

Reports to the 103rd Annual Conference of the Socialist Party



52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN

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General Secretary's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Bissett

Members who have not been to Head Office for some time will notice immediately the changes throughout the building. Head Office has changed almost beyond recognition in the past couple of years. Improvements have been ongoing since the last Conference, the most recent being new windows throughout head office, particularly on the balcony area, and in a refitted kitchen, complete with new flooring. The Premises Committee are to be commended on their work and supported in their future plans to make HO a more welcoming environment for visitors and a more comfortable setting for members to work in. With the above in mind definite steps should be taken to put HO to more use, not only with regards Party activities but also with reference to the proposed social evenings.

At ADM I reported on the resignation of members in Kabale, Uganda, and how the Communist League (USA) journal, *The Worker*, had reported that Ugandan WSM members had now formed the Communist League Uganda. Since then ex-WSM Kabale members have been in touch saying they never actually joined the Communist League, only that they had had correspondence with them, and that they were still propagating the ideas of the WSM in Uganda. Correspondence with the Communist League bears this out – that they never actually signed up with the CL – which still does not address the fact that *The Worker* did in fact report the setting up of the CLU and the resignation of WSM members there, some 8 weeks before we found out. At the moment, although we are still in correspondence with ex-members in Kabale and, indeed, sending them literature, we are yet to receive requests from ex-WSMers in Kabale to rejoin.

Elsewhere, a group of ex-members of the WSPI (the latter now affiliated with the Socialist Studies group) have formed the World Socialist Group (India) and remain in touch with us regards their meetings and further development.

A new group has formed in Sri Lanka calling themselves the Socialist Party of Sri Lanka, a break away from the UCL (a sister party to the group known to us as Militant). They are keen to affiliate with the WSM, but despite much correspondence,

inclusive of a 10-page document outlining their political position, have made no overt political statement that the WSM would endorse as a basis for accepting them as a companion party. They did invite us to their inaugural conference in February, an offer we declined for numerous reasons.

The Party membership at the moment stands at 367. Rather than this being reflective of another exodus of Party members, it again highlights the work of an efficient Central Organiser and Central Branch Secretary who have spent some considerable time contacting members we have not heard from/had dues from for some time and processing Forms F for those it is clear we have lost contact with. It can be assumed that many members have very little, if any, contact with the Party and so Party-wise feel isolated from the rest of the membership. This perhaps goes some way to explaining the low return of ballot papers. One way this problem could be addressed is to produce an informative monthly newsletter (4 pages of A4) that could be circulated to the entire membership. Our membership is our biggest asset, yet we make very little attempt to keep in touch with members on the periphery of the Party.

Membership statistics since April last year, up to the March EC meeting this year, are: Forms A: 16; Forms F: 24

That our membership is our greatest asset is reinforced via the returned questionnaires sent out by the Campaigns Department at the end of last year. Our membership possesses so many untapped skills and abilities – respondents included established writers, accredited speakers, the multilingual, those with advanced Internet and PC skills, artists, graphic designers etc etc – that we seem to be performing at a mere fraction of our real capability. Our potential to make a massive impact on the political scene – small though our numbers are – is seriously underestimated. However, the overall reports from the departments are, to be honest, not that impressive with regards activity. For instance, the Campaigns Department functioned for the latter part of 2006 with one member who had only joined in February of that year. It is high time

we got out act together, recognised just how strong we really are, activated the inactive, tapped into the hidden skills and abilities we collectively pos-

sess, and set out to give capitalism the bloody good kicking it deserves.

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Assistant Secretary's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Tristan Miller

2.1 General activities

As per the Terms of Reference for the Assistant Secretary, I have been assisting the General Secretary in the preparation of meeting agendas and minutes, and in maintaining the administrative apparatus at Head Office. This activity includes the following:

- I am currently investigating the procurement of new telephones, or a new telephone system.
- I have been working with the HOO and Premises Committee regarding an electronic display for the Head Office window.
- I have helped source and procure new stationery.
- On the advice of various members working at Head Office, I had installed a customer relations management/accounting software package on the Head Office computers. This software will allow the Party to produce professional-looking invoices and track payments and inventory. No one has yet volunteered to enter our publication catalogue and list of customers into the system.
- I have repaired or replaced broken computer parts and recovered the data from a damaged office hard drive.

I have also been delegated by the Executive Committee to coordinate activity taken pursuant to the 1995 Conference resolution concerning the protection of the Party's identity and funds. For this task I have been liaising with various Party officers, departments, and committees, as well as conducting correspondence with affected third parties. The report of these activities follows.

2.2 Actions Taken Pursuant to the 1995 Conference Resolution Concerning the Protection of the Party's Identity and Funds

2.2.1 Introduction

Over the past year, various Party Committees, Departments, and Officers have been alerted to the fact that several third parties have been using our name (in either its official or abbreviated form) and identity in such a way as to confuse or mislead the public. The actions of these third parties have damaged the reputation of the Party and have likely led to loss of revenue from donations, literature sales, membership fees, and legacies.

The existence of such third parties is not news to us, but when we are alerted to specific actions of theirs which impinge upon our identity we are obliged to take action. This position is mandated by the following 1995 Conference resolution:

This Conference supports any lawful action to protect the legal identity and funds of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. (Carried 117–28, Socialist Party of Great Britain Annual Conference 1995)

This report is presented in an effort to keep the Party membership apprised of recent activities carried out in accordance with this resolution. It is drawn from various reports on the same topic presented to the Executive Committee; anyone wishing for a more detailed accounting of the events de-

scribed here should refer to those reports. This report covers the period 31 August 2006 to 24 February 2007; activity prior to 31 August 2006 is documented in the Report to the 2006 Annual Delegate Meeting.

The Party has always emphasised that it has no objection to any third party organising political meetings, selling literature, publishing advertisements and websites, *etc.* Its sole objection in the incidents described in this report is to the misuse of our name, and the only action authorised by the Executive Committee has been to prevent or correct such misuse.

It is regrettable that the Party must spend so much of its time and resources disassociating itself from the actions of these spurious groups, but this activity serves to preserve our reputation and revenues. Furthermore, should the Party ever become involved in legal action respecting the use of our identity, we may need to demonstrate that we have consistently opposed fraudulent use of our name. Otherwise a judgment could be entered against us on the grounds that our failure to defend our identity has effectively relinquished our claim to it.

2.2.2 Spurious websites

`socialiststudies.org.uk`

As detailed in the report to ADM, on 26 July 2006 a new website claiming to be that of the Socialist Party of Great Britain appeared at the address <http://www.socialiststudies.org.uk/>. Following complaints by the Internet Department to the operator of the website and to the hosting companies involved, references to our name were removed on 7 September. (The Internet Department had been dealing with this website on the instructions of the Executive Committee since 3 June.)

Some time in December, however, the claim to be operated by the Socialist Party of Great Britain reappeared on the website. Furthermore, pages on the website included a notice attributing copyright to J Levis Computers. Our complaints to the hosting companies were renewed, and the website was once again suspended on 19 January 2007.

The website reappeared the week of 12 February, still including the statement that it is operated by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. As of the date of this report, the Internet Department is once again in contact with the hosting companies to have the website removed.

Socialist Alternative domain names

At its June 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee instructed the Internet Department to dispute domain names registered by Socialist Alternative (formerly Militant Labour) which were being used for a website claiming to be that of the Socialist Party. Following consultations with the Election Committee, the Department decided to postpone the dispute until after the implementation of the new electoral registration laws. This implementation having been effected, the Department is now preparing the files for the dispute. A London-based solicitor specialising in domain name disputes has offered to provide, free of charge and without obligation, a brief assessment of our case, a quotation for a more thorough consultation, and a referral to a colleague in the event that we wish to pursue our dispute with Socialist Alternative's use of the name outside the Internet.

2.2.3 Spurious meetings

The report to ADM related how a third party was booking and holding meetings in the name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain at the Marchmont Street Community Centre and the Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre. Both of these venues are operated by the Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association. The organisers had also been soliciting funds on the basis of being the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The Assistant Secretary had been in contact with the Association requesting that they not allow such unauthorised bookings.

The Assistant Secretary received a letter from the Association dated 13 September confirming that they had cancelled all dates booked at the Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre for the SPGB. A follow-up telephone call a few days later confirmed that the Marchmont Community Centre dates had also been cancelled.

In October, the Association decided to provisionally reinstate the meetings until the Party provided them with advice from the police or a solicitor. Accordingly, and pursuant to a 2 September Executive Committee resolution, the Assistant Secretary contacted the Holborn Police on 15 November to ask if they would recommend to the Association to cancel the meetings. The responding officer indicated that it would be a crime for a third party to solicit funds on the basis of being us, and decided to send constables to the 19 November meeting to determine whether a crime was being committed. However, the constables left after being told by the organisers that they had made an announcement disclaiming any connection to our organisation. An

independent visitor to that meeting, and another visitor to the 3 December meeting, later reported to the Assistant Secretary that no such announcement had been made, that they believed they were attending one of our meetings, and that they later realised that they had been deceived. The Assistant Secretary relayed this information to the police on 4 December, who then seemed satisfied that a criminal deception had taken place.

On 22 January, the police telephoned the Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association and asked them not to allow their client to hold unauthorised meetings in our name. The Association instructed their clients accordingly, indicating that their rental contract would be cancelled if they continued to use our name; their client agreed to these terms. However, the group held two further meetings (and solicited funds thereat) claiming to be the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The Association, learning of this deception, cancelled further meetings on or about 21 February, but reinstated them on 23 February after receiving written documentation from the group that it had changed its name to "Socialist Studies" plus a renewed promise not to use the name "Socialist Party of Great Britain" on its banners and publications, nor to present themselves as the SPGB at the meetings.

2.2.4 Spurious advertisements

On 14 November the Assistant Secretary wrote to the *New Humanist* and *Time Out* requesting confirmation of the Advertising Department's letters of 27 July asking that they no longer run unauthorised ads in our name. On 20 November the *New Humanist* called to apologise for running these ads; they indicated that the ads had not appeared for some time and would not be run again.

Ads for unauthorised Socialist Party of Great Britain meetings have continued to appear in the *New Statesman* and the *Camden New Journal* despite written complaints from the Advertising Department. On 30 November the Assistant Secretary called the *New Statesman* for a response to an earlier complaint from the Advertising Department, and was put through to the publisher, Spencer Neal. Mr Neal said that he often receives complaints from organisations asking them not to run ads by other organisations, and that his policy is not to take any sides. He said that he would reconsider our request if it were accompanied by a recommendation from a solicitor or the police. The Advertising Department and Assistant Secretary are continuing to pursue the matter.

2.2.5 Spurious post office box

The report to ADM related how a third party had opened a post office box (P O Box 46753, London SW17 9YP) in the name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and was using it to solicit funds and carry out correspondence in our name. Following a complaint to the Royal Mail, the Assistant Secretary received confirmation from them on 22 August that the post office box had been shut down on suspicion of fraud.

A detective from the Kennington Criminal Investigation Department of the London Metropolitan Police, who became involved in this case following a request for their advice from the Royal Mail, contacted the Assistant Secretary on 18 September to confirm that the post office box had been shut down. He also stated that he had interviewed and advised its registrant, Mr Michael Sansum. The Assistant Secretary had been authorised to cooperate with the police in this matter by an Executive Committee resolution of 5 August 2006.

2.2.6 Spurious publications

The Publications Department learned that several libraries stock *Socialist Studies* and have it catalogued under our name. The Publications Department has written to these libraries to indicate that we are not the publishers of *Socialist Studies*.

In issue N^o 62 of *Socialist Studies* is an article regarding the recent police interest in their meetings; it contains a number of gross mischaracterisations and falsehoods regarding the events in general and our involvement in particular.

2.2.7 Dispute resolution

There exist a number of options for dealing with third parties who attempt to use the Party's name and identity, or elements thereof. These include persuasion, civil lawsuits (or threats thereof), criminal prosecution (or threats thereof), mediation, and inattention. These are discussed in turn in the following subsections.

It should be noted here that recent meeting minutes of the *Socialist Studies* group indicate that they have retained the services of a solicitor, John Stephenson & Co of St Albans, to advise them on matters relating to their attempted use of our name. The Assistant Secretary attended the group's 23 January business meeting and was verbally assured that the group had no intention of bringing a lawsuit against the Party. They also claimed that they could continue using our name with impunity

as they believe it would be too expensive for us to bring a lawsuit against them.

Persuasion

Persuasion involves the Party directly contacting third parties involved or affected by the dispute and asking them to voluntarily recognise and respect our identity as the Socialist Party and the Socialist Party of Great Britain. (For example, if a someone takes out unauthorised newspaper ads in our name, we write to the newspaper informing them that the ad was not authorised, and provide proof of our identity if requested.) This method is always attempted initially and is usually successful, as we have ample documentation in support of our names and identity. However, given the persistence of the infringing parties and their tendency to switch advertising venues and Internet hosting companies, this method involves considerable effort and constant vigilance. It is a reactive rather than a proactive approach, and deals only with the effects of the infringement rather than with the infringers themselves.

Civil lawsuits

As summarised in the report to ADM, certain actions by third parties may constitute actionable civil torts such as passing off and copyright infringement. If the Party were to bring a suit against the infringing parties (and we have previously been advised by legal professionals that we have an excellent case for passing off), the remedy would involve injunction (*i. e.*, a court order compelling the infringing party to cease using our name, breach of which would result in fines or imprisonment for contempt of court) and/or payment of damages.

The advantage to a lawsuit is that, provided it is successful, it would likely prevent future infringements by the defendant. The greatest disadvantages would be the effort expended and the monetary cost (though this may be recouped in whole or in part through damages). The case might also attract publicity, which the defendant could exploit by mischaracterising the purpose of the lawsuit (*e. g.*, claiming that the Party is using the lawsuit to suppress rival political ideas).

The option of instigating a civil suit was discussed at ADM but no consensus was reached.

Criminal prosecution

As summarised in the report to ADM, and in §2.2.3 above, certain actions by third parties may constitute criminal offences such as fraud (*i. e.*, obtaining property by deception). The Criminal In-

vestigation Department of the Holborn Police Department have apparently determined the *Socialist Studies* group's solicitation for funds in our name to be criminally fraudulent, and have warned the proprietors of their meeting hall not to allow their client to persist in their deception. For the time being the police seem content with issuing informal warnings rather than pressing charges.

The Party could press for charges to be filed, which could result in a criminal prosecution. A conviction would result in fines and/or imprisonment for the guilty parties. As with a civil lawsuit, the advantage of this approach is that it would prevent future infringements by the defendant. And unlike a civil lawsuit, the Party would not assume the cost and effort of pursuing the case. However, the Party should think carefully before using the coercive apparatus of the state for this end, particularly since it could mean forcible imprisonment of former comrades who many members believe to still be socialists.

Mediation

Professional mediation is a dispute resolution procedure which does not involve coercion. In mediation, a mediator is employed to assist two parties in negotiating an agreed settlement to a dispute. They do this through helping the parties discover and discuss the important issues and by keeping the discussion on track. The mediation is completely voluntary and not legally binding, though the settlement reached could be made into a legally binding agreement if the parties so desire.

The National Mediation Helpline is a service provided by the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Civil Mediation Council to provide information about mediation and referrals to accredited and insured mediators. Mediations booked by the NMH have a success rate of 85%.

The cost of mediation varies depending on the nature of the case, but generally ranges from £50 to £94 + VAT per hour, and is normally shared between the parties.

Mediation may be of use in the *Socialist Studies* case, as the mediator could help focus the discussion on the use of the Party's name and away from personal and peripheral ideological differences. Any agreement reached through mediation could be presented to the membership as a whole for ratification, if necessary.

The issue of mediation was raised in the report to the February Executive Committee meeting, but no discussion was minuted.

Inattention

The Party always has the option of ignoring unauthorised use of its name and identity. However, this is undesirable because the public could become confused about who we are. Non-socialist statements made by other groups could be mistakenly attributed to us, which would damage our reputation as a socialist political party. We could also lose revenues if people mistakenly send legacies, donations, and literature orders to the wrong group. In the past we have lost or almost lost membership applications which were misdirected to a third party claiming to be the SPGB. Finally, should the Party ever become involved in legal action respecting the use of our identity, we may need to demonstrate that we have consistently opposed fraudulent use of our name. Otherwise a judgment could be entered against us on the grounds that our failure to defend our identity has effectively relinquished our claim to it.

In short, if the Party wishes to adopt a policy of inattention towards unauthorised use of our name, it must understand that this would likely be irreversible. It should also consider whether inattention is even a legitimate option in view of our hostility clause.

2.2.8 Afterword

The preceding sections of this report were submitted on 24 February. On 25 February, my ability to carry out the EC and Conference resolutions without the appearance of impropriety was compromised when the *Socialist Studies* group made a number of public personal attacks on myself, seemingly supported by selective quotation and misquotation, which either suggest or plainly state that I have committed theft, that I personally advocate street violence against their group, that I wish to prevent people from espousing socialist ideas, and that I am acting without the knowledge of the Party.

I would like to think that I am a cool-headed person who would not allow such remarks to affect the dispassionate discharge of my duties. However, the fact that they have been uttered in such a public forum makes it difficult for me to continue to operate as the Party's representative in this matter without coming under suspicion that my actions are motivated by a desire for revenge. For this reason, on 3 March the Executive Committee received and accepted my request to be recused from further action against *Socialist Studies*.

I would advise against delegating this task to a different Officer, and even against devolving it to the various Committees and Departments concerned, because what has happened to me could just as easily happen to any other comrade who engages in this matter, and because no comrade, myself included, has the time, resources, and expertise to deal with all the technical, diplomatic, and legal issues which arise. I am by now thoroughly convinced that this job, if it is to be done at all, is for a solicitor, not a secretary.

However, I would also caution against dropping the matter altogether, because doing so could mean tacit and legally irrevocable approval of any third party's misuse of our name, because this could undo much or all of the work which has already been done to thwart this misuse, and because clearly there is support within the Party (exactly how much, I do not know) to continue defending our identity.

Given the stakes involved, I do not see that the Executive Committee has any choice but to consult the membership directly. I have recommended that the EC consult a solicitor to identify and assess our various options (including inaction) and their associated costs and consequences, and then call a Party poll on which option to pursue. This matter is simply too important to put off or ignore, too complicated to entrust to any one comrade, and too potentially controversial to be decided by the EC alone.

Central Organiser's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Adam Buick

During the year the East Anglia Regional Branch was launched and has been functioning successfully. The formula of a weekend meeting every two months or so has proved the right one and could perhaps be adapted for other branches. In 2007 I will try to see if a similar branch cannot be launched in the West Country as well as investi-

gating whether or the more or less non-functioning branches in Birmingham and the North East could not be transformed into regional branches meeting every couple of months on a weekend. Another possibility is the creation of regional electronic branches.

Membership Applications Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Ben Malcolm, Andy Pitts, David Porter

Below is a record of the number of applications received during the year 01.01.06 to 31.12.06 For comparison the numbers of applications dealt with during the year 01.01.05 to 31.12.05 are given in brackets.

Membership Applications

Number of overseas applications from:

01.01.06 to 31.12.06 was one (7) and this (6) has been accepted.

Number of U.K. applications from: 01.01.06 to 31.12.06 was eight (6) and seven (6) of these have been accepted.

There is one outstanding application.

Central Branch Secretary's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Brian Johnson

In December I circulated a comprehensive questionnaire to all Central Branch members to deter-

mine to what degree individual members are ac-

tive, how much activity they wish to become involved in, and the specific skills they have. Although a majority of Central Branch members remain inactive, so far the response has been fairly encouraging, with four UK members (and three overseas members!) putting themselves forward as delegates to Conference and ADM. For the future I hope to start publishing a bi-yearly newsletter, to be circulated at the same time as the ADM and Conference mailouts, which may encourage more members to become involved with the administration of the Branch. Hopefully, the election of secretary, treasurer, Overseas Contact Secretary, and Central Branch Organiser by the Central Branch membership will be standard procedure within the next few years.

The dues for Central Branch went uncollected for about four to five years and only started to be collected by the Assistant Treasurer, Cde Fred Allen, in September 2005. And it will take us about another four months before dues are up to date. Twenty members in the UK have requested that their dues be waived, and with the exception of Turkey, I don't expect dues from members living in undeveloped countries where £60 per year represents a small fortune. From the beginning of this year—for members in the UK, Europe, and Turkey—I've made a start on formalizing the waiving of dues under Rule 2 in conjunction with the Treasurer and General Secretary.

Some members are reluctant to pay full dues because they weren't informed of the change in Rule 2 in 1998 which meant the over-65s no longer have their dues automatically waived. Also, none of the members were informed of the last two increases in dues. Therefore, fallout is to be expected

with members being lapsed or resigning. Since the beginning of this year, two members will have been transferred to the WSPUS, one to Manchester Branch, six lapsed, three resigned, and a further ten or more are on the verge of being lapsed.

Presently, despite the changes in Rule 3 the membership of Central Branch is still the largest branch with 94 members in the UK, 54 overseas, and 15 in Europe (a total of 69 within the Overseas Contacts group) making a total membership of 163. Quite a bit of this growth from overseas comes from members moving overseas or contact through the Internet. Turkey, where there are four members, seems to be promising, and if we had an Overseas Contact secretary willing to work hard for the next three or four years there is a good possibility of a group, branch, or even a companion party getting established there.

I'm concerned for some members of the Overseas Contact group where the structure of political democracy is limited, fragile, or nonexistent, and being members of a UK political party places them in danger. If they were to formally come under the umbrella of the WSM with their own set of rules and procedures and officers, this may alleviate the danger a little, besides make the administration a lot easier. Also, only six Overseas Contact members returned their ballot papers for party officers, and few of them return their Conference voting papers. If the proposed changes in Rule 3 are accepted by Conference there could be an influx of members from the North East and Birmingham. However, in conjunction with the Central Organiser the hope is to set up regional branches in these areas on the lines of East Anglia Regional Branch.

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Treasurer's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Gwynn Thomas

I continue to attend at Head Office on average twice a week. I continue to liaise with Comrade Fred Allen who acts as Assistant Treasurer and collects Central Branch dues.

As of the writing of this Report I have been unable to produce a finalised account for branches to look at. As for last year this is because our Bank

only issue statements quarterly. I hope to have a finalised account ready for Conference.

Financially the Party is in good order. We have in the region of £328 000 in various accounts due mainly to a substantial legacy and some very generous donations from individual Party members. As in previous years our outgoings exceed our normal

income from dues and sales.

Thanks to the assistance of Comrade Tristan Miller the Party now has a PayPal account. This

means that payments to the party can easily be made by persons with a credit or charge card in currency other than Sterling.

7

Premises Committee Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Tristan Miller, Stair

7.1 General activities

The most significant new changes since the ADM report is that four rotten windows have been replaced by PVC double glazed sash type, which are in keeping with the style of the building. An extra window has been fitted in the basement that had long been boarded up.

Another big change by conference will be that the glass space above the balcony floor will have been replaced with a neat anti-glare, double-glazed ventilated fitting. Various masonry works that lie above this area were accomplished prior to fitting.

Inside the building the kitchen will have been modernized and made into a more user friendly and attractive environment. Stone look vinyl tiles now replace a dark floor, which was difficult to keep clean. There is also more cupboard space.

A member has donated an attractive pine table and four chairs for the library so that it is a more comfortable space for study and research.

Many other jobs to do with general maintenance, functionality and appearance have continued to take place, it must be added that things have been able to move at a fairly speedy rate because of the good working relationship and enthusiasm of members and supporters alike.

Later on in the year more significant changes are likely to be made by replacing worn uneven flooring in the rest of the building and refitting the library.

Last but not least the work to the front of head office will have been evaluated and possibly completed.

7.2 Smoking

The Premises Committee has investigated the forthcoming law prohibiting smoking in public places in order to determine whether or to what extent it would apply to Head Office.

The relevant legislation is the *Health Act 2006* and its associated statutory instruments: *The Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2007*, *The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006*, *The Smoke-free (Penalties and Discounted Amounts) Regulations 2007*, and *The Smoke-free (Exemptions and Vehicles) Regulations 2007*. The portions of the statute concerning smoking in public places comes into force in England on 1 July 2007.

7.2.1 Coverage

A plain reading of the *Act* makes it clear that the entirety of the Head Office building as it is currently used is covered under the terms of the smoking ban. Specifically:

- Smoking is prohibited by law in premises which are “open to the public” (§2(1)).
- A premises is considered “open to the public” even if the public is granted access by invitation only (§2(7)).
- Smoking is also prohibited by law in premises which are used as a “place of work” (§2(2)).
- A premises is considered a “place of work” even if the work is performed there only intermittently (§2(2)).
- A premises is considered a “place of work” even if the work performed is voluntary rather than paid (§2(8)).

- Premises which are open to the public are smoke-free only when open to the public (§2(2)), but premises which are used as a place of work must be smoke-free at all times (*i. e.*, even when no work is being performed) (§2(2)).

Also of note is that the ban applies to both tobacco and non-tobacco herbal smokes (§1(2a)).

7.2.2 Exemptions

A plain reading of the *Act* suggests that smoking could be permitted in an enclosed portion of Head Office which is never open to the public and which is never used as a place of work (§2(3)). Currently, the conference room, balcony, stairwell, kitchen, library, and archive room are “open to the public” as defined by the *Act*, since members of the public are routinely or occasionally invited into these places. All these rooms, and every other room in Head Office, are currently used as places of work as defined by the *Act*.

Smoking is also permitted in spaces which are not enclosed or substantially enclosed, such as the back yard.

7.2.3 Signage requirements

The regulations for signage are currently under review. The latest draft regulations would require the Party to display a no-smoking sign in a prominent position at each entrance. The signs must be equivalent of A5 in area; display the international no-smoking symbol in colour, a minimum of 70 mm in diameter, and carry the text, “No smoking. It is against the law to smoke in these premises.” The appropriate signs will be freely available from the Department of Health after Easter.

7.2.4 Penalties

The penalties for infringement of the legislation are currently under review. According to the latest proposal:

- Smoking in a smoke-free premises results in a fixed penalty notice of £50 (discounted to £30 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine of up to £200.
- Failure to display no-smoking signs as required by law results in a fixed penalty notice of £200 (discounted to £150 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine of up to £1000.
- Failure to prevent smoking in a smoke-free premises results in a fine of up to £2500.

7.2.5 Conclusion

A plain reading of the legislation makes it clear that Head Office is covered under the forthcoming smoking ban. Smoking would not be permitted in any room in Head Office, though certain rooms could be exempted if they were closed to the public and never used for Party work. Smoking is also not prohibited by law in the back yard. The Party would be required to post officially approved no-smoking signage at all entrances, and would be required to actively prevent smoking in the building, or else face fines of up to £2500 per incident.

If the EC, or the Party, were to consider setting aside a portion of Head Office for smoking, then it should consider not only compliance with the no-smoking legislation, but also the concerns raised by the Premises Committee in its reports to the July 2006 and February 2007 Executive Committee meetings, as well as the appropriateness of specifically dedicating a portion of Head Office for a use unrelated to Party work.

Election Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Adam Buick

The Party took part in two local elections in 2006, on 4 May, in the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Kingston. For the record, the results were Lambeth:

Lambert 62; Martin 39; Lee 38. Kingston: Bond 80.

Considerable local press publicity was obtained in Kingston but hardly any in Lambeth, probably reflecting the fact that Lambeth is an inner London borough with only one local paper covering a number of different boroughs while Kingston is an outer London borough with a couple of lively local papers. There may be a lesson here for future local electoral activity in the London area.

In both elections, the Returning Officer accepted as the candidates' description on the ballot paper "The Socialist Party". Since then the law on this has been changed, with registered parties being allowed to register up to 12 variations on their name from which they have to choose their description. We have applied initially to register "The So-

cialist Party" and "SPGB". A reply from the Electoral Commission is still awaited, but should be known by Conference.

The Dept has continued to comply with electoral law by recording all donations of £200 and over and reporting every quarter on any (including legacies) of over £5000. In fact we had five (including 3 instalments of one legacy) in the second half of the year. These are or will be published on the site of the Electoral Commission at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/regdpoliticalparties.cfm>.

Bill Martin ceased to be a member of the Department before the end of our mandate.

9

Socialist Standard Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Paul Bennett (Editorial), Oliver Bond (Subscriptions), Adam Buick (Editorial), Dave

Perrin (Editorial), Paddy Shannon (Layout), Neil Windle (Layout)

We have continued to produce the *Socialist Standard* each month. There has been no shortage of articles nor of striking designs for the front cover, even if on occasions we haven't had a proper balance of articles.

Now that we have got the formula for the appearance right, we have turned to getting the circulation increased. We see two main ways of doing this: (a) increasing the number of subscribers, and (b) extending our foothold in commercial distribution.

In 2006, in conjunction with the Advertising Dept, we experimented by joining INC, a cooperative specialising in getting subscriptions for radical magazines, and participating in their collective advertising. This resulted in the *Standard* being advertised in thousands of leaflets sent to subscribers of radical magazines (including the *New Internationalist*), and in a dozen or so new subscribers. As the cost per new subscriber was lower than that for our press advertising, we are in favour of the exercise being repeated this year. The 3-free months trial subscription was continued and brought in a

similar number of new subscribers.

Our foothold in commercial distribution is a contract with COMAG to distribute the *Standard* to bookshops and newsagents in the London area. In 2005 this was extended to include 8 Borders outlets, 5 outside of London (Glasgow, Bristol, Brighton, Oxford, Cambridge). Here we have consistently achieved monthly sales of 30 or so out of the 50 sent. However, this was not considered sufficiently profitable by COMAG who told us in January 2007 that they would continue to distribute the *Standard* only if they kept 100 percent (instead of the previous 45 percent) of sales income. We agreed to this, not just because it is better than nothing (and we already sent the *Standard* free to radical bookshops), but also because we have been considering launching a campaign to increase our sales via COMAG and Borders.

For a price of £650 Borders offer a promotion called "Shelftalkers" which involves drawing attention for a two-week period to a magazine in its specialist section by a specially-designed marker underneath where it is displayed. A minimum of 25

non-returnable copies has to be supplied to each of the 50 Borders outlets. This means we would need to increase the print-run from the existing 1500 by up to 1250 extra copies, which would have to be taken into account as an extra cost.

We are considering proposing taking up this offer for two, maybe, three consecutive months (so that people who buy it the first month can find it there the next one). The aim will be that there will be sufficient sales, at least in some of the Borders shops, to convince them to take some permanently. This might even generate enough income for CO-MAG to agree to a new contract allowing us a share of the sales. They want to make at least £100 a month from a magazine. The proposed increase in

the cover price of the *Standard*, to be discussed at Conference, if carried would help in this respect.

As to the proposed increase in pages from 20 to 24, we have discussed this amongst ourselves and are convinced that we could handle it. If this is carried we would propose to also increase the subscription rates to £15 (normal), £10 (unwaged), £20 (Europe), £25 (Rest of World). In fact we would propose the increase in the first two rates even if the number of pages aren't increased, to cover the big increase in postal costs since August 2006 when pricing by size rather than just weight came in (but which didn't affect post sent overseas).

10

Head Office Organiser's Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Stair

The paperwork at head office is being dealt with efficiently and there seems to be no shortage of volunteers who step forward to help with the dispatch of the *Standard*. It seems to me that the development of a warmer and more comfortable environment has added to more people coming into the building to browse the literature, ask questions, engage in discussion, and make purchases.

Furthermore, and as a result of these changes, it has been decided to hold monthly public meetings at Head Office instead of relying on the Friends Meeting House. The first one was a great success in that it attracted about twenty-five people. Of course, regular events at Head Office will encourage more interest from passers by.

More members and those sympathetic to the party have come forward and made themselves regularly available when I'm not on the premises to ensure things run smoothly. Marie Chesham has continued to market *Socialism Or Your Money Back* to bookshops, concentrating on Waterstones and Ottakers at first. This has been very useful and it seems that the more registered books they have sold across the board the more likely the individual bookstores are to place an order. Libraries have been and will continue to be contacted also.

We continue to get very good deals on office

equipment and stationary and have our photocopier serviced appropriately due to my previous experience in the trade.

I also continue to help John Lee on the Advertising Department to negotiate good rates for advertising in magazines. A new venture in this area last year was advertising with The Independent News Collective. We were able to advertise the *Standard*, as part of a drop-insert, in thousands of issues of various 'alternative' magazines. Furthermore, a leaflet advertising the *Standard* and our literature will be adapted soon as an insert-drop for The New Internationalist

In relation to the work of the SSPC and the need for better distribution of the *Standard* I have been helping and negotiating with our distributors with a view to having the *Standard* distributed in more prominent bookshops across the UK. One avenue we're presently exploring is The Borders chain.

In my capacity as Head Office Organiser I have over seen most of the changes to do with the ongoing work on the premises. My car has been a valuable source of transport in making many trips to DIY shops to choose and collect materials.

I am keen to continue this work and to play my part in making the Socialist Party a more effective organisation.

Campaigns Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Bissett, Phil Lancaster, Jim Lawrie, Michelle Martin

For much of the past six-months the Campaigns Department has functioned with one solitary member, one member having resigned from the department in the latter part of last year. Consequently the department has very little to report with regards activity carried out since ADM. Leaflets were designed for and distributed at the Global Climatic Change demo on 4th November and at the 24th February Anti War Demo, both in London. Leaflets focusing on racism and the BNP were prepared and handed out at events in November 2006 and in February of this year.

Recently the Campaigns Department sent out a questionnaire to all members in an attempt to ascertain the skills and abilities of the Party mem-

bership, be it public speaking, web design or even video production. The replies were promising and will hopefully help us better coordinate out activities in the future.

The Campaigns Department are also keen to re-start the University Challenge campaign of several years ago, writing to the debating societies of student unions etc, offering to put up Party speakers in their student debates.

Ideally, the department needs more members if it is to function effectively. It is regrettable that a revolutionary socialist organisation can only recruit two members, living three hundred miles apart, on to one of its most important departments.

Internet Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Matt Culbert (SPGB website), Tristan Miller (WSM website), Robert Stafford (Enquiries)

12.1 Internet domain names

See the *Report to the 2007 Conference on Actions Taken Pursuant to the 1995 Conference Resolution Concerning the Protection of the Party's Identity and Funds* for updates on the issue of disputed domain names.

12.2 Socialist Standard digital archive

Pursuant to an Executive Committee resolution of December 2005, Cde Miller is personally responsible for the creation of a digital archive of the So-

cialist Standard. This task also falls partly within the purview of the Internet Department, since the archive is intended to be published online.

The first step in the creation of the digital archive is to scan the paper documents into a computer. In 2005, Cdes Miller and Sanden produced digital scans of the *Standard* from the period of 1970 through 1997. At the time they had access to high-speed digital scanning equipment. However, they no longer have access to this equipment, so Cde Miller has investigated the costs for purchasing or renting a high-speed digital scanner, and for contracting out the scanning project to a third party. These costs are currently under consideration by the Executive Committee.

Once the documents are scanned into the computer, they are available only as plain images. In order to make the text searchable, and in order to reduce the size to something suitable for publishing on CD, DVD, or the Internet, we require archiving software. Cde Miller has investigated the costs for archiving software, and his report is currently under consideration by the Executive Committee.

12.3 Enquiries

Table 12.1 shows the approximate number of e-mail enquiries received at enquiries@worldsocialism.org or feedback@worldsocialism.org per month for 2006. The graph in Figure 12.1 shows the number of e-mail enquiries per month since January 2005.

12.4 Web server statistics for 2006

The statistics in this section apply to the entire worldsocialism.org site, which hosts the World Socialism Movement website and the websites of the Companion Parties. Section 12.4.1 gives a general summary of hits to the worldsocialism.org website for 2006 and for every month thereof. Section 12.4.2 shows the top 30 referring websites for 2006, and indicates how many referrals were made from each site per month. Section 12.4.3 shows the top 30 search queries for 2006, and indicates how many search engine referrals were made as a result of each search query per month. Section 12.4.4 shows graphs for the weekly and monthly hits to the site from December 2004 to the present.

A glossary of the terminology used in these sections is as follows:

Successful request A successful request occurs when an Internet user successfully accesses a resource (such as a web page, an image, a video file, or an audio file) residing on the worldsocialism.org website. Note that many web pages have embedded images, each of which counts as a separate request. The “successful requests for pages” counts only textual web pages and not em-

bedded images or other media. A successful request is also known as a **hit**.

Failed request A failed request occurs when an Internet user attempts to access a resource on the worldsocialism.org website, but an error occurs which prevents access. Errors are normally caused when one of our webmasters moves a web page but forgets to add a redirect (*q. v.*). Errors can also be caused by the user, such as when they mistype the web address.

Redirected request When a webmaster moves a web page from one address to another, he or she should instruct the web server to automatically forward (“redirect”) any requests for that page to its new location.

Distinct file Each text page, image, video file, audio file, *etc.* on a website is contained in a separate and unique file. “Distinct files requested” is the number of unique files which have been requested at least once in the given time period.

Distinct host A host, in this context, refers to a unique computer accessing the Internet. One host can make multiple requests for pages and other resources. Though some computers are shared among people, the “distinct hosts served” statistic gives a rough idea of how many unique people visited our web site at least once in the given time period.

Referring site A referring site is a third-party website which contains a link to one of the resources on worldsocialism.org.

Referral A referral occurs when an Internet user follows a link from a third-party site to one of the resources on worldsocialism.org.

Search query A search query is a word or set of words which someone types into a search engine in order to find information they are looking for on the Internet.

Search engine referral A search engine referral occurs when someone finds and follows a link to our website as a result of making a search query.

Month	Enquiries
January	27
February	9
March	28
April	24
May	32
June	34
July	25
August	14
September	13
October	23
November	14
December	13
Total	256

Table 12.1: Monthly e-mail enquiries for 2006

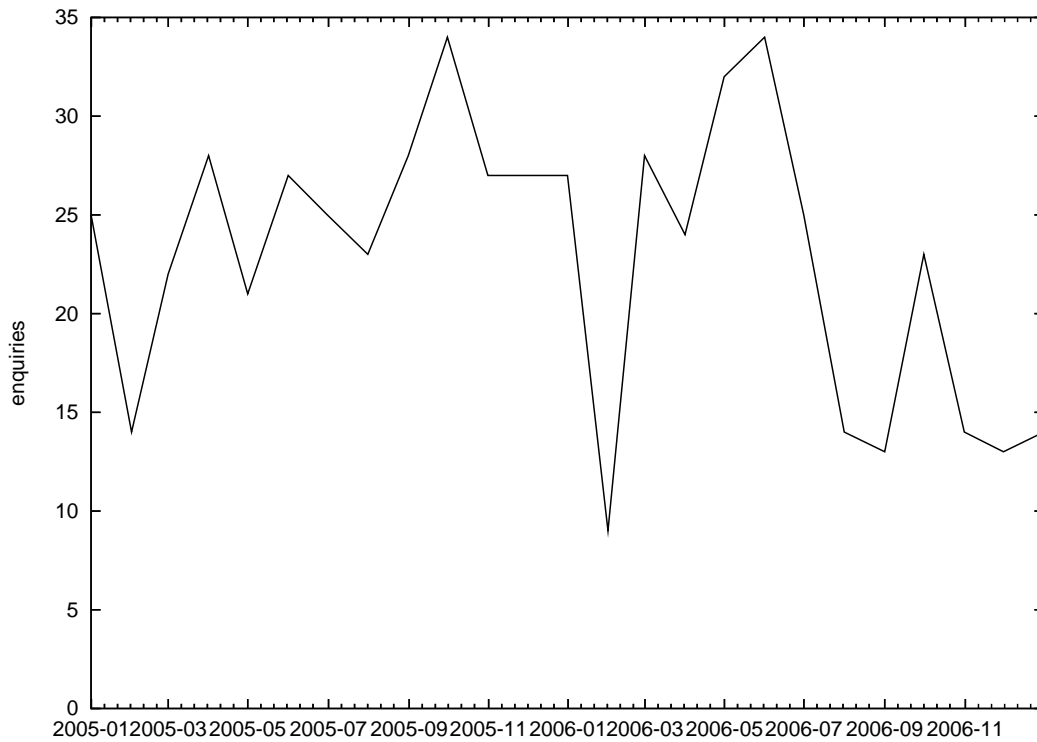


Figure 12.1: Monthly e-mail enquiries since 2005

12.4.2 Top 25 referring sites

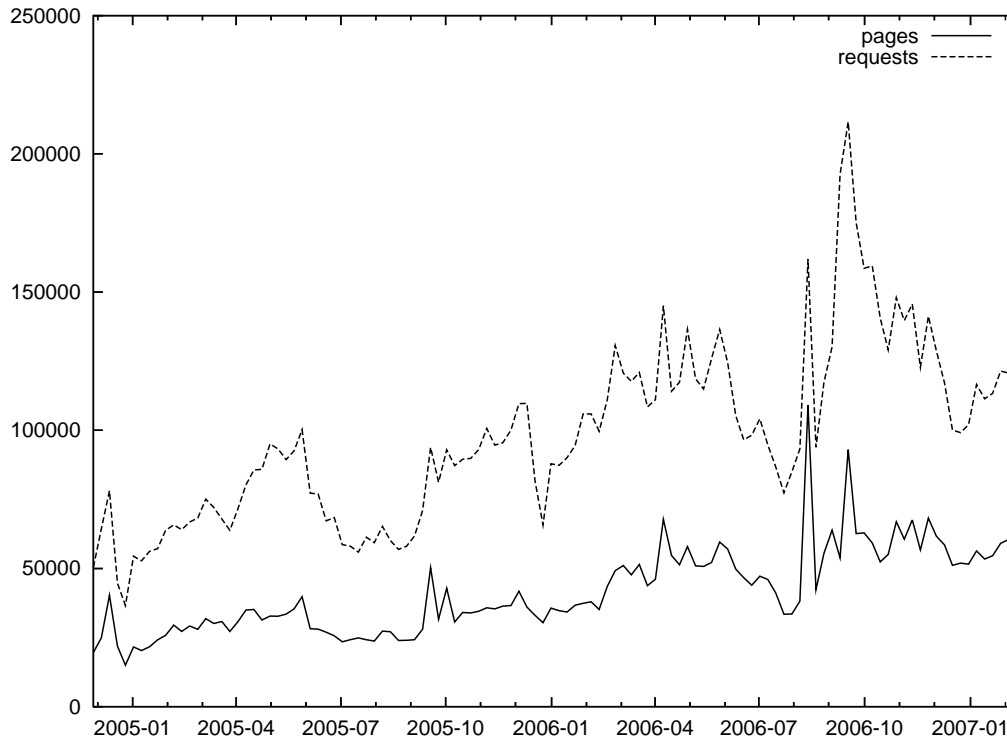
Rank	Site	Referrals												
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	profile.myspace.com	6141	10078	11450	9369	12889	15586	15207	18832	168812	112907	56187	35935	473393
2	www.google.com	5269	5877	7048	6596	6914	3947	3471	3695	5892	7593	7757	5739	69798
3	images.google.com	4610	4823	5360	5057	6589	3207	2095	4659	9141	7825	6166	4727	64259
4	www.myspace.com	—	—	—	923	816	1122	979	490	17161	11778	4802	2759	40830
5	invereskstreet.blogspot.com	—	—	—	—	—	—	732	386	6451	9964	13036	9002	39571
6	search.yahoo.com	1708	1882	2231	1893	1910	1131	1084	1384	2051	2389	2232	1787	21682
7	www.google.co.uk	1830	1624	1957	1256	1298	957	830	692	1242	1382	1596	1120	15784
8	www.stumbleupon.com	1526	2232	1524	—	—	1299	1397	2264	1452	1183	1353	1390	15620
9	images.google.co.uk	1173	1200	1401	820	1158	1229	741	478	1777	1573	1521	815	13886
10	letshavesocialismnow.blogspot.com	1010	1606	—	708	1188	1445	651	978	814	920	907	927	11154
11	www.google.ca	985	808	1180	1174	1057	622	375	—	711	1214	1491	871	10488
12	images.google.ca	948	813	1035	1001	936	890	—	—	1119	1114	892	589	9337
13	cgi.ebay.com	1050	464	—	742	1205	1549	849	1038	—	568	—	653	8118
14	leninology.blogspot.com	—	4466	2903	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7369
15	myspace.com	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2554	1909	1157	1016	6636
16	comment.myspace.com	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1872	2266	1005	703	5846
17	www.haloscans.com	—	—	—	—	—	578	450	1345	1124	595	1622	—	5714
18	images.search.yahoo.com	1191	999	1346	656	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4192
19	blog.myspace.com	—	—	—	1868	1453	530	720	471	1178	—	1069	—	4144
20	www.scenetorrents.org	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3851
21	www.educationforum.co.uk	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3081	581	—	—	3662
22	www.mortigitempo.com	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3317	—	3317
23	www.ditkannietwaarzijn.nl	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3115	—	—	3115
24	bulletin.myspace.com	—	—	—	—	808	566	—	—	629	—	—	771	2774
25	worldsocialism.blog.excite.it	—	—	—	—	621	559	—	—	—	—	904	672	2756
26	www.leninology.blogspot.com	—	1557	1174	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2731
27	money-law.blogspot.com	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2686	—	2686
28	search.msn.com	634	669	734	644	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2681
29	www.otib.co.uk	1463	—	—	1215	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2678
30	www.miragorobot.com	—	—	1909	—	—	—	581	—	—	—	—	—	2490

12.4.3 Top 30 search queries

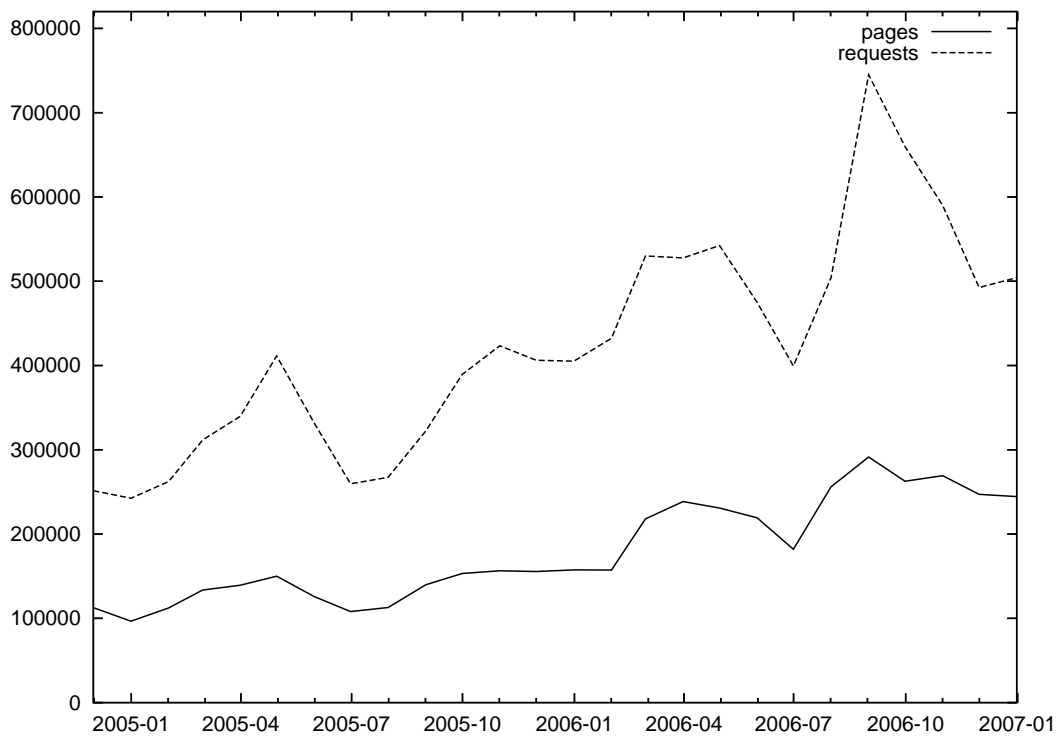
Rank	Query	Search engine referrals												
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	socialism	765	968	1381	1221	1102	585	418	959	1941	2813	2695	1445	16293
2	kapitalizm nedir	171	172	259	172	147	131	141	143	146	365	295	314	2456
3	what is capitalism	46	88	91	95	89	—	—	122	376	455	492	358	2212
4	what is socialism	44	54	—	93	95	—	36	96	550	492	334	307	2101
5	che	597	347	306	235	148	89	31	46	—	—	—	—	1799
6	socjalizm	214	189	245	191	219	123	35	—	120	101	180	169	1786
7	sun sets	178	90	192	207	209	151	105	97	181	130	102	99	1741
8	socialisme	162	137	160	167	120	109	34	43	115	174	338	108	1667
9	spgb	52	—	67	71	100	93	106	130	216	215	214	184	1448
10	socialismo es	—	—	—	—	—	—	1160	—	—	—	—	—	1160
11	world socialist movement	—	—	—	53	60	50	107	219	111	117	168	210	1095
12	socialist movement	50	91	86	66	76	43	41	—	116	153	137	123	982
13	socialist standard	62	74	62	64	77	69	56	85	90	70	83	94	886
14	the irish question	67	69	94	97	75	68	—	—	63	70	88	54	745
15	irish question	91	78	114	95	114	85	—	—	—	—	—	54	631
16	socialist party	91	94	107	84	97	39	50	43	—	—	—	—	605
17	socialismo	—	—	—	121	163	123	—	—	—	—	125	46	578
18	socialist quotes	77	87	115	85	75	74	40	—	—	—	—	—	553
19	stalin	97	130	240	84	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	551
20	world socialism	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	60	77	81	96	112	456
21	racism	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	49	69	114	118	52	402
22	what is capitalism?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64	104	111	79	358
23	beheaded	105	82	151	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	338
24	hunger in canada	—	—	—	—	131	39	—	—	—	57	95	—	322
25	causes of the gulf war	—	—	63	53	85	42	—	—	—	—	—	—	308
26	socialist party of canada	115	42	55	—	50	—	34	—	—	—	—	—	296
27	what is socialism?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	101	119	—	64	284
28	winnipeg strike	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	62	—	—	231
29	capitalist countries	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	66	78	81	225
30	pau successor	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	204	—	—	—	204

12.4.4 Long-term report

Weekly hits to www.worldsocialism.org



Monthly hits to www.worldsocialism.org



Publications Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Bissett, Tristan Miller, Stair

There is not a lot to add since the ADM report.

Sales of *Socialism or Your Money Back* are continuing (see HOO Report).

It has been suggested that we revamp and have a uniformity of look with our range of photocopyable pamphlets. We think it would be a good idea

to re-typeset some and have colour covers that can be put through the copier when necessary. This would help add to sales and look more presentable when we produce our catalogue later on in the year.

Video Production Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Bissett, Paddy Shannon, Neil Windle

The department has produced no videos as a department since the *Kids Stuff* video came out. This said, one member of the department has filmed several Party talks, two of which have been edited to DVD and have been uploaded to YouTube. It is hoped other Party talks can be edited and uploaded shortly. We believe it would be a step forward if the same could be uploaded to the Party website.

A script is ready for another video, though this would require a number of confident presenters, not just the solo presenter as on the *Kids Stuff* video.

The department is keen on producing ten short videos each of 10 minutes duration and each focusing on a different aspect of the Party case. The small size of these videos would enable them to be easily uploaded to sites such as YouTube, Google

Video and the myriad torrent sites. Moreover they could be uploaded to the Party site and even burnt to disc and sent out to enquirers; maybe even handed out at demos as the cost of bulk buying means duplication costs could be kept to a minimum. The Department would seek payment for Carol Taylor's film making and editing services. She literally put in hundreds of hours on *Kid's Stuff* without recompense.

With regards the aforementioned projects we would need to screen-test volunteer members. At the moment the VPD has just one member with a proven screen record. We have access to the film-making and editing technology and, indeed, the writers; what we need now is a wider array of presenters.

Advertising Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Mike Browne, John Lee

Last year, we advertised in *Big Issue* London, *Big Issue* North, *Private Eye*, *New Statesman*, *Prospect*, *Nexus*, *Morning Star* and *New Internationalist*. We have used the *New Statesman* to both advertise meetings and the case for socialism. The advertising of the *Standard* in the INK leaflet –Cost £320. produced several subscriptions and we would wish to renew that.

Costs of adverts

Big Issue London, 1 advert in February, £70.50, 3 adverts in November £139.59.
Big Issue North, 4 adverts for price of 3 in Aug./Sept. £95.18.
Private Eye 3 adverts in February £300.00.
Prospect 3 adverts in April/May/June £108.29.
New Statesman 4 adverts in April, in June, in

September, in November £141.00.
Nexus 6 adverts from July 06 to June 07 £103.68.
New Internationalist 2 adverts in October and November, £198.76.
Morning Star 2 adverts in December £11.17.
Total cost: £1,240.67.

Results of adverts

Big Issue London 18 replies cpr £11.67.
Big Issue North 9 replies cpr £10.57. Private Eye 21 replies cpr £14.28.
Prospect 1 reply cpr £108.29. New Statesman 8 replies cpr £17.62.
Nexus 1 reply cpr £51.84 New Internationalist 6 replies £33.13.
Morning Star 4 replies £2.79.

Enquiries Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Lee

Source	Enquiries	
	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec
MySpace	32	57
Web	11	17
e-mail	25	1
<i>Standard</i>	15	14
leaflets	11	8
telephone	7	5
election leaflet	1	—
<i>Private Eye</i>	12	9
<i>Prospect</i>	1	—
<i>Big Issue</i>	6	21
<i>Nexus</i>	—	1
<i>New Internationalist</i>	—	6
<i>Morning Star</i>	—	4
other	24	14
unknown	2	—
DVD	—	1
TOTAL	151	162

Blog Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

John Bissett, Steve Colborn, Robert Stafford, Graaham Taylor, Gwynn Thomas, Simon

Wigley

The Party blog - socialismoryourmoneyback.blogspot.com - was set up on the first evening of ADM last year; its aim being to provide daily socialist analysis and commentary of the latest news as it breaks. The blog is the work of a handful of members, some of whom, as well as working for the Socialist Party's various departments, have their own personal blogs propagating socialist ideas. At the time of writing there are 3 members of the depart-

ment, half the figure of two months ago.

Obviously we have fallen well below our envisaged target of at least one posting a day, not least because the extant members of the department have other Party commitments. We desperately need more Comrades to assist with this valuable work, if not actually working for the department then via their submissions for the blogsite. We think it not unreasonable aim for the depart-

ment to post new material on a daily basis. In this latter regard a set of guidelines might be useful to aspiring bloggers.

To date there have been some 60 entries to the blogsite on a range of issues of interest to socialists – many by members not actually on the Blog department. And to date the blog has had some 8,000 hits from 60 countries around the world. It is interesting to see where the viewers of the blog are located:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada,

Cayman Islands, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Serbia & Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, UK, US, Unknown Country (many like this).

18

Audio Department Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Stair

A member has come forward who seems to be keen to transcribe some of our tapes onto CD.

Further work on this department will be given

more attention when more members are prepared to do the necessary work or other matters are less pressing.

19

Ballot Committee Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Mike Browne

The work was carried out in 2006. In the annual ballot for 2006 114 members returned their ballot papers, in the 1st ballot for 2007, 121 members did so and the 2nd ballot in February/March 2007

brought 110 returned papers.

Note that having been diagnosed with a serious medical condition, I will be unable to continue to be the only member on the committee.

Standing Orders Committee Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Mike Browne

It was a busy year for the committee. In the conference voting, 150 members returned their voting papers. This was an increase on the previous year.

20.1 Autumn Delegate Meeting 2007

The EC has yet to decide the actual date of the Autumn Delegate meeting in October but **the returning date for Branches to send in their Items for discussion will be the 1st September 2007.** Please note this date.

20.2 Conference 2008

Please note that the date of Easter next year is very early, The date of Good Friday will be 21st March so the date of Conference at Easter would be 21st & 22nd March 2008. The time table resulting would be: Latest date for Branches to submit items for the Preliminary Agenda would be 4th January 2008, Latest date for amendments to the Preliminary Agenda and for items for discussion for the Final Agenda would be 8th February 2008.

Note that having been diagnosed with a serious medical condition I will be unable to continue to be the only member on the Standing Orders committee.

Ad-Hoc Committee to Construct Alternative Models of Party Decision-Making Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Brian Gardner, Tristan Miller, Simon Wigley

The Committee regrets to report that, due in part to the loss of one of its most active members, it has not made any progress since its report to the 2006 Annual Delegate Meeting. However, the remaining

members are still conducting discussions, and hope to be able to make an informal oral report at Conference.

Ad-Hoc Committee on the Use of Head Office as a Social Centre Report to the 2007 Annual Conference

Sandy Easton, John Helps, Stair

This meeting took place as a result of the floor resolution put forward by B Johnson and Simkins and amended by Miller and Stair (October 2006 ADM).

The substantive resolution that was carried reads; "This ADM recommends that the EC delegate an ad hoc committee to form concrete plans on the possibility of a social centre in head office and, upon the receipt of its report then seriously consider the possibility of opening head office in line with the item for discussion regarding The Cowley Club, Brighton"

In the future we consider it best to have a rolling programme of improvements. We envisage changing the front of head office and the possibility of opening it up for display windows, for books/pamphlets and a monitor that can advertise coming meetings and other events.

At present we consider it important to take one step at a time, to see what works with full knowledge that we have enough people on hand to help.

We already have four bookcases fixed on to the walls of the ground floor, some of these contain second hand books, either surplus to the library's requirements or donated by members. This alone has been attracting more people into the building to have a browse, ask questions, engage in conversation etc. To increase this "footfall" we think it would be a good idea to start stocking some new

books in order to be able to concentrate on more specific titles that may be of interest to anyone who is perhaps close to our wavelength and/or has a questioning attitude to the world around them.

A unfulfilled carried conference resolution from 1992 reads; "This conference calls for a volunteer to run a new and second hand book shop at the front of head office."

We would like a budget for buying new books and we suggest that we initially buy two or three copies of a range of ten different titles. The committee will set up a separate accounting record system for the sale and purchase of these books. We will also record the amount of income we are receiving from the sale of second hand books. We now have three fixed cash boxes to record the separate sales of; 1.) all party material 2.) new books 3.) second hand books

We believe that security at head office will not be compromised because we intend to keep things as they are at present. To enter the building a member of the public has to ring the buzzer of the inner front door in which case there would be someone on hand to help. If more members are willing to be present on the balcony/ground floor area for specific days we will be able to be more approachable.

We suggested an appropriate title for the committee would be, "The Public Access Committee".

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Missing reports

The following reports had not yet been received at the time of printing:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treasurer's financial statement 2. Auditor's Report | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Master Form C 4. <i>Socialist Banner</i> Committee Report 5. <i>Archives and Library Department</i> Report 6. World Socialist Correspondence Club Report |
|---|--|

Call for nominations for Central Branch Organiser

To all Central Branch members for action
To all other members for information

Comrades, this is a call for nomination(s) for a Central Branch Organiser whose job will be to carry the 1997 Conference resolution regarding election of delegates and the placing of items from Central Branch on the ADM and Conference Agendas.

Any such nomination should be sent to the Ballot Committee at Head Office by **Friday 30th March 2007**. Once any nominations are received then a ballot of central branch members will be held.

The 1997 conference resolution relating to central branch is this:

That for placing amendments to rule, resolutions and items for discussion on the Conference and ADM agendas and to be represented by delegates, Central Branch shall be organised as a Branch. The procedure to be as follows:

1. The administration of Central Branch shall remain with the Central Branch Secretary except in respect of the participation of Central Branch members in Conference and ADM which will become the work of a Central Branch Organiser.
2. The Central Branch Organiser to be elected annually by Central Branch members. Names shall be called for by the EC.
3. Amendments to rule, resolutions, items for discussion and the names of delegates may be proposed by individual members but made available to be voted on by all Central Branch members.
4. Successful items and the names of elected delegates shall be forwarded to the Standing Orders Committee by the Central Branch Organiser in a timetable compatible with the issue of the Preliminary and Final Agendas of Conference and ADM Agenda.
5. The number of delegates at Conference to be in accordance with the maximum number of Central Branch members voting, i.e., two for the first ten and one for every further ten.
6. The Central Branch Organiser shall have the power to co-op assistance.

The job of Central Branch Organiser will involve a lot of work from Head Office. The Central Branch Organiser will be expected to write to Central Branch members asking for items and names of delegates and to carry out the ballots resulting and then to inform the Standing Orders Committee of the results in time for any items to be placed on the ADM and Conference agendas. The first timetable needed to be met is that any ADM items for discussion will need to be with SOC by the 1st of September 2007.

Mike Browne
Ballot Committee
3rd March 2007

An electronic (PDF) edition of these reports are available. Point your web browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spintcom/files/> or contact the Socialist Party Head Office to request a copy:

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