

# AWL conference 1-2 March 2003

## Policy passed: The AWL and the left: relations with the Revolutionary Democratic Group

### AWL and the left: section 12

We have had contact with the Revolutionary Democratic Group [RDG] ever since they split from the SWP in the early 1980s. Our longstanding difference with them, over the peculiar priority and esoteric significance they give to the call for a democratic republic, remains. On other questions there has been clear rapprochement over the last couple of years, and a marked increase in collaboration:

(a) At the March 2001 Socialist Alliance manifesto conference we agreed a joint political statement which put the call for a democratic republic in the context of a fight for a workers' government.

(b) Both in theory and in individual practice, the RDG is committed to serious trade union work.

(c) At the December 2001 Socialist Alliance constitutional conference we had similar basic attitudes—wanting a broad “federalistic” democratic structure for the Alliance, wanting to stop the Socialist Party splitting away or at least make it as difficult as possible for them to split, and wanting a full political life for the Alliance.

(d) The RDG sided with us at the October 2002 Socialist Alliance euro-conference.

(e) The RDG supports a “two states” position on Israel-Palestine, and has shared platforms with us on this.

(f) The RDG joined our contingent on the 28 September anti-war demonstration, and we got essential agreement on what a leaflet for that demonstration should say, though we were not able to finalise exact wording.

(g) RDG members have been selling and contributing to *Solidarity*. An additional motive for interest in the RDG is that through their work in the Socialist Alliance they have got a number of good activists round them in some areas.

We should:

- Involve the RDG in our pre-conference and conference discussions;
- Invite RDG members in relevant unions to join our trade union fractions;
- Invite the RDG to sell (and contribute to) the paper systematically;
- Urge the RDG to respond to our open letter for working-class socialist unity, and to discuss joining us on the basis of that text and of the joint political texts we have worked out with them, such as the March 2001 one.

*All these developments are positive and welcome. However, we have had enough experiences, for example with the Thornett group Briefing and more recently with the CPGB, to recognise that fusions and even close working relations between socialist groups depend on more than a bald set of formal political positions. It is necessary to understand exactly the nature of the group we are dealing with, what makes them tick.*

*In the case of the RDG, we should ask ourselves what we are dealing with as a political organism. The RDG has no publications and little collective public activity, so we must ask:*

- *To what extent does it debate new political developments?*
- *What sort of internal life does it have?*
- *Do agreements that have been made with the AWL actually reflect the grouping as a whole, taking decisions after proper considered internal discussion?*

● *Is the RDG itself serious about fusion?*

[The text in italics was an add amendment proposed by the NC.]