

### Factionalism in Hull, 1983

I joined the former I\*\*\* in 1980 in Birmingham immediately prior to moving to Hull. I was aware that discussions were taking place with the old W\*\* that might lead to fusion. I was the only I-\*\* member in Hull, and there was only one member of the old W\*\*, John S. However, there were several former members of the old W\*\* still 'around', and I took the initiative in rounding them up. Together with John S, I organised a public meeting at which Alan T and John B would speak on behalf of both organisations. Although I sensed some differences of approach between the two organisations (particularly over women and the M.P.), I was keen for the fusion to take place, as were all the I-\*\* comrades I had met (eg in B'ham).

Largely as a result of my initiative in contacting former old W\*\* members a functioning branch was established at the time of fusion. However, from quite early on (certainly by September 1981) there was evidence of suspicion and hostility towards the I\*\*\* tradition from the old W\*\* comrades. In particular they seemed to object to Sean M and others coming to visit the branch.

During the course of 1982 I resigned from the organisation because of the pressures I was under with my social work placement. My intention was to re-join as soon as my personal circumstances allowed. I continued to take the paper and remained active in the M.P. and in women's campaigns.

In the spring of 1983 (probably May or June) I approached Ian D (Branch Organiser) about rejoining, but he didn't seem very keen to have me back. It was 2 or 3 months before I was told about a branch meeting. At that meeting we discussed my future work, and it was agreed that I should attend the following week's S.\* meeting. This proved to be a very tense, unpleasant meeting where League members spent a lot of time attacking the paper over its alleged 'softness' towards Benn and the M.P. as a whole. Non-members were present. You would certainly not have had the impression that the League members were in any way 'supporters' of the paper !

Later that evening, I was questioned very closely by John S about my links with members of the former I-\*\*. He made it obvious that he regarded ex- I-\*\* people as political opponents. He said he was questioning me on the instructions of Ian D, the Branch Organiser.

P.T.O.



I told John that I was shocked by this factional attitude and lack of comradeship within the supposedly 'fused' organisation. I decided then that I could not re-join a branch controlled by old W\*\* sectarians who clearly did not regard themselves as part of a fused organisation and regarded me (as an ex- I-\*\* member) with suspicion, bordering on hostility. This was an entirely political matter, as my personal relations with these comrades had usually been friendly.

All the above events took place in the spring and summer of 1983, although I cannot be sure of exact dates.

Julia G. Hull