

Socialist Workers Party:

On the folly of celebrating the Party's misfortunes

DON MILLIGAN, February 27, 2010

Since early December the blogosphere has been alive with entertaining articles and gossip concerning the SWP; the Party's pre-conference discussion, the antics of the Central Committee in relation to the Left Faction, and much else has been the cause of mirth and many bad jokes expressed by people who have evidently had their fingers burned at some time in the past when the SWP or some other centralised revolutionary party is remembered as having abused their youthful enthusiasm and naiveté. Whatever the specific reasons for the impulse which leads people to jeer at the SWP and its misfortunes online, it does not appear to be founded upon any sustained theoretical disagreement with the Party or its general outlook. There is much chatter about authoritarianism, the suppression of open discussion of differences, and the bureaucratic manoeuvres of the SWP's leadership, but little sustained criticism of substance has emerged from this flurry of activity among the blogoteriat and their discussion forums.

This merriment had reached a crescendo by February 16th with the mass resignation of some 42 people led by Lindsey German and John Rees, the leading lights of the Left Faction.¹ The blogoteriat has been particularly entertained by the charges of bureaucratic manipulation and the suppression of proper discussion, made by German and Rees against the Central Committee. This is because, German and Rees, as very long-standing members of the SWP's leadership, have 'form' themselves when it comes to using procedure and rules to stop debate and disagreement dead in its track; German and Rees are merely accusing the Central Committee of doing what they themselves have frequently done in the past.

This is, no doubt, entirely true, and it may indeed have its comic aspect, but the hypocrisy of German and Rees is entirely

¹ See the exchange of emails on February 10, 2010, between Lindsey German and Martin Smith for the SWP's Central Committee; see also, German's letter of February 12, 2010; and the mass resignation letter of February 16, 2010 at 'SWP Documents' on the Documents page of Studies in Anti-Capitalism at www.studiesinanti-capitalism.net.

irrelevant when attempting to assess the implications, which this crisis has both, for the organization, and for the wider left in Britain. When the 42 who've left the Party are added to the twenty or so who have either been excluded by the Central Committee, or who have left in disgust, over the two or three months prior to the mass resignation, the numbers lost to the Party had, by the third week in February, reached more than 60 people; this is sixty-odd regularly active comrades, out of a total active membership numbering around 600 people.

So, the damage is considerable: the party has lost more than 10 per cent of its active membership, including a number of comrades with more than thirty years experience in revolutionary politics, together with the Convenor of the Stop The War Coalition and a number of the STWC's prominent activists. Their departure will no doubt provoke the withdrawal of yet more people, dismayed and confused by the infighting, whose precise significance will probably elude a fairly large slice of the membership. This, together with the demoralisation and demobilisation of many of those who continue to pay their dues, will, no doubt, compound the Party's crisis.

This is, joking and merriment to one side, an important question in Britain for the anti-capitalist movement, or the revolutionary movement, or the far left, call it what you will. No doubt many people will be delighted by the shambles which will certainly undermine the infuriating arrogance and blithe certainties which have long characterised the Party's most enthusiastic activists. However, it should not be forgotten that since the implosion of the Workers Revolutionary Party,² the disintegration of the Militant Tendency (RSL),³ the dissolution of the Revolutionary Communist Party,⁴ and the continuing disarray in socialist politics in Scotland, the Socialist Workers Party has,

² The Workers Revolutionary Party fragmented in 1985, but a rump party continues to exist and is led by Sheila Torrence.

³ The RSL, the Revolutionary Socialist League, was the parent organization of the Militant Tendency. In response to the struggle led by Neil Kinnock to drive the 'militants' out of the Labour Party in the eighties, the Militant Tendency abandoned its tactic of working inside the Labour Party and became Militant Labour in 1991; it changed its name again in 1997 to the Socialist Party, and its organization in Scotland, Scottish Militant Labour, proposed the formation of the Scottish Socialist Party.

⁴ The Revolutionary Communist Party was dissolved in 1997. See Don Milligan, 'Radical Amnesia and the Revolutionary Communist Party', January 8, 2008, at the Articles & Reviews page on *Reflections of a Renegade* at www.donmilligan.net.

alone on the far left, been able to sustain a fairly high level of activity during the last twenty years. Always much more flexible (or, opportunist) than its rivals the organisation was always able to enter the fray and to work with a bewildering array of potential allies and fellow travellers, a capacity which distinguished the Party on the far left, giving it a reputation for the nearest thing to ‘realism’ available to revolutionaries in Britain.

Now, we have to ask why has its luck suddenly run out? Well, of course, “suddenly” is a moot point, the unravelling of the Socialist Workers Party has, in fact, been a long time coming. It starts I think with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the counter-revolutionary years of 1989 to 1991. Because the Socialist Workers Party and its forerunner, the International Socialists,⁵ had been organized around identifying the socialist countries as exploitative, and essentially capitalist regimes, they possessed a theory which placed them at something of a tangent from the traditional Trotskyist critique of the Stalinist or Maoist states. Unlike ‘standard issue’ Trotskyists, IS and the SWP could not see anything worth defending in the Soviet Union or in its satellites, and were, consequently, always able to make this abundantly clear with their slogan: “Neither Washington or Moscow, but International Socialism!”

They did not believe that the statified or nationalised forms of property preserved or instituted by the bureaucracies in Russia, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere represented any sort of gain for the working class. On the contrary they always argued that the Stalinist bureaucracy, which came into existence in Russia during the 1920s, had by 1928-32 entirely destroyed the positive gains made by the October Revolution of 1917, and had utterly destroyed the Bolshevik Party in the years of terror which followed the crushing of Trotsky’s Left Opposition in 1927. Consequently, the International Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party believed that a new form of exploitative society had come into existence in Russia during the twenties that they dubbed “Bureaucratic State Capitalism”; this new formation was

⁵ The Socialist Review Group was founded in 1950. It became the International Socialists in 1962, and was renamed the Socialist Workers Party in 1977.

just as much an enemy of the working class as private or Western forms of capitalism.⁶

With the ‘collapse of communism’ during the counter-revolution of 1989-1991 much of the theoretical apparatus which had enabled the various Trotskyist, Stalinist, and Maoist parties and groupuscule to distinguish themselves, one from another, evaporated into thin air – with the resurgence of capitalism all that was solid melted into air – not surprisingly general dismay and confusion followed as the defining commitments of many a lifetime turned to dust.

The SWP, alone among the communist or revolutionary socialist groups, could face the future with confidence. All that had happened was the disintegration of Bureaucratic State Capitalism, which they had always said represented nothing more than an inefficient and corrupt form of collectivist class rule dedicated to exploiting the working class. The implosion of this form of class rule was not, definitely not, a disaster. Of course, they would have preferred the bureaucracy to have been overthrown by the Russian working class ‘from below’, but it’s unravelling by Russia’s ruling elite, by Gorbachev and his allies, followed in short order by Boris Yeltsin, was in no sense a disaster for the SWP’s outlook. The theoretical innovations pioneered by Tony Cliff and others from the late forties onwards had stood the Party in good stead, and now that Stalinism had more or less vanished from the stage of history, the SWP’s analysis had in some sense been vindicated.

The SWP was able to greet the new period with confidence despite talk of “downturns” and a splendid suite of rationalisations for their lack of progress and growth, they were, after all, “the smallest mass party in the world”. The truth of this oxymoron lay in the sense that the Party had developed of itself that it was a *real political party*, rather than one of the numerous sects and groupuscule that attempted to compete with it on the left. With the accumulated experience of the seventies and the eighties, “The Party” was as Tony Cliff had always argued “the memory of the Class.” Consequently, the SWP was undamaged and undismayed by bouts of amnesia concerning the Party’s relationship to the Labour Party, to ‘electoralism’, and to their

⁶ See Tony Cliff, *State Capitalism in Russia*, 1948, 1955, 1974, full text at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1955/statecap/>

confused and less than glorious response to Irish Republicanism and thirty years of bloodshed in the North of Ireland. However, the SWP with its musical battles against racism, and its dark predictions concerning the permanent threat posed by fascism, liked to associate itself with the stark alternatives summed up by the phrase: “socialism or barbarism”.⁷

This approach enabled the Party to build a large periphery, and a large layer of occasionally active members who could be called upon to turn out for the revolutionary equivalent of ‘high days and holidays’. They promoted a view of themselves as a kind of disciplined Leninist party that was, paradoxically informed by a libertarian ethos, owing as much to Anatoly Lunarcharsky, Alexandra Kolontai – the freer spirits of Bolshevism – and to Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, the ‘mass strike’, and the *Spartakusbund*, as they did to the sterner, ‘firm but fair’, methods pioneered by Lenin and Trotsky. This capacity to incorporate a freer spirit into what was essentially an authoritarian outlook, taken together with its reasonably comprehensive industrial weekly coverage in the *Socialist Worker*, permitted the organization to pose as an authentic political party. This posture was further emphasized by the regular appearance of the monthly in-depth news coverage of *Socialist Review*, and the regular appearance of their theoretical publication, *International Socialism Journal*. The SWP could hold its own with the intellectuals of the *New Left Review*; it could actively support workers in dispute with news, information, and solidarity initiatives; it had its own bookshop and the capacity to issue a stream of well-produced books, pamphlets and placards. It was to all intents and purposes a real political party. This is why so many of its leaders, members, and supporters, began to believe their own ballyhoo.

However, a tension always existed between the rather weak and defensive reality of Party organization and the scale of its interventions in wider campaigns and coordinating committees. This tension has always been expressed in conflicts that arose between the priorities of trade union militants, tenants’ leaders, community activists, and campaign convenors, on the one hand,

⁷ “Frederick Engels once said: ‘Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to Socialism or regression to barbarism.’”, Rosa Luxemburg, *Junius Pamphlet*, 1915/16, Chapter One, full text available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/ch01.htm>

and those of the Party's leaders, on the other. In every situation where an SWP member established a political base *outside* the Party; this comrade would inevitably come into conflict with the Party leadership who were determined to maintain the authority of the Central Committee against the emergence of rival centres of influence, which had a tendency to arise spontaneously from the work of comrades who led popular campaigns and organizations which were largely composed of people from *outside* of the Party, and who were actually beyond the control of the Central Committee.

The inability of the SWP to either, resolve, or live with these tensions, reveal more than anything else its status as an *ersatz party*, no doubt an organization capable of extraordinary hubris, but incapable of setting a plausible agenda for a mass movement. Its leadership has never been able to work with the wider movement, in whatever sphere you care to name, without at a particular juncture having to pull back from involvement in order to maintain the coherence of its political position, and the authority of its governing bodies. This is not about personalities, it is much more fundamental that. It is about the failure to develop a dynamic understanding of the nature of capitalist relations of production and the kind of politics needed to challenge the priorities and practices of the bourgeoisie. The SWP has not been able to develop its theory concerning the nature of capitalism or the shifting nature of the class relations. Consequently, it has stuck with its 'falling rate of profit', with its 'workplace priorities', its 'battle against fascism', its 'lessons of the October Revolution', and its endless historical reprise of the truth about repression, and the limitless possibilities of 'struggle from below'. However, the sad truth is that it is an intellectually dead organization incapable of developing any real understanding of the nature of capitalism, of its transitions, or its developments.

The SWP continues to live off the theoretical innovations of Tony Cliff and Michael Kidron from the forties, fifties, and sixties. However, unlike the rest of the left, because it was 'proved essentially correct', by the implosion of Stalinism, it has been able to trade for some considerable time on its rather antiquated political insights. The Party's theory is sound, it has no need to change; like the man in the cartoon that walks off the edge of a cliff the SWP is fine as long as it does not look down.

This is why, despite all appearances to the contrary, it is a sect like any other on the left. Incapable either of engaging with the working class in all its confusing, contradictory, and occasionally nefarious diversity, or with the bewildering fluidity and complexity of capitalist relations of production.

This is why during the years, which have followed ‘the collapse of communism’ the SWP’s apparent strength was the consistency of its approach and the soundness of its ‘brand recognition’, complete with its clenched fist logo. Neither, its understanding of capitalism nor its view of what would be needed to challenge the rule of capital, and ‘the law of value’, departed in any essential manner from the certainties, which the founders of its political tradition had articulated at least fifty-five years ago.

So far so good, it could cope easily with Seattle, it could harangue the World Social Forums for their refusal to take decisions or to lead political initiatives, and it could absorb the development of environmental ideas into its agenda with consummate ease. It could become quintessentially ‘anti-capitalist’ in the modern manner while tirelessly pointing out to variegated activists and to potential members, the danger of being misled by anarchists, funsters, and single-issue libertarians; the Party has always been able assure all and sundry of the overwhelming need for the Revolutionary Party and the wise and sagacious leadership that its unique relationship with the working class enabled it to provide.

Key to the SWP’s capacity to absorb many of the changes in the political landscape wrought by globalization and war since the early nineties was its capacity to employ anti-imperialism in a rather baggy and capacious manner. They could respond quite well to the surprising processes of industrialisation in a number of formerly underdeveloped places in the world without altering their conception of imperialism by welcoming the growth of the industrial working class. Although they could not see capitalist expansion and the opening up of new points of production in what had once been ‘the third world’ as intrinsically progressive they could, of course, greet the growth of the urban working class in a number of rapidly industrialising countries with enthusiasm. In some sense they could characterise the growth of the industrial working class as a vindication of their ideas concerning the

central importance of political organisation in factories, in mines, in transport and in docks, harbours, and airports. In some sense this global expansion of the industrial working class was seen as compensation for the process of deindustrialisation in Britain that has proved to be lethal to their political tradition, forcing their workplace organisations and activities increasingly into the public sector, where the Revolutionary Party finds itself almost wholly dependant upon teachers, nurses, hospital porters, social workers, town hall administrators, and other public employees. And, it is safe to assume that their presence, such as it is, in the Royal Mail and other large public organizations will not survive the intervention of private capital into these sectors.

Although imperialism manifestly no longer simply provokes underdevelopment, it can be seen as a particularly baleful force in the world in which, capital under the protection of the military and financial hegemony of the United States, is given carte blanche to organize the exploitation of natural resources and living labour in any manner that the capitalist class and their power brokers deem suitable. So although the SWP's conception of imperialism appears to have undergone modification and modernisation imperialism is still seen as a product of the necessity of capital relentlessly to intensify exploitation and expand geographically in order to counteract the 'rising organic composition of capital' and 'the tendency of the *rate* of profit to fall'. Imperialism is still seen as a spontaneous product of capitalism's drive to overcome the restraints inherent within the system – for the SWP imperialism is the manner in which capitalism attempts to extend the life of a system, which would have collapsed long ago without the opportunities for expansion provided by colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the massive development of investment in new points of production in poorer parts of the world.

The SWP believes that capitalism long ago lost its genuinely dynamic character and now simply exists in the form of zombie capitalism in which the dead simply feed off the living;⁸ capitalism is incapable of all serious innovation and progressive development. This means that any resistance

⁸ See Chris Harman, *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx*, London: Bookmarks, 2009.

which arises to challenge capitalism or the hegemony of the United States is inherently progressive, regardless of any of its specific social, cultural, or political features. Just as in the nineteen fifties, and sixties, many socialists including those belonging to the SWP's tradition, could readily support nationalists and Stalinists engaged in the struggle against colonialism, and for national self-determination, regardless of the content of a liberation movement's programme or their specific social and political outlook. Such movements were said to be *objectively* progressive, and indeed generally were; in their attitude towards the emancipation of women, their wish to develop education and healthcare, and in the struggle to modernise their respective economies, anti-colonial nationalists were indeed progressive.

The SWP and the left more generally could support such movements with comparative ease irrespective of their often less than prepossessing character regarding democracy, human rights, and trade union organization or socialist politics in general. They were anti-imperialist and were *ipso facto*, progressive.

However, one of the key consequences of the failure of this kind of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist politics has been the emergence of militant Islamic states and movements in which a wholesale appeal to the literal verities of the *Qur'an* and the establishment of theocracies is canvassed, including the endorsement of patriarchal clan and tribal organisations, as bulwarks against capitalist development and the military and economic incursions of imperialism. These developments have evidently been provoked by the failure of nationalist elites to produce economic growth and significant improvements in the conditions of the masses in the Arab world,⁹ in Iran, in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In all these areas religion has been advanced as both a unifying idea and as an emancipatory ideology in the struggle against corrupt local elites and against those in league with American imperialism.

It is in the SWP's response to these new and often bewildering developments, which has exposed the ossification and decay of its capacity to develop a coherent response to contemporary

⁹ See United Nations Development Programme, *Arab Human Development: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*, AHDR, 2009, full text available at: <http://www.arab-hdr.org/contents/index.aspx?rid=5>

events. In response to the murder of 3000 New Yorkers on 9/11 the SWP specifically attacked the ‘War on Terror’ and opposed any armed response in retaliation for the murders. The Party immediately set its face against armed resistance to Al Qaeda, or the Taliban, or indeed to any armed Islamist groups anywhere in the world.¹⁰ As the religious and social outlook of Muslims inevitably came to the political fore the SWP decided to throw in its lot with those defending Muslims engaged in struggle with imperialism in general and with the United States in particular. Moreover, it judged Muslim opinion in Britain, which was broadly hostile to military strikes against Islamists anywhere in the world, as fundamentally progressive because of its anti-imperialist character.¹¹ Of course, the SWP ducked and weaved, formally opposing Islamism, but throughout the nineties identifying opportunities for the Party within what it called the “contradictions” of Islamism. Chris Harman put it like this:

“Socialists can take advantage of these contradictions to begin to make some of the more radical Islamists question their allegiance to its ideas and organisations – but only if we can establish independent organisations of our own, which are not identified with either the Islamists or the state.”

Evidently, there were going to be recruiting opportunities for the Party:

“The need is for a different approach that sees Islamism as the product of a deep social crisis which it can do nothing to resolve, and which fights to win some of the young people who support it to a very different, independent, revolutionary socialist perspective.”¹²

¹⁰ See the Stop The War Coalition, Statement of Aims, first enunciated on September 21, 2001, ten days after the attack on New York and Washington, at: <http://stopwar.org.uk/content/blogcategory/24/41/>

¹¹ See a discussion of the problems with attempting to depict the Muslim-Socialist alliance as progressive in Don Milligan, ‘Unity at All Costs: David Edgar and the left’s alliance for good causes’, May 10, 2008, at Articles & Reviews page on *Reflections of a Renegade* at www.donmilligan.net.

¹² From the Conclusions of Chris Harman, ‘The Prophet and the Proletariat’, *International Socialism Journal*, Number 64, Autumn 1994, full text available at: <http://www.marxists.de/religion/harman/>

Following 9/11 the SWP embarked upon a charm offensive with Britain's Muslim leaders and organizations, and their alliance with George Galloway, the Muslim Council of Britain, and prominent businessmen in the Bengali and Pakistani communities in Britain was the result. This was formalised by the establishment of the Respect Party in 2004 to which the SWP's Central Committee gave its blessing. Prominent members of the SWP were drafted in to run the Respect Party's apparatus and to administer its electoral activities. This was an anti-imperialist alliance in which there were no progressive elements. The alliance was not established for any purpose other than to challenge American and British policy in relation to the struggle against Baathism and Islamism. A notion of 'Islamophobia' was elaborated and endorsed by the SWP in order to discredit anybody who dared to point out the wholly reactionary character of either traditional or militant Islam. Henceforth, hatred of the Muslim religion was to be characterised by the Revolutionary Party as a phobic and political aberration akin to racism.¹³ Despite the fact that it is well known that Islam shares with orthodox Judaism, Roman Catholicism, evangelical Christianity, and Hindu nationalism, a profoundly reactionary and hateful character, the SWP wanted to crush all expressions of opposition to this nasty religion in the furtherance of its attempt to build a base for the Party in the Bengali and Pakistani communities in Britain.

This strategy came to grief when it became apparent that none of the Muslim organisations, imams, or businessmen, were prepared to put up non-Muslim SWP members for election in any local council ward where there was any realistic possibility of being successfully elected. It soon became clear that the Respect Party was a wholly pro-Muslim, pro-Palestinian, organisation, in which the capacity of the SWP to draft in large numbers of non-Muslim students and activists up and down the country cut absolutely no ice with Galloway or with the businessmen and

¹³ In this the SWP has merely participated in a widespread and deliberate attempt to conflate hatred and criticism of the Muslim religion, with hatred and discrimination leveled against people who confess their faith in the *Qur'an* and the tenets of Islam. It is ironic that in this the SWP has lined up with the United Nations, the European Union, and British ministers like Jack Straw.

religious power brokers prominent in Pakistani and Bengali communities. This resulted in an extraordinarily cack-handed split engineered by some of the SWP members in the leadership of Respect. The upshot was the loss of the Respect Party name, its offices, and most of its elected councillors who either defected to the Labour or Tory parties, or remained grouped around George Galloway in *Respect Renewal*.¹⁴

This was a catastrophe for the SWP and it is the fallout and bloodletting, which resulted from the collapse of its alliance with Muslim organisations, which has in the fullness of time, resulted in the departure of many of those SWP members deeply involved in the Respect venture, and in the Stop The War Coalition of socialist, Muslim, and pacifist organisations. This has resulted in many charges from other sects on the left that accuse the SWP of “opportunism” and “unprincipled alliances”, and of the formation of a ramshackle ‘popular front’ that was destined, as many of these sects had wisely predicted, to disintegrate in a shambles.

However, all of these wise words have avoided the fundamental problem that the SWP to all intents and purposes shares a pro-Muslim outlook with the rest of the left and most of their critics on the Internet. The Party’s rather subtle tactical intentions to exploit the contradictions within radical Islam in order to win young Muslims over to a revolutionary perspective is a bit too subtle for most on the left, and has resulted in a blanket defence of Muslims who are depicted as simply the victims of repressive and rapacious imperialist states. In doing so, the SWP and much left-wing opinion, has endorsed the idea, popular in Muslim communities that the *Ummah*¹⁵ is under attack from Islamophobic forces. Far from winning young Muslims over to a more progressive outlook the left has surrendered to the sense of persecution, and to the conspiracy theories, which have come spiralling out of Britain’s Muslim communities, to accuse the Whitehouse in particular, and the Jews in general, for 9/11 and for much else that has redounded to the disadvantage of Muslims everywhere. Similarly, by conspicuously failing to steadfastly advocate a ‘two-state solution’ many on the left have simply gone along with simplistic attacks upon ‘Zionism’ in the

¹⁴ See Don Milligan, ‘Division of Respect’ at Respect Documents on the Documents page of Studies in Anti-Capitalism at www.studiesinanti-capitalism.net, February 13, 2008.

¹⁵ *Ummat al-mu’minin*, the “Community of Believers”.

vain hope that this will be sufficiently distinct from attacks upon ‘Jews’ in order to avoid strengthening anti-Semitism and conspiratorial thoughts in Muslim communities regarding the ‘Jewish Lobby’ and the United States. The upshot of all the subtle and tactical distinctions that many people on the left have traditionally enjoyed making has been to engage in entirely uncritical and undemanding alliances with Muslim organisations and Muslim public opinion, where all attempts at criticism are silenced with accusations of ‘Islamophobia’.

This has obscured the essential truth that the only armed opposition to imperialism is profoundly reactionary. It cannot be said in any sense whatsoever to carry with it any progressive element or emancipatory core capable of resolving the fundamental problems of the masses in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan or anywhere else. Indeed, it is pretty clear that capitalist development in most areas where the Islamists are most conspicuous would, so to speak, be ‘a Godsend’, compared with the obscurantism, fratricidal killings, and backwardness represented by Muslim insurgencies and armed groups.

The SWP because of its hubris in matters theoretical, and because of its belief that it was unscathed by ‘collapse of communism’, is merely taking longer than the rest of the left to collapse in the face of the resurgence of capitalist development.

Consequently, it is most striking that given wage stagnation, looming cuts, mounting unemployment, and evident disarray among the capitalist class in how best to manage a crisis which could be said to have come close to being an existential crisis, that the SWP and the left more broadly has been unable to make any progress at all. On the contrary, the left is in retreat almost everywhere in the face of an inexorable drift to the right in both North America and in Europe. Even the uproar in Greece, Ireland, and Spain, appears to be creating few opportunities for sustained advance by the left.

Much more interesting and more important than having a laugh at the expense of the SWP’s latest ‘popular front’ debacle is to question why it is that the left appears to be politically and intellectually in Carey Street. The SWP is merely a particularly prominent example of this bankruptcy, but it is by no means alone in being unable to grasp the manner in which capitalist

relations of production are expanding throughout the world and raising the standard of living of millions, while simultaneously plunging other millions into poverty and insecurity.

The SWP in common with the left more broadly merely attempts to force all contemporary developments into a straight jacket composed of its own orthodoxies and received opinions. By and large the Party has been unable to articulate a strategy or to develop policies founded upon a dynamic analysis of changing conditions, which demand a dynamic engagement with resurgent capitalism, with the exercise of American power, and with the modern working class which mass migration and technical innovation has refashioned several times over since the SWP's tradition was founded. Consequently, we are faced with a degree of political exhaustion and confusion in the SWP, and throughout the left, which demands much more serious attention than that given to it by the blogotariat and their cheerful but slight discussion forums.