

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.