

Manchester University SWSS

Manchester University SWSS would like to make public that we condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the recent handling of very serious accusations against a leading member of the SWP Central Committee.

As many people will have seen from the recent leaked transcript of SWP conference, the conduct of the Disputes Committee fell far short of what should be expected in a socialist organisation committed to ending women's oppression. Questions regarding sexual history and drinking patterns would be rightly condemned as sexist if asked within a bourgeois courts of law – it is therefore completely unacceptable that socialists should consider this a reasonable line of questioning. On the whole the behaviour of the party's leading bodies suggest a worrying departure from the best practices and traditions of our movement.

What has also has been deeply worrying is the attitude that has been taken towards younger members and students raising legitimate concerns. It seems an atmosphere of intimidation has been allowed to develop in which young members are viewed with suspicion and treated as such. Accusations of 'autonomism' and 'feminism' (not that feminist should, or indeed is an insult in our eyes) have done nothing to clarify political positions; instead these notions have reinforced a culture in which members don't feel encouraged to raise disagreements without fear of being labelled as or accused of not understanding our democratic processes.

We believe that the conduct of the CC in reaction to the recent articles in the mainstream press about the party has at best been inappropriate and at worst delusional. The insistence that we can draw a line under the issue when it has and will evidently continue to affect our work is indicative of a Central Committee quite obviously disconnected with conditions on the ground. Our criticisms however are not simply down to a desire to maintain the credibility of the organisation but are also steeped in our principles in fighting sexism, both in wider society and within the labour movement.

We would like to make clear that such criticisms do not represent a

break with our party's analysis of where women's oppression comes from and how we can fight for women's liberation (two positions which it must be said Manchester University SWSS have fought like lions to defend.) From Slut-Walks, Pro Choice Demonstrations and Anti-sexual harassment campaigns SWSS has a record that we will not allow to be undermined by forces within our own party.

Finally, to all those we have fought alongside in the past we would like to express our sincerest apologies for the recent failures of our organisation. We understand the distress and distrust that many of you have expressed as a result of this and ask you to bear with us, to give us the opportunity to exhaust this line of enquiry, this line of protest, to allow us to fight for the very relevance (if not existence) of the Socialist Workers Party. In turn we assure you that we will continue to uphold the proud tradition we stand in, that we will continue to fight oppression in our society in all its forms and that we shall never dismiss or shy away from the criticisms and concerns of those in the movement and in the class as a whole.

In Solidarity,

Manchester University Socialist Worker Student Society