

We want our party back!

Rebuild the DSP as a public revolutionary Marxist party again.

By John Percy

[The following is an edited version of the counter-report on DSP perspectives presented on behalf of the NE minority to the 22nd DSP Congress. The vote for the general line of the report and summary was regular delegates: 15 for, 0 abstentions; consultative delegates 10 for, 0 abstentions.]

The urgent task for the DSP at this congress

Comrades, the main task for this DSP congress is to correct the mistaken line we began to implement in 2002-03 and formally adopted at our last congress two years ago.

The clear choice before us is – to *maintain* or *abandon* that false perspective.

What was the essence of the mistake that we made? Essentially, it was our decision to integrate the DSP into the Socialist Alliance, to become just an internal tendency in SA, because we had decided that the SA was “the party we’re building”. To seal that, we changed our name from Democratic Socialist Party to Democratic Socialist Perspective.

In 2005 the NE recognised – unanimously, the NE minority thought – that the objective political situation on which we predicated that major turn was *not there*. The major upsurge we were hoping for did not eventuate; the large number of partners and new class struggle forces were not in the Socialist Alliance; and consequently we were seriously overburdened building two parties.

We also recognised – again unanimously we thought – that this overburdening was showing up in all the important indices by which we could measure our strength:

- We were facing our most serious financial deficit since the mid-1990s, and our national pledge base was declining;

- Sales of *Green Left Weekly* were dropping, and most starkly the number of sellers had fallen dramatically, from just under 200 a week to about 140;
- Resistance, the traditional replenisher of our cadre base, was getting weaker, and many DSP branches no longer had a Resistance branch;
- And most clearly, our membership had dropped from more than 350 to about 270 by the May NC. We had 25% fewer cadres than when we started the Socialist Alliance tactic.

The May national committee meeting unanimously decided on emergency measures to address the worst *organisational* crises, and looked to the rest of the year, and the pre-congress discussion and congress, to correct the mistake of our last congress, and set us on track again *politically*.

But it has emerged in the course of the discussion that the NC majority is unwilling to face up *politically* to our mistake of two years ago. It hopes that we can solve our problems with *organisational* measures, while still implementing the essence of the political line of our last congress.

Politically, still just an internal tendency

De jure we are declaring ourselves a “public revolutionary socialist organisation” again, but *de facto* we remain primarily an internal tendency of the SA. Yes, in May, we agreed to strengthen the “organisation of the DSP”, i.e. its structures for organising work. However, the majority leadership’s perspective rules out any activity or statements that can give the impression – “send signals far and wide” – that we are still building the DSP as a party.

One consequence of being an internal tendency of another party (or party-in formation) is that we can try to organise more of our work through the structures of that other party. But doing this is *not* the fundamental feature of operating as an *internal tendency* of another party. The primary feature of an *internal tendency* is that it does not present its politics *externally*, outside of the host party. The majority perspective *de facto* still operates in this perspective. Their perspective is intolerant to any *external* presentation of the DSP as a party.

- We retain the name we adopted as an internal tendency: Perspective.

- There is a ban on DSP profile at public events: no banners, placards etc.
- DSP leaders and activists will continue to be profiled in *GLW* as SA.
- DSP members will participate in coalitions and other alliances as SA members. (Including even where the SA has ~~no agreed political position, or~~ an inadequate political position, eg. Venezuela).
- Press releases will go out only in the name of SA.
- Nobody must ever say publicly that the DSP is the party we are building, because that will “kill off SA”.

The one possible concession that has been mentioned is the DS Perspective holding public Marxist classes. But the DSP is more than an educational association. It is a revolutionary Marxist party with a responsibility to seek every opportunity to present its revolutionary program and critique. The SA cannot do this for us. While the DSP remains operating as *de facto* primarily an internal tendency, there will be no organisation in Australia declaring itself openly as presenting a revolutionary program and systematically seeking every opportunity to win a hearing for this program and the ideas underpinning it – apart from ~~sectarian~~ groups like the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), Socialist Alternative (Salt), the Socialist Party (SP) and Solidarity.

The urgent tasks

It's *not enough* to run an emergency campaign on finances and a campaign on pledges. It's *not enough* to run a campaign on sales, more blitzes. It's *not enough* for DSP members to run harder on these and other tasks (especially since there are *fewer* of us now.) We have to recognise the wrong political estimates and tactics that led to our weakening, and set a political and organisational course that can start to reverse the damage.

The DSP needs to rescind the political, organizational and constitutional measures that we adopted for formalizing the 2002-03 turn.

We need to shed our delusions that SA has become a party, mass or otherwise, and be realistic about what it is. By doing this, we will return it to a useful campaigning alliance.

We need to return to building the DSP as an open revolutionary Marxist party.

If we do that, we can have a successful year ahead – rebuilding Resistance is possible; Venezuela solidarity is important and can be inspiring; Socialist Alliance can get out of the doldrums that resulted from our fixation on forcing it to become our party.

Attempting to implement the majority line next year will mean we're headed for a very difficult year – our illusions will be shattered, comrades will become demoralized; there'll be a further weakening of the DSP cadre force, a weakening of our branches, and a weakening of Resistance; we'll miss real opportunities in the mass movement, including the trade union movement, but also Venezuela, civil liberties, anti-racism, anti-imperialism. Most importantly, we'll suffer from a further lowering of the political level and cadre development of our party as we try to persist with the "SA as our party" turn.

The 'SA as our party' line is the problem

The line adopted by the last congress is the problem, and the line being presented by the NC majority comrades for this congress is a further problem, compounding our past errors.

The problem is not the comrades who voted for this line, or the comrades who are delegates elected on behalf of the majority platform. I'm sure comrades have spoken and acted and voted in *good faith*, sincerely believing they're doing the best by the party.

But the majority *leadership* comrades who have persisted with this line, and fiercely defended it against criticism from the minority, after the experience of the past two to three years *do* have to take responsibility for their *misleadership*. With leadership comes added responsibility, and accountability.

In the coming 12 months there will be further losses for the party, and political retreats, as a result of trying to implement the majority perspectives.

When that happens, we presume that most or all of the majority leaders will recognise a need to change course. But doing so will be more difficult than doing it now. It will be more difficult because more comrades will feel that they have invested more in the old course. And it will be more difficult because the party and its cadres will have been through another year of political miseducation, another

year in which comrades present themselves nearly always as builders of SA and almost never as revolutionaries.

Everyone agrees that there was a decadisation of the DSP following the turn to integrate the party into SA. But it is extremely short-sighted to regard that decadisation as simply fewer comrades selling *GLW* for fewer hours or reduced pledges because of pressures of work in SA. Those are symptoms, not the essence, of the problem. The essence is a *political* error: trying to use the devotion and enthusiasm of DSP cadres to substitute for the mass forces that we hoped would flow into SA. This error has already distorted our politics; *persisting* in it can only lead to *political degeneration*: that is, an increasing abandonment of the party's revolutionary politics.

A political change needed, back to SA as a campaigning alliance

The majority supporters encompass many different positions regarding SA, and have used a huge number of different descriptions of what SA can or should be now. (A dozen, and growing.) But the bottom line for all of them is that SA, not the DSP, is the party we're building.

The re-imagining of the Socialist Alliance as something less than a party-in-formation, reflected in the decision to stop the integration of DSP resources into SA, also requires a re-imagining of the relationship between SA and the struggle to build the DSP itself.

Over the last two years in particular, building the DSP and building the SA have been envisaged as "intertwined" in a fundamental way. It is also now necessary to re-imagine how to build the DSP, where building the DSP becomes the central strategic task. In re-imagining the project of building the DSP, SA remains an important tactic, but not a general tactical framework, which it has been in recent years for all our work. We need to *disentangle* the DSP and SA.

Such a re-imagining of how to build the DSP means a turn back to re-emphasising many of the lessons of our past experience. But it is *not* a "circling of the wagons" or a turning inwards.

Our resolution on the DSP and SA

The draft resolution on our DSP-SA relations is not perfect. It still has inconsistencies coming out of the difficult situation of the last two years. But it *does* have the key points, and is a start.

There are three key paragraphs in the resolution, which can't be ignored, although many majority comrades consistently do so:

"21. The Socialist Alliance will have to go through a more extended period of united campaigning and regroupment with broader left forces that are generated by a new upturn of resistance to the capitalist neoliberal 'reforms' before it can harness the leadership resources and political confidence to take a significant step to creating a new socialist party...."

"25. In short, the DSP has not been able, and cannot afford, to operate as a purely internal tendency in the Socialist Alliance. The DSP function as a public revolutionary socialist organisation, while continuing to be affiliated to the Socialist Alliance, to build it and to seek to provide political leadership to it."

"34. In accordance with the perspectives outlined above the objectives of the DSP within Socialist Alliance are as follows:

"* To build the Socialist Alliance as a campaigning alliance in the social movements (particularly the trade union movement) that seeks to build, in actions and in words, a new mass workers' party because the greater political unity, confidence and active commitment required to advance this new party project will be forged through such collective struggle."

Comrades should be aware of the history of this document. The first two versions were not acceptable to minority comrades on the national executive. With the acceptance by the majority of the most important of the amendments we moved, we could vote for the third version at the August 15 NE. But obviously the resolution has turned out to be open to interpretation, with the majority ignoring these three key sections, and interpreting it as a continuation of the false line of the last congress.

The different currents in the majority

The common element in the NE majority line amounts to the emergency drive to get *GLW* sales up and raise more money, plus preserving the "SA as our party" line, if at a slower pace. It's an exaggerated view of what SA has actually been reduced to – that is, hype – plus a large dollop of *hope* that things will change in 2006,

with new activists flooding in based on a fightback against the Industrial Relations laws.

But within this majority bloc there are not only a multitude of descriptions and definitions of what SA currently is or could be, but also three distinct tendencies, as the PCD in *The Activist* ~~Vol. 15, No. 25~~ by Melbourne minority comrades pointed out:

“The minimalist interpretation integrates into its perspective those elements of the resolution that emphasise the practical importance of rebuilding the DSP....

“The maximalist tendency can’t let go of the earlier hopes we had for SA. It has no practical perspectives for how to move forward but a complete reluctance to accept the conclusions drawn in the resolution about the conditions that would be necessary for us to re-launch SA as a new party project. At its best this tendency is banking on a major upswing in the mass movement – specifically generated by a fight back in the labour movement – to provide a new basis for building SA as a new left party. At its worst, this tendency errs toward SA as a permanent tactic, justified on the basis that as it is “not enough to say that we *advocate* building a ‘new mass workers’ party’ in the abstract”, we must be building SA (or something like it) all of the time. The only practical recipe put forward by this tendency is “we just have to work harder”, i.e. we just don’t call people enough on the phone....

“The third tendency in the majority is a pragmatic one, represented by the report given to the NC itself, and fundamentally concerned with keeping the SA experiment going. This is why the report consisted of an emphasis on specific measures to keep the DSP afloat, and left the development of SA priorities to the pragmatism of the branches, almost regardless of variation.”

This is a good snapshot of the varied composition of the majority leadership, which includes a few other positions as well. (There’s *much* greater political homogeneity among supporters of the minority platform.)

But we also need to understand the *dynamic* within the majority supporters, which *direction* the majority bloc is likely to head in. Then we’d have to say that it’s increasingly the *maximalist* tendency that has been calling the shots, and thus will be dominating the DSP’s line of march in 2006, and that is the majority’s real line.

Eliminate the hype, and face up to the reality

We have to drop an unfortunate feature of our Socialist Alliance work in the last year – we have to cut the hype and exaggeration.

This is very much linked to being able to assess our experiences realistically, and face up to our mistakes. If we don't, or can't, do that, then the resort is to hype. It's bad for our comrades. It's bad for our friends.

If we honestly think about SA branches, we have to admit: Despite local or temporary successes, on a national scale there's not much there beyond ourselves. It's demoralising for comrades to have to go through the motions. And it's getting worse.

In fact, comrades, *our drive to turn SA into our party* has almost killed SA. We're doing to SA what the British SWP tried to do to Socialist Alliance there, ~~and now is increasingly doing to Respect~~. Political realities are proving stronger than our intentions: more and more, SA is nothing but a front for the DSP. Political activists outside the DSP are recognising this much more rapidly than the party majority's leaders.

The task ahead is to *revive* SA as something real, to get it back some of the life it had in the first year or two, and save SA's reputation. If we continue on the majority's course, SA will be useless for any future expansion and regroupment efforts.

Able to admit our mistakes

It's important to be clear and honest about the past.

- We made a *mistake* two years ago. We should call it by its right name.
- We made a wrong *assessment* of the objective political situation;
- We made a wrong *prediction* about where things were going;
- As a result, we took wrong political and organisational *decisions*.

We can't just jump to something slightly different and move on. We need to know *why* we change course; *what* mistakes we made. We need an objective assessment now for our comrades today, and for comrades in the future.

Liquidation of the public politics of the DSP

An essential element of our “SA as our party” turn was that the DSP became just an internal tendency in SA, a “Perspective”. The idea was that more and more of the DSP organisation takes place within SA and *also* that all public political interventions and propaganda be carried out *through* SA. The DSP would not appear *externally*.

The majority claims that they’ve drawn back from the integration into SA and thus are not still pursuing the mistaken line of the last congress. But all they really recognise is a change of pace – “the new party project is progressing slower than we anticipated” – and that therefore the organisation of our members is better done through DSP structures rather than SA structures. They claim that, since the May NC, they’ve made adjustments for the misestimation of the objective political circumstances. Yes, we’ve restored DSP branch meetings, doing the organisation within the DSP framework, (organising to sell the paper and raise money) but *the essential political element of DSP as just a tendency in SA remains*. The DSP remains de facto *internal* to SA.

SA is still being projected as the “party” (despite all the differing circumlocutions). The *program* is the SA program – left social democratic, bourgeois reformist.

How is the *DSP’s* public face presented? As SA! We use the DSP structures to organise ourselves to present to the public as SA. We become SA, with SA’s *politics*. At rallies, all the socialist organizations have a stall except the DSP, which hides behind SA. We’re the clearest revolutionary Marxist organizations, but we can’t compete with ~~pretenders like~~ SALT, or the Socialist Party, to recruit the activists who are moving towards revolutionary politics. Even Resistance has lost much of its public profile due to the fixation of just SA as the public organization that we build.

Thus we haven’t moved away from being *primarily* an internal tendency in SA. Majority comrades are increasingly projecting such a situation as the natural, necessary state of affairs – what’s needed in Australian conditions; how “any revolutionary party worth its salt” should operate.

We have to be frank. This is nothing more than *liquidation* of the revolutionary party into a left social democratic formation. *Strangely* and sadly, we are liquidating into a party that consists of not much more than ourselves.

The real experience of our previous reach-out efforts

The majority line forces them into the position of having to falsify the real experience of our past regroupment efforts.

The '80s were an important formative period for our party. At the beginning of the '80s we broke with the US SWP, our close collaborators up to that point, and then in the mid-'80s formally left the Fourth International. We came to terms with our Trotskyist beginnings.

The reach-out approach, the flexible party-building tactics that we tried to implement through most of the '80s, have been referred to quite a few times in the discussion. Comrades *should* study our history, it's vital, but it's important that we don't distort that history, we shouldn't be one-sided. Don't misuse that history to *negate* the real lessons we should be retaining.

In the '80s we had an impressive range of efforts to reach out, we grabbed every opportunity that emerged. But we did *not* get stuck on failed tactics. (We reassessed our old entry tactic into the ALP for a start.) We never hung on to a failed tactic, converting it into a permanent one. And after each effort, we looked for *new* possibilities, explored everything.

We usually needed some recovery time after each effort. Those efforts *did* cost us. We had to go through "recaderisation" in early 1984, in 1985, in 1987, and again in 1990-91.

So let's recognise the *real* history, the *real* experiences. Let's not rewrite it to fit the majority's current schema. And especially, let's not invoke Jim Percy dishonestly in aid of the majority's *errors*.

We also need to understand exactly what *GLW* was. It was a "regroupment" effort without organized partners, trying to mop up the radical individuals, the exes. We were very successful to an extent, but the hands-on involvement of these people didn't last very long. Some individuals persisted as supporters. But it was the *DSP* running it.

So we should be careful, it's not a *principle* that our paper is non-party. It was *possible* to build such a paper while we still had a firm Leninist party to back it and build it. Without the *DSP* and *Resistance*, *GLW* wouldn't have survived. It is absurd to argue that *GLW*'s success

as a broad paper means that the revolutionary party can be similarly broad.

Two other key features of the '80s

Reach-out and tactical flexibility were a feature of the '80s, but I'd like to refer to a few other features of the '80s that are very much connected.

1. Our full-time party school

Throughout the '80s we ran a full-time live-in *party school* for our cadres. We had our own building, a 10-bedroom house in Dulwich Hill, where we ran cadre schools for 10 comrades at a time, lasting four months. Three schools a year, for 10 years, meant about 300 comrades went through. This included about a dozen comrades from parties in the Asian region. We also squeezed in one-month schools.

These schools involved very intensive reading, and discussions. The main texts were Lenin's *Collected Works*. Each student went away with their annotated set – 47 volumes. This was a very intense school studying Marxism and Leninism, and deepening the sense of party spirit/comradeship, deepening the commitment of comrades to take the path of professional revolutionaries. So to imagine that the '80s were marked just by our reach-out efforts to broader forces would be misleading; we were also seriously deepening our understanding of Leninism.

2. Our political thinking out process

We were also thinking things out for ourselves throughout the '80s, becoming an independent, thinking machine – an important feature of a Leninist party. This political thinking out was related to our school, and to our international independence, and tactical flexibility. It resulted in some very important reports and documents that we wrote and adopted throughout the '80s. These documents are still very much the programmatic foundation of our party.

- The document “Debate on Afghanistan”, the key document where we first stood up to the US SWP, published in 1981.
- The document on “The Vietnamese Revolution and its leadership”, 1984.
- “The struggle for socialism in the imperialist epoch” (our “Red book”), 1984.
- “The Cuban Revolution and its extension”, 1984.

- “The ALP and the fight for socialism”, 1985.
- “Socialism and human survival”, 1990.
- “The program of the DSP”, 1990.

These documents were the collective product of the strong leadership team we’d developed (although I’d point out that in nearly every one of those documents the first draft was written by either Allen Myers or Doug Lorimer) and in that decade we produced many other very important documents and reports on the key changes and debates we had, leaving the FI, analyzing the US SWP’s degeneration, assessing our experiences in the Nuclear Disarmament Party, our regroupment and reach out efforts etc.

We can be very proud of that very productive period in our party’s history; these were quality Marxist analyses, often original, mostly standing the test of time. We were breaking with our past, reaching out, looking for ways to grow, but also deepening our theoretical understanding, throughout the party, and with some very important political and theoretical achievements.

The second last paragraph in our 1986 ALP document, from which we quote for the resolution for this congress, should be enough to sober us up and make us refrain from trying to distort the *actual* experience of the ’80s:

“It is particularly important to be on guard against arbitrary schemas about how the class struggle will or should develop, for these prevent revolutionaries from recognizing new or unexpected opportunities to contribute to the class struggle. The task of Marxists is not to make speculative predictions about the future, but to help create it by building a revolutionary party in the daily struggles of the working class and its allies.”

As Jim Percy said in a report, also in 1986: “Our organizational approach must above all be concrete. We cannot afford a timeless approach. Our approach cannot be based on our wishes or on schemas about how the class struggle should unfold.” (“Building the revolutionary party”, 1986, p56)

A tactic in desperate search of a rationale

The majority line also forces them into falsifying the whole experience and history of SA, from its beginnings, through NAC, and the situation with the militant trade union current.

If delegates decide to adopt the majority perspective and it is actually implemented in full, this will amount to having reaffirmed the “SA as our party” tactic, in effect converting it into our permanent strategy.

The DSP’s overriding strategy has always been the construction of a mass revolutionary party, which we consider a prerequisite for socialist revolution in Australia. But to achieve the unchanging goal of a mass revolutionary party, we need the utmost flexibility in tactics.

Persisting in a failed tactic, against the evidence of experience, can destroy the party as a healthy organisation.

There are many examples in the history of the Marxist movement where the mistake has been made of elevating a tactic into a strategy. Three major examples from our own experience and from our collaborators in the international Trotskyist movement should educate and inoculate us against this error.

First is the example of the entry tactic, Marxists joining a Labor or social-democratic party to reach broader forces.

The second is the example of rural guerrilla warfare, the tactic adopted by the majority of the Fourth International at its 1969 congress, which was elevated into a strategy.

The third is the example of the US SWP, which did so much in inspiring and educating us in the ’60s and ’70s, but then degenerated comprehensively when they converted their tactic of the “turn to industry” – in anticipation of a big workers’ radicalisation in the US and internationally – into a permanent strategy.

Reviving SA after nearly killing it

There have been several distinct stages in the SA experience.

Firstly, there was SA Mark 1, our initiation of the process, and the first few years. Remember, comrades, what prompted us to think about this tactic? The decision by the British Socialist Workers Party to contemplate election work after two decades of abstaining totally from it. We thought, here’s an opportunity to make an approach to the local ISO, for joint work, joint election campaigns, and a regrouping of the left. They either had to respond positively, or suffer a political blow and organisational losses.

So we should be honest about the origins of the SA tactic, “SA Mark 1”. It was not to link up with a militant trade union current. That only got raised as a possible partner later. It was not to link up with the potentially large layer of political independents and former members of left groups. It was *specifically* aimed at the ISO, to pre-empt any move by them to electoral work, and to discuss regroupment with them.

We were excited about the prospects of left unity in the first years of SA, in 2001-02. It was a good, positive feeling. But there’s no remnant of that in SA any longer; all the other sects-party affiliates are for sabotage, not for unity.

Secondly, there’s SA Mark 2, the period (beginning 2002-03) when we started to think that the Socialist Alliance might be able to become a new, broader party, and the big step in that process, our gamble of becoming an internal tendency in the SA.

It’s this second period, especially the last two years, that has clearly failed, and which we have to correct.

We’re now in yet another stage of our Socialist Alliance experience, which will be different from those earlier ones. This new stage, however, is conditioned by the reality that SA has almost been killed off by us trying to force the transformation into a party without the forces needed as partners. No amount of phone work or sending people membership cards will revive SA while the DSP tries to force it to become something it cannot *yet* be. Our task now is to revive it before it dies completely. This means firstly to recognise its reality, but then to use the best of SA’s achievements to continue alliance-building, collaborating etc. in order to help bring about the fightback conditions that are necessary for a new party.

The suddenly disappeared NAC

In this debate, where we should be making a comprehensive assessment of SA over the last two years, NAC has hardly been mentioned. Since their defeat at the June SA National Conference, they’ve vanished, not just from SA, but from *our history*.

But for the two years before that, they were a central part of our perspectives for SA, our key ally. We propped them up helped them get elected as conference delegates and election candidates, and supported their election to the SA NE in greater weight than their actual numbers. ~~made sure they were elected as delegates to~~

~~conferences, preselected as candidates for elections, put them on the SA NE in greater weight than their actual numbers.~~ We were belatedly *forced* to acknowledge this in the lead up to the 2005 SA conference, but we made no assessment of why or how we made this mistake. But now, they've just vanished, and it's considered bad taste to even talk about them.

The tactic of making SA “the party we build” has clearly failed, whether it's justified as a revolutionary left regroupment, or building a new mass workers party, or the dozen other variants that have emerged in this discussion. The *political conditions* were not there, we overestimated the state of the movement, or underestimated what would be required to propel significant new forces into activity in a new party, or hoped that the different movements that arose in 1998-2000 were the harbinger of bigger class struggles and radicalisation. That tactic has failed.

But as well as objectively assessing the broad political situation, surely we could tell something was wrong by the actual situation *inside* SA itself:

- The affiliates were not collaborating with us, they were dropping their SA activity (key was the ISO, and in 2004 they made a conscious decision to pull back);
- The NAC ~~crisis/disaster experience~~;
- Few of the militant trade union current were becoming active in SA;
- There were very few other independent activists in SA.

Even if our hopes, and hectic activity, obscured our perspective on the broad political picture, surely we could all see the situation in SA itself – it was us and not much more. Especially, with the exit of NAC on which we'd based so much of our hopes for the past two years, surely a major political rethink of our line was required, not just an organizational adjustment?

The 2005 SA conference is often hailed as a success because we won a national executive structure that was more workable. ~~This was a defeat for NAC, which had become hostile to the DSP.~~ But it also represented a further NARROWING of SA. Another bloc had left SA (NAC), alongside the affiliates which had become less active or not active at all. The disappearance of NAC from our history represents a refusal to acknowledge a false political assessment of the NAC by the DSP leadership; the hailing of the SA 2005 Conference as a great success, fails to note the further narrowing of the composition of SA.

With the NAC exit, the rationale for the “SA as our party” line became totally dependent on our hopes for the militant trade union current, but they have very minimal actual involvement in SA. So the line is dependent on yet another hope, another forecast, that with a fightback against the IR laws in 2006, militant trade unionists will start flooding in to SA. We’re repeating the mistake of three years ago, banking everything on a speculative prediction about the future.

Why the heat?

Some comrades ask: Why has this political discussion become so sharp? Isn’t it just a difference over the allocation of resources?

No. “SA as our party” was a fundamentally flawed tactic, which has now settled in as a flawed strategy. It will lead to worse consequences, and the political problems are already starting to grow.

The minority perspective is logical, once you realistically look at our experience: don’t persist in a failed tactic. It *is* necessary to “re-imagine”. But that was not done. What we’ve seen is a retreat *back* to a failed tactic, keeping the *political* integration into SA, even if drawing back from the integration of our *physical* resources. The DSP does the hard work, but SA is the public face of our politics, and our cadre formation is stunted, new comrades are taught in practice that left social democratic politics are the real thing.

The heat also flows from the nature of the mistake, and the hype and illusions needed to keep it from collapsing.

The minority has made a sharp analysis, warning of the mistake and the dangers of persisting in it. But the majority looks on us as though we’re wrongly airing dirty linen in public. It’s a bit like the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, “The Emperor’s new clothes”, and we’re the little kid who points out the obvious truth, which everyone else has been conned into shutting up about.

What are the possible responses to such a scenario?

One response involves weaving a new magic coat, putting up more smoke and mirrors.

Another range of responses is to get the kid out of the parade, shut her up, shoot the messenger. ~~Thus you mock the discussion, as Comrade Peter Boyle did during his October NC report. Or you argue that “we shouldn’t have had this discussion, it just stirs up the~~

~~demoralised elements,” as he said to Comrade Iggy Kim at that NC. Or you call all the minority, “demoralised elements”, or impute ulterior motives to them.~~

The discussion is heated because the difference is between recognising that “the party we build” is the DSP, and persisting with the failed perspective that “the party we build” is the Socialist Alliance.

Rebuilding the DSP

Comrades, the framework for this congress should be, rebuilding the DSP, and our perspectives for 2006. There are good prospects for rebuilding, but not if we’re stuck with the old line.

At the centre of the October NC report I presented a clear listing of exciting party-building projections for 2006.

1. Concentration on rebuilding Resistance.

Resistance has been the main source of new cadres for our party throughout our history. We need this process to resume.

2. Making more of *Green Left Weekly* as a general tactic.

Green Left Weekly has to fully make use of the breadth we have and the respect we’ve won through it. It’s our biggest reachout vehicle – “the most valuable political institution in the left”, as our resolution states.

3. Reorganising Socialist Alliance as an important tactic.

It has to be “a campaigning alliance”.

4. Venezuela solidarity.

We have to take the lead, setting up Venezuela solidarity committees, led openly by DSP members.

5. Early projection of APISC, and beginning building against Bush.

APISC will be at Easter 2007, and we’ll get out early invites and organising underway, early leaflets and posters.

'A public revolutionary socialist organisation'

The key task is to get us functioning "as a public revolutionary socialist organization" again. This section of the resolution (Paragraph 25) is blatantly ignored, or denied outright, by the majority.

Restoring our name Democratic Socialist *Party* can be the symbol, but the *political essence* of the change is the key.

We need to reestablish the DSP as the organising framework for our tactics in the movement. We need to reorganise the DSP around the paper – organizing regular *Green Left Weekly* public forums, at least monthly, weekly organising, education, building that in *GLW* itself. Priority needs to be given to DSP branch meetings and fractions, encouraging comrades to argue our politics in public again.

The DSP needs a public projection as a revolutionary Marxist party. Liquidation of the public face of the DSP means there is only the public face of SA etc.

I'm puzzled by the *vehemence* of the reaction against "a DSP banner or two" at demos. What are the implications of this? The majority claim that resurfacing DSP "would kill off SA" How? Is it that fragile?

Our guideline should be: Don't automatically do things in the name of SA if we aren't doing it with allies.

We should be presenting our revolutionary Marxist views everywhere there's a hearing for them. We should be on a constant search for every opportunity to win a hearing for revolutionary Marxism. ~~(If you start heckling every reference to revolutionary Marxism as "Spartacism", as a few majority comrades have been doing in Sydney, then we've reached a sorry state.)~~

And as a public revolutionary organisation, we should be reviving *pride* in the party.

Cadre renewal

Is cadre renewal possible with the NC Majority's line? It's not, ~~as I argue in *The Activist* Vol. 15, No. 18~~. In fact, our resolution makes this clear:

“Socialist Alliance structures remain too loose and weak to win, educate and train new socialist activists ...” (Paragraph 24)

Real revolutionary Marxist education and cadre creation take place *within the framework of* a properly functioning Leninist party.

The whole perspective of the majority reduces cadre renewal to a formula of:

1. Organisational tasks, i.e. integration through involvement in the internal (emergency) committees: finances, sales etc.
2. Classes.

They substitute Marxism classes for Marxist practice – the collective organisational form of which would be fractions and other DSP forums for collectively organising ourselves to project Marxist politics broader than the party. For the majority the collective framework is SA so Marxism classes become the political emergency measure that is added to sales committees and other emergency measures.

Some of the majority supporters are taking the mistake further, *downplaying* the central role of Resistance in our cadre renewal throughout our history – this has been argued in the PCD – and *embellishing* the value of the older recruits who might come via SA – we *know* the future of the revolution is with the youth. And there’s terrible mis-education as a consequence.

Organisational patches for a political problem

Is the May NC emergency campaign enough? Not unless we address and correct the wrong political line that got us into the crisis. The line from the NC majority is: keep the wrong line about SA as a party, but push even harder on the party-building tasks.

Firstly, we can’t do both at the same time, it will be stop-start. The biggest problem with the emergency measures, which the NE majority is in denial about, is that they worked *because* SA went on hold. It’s been on hold essentially since May.

Secondly, this approach won’t resolve the political problem, and the problem of cadres. We have to ask – *Why* do we have to go on a drive to recadreise?

Thirdly, face up to the depth of our crisis. We all realize Resistance branches have disappeared in many cities. We’re now also on the

verge of losing DSP branches, and permanent emergency measures will do nothing to begin to turn this around.

Nevertheless, there are specific DSP-building tasks we have to stress, and that will be covered in a later report.

There are two particular areas where the majority line will cut us off from real chances of organizational growth and political consolidation – Resistance and Venezuela solidarity.

Rebuilding Resistance

Resistance rebuilding is a crucial part of our DSP party-building perspectives in the period ahead.

The crisis in Resistance is definitely, if not exclusively, a casualty of our gamble on transforming the Socialist Alliance into a party. Resistance is probably now the weakest in our history. Our party leadership, both nationally and in branches, almost stopped giving assistance to Resistance leaders. That close collaboration and assistance has to resume, to ensure a strong focus on recruiting and developing youth cadres.

Centrality of Venezuelan solidarity work in 2006

We also need to stress the centrality of the Venezuelan revolution, and our solidarity with it, in 2006.

We will rebuild Resistance through Venezuela solidarity. But Venezuelan solidarity is not just for Resistance. Central DSP comrades have to be assigned to lead, in each branch, and nationally.

In leading this work we have to be clear and unequivocal in our support for the Venezuelan leadership and its closest allies, the Cuban Communist Party. That's not possible if we operate as the Socialist Alliance (unless we just rebadge).

APISC and ASAP

A big focus of our work for the next 18 months should be building a huge APISC in April 6-9, 2007. It can be a stage of our intervention into:

- The anti-Bush protests, round APEC, probably in September;
- The political propaganda and education response that will be raised by discussion of APEC;
- The possible re-launch of Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific (ASAP), before or at APISC.

The last APISC gathered over 500 people. We had almost no lead time to build the conference and were hampered by the SA framework, so we were not able to profile the DSP as the real engine behind the conference nor as the source of the political ideas presented by our comrades.

Grasping the true nature of the objective situation, unhampered by dependence on a predicted upsurge in a particular sphere, and with sufficient lead time, we should already have begun working on a plan to gather at least 1000 people in APISC 2007.

Resuming our international work

We also have to resume our international work, our collaboration and discussion with other Marxist parties, especially in the Asian region, and resume it as the DSP.

This is especially true in the context of the Venezuelan revolution, and developing relations with the Venezuelan and Cuban leaderships, and also with the Communist Party of Vietnam. We're experiencing a stepping up of our comradely relations with the Vietnamese Communist Party and hope to get an invitation to their Congress in June.

We can't do it with an SA hat. ~~For example, where the DSP pays, a DSP leader travels, then tries to force on an SA hat, but speaks on behalf of the DSP program and ideas, where such views have not been discussed, let alone agreed to, in the SA.~~

In the PCD period, including in oral PCD sessions, leaders of the majority have argued several times that "taking positions on international questions is something that we have to overcome".

That is a total misunderstanding and distortion of the lessons we drew as we broke from Trotskyism and left the Fourth International. The Nicaraguan Revolution *helped* us come to terms with our past, reassessing the Cuban Revolution.

We have to continue developing our collaboration with other parties in the Asian region – in Indonesia, East Timor, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Mauritius, South Korea.

We have to continue the production of *Links*, regularly at three issues a year, and find ways to step up its distribution. (For the last two years, *Links* has been produced only twice a year, primarily because comrades lack the time to write for it, and the time to carry out tasks like proofreading.) It's an important part of our international work, as well as a place for our own longer documents and theoretical articles, important for the education of our cadres.

Party spirit and psychology

The perspective of our last congress was that the DSP should be "withering away". We were "dissolving ourselves into the Socialist Alliance". That was the psychology. We must reject *every remnant* of that.

We need a conscious effort to project ourselves again, not fall into wearing the SA hat by default.

There's no party spirit in SA, because it's not a party. We had a party spirit in the DSP, and we need to rekindle it. From that we do better, in all our political and organisational tasks: increasing our *GLW* sales; increasing our pledge base; re-building Resistance; hegemonising the public discussion of politics on the left through *GL* forums.

We need that party loyalty, and party spirit, to encourage younger comrades to go on full-time, to become lifetime revolutionaries, to make a sacrifice for the revolutionary party.

Burying the DSP in SA for another year (or longer!) in the forlorn hope that SA will progress towards becoming a new party is a very narrow, internal perspective. That's akin to "circling the wagons". (Many of those SA branches are very narrow circles!)

There's a much broader, exciting, positive perspective available, of building the DSP, leading the Venezuela solidarity campaign, rebuilding Resistance, using SA where it's useful, and being in a much

stronger position to take advantage of all political openings – that will inspire comrades to greater efforts, and more reach-out efforts, and allow us to recruit and integrate more new cadres.

With this perspective, we can see great growth opportunities for Resistance, and we can see real opportunities for the DSP to grow considerably in the two years ahead. There's a challenge for our youth! There's a real possibility of excitement about revolutionary politics again!

Jim Percy gave a party-building report at the DSP NC, October 7, 1991, where he pointed out: "One of the things we've done is to try every tactic to break out of our isolation. That's what we did in the 1980s, and there's a sort of danger in doing that, in and of itself – in downplaying the importance and permanency of our party, in unsettling comrades who start to look for a breakthrough or even begin to confuse our ideas with the less formed ideas of others on the left." (*Traditions, Lessons and Socialist perspectives*, p.78)

We had to emphasise the party again then, emphasize party-building and recadreisation!

Danger signs of degeneration

There's a danger of further political and organisational degeneration if we continue on the majority course, and there have been some political signs already.

- We lose objectivity. Hype rules.
- We lose our critical vision. We fudge on the *GLW* coverage of Greg Combet's speech. We pull punches in relation to the trade union bureaucrats' opportunism.
- We downplay the significance of the Venezuelan revolution.
- We dumb down our politics. (~~Nobody criticized Comrade Barry Healy's proposal in the PCD regarding *GLW*, writing in words of no more than two syllables—we won't be able to talk about Socialist Alliance, there's three syllables in socialist, Barry.~~)
- The "just do it" approach.
- Apolitical moralizing. ~~As Comrade Paul Benedek said in a report to a Brisbane PCD meeting, "The ALP/Greens want you to support the minority".~~
- The DSP has been rebadged publicly as SA. And now comrades want to extend it to Resistance, seeing it just as an "anti-Howard" youth organization.

- There's the mis-education of new Resistance comrades, ~~one comrade arguing in *The Activist* that SA is a mass workers' party now!~~
- The escalating political liquidation of the revolutionary Marxist party.
- And finally there are new "theoretical" justifications ~~– the Peter Boyle's last contribution in *The Activist*, and reaffirmed here, where he argued~~ argument that "building the DSP was a tactic" in the '90s – exactly *who* was supposed to be pursuing that tactic? The DSP? ~~(Is building the DSP only a tactic? Peter Boyle (*The Activist* Vol. 15, No. 22, p37)~~

There are also organizational signs:

- Commandism replaces collective work.
- ~~Heckling or harassing comrades who support the minority position takes place.~~
- ~~Mocking Downplaying~~ the discussion, ~~downplaying~~ what should be the cornerstone of democratic centralism. ~~It's "a discussion we shouldn't have had".~~
- The characterisation of minority supporters as "demoralized".
- ~~The "Refute" motion, which was an extremely embarrassing motion for our party to pass.~~
- ~~The threats to impose a non-existent rule about political discussion, correspondence, and meetings. (See Cannon's 1966 letter, in our *Building the Revolutionary Party* book, 1997)~~
- ~~Finally, one of the worst things in the discussion was the charge by Comrade Dick Nichols in the Melbourne oral PCD discussion that if the minority position won the DSP would be "uninhabitable". Think of the implications of that, comrades.~~

Unity in action

I urge delegates to take seriously their responsibilities in deciding the future course of our party, and to rise above the misrepresentations of the minority position. Think seriously about the dangerous, liquidationist path presented by the majority leaders, and vote against that course.

Whatever the result, we'll test out our course, with unity in action, implementing democratic centralism.

But this process is not just one-sided. It's *not* just the minority implementing the majority line. And it does not mean that the minority must recant its views. It's "unity in action", not "unity in thought".

It's *also* a process of the *majority* testing out the results against *their* line, and comparing it with the minority analysis, line, and projections.

It requires honesty, and openness, on both sides.

The choices in 12 months' time

What are the likely options in 12 months' time, if the majority line is adopted?

Option A. The majority line is proved correct – SA starts to become a real party, new forces/partners emerge and are integrated into the ranks and leadership of SA. Resistance rebuilds, new cadres are trained, and the DSP cadre base grows again. Great.

Like everyone in the DSP, I hoped that SA would become the new broad party. But the objective circumstances do not exist, and the minority perspectives outlined in this report will have to be implemented sooner or later.

Option B. Nothing much changes with SA, it remains pretty much just the DSP. So we try yet another jump, a new project, e.g. a Respect-type outfit, or a Workers Charter, or a "Solidarity", without politically assessing the failure of SA.

Option C. Nothing much changes with SA, it remains pretty much just the DSP. So we drift back to *de facto* building the DSP as our party, SA withers further. Again, without any political assessment of our SA experiment.

Option D. Nothing much changes with SA, it remains pretty much just the DSP. There's no breakthrough with SA, but we keep it as our main public face, our halfway house. As is starting to happen now the liquidation of the revolutionary Marxist party proceeds further, in favour of a left social democratic party. Some comrades in the discussion who already favour this course would dissolve the DSP into SA.

With options B and C, the DSP has been organizationally weakened further by an unnecessary extra year of a wrong line, but the damage

done politically is far more serious – the party as a whole hasn't learned from its experience.

With option D, the majority line leads to dangerous and negative results – dissolving the DSP into SA. Options B and C might delay the disaster, and some majority leaders can claim that whatever happens, it will prove the majority line correct, but with that approach the party withers slowly. We don't learn from our mistakes, our cadres are discouraged from thinking objectively, the party stops being a thinking machine.

Option E. The minority line.

Tests, now and in the future

At the start of this discussion I stated that it would be an important test for the party, and a test for all comrades.

We have had a very intensive discussion, despite the majority comrades' reluctance, and mocking of the discussion. But the *real* democracy in the party will be tested in the year ahead.

For the political line that the majority is reaffirming, I think we've had ample test in the past two to three years. That line has failed. The majority want to repeat it, try it again, in the hope that political circumstances and the objective situation will change to match the predetermined tactic. But unfortunately, the results will be the *same* – *failure*.

Predictably, after that failure, attempts will be made to shift the blame on to the minority. (~~In fact this was aired right at the beginning of this discussion~~). But the real problem is the persistent refusal of the majority leadership to recognize the mistake we made, two to three years ago, and to repeat it now. So the majority is likely to repeat the excuses:

- That the minority made it “a self-fulfilling prophecy”;
- That the minority's line on SA has “scared off” the militant trade union current;
- That the minority sabotaged the implementation. (Well, we haven't sabotaged the implementation, and aren't likely to, in any area, campaigns or party tasks – if you look at the *GLW* top sellers list over the last year, you'll find the minority comrades there in greater proportion to their numbers ...)

So I urge comrades, don't *demonise* the minority or its *line*. Use it as the *yardstick* to measure honestly the DSP's performance in the coming year.

Defending democracy and party unity

We are fervently committed to defending *democracy* in the party, and defending the *unity* of the party. The minority will be the best defenders of democracy and unity in the DSP, upholding the traditions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and the early decades of the US SWP.

The PCD, from a minority viewpoint, has been a record of increasing political clarity that we can be very proud of. It's been politically satisfying, for all comrades who participated in that discussion. We ended up seeing more clearly. (And a few comrades have commented on this at the congress, who *aren't* supporters of the minority, that the discussion has been very useful, something we can be proud of.)

From a majority viewpoint, comrades, what can you take from the discussion? Although I can't speak for you, I don't think it's more clarity. It seems that more contradictions have emerged, the majority is more heterogeneous. Was it a satisfying discussion? I wouldn't think so, because the majority leaders didn't *want* the discussion. And there's increasing *anger* at the minority, blaming comrades for their criticism of the majority leaders' political retreat.

Nevertheless, in implementing and testing out the line adopted in the year ahead, we need to reaffirm the basic principles on which we've built our party so far:

Make use of all comrades. ~~We don't build our party by putting other comrades down.~~ We have to emphasise and make use of comrades' strengths.

We shouldn't "spend" cadres unnecessarily. There should be no "forced march" approach when we find we're going against the objective political realities. We need politically stimulating interventions for comrades, and comrades need time for reading and education.

We need an atmosphere of comradeship. We might come from different social backgrounds, and might have very different things we do in our spare time, outside politics, but our political perspective and project unites us as comrades. We need to restate this. There is a

constant pressure on our comrades against this approach. Individualism rules in bourgeois society – and we are not immune from this pressure.

The party needs comradely relations between all of us to operate properly. We don't have a hierarchical view and practice. We don't operate through orders from above, comrades are politically committed.

Our goal is to build a strong, Leninist party, with a base in the workers and oppressed, and a clear political program, and we need to build *an inclusive leadership team*, even with political differences. That's a lesson of successful revolutionary leadership teams.

Conclusion

The majority line is based on hope and hype. Continuing with the line of SA as “the party we build” ensures a repetition of the tough last three years – frustration in SA, more demoralization, decaderisation.

We would *all* have been extremely happy if the SA tactic adopted at our last congress had resulted in us leading and organising thousands of militant working class activists on a class struggle program. It would have been *worth* cloaking our revolutionary socialist perspective for a while for that. But it hasn't succeeded. ~~What we have are a few dozen, not very active contacts. It's not a party. It's not a party.~~ It hasn't the solidity or weight making it worthwhile to continue that sacrifice of our politics.

With the minority perspective, we can build the DSP as our party again, rebuild Resistance, benefit from our support for the Venezuelan revolution, have flexibility regarding SA, doing what's realistic, and make a thorough political assessment of the whole “SA as our party” experience. We'll have to rebuild in order to move forward, able to try new openings, our next project, as a public revolutionary Marxist party again.

Summary

“The minority *wants* to kill off Socialist Alliance”, or what it's proposing will “*objectively*” kill off Socialist Alliance. That's the charge by the majority at the beginning of the discussion, and it's the

charge they *end* with. Despite at the beginning of the discussion and at the end of the discussion, us saying, “No, we do not *want* to kill off Socialist Alliance.” But we point out that the *reality* of continuing the line of the last congress is effectively doing that. *That’s* what’s killing off Socialist Alliance. Not anything that the minority is proposing or wants to do.

We denied it at the start, No. We have differences over what SA *can* be and *should* be, given the objective circumstances, given our experiences, and given what has happened with the people we tried to collaborate with. There is a certain *reality* there that majority comrades are continuing to be in denial about. Even on the question of a campaigning alliance, some majority comrades get up and say, “No, we’re *not* for a campaigning alliance,” even though that’s in our resolution. Others say that we *are* for a campaigning alliance but it’s *becoming* a party. All sorts of variants.

In the course of the discussion, with different reports to the NC and congress, and contributions to *The Activist*, I think the minority comrades have put an excellent case, and have argued our case extremely well, both in relation to SA, what we want to happen with the DSP, and the relations between them, which is the key thing we’ve been debating.

We have said, yes, we’re for a campaigning alliance; yes, a periphery organisation. ~~—and actually hearing a lot of the things Comrade Coral Wynter said, I ticked them off, yes I can agree with that, I can agree with that. And then it occurred to me, that’s pretty much what we were proposing as a periphery organisation.~~ Now it can’t *just* be a periphery organisation, that can be one feature of it: a campaigning alliance as the main feature, but as an electoral vehicle as well. But it has not succeeded *as a party!*

There have been different variants of SA, but we think we can say that one variant that we tried, and that comrades want to try again, *has not succeeded*, for very specific reasons, political and organisational. We’ve argued that SA in its early days has done *better* than SA is doing now. SA “Mark 1” if you adopt my terminology. It was bigger; there were other forces involved there with us. We knew they were not very reliable forces, and sometimes very sectarian. But outside of the affiliates there were a lot more forces. I remember the meetings that we went to in Sydney. There *were* real forces there; not the forces that came to that “extremely successful” SA meeting in Sydney. There were *real* forces. The DSP was in a *minority* at these meetings. Good! *Now* we rejoice if *two* independents walk through the door!

So we're not for "withdrawing" from SA, but we're trying to retrieve some of the things that we did *achieve* with SA, and not jettison them. It's the majority line that's going to be jettisoning those achievements. ~~Comrade Dick Nichols~~ [One majority comrade](#) asked the question about the "value" of SA, but *as what?* That's the critical difference, that's what we've been *debating*.

Now we've put forward a clear line on the DSP, what we should do with the DSP, that it should be our party, recognised as our party, and – it's in the resolution, actually – *function as a revolutionary Marxist party in public, again*. Now, that's agreed to by the majority, in the resolution, but they don't agree that in any way should it be *implemented*.

Even the question of banners at a demo. It's good that a few majority comrades said, sure we can have a banner at a demo, but I know the majority of majority comrades do not want any DSP banners at demos. *We haven't even got any DSP banners at the DSP congress!* We've got Socialist Alliance... Socialist Alliance... Socialist Alliance... Socialist Alliance... [shout from a delegate, "we've got it on PowerPoint"]. Ah! The virtual banner! For a virtual DSP!

Oh, we've got a *Resistance* banner. And some comrades have said specifically that the revolutionary Marxist line is presented by Resistance. Of course it *should* be represented by Resistance, to masses of young people. But that's not the *only* way we should be presenting our revolutionary Marxist perspective. And not just by Venezuela solidarity either. The DSP *does* have a role.

~~Now there've been so many caricatures. I suppose I have to thank Comrade Mick Bull, for being frank at least. There's nothing in what he said that I agree with, but given the caricatures of what's been said, obviously by more comrades than Mick Bull, it's good that Mick Bull says that. These are real caricatures. Comrade Jorge Jorquera suggested to me, "why don't you dust off your dictatorship of the proletariat placards for the next demo, John". Oh yeah, we always carried them, didn't we? My god, what do comrades think we are, what do you think of our last 30-35 years of experience?~~

It's not *sectarian* to argue that we should be a public revolutionary Marxist party. It's not sectarian. And still keep SA, as a campaigning alliance. There's no contradiction *there*. The contradiction is on the majority side.

Everyone agrees, we've got to re-caderise. But there is a lot of difference and a lot of confusion about *how* you do it, and *where* you

do it. Our resolution, unanimously adopted, says that cadre creation cannot take place within the Socialist Alliance. Does anybody doubt that? Read it, it's there, in black and white. Cadre creation, we *know*, takes place within the framework of a properly functioning Leninist party. The DSP. And it takes place *better* if we function publicly as well.

Now in certain situations we can go underground, but it still takes place there. In certain situations we can hide ourselves in another party. I don't know how many other comrades here have been involved in a revolutionary Marxist party taking part in an entry operation, but that was our *line* in the '70s, in the Labor Party. I've done that. We actually found we just had to disregard that old line we inherited. Or you keep on with it, and turn it into a permanent strategy.

We *are* for transitional formations, and transitional formulations, but the American SWP, and Trotsky, were never for a "Labor party" as a permanent tactic. Or as the permanent formation. Do you think they ever stopped functioning as the Socialist Workers Party? No. In the '80s, did we ever stop functioning, publicly, as a revolutionary Marxist organisation? No. We need our public face again. We need to function through *Green Left Weekly* as *the DSP* again. We need to get those *Green Left Weekly* forums going regularly. And we *can* recruit. We actually recruited *better* before setting up SA than we've recruited in SA. That's a fact. We've got high hopes, but look at the facts. We *can* recruit, and we can use SA much better.

Now, can we use SA as a megaphone? Yes and no. We've agreed that in some ways we can use SA as a megaphone, yes, SA leaflets can be very useful. But can we have DSP leaflets again? Why not? Why not? Can we have DSP mentioned in *Green Left* again? Why not? Let's do that. Let's function as a party again. And really, let's look at SA as a campaigning alliance and we can make that function *better* than it can as our pretend party.

There'll be further discussion on this question, a detailed discussion, in the DSP tasks report, and DSP tasks in SA, the following two reports. And also in our Youth work report, which is an essential aspect of rebuilding the DSP, to rebuild Resistance.

And I think we'll test things out further in the coming year, although I think there's been plenty of experience already. But I do think there *is* a clear choice, as I outlined at the beginning of my report. A comrade questioned, can it *just* be, "maintain or abandon"? The problem is, some comrades have tried to straddle, and confuse. Whereas in this situation, as revolutionary Marxists, having a congress to decide what

to do, we need the *utmost clarity*. We also need to realise, what is the *line*, the *real* line that the majority is going to implement, and I think it was worthwhile pointing out the divisions, the different points of view in the majority. It is going to be that “maximalist” point of view that will be implemented, and I think we’re going to suffer from it.

I urge comrades to vote for the clear perspectives that have been outlined in the minority report, and in the contributions by the minority comrades in the discussion, which has been an *excellent* discussion, exemplary in our history, and in the history of the revolutionary movement.