

CONFERENCE NOTES

(Issued by Irish Workers Group Tendency. See over for corrections and notes on the motions and procedure for this conference.)

OPEN MEETING

All members and observers at Conference are welcome to attend to discuss

"WHY THE SLP NEEDS A BROAD REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS TENDENCY"

In seven months of the Party's existence, despite having a number of fighting policies against unemployment and redundancy from the first Party Conference, the SLP has been unable so far to translate these into coherent and nationally guided forms of action. There is no guarantee that any similar fighting policies for direct action passed by the membership this weekend will fare any better.

We must not let this happen. The SLP must become an organisation geared for direct action in the struggles of the working class. In order to do this, all those within the Party committed to turning the party outwards in a fight for revolutionary policies must unite and organise within the party to give a clear lead in debate and action nationally.

VENUE: SLP H.Q. TIME: 8-10 pm
9 Parnell Square. SAT. 27th May.
Second Floor.

SPEAKERS

INTRODUCTION from Jim Larragy (NEC, Dublin N. Central and IWG member) on Why a Broad Revolutionary Workers Tendency is Necessary and what it would do in the Party.

E. McWilliams, Derry Branch and IWG, will speak on what the IWG believes should be the platform of a broad revolutionary tendency in the SLP which should be open to all tendencies.

OPEN DISCUSSION

This meeting is sponsored by the Irish Workers Group (SLP).

C O R R E C T I O N S T O M O T I O N S A S
C I R C U L A T E D

1. It is disgraceful and inexcusable that delegates only got the final amendments - 23 pages of them - on the day before the conference or indeed as they arrived. If the attendance is poor who can be surprised? This state of affairs makes serious democratic debate impossible.
2. An important motion on the economy submitted for IWG Tendency in the name of Jim Larragy (NEC and N. Central) does not appear at all. We reprint it on the back of these notes.
3. The Derry motions on Women are presented in a distorted way.
 - (1) The motion to delete the NEC document on women and substitute what is now put in Appendix A was originally deliberately worded that it was to be tabled "bearing in mind the separate action programme for a women's movement also submitted for adoption". This wording does not appear.
 - (2) The Action Programme submitted for addition to the Party's policy on Women is incorrectly presented. Only the introductory paragraph is given. Then we are referred to N. Central's motion no. 25. Then we are given another paragraph to add in, and then we are told it is completed by the addition of two demands on British imperialism. Motion 25 incorrectly is missing a heading before the demands on Church and State which should come under "The Struggle for Democratic Rights and Against Imperialism". Instead these demands are tucked into a section headed "Personal Independence and Equality". Also the introductory paragraph to the Democratic Rights section as submitted by Derry appears nowhere.
We therefore attach the full Derry proposal for an Action Programme on Women. Without seeing it as a whole its merits cannot be judged.
4. We believe that the motions on what demands the SLP should stand for on Women should all be grouped together in a discussion on an Action Programme rather than attempting to insert bits of basically the same demands in different places. In fact, motions 4,7,14,16,22,25 and 26 on Women are all pieces from the Derry proposal for an Action Programme which was argued for in a number of branches and in the Women's Committee by IWG, and motion 24 is almost identical to the first section of it.
5. The motion no. 27 on Women (on abortion) from Dublin N. Central was unfortunately passed without the phrase "recognises the right of women to control their own bodies and". This phrase should not appear for N. Central.
6. Motion 5 on the Economy from Galway was submitted as three motions. The first one, amending 5(c) should read "nationalisation under workers control without...".
7. The Action Programme on the National Struggle (motion 35 on the National Question) adopted by Dublin N. Central and Derry but Galway carried it without the paragraphs 3(b) and 3(d) under Joint Activity (pars. on political prisoners' release and the RUC & UDR).
7. In the document in Appendix A of the Women's motions: in section no. 2, delete "satisfying sexual needs". In section 7, for "anti-unionist women" read "anti-unionist married women". Due to communications problems these formulations were submitted wrongly.

A C T I O N P R O G R A M M E

Recognising the need to independently organise working-class women if the majority of them are to be mobilised on the key issues of their own specific oppression and exploitation, the S.L.P. commits its branches, women's groups, trade union groups and young socialists to the building of a mass working class women's movement. Such a movement must be centred on organised women workers in the trade union movement. Its basic aim must be to unify men and women in the working class, especially by bringing women fully into production as workers. In order to do this, the movement must fight for not only economic rights but for the social liberation of women and an end to their domestic slavery. In addition we must seek to involve women as housewives or unemployed in broad labour movement campaigns on prices, health, unemployment etc., and in solidarity with strikes.

Only as part of a unified working class movement under socialist leadership can the battle for women's freedom be advanced. Thus, at all times, we fight both to develop the working class women's movement and to win it to our wider socialist programme. The following are our main demands.

A. ECONOMIC EQUALITY

In order to end discrimination against women in economic life whereby they are super-exploited as cheap manipulable labour and as housewives and domestic unpaid slaves, we campaign for the following demands, fighting for direct action where possible towards achieving them.

1. For equal pay for work of equal value, to be fought for on the basis of wage comparisons which are not restricted to the particular locality or employment, and opposition to any form of job grading designed to counter equal pay claims.
2. For a national minimum wage for all, based on the adult male industrial average with full automatic compensation for inflation.
3. For separate taxation of all as individuals and for the same structure of tax-free allowances for everybody without regard to marital status or sex.
4. For an end to all discrimination in social welfare against women and for full eligibility of all unemployed women claimants for full unemployment payments whether married or not.
5. For a shorter working week and overtime ban without loss of pay, and for schemes of useful public employment to create jobs for women and men alike.
6. For every woman's right to work fully and equally with men, and for unconditional opposition to every attempt to lay off women workers, single or married.
7. For equal rights of access to all occupations on the sole condition of ability to do the job.
8. For equal access to all forms of training, apprenticed trades, educational courses, grants, scholarships etc.
9. For an end to discrimination against women on small farms in social welfare, employee insurability and ownership rights.

B. TRADE UNIONS AND WOMEN

Because the weak trade union organisation of women on the one hand makes them easy prey for anti-union sentiments and strike breaking, and on the other hand leaves them open to continued super-exploitation, we fight for the fullest participation in the labour and trade union movement principally through the following demands.

10. For an intensive campaign by the trade unions for the full unionisation of all working women now, regardless of type or size of workplace, and especially in hotel, catering, domestic and retail employments.

11. For workplace union meetings during working hours to facilitate women's participation, and provision of creches at union meetings.
12. For the right of women in unions to caucus separately from men as a consultative group or preparatory to full union meetings.
13. For special elected committees in unions to promote and give a lead to action for women's demands.

C. FERTILITY AND MATERNITY LEAVE

Unless women have full, free access on demand to all necessary means and the best available advice to afford them complete control of their fertility, their right to work remains precarious and thus they remain open to gross exploitation. Equally, to prevent pregnancy forcing women out of work, it is imperative that in fighting for women's economic rights we raise the following demands.

14. For free and legal contraception available on demand through the health services to women and men, married and single.
15. For comprehensive secular sex education including birth control methods, in schools, and freely available literature and expert advice through the health services.
16. For six months maternity leave with full pay, with no loss of job security sick leave entitlement or pension or promotion rights.

D. CHILD-CARE AND DOMESTIC LABOUR

In order to overcome the role of domestic slave imposed by capitalism on women both in the area of child care and the care of aged or sick dependents it is necessary to fight for the maximum possible socialisation of domestic toil including the areas of laundering and food preparation. The main points we must fight for towards these ends are as follows.

17. For provision of free professionally-staffed creches under union control in workplaces, and under community control on a 24-hour basis in local areas. For comprehensive pre-school provision and professionally run play centres for children.
18. For a comprehensive community care system in the health service providing trained domestic help for aged and invalided dependents of women wishing to work.
19. For a free nationalised health and pharmacy service, an end to state-subsidised private medicine and for the provision of the best gynaecological, maternity and child health care for working class women and children equally with wealthier sections of society.

E. PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE AND EQUALITY

A working class women's movement must smash and dismantle the legal, constitutional and social structures whereby women are denied equality in law and personal life with men, have the least possibility of escaping a failed marriage, are treated as chattels and are often deserted without maintenance and with children. We must also seek to end the rigid sex-role stereotypes which underpin this discrimination through education and the media. We therefore campaign for the following demands.

20. For free legal divorce at the request of one partner, with adequate maintenance for dependents of divorced persons.
21. For an end to all laws which make a woman the chattel or legal dependent of her husband.
22. For student and teacher union action to oppose all forms of sexism in education, and for trade union action against sexism in the media, advertising, and publications.

Women - Action Programme contd.

F. THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND AGAINST IMPERIALISM

Because imperialism has divided Ireland into two reactionary states, stunting the development of democratic rights and conferring enormous social power on church institutions fundamentally opposed to women's liberation, no working-class women's movement can grow or be won to a socialist programme unless it takes up the struggle for full democratic rights as part of the fight for national freedom which was abandoned by the Irish ruling class and its agents in the labour movement. We therefore fight to raise in women's struggles the following demands:

- 23. For a free, secular, co-educational and comprehensive system of education at all levels and a complete end to church control.
- 24. For complete separation of Church and State in all areas. public representation, hospital services, mental health services, marriage registration, adoption services, adult education, youth organisations, borstals, social-worker services, poor relief, overseas aid etc.; and for fully nationalised social services in all areas and an end to all public subventions of church agencies.
- 25. For abolition of all censorship of publications, films and broadcasting; for full freedom of expression on questions of sex, birth control and abortion.
- 26. For an end to all repressive legislation, North and South, and the abolition of special courts.
- 27. For British Troops out of Ireland now!

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ECONOMY MOTION OMITTED IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT

Submitted for IWG Tendency in the name of Jim Larragy.

"Replace the last sentence of Section 6, paragraph 7 of the document with the following:

In order to protect wages against inflation and to link the power of the strongly organised to the weak in protecting wages against inflation we advocate a fight by the rank and file for the same minimum lump-sum wage increase for all workers as compensation for each new percentage rise in prices, for example £1 a week extra for every 1%, to be fought for through free collective bargaining.

While such increases might initially be based upon the official Consumer Price Index, the trade union movement must develop its own cost-of-living index in order to allow the rank and file to assess how much it really needs to compensate for price increases. Furthermore, the operation of a working-class cost-of-living index must be linked to price-watch committees of the broad labour movement including housewives' and tenants' groups etc. "

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