

**This letter - which was emailed to Martin Smith, Socialist Workers Party National Secretary, around lunchtime today (February 16, 2010) - is signed by 42 SWP members.**

**A further 18 people who have resigned from the SWP in recent weeks endorse it too. The full lists of names appear at the foot of this post.**

'We are writing to resign from the Socialist Workers Party. We do this with great sadness but the events of recent weeks leave us with little choice. The immediate reason for our resignation is the attempt by the Central Committee to stop Lindsey German, the convenor of the Stop the War Coalition, from speaking at a Stop the War meeting in Newcastle. This demand was justified by the claim that the meeting was 'disputed' or bogus. In fact, it was a properly constituted Stop the War public meeting, agreed at two consecutive Tyneside steering committees. Two SWP members tried to block the meeting because it clashed with a party branch meeting. The Stop the War meeting was a success, but was boycotted by the local SWP. The Central Committee demanded that Lindsey should not go to the meeting and 'reserved the right' to take disciplinary action if she attended.

Such sectarian behaviour does enormous damage to the standing of the party in the movement. Unfortunately, it fits into what is now a well-established pattern.

For many years, the SWP has played a dynamic role in the development of mass movements in Britain. The party made an important contribution to the great anti-capitalist mobilisations at the start of the decade, it threw itself into the Stop the War Coalition and was central to the Respect electoral project. These achievements were dependent on an open, non-sectarian approach to joint work with others on the left and a systematic commitment to building the movements.

The SWP leadership has abandoned this approach. The task of building broad, political opposition in every area to the disasters created by neoliberalism and war is now subordinated to short term party building. We believe this undermines both the movements and the prospects of building an open and effective revolutionary current in the British working class. The most glaring mistake has been the SWP's refusal to engage with others in shaping a broad left response to the recession, clearly the most pressing task facing the left. Even valuable recent initiatives, like the Right to Work campaign, have minimised the involvement of Labour MPs, union leaders and others who have the capability to mobilise beyond the traditional left.

An authoritarian internal regime has developed as a result of this change in direction. In the run up to the recent party conference, four members of the Left Platform opposition were disciplined, three of them expelled. Since the conference, four of the remaining student comrades at the School of Oriental and African studies in London have been effectively pushed out of the party. A comrade in Newcastle was given an ultimatum to resign from a key position in the local movement in January. He resigned from the party and 10 comrades left in protest at his treatment. The use of disciplinary methods to 'win' arguments is completely foreign to the traditions to the SWP and should have no place in

the socialist movement.

For these reasons we are now submitting our resignations. We do not do so lightly and we will of course remain active socialists and revolutionaries. We all joined the party because we felt it would make us more effective. Sadly, we now feel that is no longer the case. We have, however, enormous respect for the many fine comrades in the SWP and we regard it as essential to continue to work with SWP members in the unions and campaigns, since we all share a broad agreement on the need to confront recession, war and fascism. We remain convinced of the need for revolutionary socialist organisation. In fact, the need for a radical political alternative and resistance on a massive scale has rarely been more urgent.'

William Alderson ★ Sian Barrett ★ Christophe Chataigne ★ Kate Connelly ★ Margi Corcoran ★ Adrian Cousins ★ Anita de Klerk ★ Noel Douglas ★ Reid Dudley-Smith ★ Mark Ewington ★ Camille Fairbairn ★ Sam Fairbairn ★ Neil Faulkner ★ Des Freedman ★ Jo Gough ★ Elaine Graham-Leigh ★ Maham Hashmi ★ Madeline Hennigan ★ Penny Hicks ★ James Hilsdon ★ Feyzi Ismail ★ Sean Jackson ★ Naz Massoumi ★ Narz Massoumi ★ James Meadway ★ Brendan Montague ★ Jackie Mulhale ★ Chris Nineham ★ Samantha Carwenne Oxby ★ Henry Parkyn-Smith ★ Dan Poulton ★ Tia Randall ★ John Rees ★ Kirsty Richardson ★ Steve Sacre ★ Angela Selleck ★ Mark D Smith ★ Guy Taylor ★ Carole Vincent ★ John Whearty ★ Tom Whittaker ★ Hesham Yafai ★

The following have resigned in recent weeks and would like to endorse this statement.

Elly Badcock ★ Will Bowman ★ Jane Claveley ★ John Cooper ★ Adam Cornell ★ Kevin Deane ★ Tony Dowling ★ James Kennell ★ Dave McAlister ★ Jack McGlen ★ Viva Msimang ★ Matt Richards ★ Sara El Sheekh ★ Caitlin Southern ★ Lindy Syson ★ Owen Taylor ★ Mark Tyers ★ Sonia Van De Bilt ★