

BRANCH JOURNAL EDITOR'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1987.

In 1986 the Branch decided to revitalise the Branch Journal, and in September I took over editorship of "Red Clerk".

As an SWP member I believe that the Union shouldn't involve itself solely in economic issues, such as members' pay and working conditions, important though they are, but should also function politically: by supporting workers in struggle whether in our own country or South Africa, by fighting racism etc., that is, by taking up political issues and arguments outside the confines of our own workplaces. That is why I've tried in the pages of the Journal to generalise discussion beyond the purely economic and have covered such issues as Ireland, South Africa, AIDS and immigration controls.

At its most effective the Journal should then involve members in political debate through its pages in contributions and letters across the Branch. It may be possible to use these as a basis of beginning to formulate Branch policies in areas the Branch has no position at the moment. e.g. on Ireland.

At a more basic level the Journal acts as a means of informing and involving members in sub-branches in the activities of the Branch.- something which the Branch Executive Committee cannot do itself - it can in this way give real cohesion to the Branch. By explaining the functions of the Union Branch, responsibilities of the Branch Officers and who those officers are; how to contact BMAC and who to go to for information on cancer screening, the Journal should lay the basis for involving members and encouraging people to become active.

The structure of the Journal reflects the decision to balance the specific ('union issues') with the general and political: so each issue of "Red Clerk" has included the regular articles, 'RANK & FILE', 'OUT & ABOUT' which are key and established articles which, in brief, attempt to make links with workers both inside and outside CPSA, and the more lengthy articles and features on the political struggle both in Britain and abroad and on issues like racism and AIDS.

Unfortunately by the time of the AGM I will no longer be editor of "Red Clerk" as I will be leaving the DHSS. Hopefully people have enjoyed the issues of the Journal and also that it will continue to fulfil the functions I believe necessary for an enjoyable and current Union Journal. I would like to thank all the people who have contributed to "Red Clerk" and hope I have laid the basis, during my editorship, for the Journal to become an increasingly valuable asset to the Branch in the future.

MICKI LOEHNER.

BRANCH JOURNAL EDITOR.