L. P. St Paul's Hardsworth	9
2		HACKNEY SOUTH		
1		HACKNEY NORTH		
		KINGSTON	KINGSTON POLY.	2
			NURSING	1
1		KILBURN	KILBURN POLY.	1
1		ISLINGTON	CITY UNIVERSITY KINGSLAY PRINCETON	3
		STRATFORD	N. E. L. P.	1
		KENSI + HAMMERMITH	IMPERIAL	1
		NEWHAM	N. E. L. P. Hardsworth	1

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~~SOUTHALL~~ SOUTHALL	QUEENSHEAD HIGH	2
SOUTWARK	CROYDON COLLEGE	1
	SOUTHBANK POLY. Ipswich 1	1
SOUTH EAST LONDON	THAMES POLY Sparkbrook 1	1
	GOLDSMITHS Norwich 1	2
TOWER HAMLETS	CITY + EAST LONDON SELO PARK 2	1
	Q. M. C.	3
	CITY POLY.	1
TOTTENHAM.	MIDDLESEX POLY.	9
SCOTLAND.		
ALLOA	STIRLING UNIV.	4
EDINBURGH SOUTH	EDINBURGH UNIV.	4
	STEVENSON COLE	3
EDINBURGH NORTH	TELFORD	1
	MORAY HSE.	1
GLASGOW SOUTH	PAISLEY	1
	GLASGOW UNIV	1

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	GLASGOW WEST	GLASGOW UNIV.	3
		CLYDEBANK TECH.	1
	GLASGOW CENTRAL	GLASGOW UNIV.	1
		STRATHCLYDE UNIV.	2
		GLASGOW TECH	1
	NORTH EAST		
	TEESIDE	TEESIDE POLY	1
	NEWCASTLE	C.A.T.	1
	YORKSHIRE + HUMBERSIDE		
	BRADFORD	BRADFORD UNIV	2
		COLLEGE	1
	HULL	HULL UNIVS	7
		HUMBERSIDE COLLEGE	1
1	HUDDERSFIELD		
	YORK	YORK UNIVERSITY (SUMMER)	18
	PONTEFRACT	YORK UNIVERSITY	1

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	B'HAM HOSELEY	B'HAM UNIV	2
	B'HAM SPARKBROOK	B'HAM UNIV	3
		GARRETTS GREEN	1
		MATTHEW BOULTON	3
	B'HAM NORTHFIELD	BOURNVILLE COLLEGE	½
		FIRCROFT	1
2	B'HAM HANDSWORTH	HANDSWORTH TECH	1
		WOLVERHAMPTON	1
	WOLVERHAMPTON	WOLVES POLY	2
		BILSTON SFC	1
	EAST MIDLANDS		
3	COVENTRY	COVENTRY POLY	1
		HENLEY	1
		WARWICK UNIV Mathematics	6
		LANCHESTER POLY	2
1	LEICESTER	LEICESTER POLY	2
		CITY + EAST	1

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2	LEEDS	LEEDS UNIV L'pool Wolfs.	2
		LEEDS POLY.	3
	SHEFFIELD CENTRAL	SHEFFIELD POLY.	7
		NORTHERN	1
	SHEFFIELD WEST	SHEFFIELD UNIV.	3
	NORTH WEST		
1	LIVERPOOL	LANCASTER UNIV. SCHOOL	1 2
		CHRISTY COLLEGE	1
		LIVERPOOL UNIV.	1
		LIVERPOOL POLY.	1
		EDGE HILL	1
2	M/CR GORTON	M/CR UNIV. Wandsworth	1 1
	M/CR CENTRAL	M/CR POLY. Sheffield	1 7
		UMIST.	2
2	SALFORD	Liverpool.	1
	WEST MIDLANDS		
	TELFORD	TECH.	1

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	NOTTINGHAM	TRENT POLY	2
		NOTTS. UNIV.	1
	STOKE	N. STAFFS POLY	1
	EAST ANGLIA		
1	COLCHESTER	ESSEX UNIV.	1
	CAMBRIDGE	CAMBRIDGE UNIV.	1
		TECH	1
	IPSWICH	SUFFOLK COLLEGE	1
	NORWICH	U.E.A.	4
		CITY COLLEGE	1
	LOWESTOFT	U.E.A.	1
		LOWESTOFT CFE	2
1	MEDWAY		
	HOME COUNTIES		
1	SLOUGH	LANGLEY COLLEGE	1
		ROYAL HOLLOWAY	2

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	HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	HERTS. C H E.	1
1	HIGH WYCOMBE		
1	OXFORD	OXFORD UNIV	2
		OXFORD CFE	1
		RUSKIN	1
2	READING	READING UNIV	2
		TECH.	1
1	WATFORD	WATFORD TECH.	1
	WALES		
	CARDIFF	CARDIFF UNIV.	2
		RUMNEY TECH	1
	SWANSEA	SWANSEA UNIV.	1
		F.E. COLLEGE	1
	ABERYSTWYTH	ABER. UNIV.	1
	WEST COUNTRY		
	BRISTOL	BRISTOL POLY	6

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1	CHELTENHAM + GLOS	COLLEGE (?)	1
	SOUTH COAST + KENT.		
	BRIGHTON	SUSSEX UNIV.	7
	EASTBOURNE	BRIGHTON POLY	1
	PORTSMOUTH	PORTSMOUTH POLY	1
1	SOUTHAMPTON	S'HAMPTON UNIV. (Liverpool)	1 1
	CANTERBURY	KENT UNIV (Tottenham)	1 1
	2 COURSES SWM.	ST. NICHOLAS COLLEGE	
	TOTAL STUDENTS AT MEETING	279.	

UCPI0000019542/14

Appendix 'B'

to Special Branch report dated 29th September 1983, identifying those persons who attended SWP National Student Aggregate at Caxton Hall on 19th September 1983.

Pete CLARK

Privacy

Andy STROUTHOS

Privacy

Paul HOLBOROOW

Andy ZEBROWSKI

Pete ALEXANDER

John DEASON

Lindsey GERMAN

Chris HARMAN

Privacy

[redacted]

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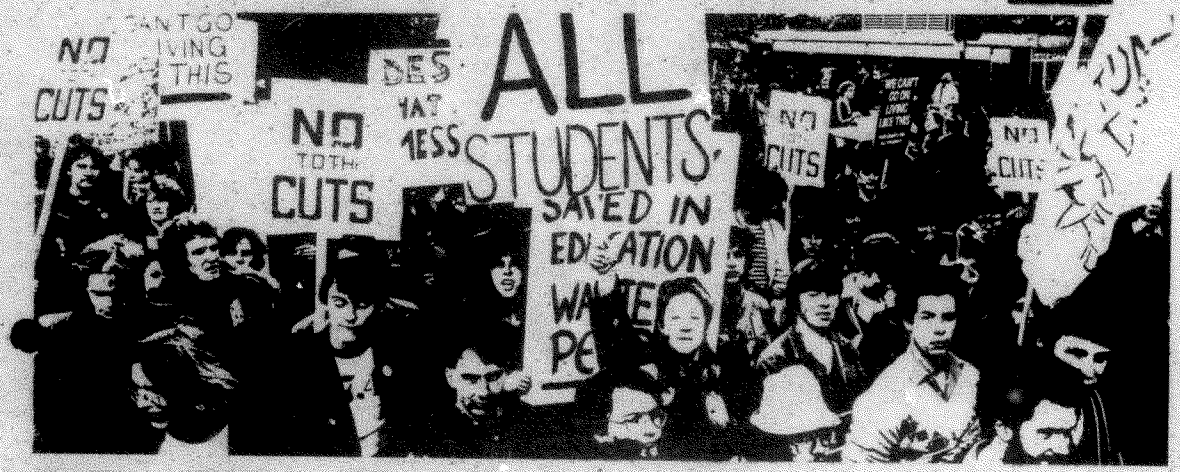
Socialist Worker Student Society

SWP



Fight for a change...

YOU PROBABLY feel very relieved at getting into college. But don't imagine it is the ivory towered bed of roses you have been led to believe.

The cuts have already slashed education in Britain's colleges. The derisory grant makes hardship a fact of life for most students. Unemployment amongst graduates is almost as high as amongst school leavers...

Everywhere you look the situation is turning from bad to worse. Unemployment up, living standards down. Debt up, interest payments up, people starving. And all the time the superpowers at each other's throats, bringing a nuclear holocaust and worldwide genocide nearer.

Yet one word sums up the reason for all the unnecessary hardship—one word provides an explantion for all the suffering in the world...CAPITALISM.

As a world system, capitalism is based on production for profit and not to fulfil people's needs. It produces crises, slumps, and shortages. It operates in the interests of a small, powerful and wealthy minority, and against the overwhelming majority of humanity.

Only the destruction of capitalism as a system can prevent the suffering from continuing.

The Labour Party

BRITAIN has seen six Labour governments. Each one promised a change towards socialism. Each one ended up attacking the working class.

So why does Labour repeatedly fail? Would it be any different if led by Neil Kinnock, or Tony Benn, or even Ted Grant? The answer is no.

Labour has failed and will continue to fail because it attempts the impossible. You cannot skin a tiger claw by claw and inch by inch. You cannot reform capitalism into socialism—like the tiger, it fights back.

It fought Wilson through a flight of capital and the pressure of the IMF. It fights through the courts, through the lies and distortions of the media, and in the boardrooms of Whitehall and big business.

The simple reality is that you cannot bring socialism through parliament. Ultimately—as in Chile ten years ago—parliamentary socialism can be stopped by the armed might of the state.

Workers' power

THE ALTERNATIVE to Labour is revolutionary socialism—the armed seizure of power by the working class, and the creation of a new kind of society.

Labour's view of socialism is one of change from above, carried out by a small elite of MPs and sympathetic technocrats. The working class is reduced to a mass of suffering individuals whose most important political act is to cast a vote.

Our view is quite different. Like Marx and Lenin, we realise socialism is the self-emancipation of the working class—that it can be brought about only by the **struggle** of working people.

In the course of that struggle new institutions will arise which can form the basis of the new socialist society. These will not be like parliament with its overpaid MPs (who can do whatever they like once elected) and which is separated from unelected state officials.

Instead there will be workers' councils, with elected, recallable delegates, accountable to the workers they represent, and elected officers paid at the same wage as the average worker. Only this can ensure society is run by and in the interests of the people, rather than in the interests of profit.

...to socialism

UCPI0000019542/16

—Join the Socialist Worker Student Society

Russia

IN 1917, the Bolsheviks led the working class in a successful socialist revolution. However, with the defeat of revolutions elsewhere, particularly in Germany, the Russian working class became isolated. The privations of war coupled with backwardness left their mark.

The working class disintegrated, and its control over the state declined. A bureaucratic group led by Stalin forced its way into power. Today Russia is not socialist but state capitalist. That is why we say *'Neither Washington nor Moscow, but international socialism'*.

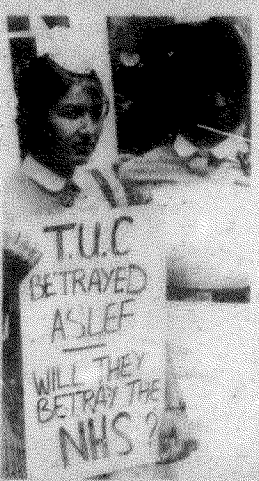
Internationalism

CAPITALISM exists as a worldwide phenomenon and socialism can only succeed on an international basis. We fight for solidarity with the struggles of workers everywhere—in Chile and Poland. We also support every anti-imperialist conflict—whether in Central America, Afghanistan, or Northern Ireland.

Unity

WE CAN only achieve socialism by uniting the working class in struggle. That is why we are intensely opposed to all forms of division within the working class. We have been in the forefront of the fight against racism and sexism, in the struggle against the fascists, against immigration restrictions, for abortion rights and nursery facilities.

At the same time, we realise it is only through the destruction of the system that breeds these false divisions—capitalism—that oppression will be ended.



Workers and unions

IT IS THROUGH mass struggles that the mass of workers gain confidence in their own ability to change society. In the process their ideas begin to change and organisation is strengthened.

It is for this reason that one of our main activities in the colleges is campaigning for financial and physical support for strikers.

Trade unions have developed to defend workers' living standards. However, the unions have developed bureaucracies of full-time officials whose interests are different from those of their members. Most are unelected and paid substantially more than ordinary workers. They exist to negotiate the level of workers' exploitation rather than fight for its eradication.

So union militants often find that they are forced to fight their leaders as well as the bosses.

Theory and practice

MOST COLLEGES contain a handful of 'Marxist' intellectuals, and some substantially more. Most of these see theory as an end in itself. For us an understanding of Marxism and the development of theory is of crucial importance...but as a guide to action.

As Marx himself argued: 'Philosphers have interpreted the world; the point, however, is to change it.'

Students

ONLY THE working class can bring about socialism, but students can play an important part. We will be organising in the colleges to win students to our arguments and encourage the fight against the cuts.

In the past we have led numerous student occupations, and these have not only proved the most effective way to fight, but have also had a profound effect on the thinking of the participants. Just as workers learn through struggle, so too do students.

Increasing unemployment coupled iwth reformist leadership of the unions have inhibited workers' struggles in the past few years. Nevertheless this downturn will come to an end—as it has done recently in Latin America—and open up new possibilities for socialists.

A revolutionary Party

THE Socialist Worker Student Societies are linked to the Socialist Workers Party, the largest revolutionary organisation in Britain.

Only a party can provide the all-important link between revolutionary students and revolutionary workers. Only a revolutionary party can unite the working class in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

I would like to join/want more information about the Socialist Worker Student Society

Name .....

Address .....

College .....

Department .....

Telephone .....

Please complete this form and return to a member of the Socialist Worker Student Society or to SWSS, PO Box 82, London E2 9DS.

UCPI0000019542/17

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

Use this form to advertise your branch activities in *Socialist Worker*.

Always arrange a *series* of meetings in advance. This makes your entry in *Socialist Worker* look impressive and gives a clearer picture of meetings ahead for contacts and members. There is space for six meetings on the form, but it must arrive by first post on the *Friday ten days before* the *first* meeting because of printing schedules.

If you have not finalised a speaker leave that section blank. Make the details of your meeting place clear so newcomers can easily find it. This form will be used to prepare the typesetting and any words which are difficult to read will cause misprints so PLEASE PRINT *CLEARLY* in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Branch ..... SWP

meets

(day, time, place) .....

.....

.....

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

(Date, Subject, Speaker)

Send to: What's On, PO Box 82, London E2

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Socialist Worker Student Society

Name: .....

College: .....

Neither Washington nor Moscow, but International Socialism and Workers Power!

P&P: SWP PO Box 82 London E2

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