

***REPORT OF THE FACT-FINDING COMMISSION  
OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT ON THE  
INTERNAL SITUATION WITHIN THE  
INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP, BRITISH  
SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
March 12th, 1972***

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NOTE: The Fact Finding Commission received documents from both the majority and Tendency comrades. These were given file designations to help the Commission in its work. These same file designations have been used here to list the documents. There were a number of instances where the same documents were received from different sources, and such duplication has been eliminated as much as possible. An attempt has been made to correct obvious typographical errors. In a few instances, where an obviously wrong word was printed or left out altogether, a word has been inserted if the meaning is clear. Such inserted words are enclosed by brackets, [ ]. —Diego.



## LETTER TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP FROM THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

*To the International Marxist Group*

Dear Comrades,

While we have differing evaluations on the attribution of responsibility reached by the Fact-Finding Commission (see our separate statements attached to the report p. 7), we unanimously urge you to implement the following recommendations:

1) That all the charges laid and disciplinary actions taken against Tendency comrades, including suspensions and censures, be rescinded. This includes, among others, the censure of Comrade Alan Harris, the charges and actions taken against Comrade Anderson, and the charges and actions taken against the Nottingham minority women comrades.

2) That the IMG leadership make every effort to aid the integration of Tendency members into meaningful political activity—especially defense work, the expansion of British circulation of Intercontinental Press, and the abortion-contraception campaign—where their specific opinion cannot come into conflict with efficient and enthusiastic engagement. This would help assure a fraternal atmosphere

inside the organization in which all minority political contributions are treated as the completely normal exercise of membership rights under the norms of democratic centralism.

3) That the majority assure the Tendency that the rules on recruitment of new members be uniformly applied and that the basic organizational units of the IMG be composed in such a way as not to isolate minority comrades within the organization.

4) That within this framework of democratic rights, the IMG minority sincerely respects and applies party discipline and recognizes the right of elected leadership to lead the organization in day-to-day activity, and that it participates in public IMG activities even though there are many with which it disagrees.

The implementation of these recommendations is in the interest of the development of democracy and political clarity and is in the interest of both the IMG as a whole and the Fourth International.

We urge the leaders of the world movement to collaborate in this effort.

The United Secretariat  
April 16, 1972

**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FACT FINDING COMMISSION  
ON ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION  
WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP  
(BRITISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)**

A proposal introduced by the representatives of the IMG on behalf of their National Committee (Ref. M-23) and agreed to at the November 1971 United Secretariat meeting immediately following the International Executive Committee plenum mandated a fact-finding commission to travel to Great Britain for the purpose of investigating the internal situation in the British section and to report back to the United Secretariat the circumstances and actions which led to a series of disciplinary measures taken against members of a minority tendency (hereafter referred to as the Tendency), some of which were referred to the commission by the IMG National Committee for recommendations.

Comrades Martine, Gormley, Delphin, and Diego were selected by the December 1971 United Secretariat meeting to constitute the commission, and they were asked to meet in Great Britain at the earliest practical date.

The members of the Commission met in London on February 15, 1972, and at our first meeting agreed to: a) examine all the documentary material submitted to us; b) to call before us for questioning members of the IMG in London, Nottingham, Glasgow, Forth Valley, and Edinburgh. To this end we travelled from London to Glasgow, to Forth Valley (Bo'ness), Edinburgh, Nottingham, and back to London. We met for final sessions in Paris and Brussels without Comrade Gormley who had to return home. Here we reached a common conclusion. Where we disagreed, we indicate our points of disagreement in separate statements signed individually.

The file of the IMG national office for the years 1970 and 1971 was given us. A dossier of eight documents with the addition of some letters of testimony and statements were submitted by the Tendency and a dossier of twenty documents was submitted by the IMG national office. Exchange of correspondence between the leaderships of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG) which are relevant to one of the cases of discipline reviewed were secured from the SWP. All this material had to be examined and indexed for reference purposes in order to reconstruct, as far as possible, the organizational procedures that culminated in the disciplinary measures against members of the Tendency.

Within the delimited scope of the inquiry which was to "ascertain the facts" and make some recommendations, it was clearly evident that we could not investigate every single episode. Nor could we permit ourselves to become involved in the political disputes existing within the section. We viewed our presence in Great Britain as an independent body requested by the IMG national leadership and authorized by the United Secretariat to examine the facts and give our opinion on the internal situation with recommendations to the IMG National Committee on what should be done.

We examined the charges against members of the Tendency in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Nottingham. These charges and episodes occurred in what was without question a highly factional atmosphere that created prejudice against members of the Tendency. We take note of the encouraging fact that despite this bad internal climate, members of the Tendency remained inside the IMG. It is testimony to the fact that they are loyal to the International. That the IMG leadership has drawn short of further administrative measures in this internal situation and has submitted this to the International for its intervention is testimony to their concern and loyalty to the International.

**CONCLUSION**

The evidence that we have examined leads us to the conclusion that the leadership of the IMG bears the major responsibility for the deterioration in the internal situation within the IMG. It had complete control of the administrative apparatus with the exception of a short period in the Glasgow branch. It has been an overwhelming majority since the inception of the dispute. It was its responsibility to ensure both the letter and spirit of the norms of democratic centralism. Failure to do so could have no other result but to create the highly factional climate that has marked the internal life of the section. We call attention to the following three examples that contributed to the deterioration of relations within the IMG.

**THE CASES OF COMRADE HARRIS,  
THE SCOTTISH MEMBERS,  
AND THE NOTTINGHAM WOMEN**

*1. The case of Comrade A. Harris*

This comrade, a member of the International Executive Committee and a founding member of the IMG, was censured by the National Committee of the IMG at its meeting of July 25/26, 1970 (ref. c-73). We do not go into the merits of the case that the leadership had against Comrade Harris. We merely call attention to the method employed by the leadership in censuring Comrade Harris. Documents and remarks on this case are appended to this report.

At the National Committee meeting mentioned above a motion by Comrade Jenkins was carried, censuring Comrade Harris for "his unilateral action regarding Leader Books." This censure was then circulated to the entire membership (a method employed by the IMG to keep the membership informed of leadership decisions). Comrade Harris correctly points out that: a) no charges were ever presented to him; b) he was not even informed that this matter was to be considered by the National

Committee; and c) he was not invited to a session that was going to discuss this matter, and permitted to state his side of the matter so that those voting on this censure motion could vote intelligently. He himself only formally learned of this censure two weeks later when he read of it in the nationally circulated Letter to the Membership. He further pointed out that this could only prejudice the membership against himself and by association the Tendency to which he belongs.

We believe that this censure was in fact a disciplinary measure and that Comrade Harris's appeal against the violation of his democratic rights is justified. We recommend that this censure be removed.

## 2. *The case of the Nottingham women.*

The second example is from the case involving the journal *Socialist Woman* and four Tendency comrades in Nottingham who have a long and well-known record of activity in the women's liberation movement. The charges against these four were initiated by an IMG fact-finding commission in May 1971 (ref. N-42 appendix 3). They were not heard nor acted upon until two special Political Committee meetings were convened in Nottingham on December 15, 1971, and January 7, 1972. At the latter session the charge that: (a) the comrades made no serious effort to aid the implementation of the National Committee decision to change the editorial structure of *Socialist Woman* between October 1970 and March 18, 1971, and that they in their capacity as members of the editorial board of the Nottingham-based *Socialist Woman* bear collective responsibility for its publication and content; and the charges that: (b) publication of the issue of Jan/Feb. 1971 was in direct defiance of National Committee motions, and the mimeoed insert in that issue was a public attack upon the IMG (ref. c-54, c-2), were considered proved, and they were referred to our commission for recommendations. We note that two comrades of the leadership appeared in Nottingham to ask the comrades not to publish their journal but they were told it was too late because it was already on the press.

On the decision by the IMG National Committee to publish a new *Socialist Woman*: a Tendency comrade was present at that meeting, but none of the Nottingham women involved in the *Socialist Woman* were present. The new journal by decision of the IMG Women's Caucus did not include any of the Nottingham women comrades; later, by intervention of Comrade Petersen, Tendency comrades of Nottingham were invited to join the editorial board, which they declined. The National Women's Caucus of the IMG met in London. They invited the comrades in Nottingham to attend, but the key comrades there could not, for quite legitimate personal reasons which we verified.

On the first charge, which involved the question of the ownership and control of the journal *Socialist Woman*, we find that the procedure followed by the IMG leadership could only lead to a public scandal highly detrimental to the interests of the IMG.

On the second charge, which involves the refusal of the Nottingham comrades to sign a public statement prepared by the leadership: the comrades state that this statement included a falsification. We find that whether or not this statement included a falsification, it is not in the tradition of our movement, to say the least, to

compel comrades to sign a public statement which they believe to be false.

Finally, referred to us was an appeal made by these comrades to their National Committee against a motion passed at the Nottingham branch which forbade them to engage in any more women's work whatsoever.

We recommend that the IMG leadership drop all charges against these women comrades, including the one acted upon at the Nottingham branch meeting cited above. We further recommend that the comrades involved be permitted to work in the abortion campaign in accordance with the motion passed at the National Committee meeting of October 23/24, 1971 (ref. C-44), authorizing work in the abortion campaign, under the control of the National Committee and the political line of the IMG. Relevant documentation on this case is attached (Ref. M-11, M-13).

## 3. *The Scottish cases.*

This third example is what happened in the Glasgow branch and the Edinburgh region (which includes the Forth Valley branch). The Glasgow branch is located in an important industrial center and is one of the older branches of the IMG. Its record as a branch has been a good one. It has been considered a model branch, and according to Comrade Matthews (administrative secretary, IMG), its financial record was good and its literature sales record was a good one particularly with regard to the IMG organ *Red Mole*. With the formation of the youth movement, Spartacus League (SL), conflicts began to develop between it and the IMG branch. These centered around the issues of the antiwar work and the work among women. Later, with the intervention of the national leadership, the conflicts extended to the industrial work.

Prior to the IMG National Conference of June 1971, these disputes were mostly of a local character but with clearly national implications. During that time, the Political Committee had sent a fact-finding commission to Glasgow to look into the disputes, and it recommended that the comrades involved clarify their political positions (ref. S-160, C-59). This was followed up by a letter from the National Secretary to the branch, in which he advised that the branch members declare themselves by joining up either with the Tendency or the national majority, and those who were not disposed to do either should come off the fence and declare themselves one way or the other (ref. T-8 Appendix 6, S-104).

Following the IMG National Conference of June 1971, the majority of the Glasgow branch did precisely that and joined up with the Tendency. The majority supporters followed suit later and organized a majority caucus. Thus the branch became formally polarized.

The IMG leadership intervened vigorously in the local situation, ending with a series of disciplinary measures. Close examination of this situation provided the clearest evidence of the extent to which the norms of democratic centralism were violated by the leadership of the IMG. At the National Conference of the IMG in June 1971, a Nomination Committee was set up to bring in a slate for the incoming National Committee. This committee dropped Comrade Campbell, one of the founders of the IMG and active in the Glasgow branch, as well as Comrade Blair, organizer of the branch, not a member of the Tendency and also a founder of the IMG. This action of the Nominating Committee led to further sharpening of the

factional atmosphere, because it was considered by the Glasgow Tendency comrades as a factionally motivated punitive measure (ref. T-8).

Following the National Conference, a strongly critical note directed against the Glasgow branch by the editorial board of the *Red Mole* was published in the Letter to the Membership. This was answered by Comrade Blair as organizer and his answer endorsed by the branch was published in a subsequent Letter to the Membership. The substance of this exchange was over the branch's apparent failure to produce articles for the *Red Mole* on the "work in" then taking place in the Upper Clydeside Shipyards (UCS) (ref. T-8 Appendix 7). Moreover the UCS "work in" was declared a number-one priority for the IMG, and the Political Committee passed a resolution on this, making intervention in UCS its responsibility. It must be mentioned that there was not then, nor is there now as far as we can determine, a single member of the IMG working in UCS.

The Political Committee sent two representatives to Glasgow to take full charge of the branch and its proposed intervention into the UCS struggle. The representatives, Comrades MacGovern and King, under full authority of the Political Committee were mandated to ensure that every member of the Glasgow branch give a written explanation in advance if they were unable to participate in any activity. No one could leave Glasgow without permission of the Political Committee or its representatives. With this background, there occurred the case of Comrade Anderson which has been referred to us and which we now examine. (Ref: C-52, T-8, C-49, S-133, S-136, M-15).

Comrade Anderson, a young trade unionist who worked in a factory near UCS, but not part of it, was ordered by a direct Political Committee decision to speak on the UCS struggle at three separate public meetings in the Glasgow area in accordance with the line delineated in the *Red Mole* under the headline "The Occupation of Clydeside: First Step Towards the Scottish Workers' Republic?" (Ref. C-54). Comrade Anderson explained that he did not work in UCS and that he was not the appropriate comrade to speak, considering that he didn't agree with the line. He was further instructed by Comrade King, the Political Committee representative, to make a national tour of Great Britain and to present a resolution for adoption by his Shop Stewards Committee, of which he was convener. The resolution called for the workers of Comrade Anderson's factory to occupy the factory for forty-eight hours and to call upon the workers of Scotland to follow their example. Hardly a minor resolution. This resolution was given to Comrade Anderson just prior to the meeting of the shop stewards without prior consultation with him. We could not question Comrade King on this since he was not available. No one had taken the trouble to discuss with Comrade Anderson the concrete circumstances of his job (it was not part of UCS), nor his status on the Shop Stewards Committee, etc.

We questioned Comrade MacGovern, and he confirmed that he did not personally familiarize himself through talking to Comrade Anderson with all the concrete facts on the latter's employment, union situation, etc. (ref. S-131, Interview by Fact-Finding Commission of MacGovern on 2/21/72).

The entire procedure used with Comrade Anderson was seen by the Tendency as arbitrary and factionally moti-

vated. It appeared to them that the national leadership was using the UCS "work in" to create a climate of crisis and panic, justifying arbitrary and abusive administrative action.

Charges were brought against Comrade Anderson by the IMG Secretariat, and he was summarily suspended from membership by the Secretariat. He was notified of this by mail in a letter from the Secretariat dated August 5, 1971 (ref. S-134). This was followed by a letter dated August 12, 1971 (ref. S-133), regretting that the first letter didn't clarify his actual status, which was here defined as suspended from the branch, but occupying the position of a "member-at-large." The branch protested and refused to recognize this decision and permitted Comrade Anderson to attend its meeting despite the attempt of Comrade King to prevent this. A telephone call to the National Secretary received the response that Anderson could attend the meeting but could not vote.

During his suspension, and in his absence, Comrade Anderson was instructed to present a resolution to the Glasgow Trades Council calling for support to a newly formed Claimants Union branch. Comrade Anderson explained that this was his first meeting as a delegate and that the rules of his union were that any resolution he wished to introduce had first to be brought up in his branch except in an emergency. He did not consider it wise for him to be the maker of this resolution. Another delegate was found to do this, and Comrade Anderson voted for the resolution.

Comrade Anderson's case has been submitted to our commission. We recommend that the action and charges against Comrade Anderson be rescinded.

On August 15, 1971, Comrade King ordered Comrade Ricardo to work full time to found a Claimants Union branch. Comrade Ricardo was unemployed at the time but was due to return to college in two weeks. Comrade King refused to listen to the reasons advanced by Comrade Ricardo for his refusal to perform this assignment. Comrade King was not available for verification. Charges were presented by the IMG Secretariat to the National Committee at its meeting of September 5/6, 1971. The National Committee referred these charges to the Scottish Committee which called an aggregate to hear the charges. At the same time the Scottish Committee made further charges against Comrade Ricardo and Comrade Anderson, as well as charges against every other Tendency comrade in Scotland. These were the charges against Comrade Stevens for allegedly refusing to pay dues owing to the Spartacus League charges against Comrade Gylda for his work in the antiwar movement, against Comrade Lymond and Comrade Campbell for their work inside the women's movement. (All these cases are documented and attached to this report.) (Ref. T-8).

These charges and the acts of suspension or expulsion that followed are in all cases badly tainted, in our opinion, by the generally provocative climate that existed within the Scottish branches (ref. S-208. [L]). A good example of the climate can be seen by the action taken by the Scottish aggregate at its meeting of August 21/22, 1971, where four Tendency comrades were "severely" censured for voting against some part of a resolution on the Argentine struggle at the National Conference of the IMG (ref. T-8, Appendix 2). This was later declared out of order by the IMG Political Committee and withdrawn.

## PROPOSALS

The Fact-Finding Commission recommends that our specific recommendations above (i.e., the Harris case, the Nottingham women's case, and the Anderson case) be applied. That all the disciplinary measures taken against Tendency comrades be rescinded. That the majority assure the Tendency that the rules on recruiting new members will be uniformly applied.

These serious steps taken by the leadership will establish the best possible atmosphere to ensure that during the present pre-conference discussion period, the Tendency comrades will not only be given the opportunity to freely participate but within a context where the entire membership will be encouraged to listen objectively to all points of view on the documents submitted for their consideration to the National Conference.

We further recommend that the proposals unanimously agreed to by Comrades Ghulam, Adair, Petersen, and Williams at the November 1971, United Secretariat meeting be seriously implemented [appended].

s/ Delphin  
s/ Diego  
s/ Gormley  
s/ Martine

Motion passed at the November 1, 1971,  
United Secretariat meeting

- a) That every effort to be made to aid the integration of Tendency members into meaningful political activity. That Tendency members be given central responsibility in Latin American defense work and major expansion of British circulation of Intercontinental Press.
- b) That Ghulam and Petersen lead in setting an atmosphere among majority leaders conducive to promoting this integration.
- c) That Adair submit a statement to the IMG National Committee clarifying the position of Tendency on Ricardo's suspension.
- d) That the Fact-Finding Commission begin work as soon as Diego and Gormley can make practical arrangement. Meanwhile Petersen and Adair to finish compiling presentation of written record.

# I. STATEMENTS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE FACT FINDING COMMISSION

## A. Delphin Statement

I signed the final report of the Fact Finding Commission because on the level of the facts presented I am in agreement with the document as a whole. This does not mean that the document will help resolve the internal problems of the IMG.

All four comrades worked within the limits imposed on us by the resolution of the International Executive Committee. In my opinion, our work was completed in a correct manner and with the greatest possible integrity on the part of all the commission members. But it seems to me in retrospect that the decision to create such a commission with such limited goals was an error, in that it is absurd to investigate a struggle between political tendencies while limiting the investigation to the facts alone, independent of their political and historical context. The goal of everyone is not to liquidate a political tendency, but to aid the IMG's development within the framework of the traditional principles of our movement.

After having read the statement by Martine, the majority of which I concur with, I would like to summarize in several points the way I view the evolution of the IMG.

1) We are not dealing with a "normal" tendency fight but with a faction fight in which two currents confront each other on almost all political problems. These two currents remain together in the IMG solely because of their ties to the Fourth International and its fundamental program — a fact which is not unimportant.

In regard to this point also, I personally think that there exists a certain generational conflict between a majority which includes the forces of the new generation coming into the 4th — sometimes with a genuine ultraleft bent — and a tendency which is perhaps better educated politically, but which has a difficult time comprehending the turn taken by the European sections in response to the new revolutionary upsurge.

2) The sharpness of this factional struggle and the hostile climate which stems from the depth of the political differences, the sectarian traditions of British Trotskyism, and from the political ties that each tendency has with other sections of the International, within the framework of the debate taking place in the world movement.

3) This having been said, the nonfraternal and sometimes irresponsible (e.g. Scotland) climate that exists in this section is based on three sources:

a) Especially in the past there was an incorrect interpretation of democratic centralism by numerous members of the majority of the IMG, especially the leadership, which did not provide the necessary education for the membership on this question. It is not easy to guide a political debate between tendencies in such a way as to guarantee that it plays an educational role. In a Leninist organization it is always the duty of the majority, by definition (and especially when it is a large majority), to protect the rights of minorities — within the limits of the cor-

rect functioning of the organization. Leaders lead the entire organization and not just one tendency. In this respect, provocative actions, or actions without political justification, were taken against the minority. (For example, the Anderson case; mandatory signature of a public self-criticism in Nottingham; the refusal to acknowledge that the strength of a tendency is based on the number of votes for a given document, etc.)

b) The irresponsible attitude of the leadership of the SWP and the LSO/LSA which did not understand that the IMG was a developing section. As in many European countries, it is composed of a new generation, with its weaknesses but also with enormous successes, a generation creating for us a potential we have never before had in the history of our movement. By repeated public and internal attacks, by the choice of articles in *Intercontinental Press*, by actions which were at best ill-conceived even if completely legal (J. Steel affair, Alan Harris, etc.), the leadership of the SWP and the LSA/LSO contributed to the deterioration of the climate and helped to crystalize the bulk of the new recruits in an understandable posture of self-defense.

c) In such a political climate, the political weaknesses which the leadership of the IMG had in the past led them to respond to the Tendency by administrative measures more than by political debate. This is all the more so, in my opinion, because the majority spent too much time constantly defining itself in relationship to the minority, rather than independently developing its own political line. This was damaging to both sides and prompted the minority to develop provocative attitudes as is shown by the case of the Nottingham leaflet attacking the publication of the London *Socialist Woman*.

By way of preliminary conclusions, I believe:

1) It is the responsibility of everyone to do whatever possible to help the IMG continue its already significant development. To that end the SWP should cease all criticism of the IMG, recognize the leadership of the IMG in fact. As it does with other sections, the SWP should discuss points of disagreement directly with the IMG leadership before raising them with anyone else. The leadership of the IMG ought to stop the polemic with the SWP in order to promote, if it wants to, a political debate with the Tendency.

2) In IMG schools, the leadership of the IMG should educate the membership — in theory and in practice — about the nature of democratic centralism and how to conduct political debate between tendencies in a revolutionary organization.

3) The minority should discuss with the majority the precise arenas of activity where it is ready to take responsibilities and to play an active role, within the context of the decisions of the IMG convention.

4) In response to a proposal of the IMG, two members of the United Secretariat should be assigned to follow the life of the IMG for several months. This is in the interests of the IMG and in the interests of the Fourth International. This does not imply bureaucratic control, nor is it some kind of mark of distrust. But the errors on each side have been too serious. The purpose is to

try to find a way for us to prevent a split which would be catastrophic for the Trotskyist movement. The next convention of the IMG may thus be decisive one way or the other.

## B. Diego Statement

The report to which this is attached is a bare-bone summary of what we saw and the conclusions we reached on the internal conflict within the British section.

I personally have some knowledge of the British movement. I have followed its various fortunes from the days of the RCP through the emergence of the SLL. I later did a three-year stint as part of the international leadership that sought to help the British comrades in their efforts to consolidate the IMG in its formative years.

You can well understand my satisfaction as I watched from afar the growth and development of the IMG during the past few years. I took for granted that this section, made up mostly of new and young comrades, would make its own mistakes, hopefully learn from these and, with help from the International and its collective experience, carve out its own political space in the spectrum of the British left to eventually gain hegemony as the genuine voice and force of International Trotskyism in Britain.

During this latest assignment I became all the more convinced that the opportunities for us during the present conjuncture are limitless and that brilliant prospects are within our grasp. The young cadres assembled inside this section were on the whole impressive in their devotion and dedication to their tasks. They were in this quite similar to the young cadres elsewhere who have picked up the banner of the International.

I found it all the more dismaying therefore to see a fatal flaw within the IMG that threatens its very existence. This must be dealt with honestly and directly in the spirit of the old injunction—"say what is."

I do not refer to the political differences that exist within the section, which reflect in part the differences within the International as a whole. These are serious, to be sure, perhaps profound.

I refer to how differences have been handled. And here the responsibility lies directly in the hands of the leadership. What we saw and what we read testifies to a mixture or irresponsibility, incompetence and just plain bureaucratic arrogance.

The documents of the IMG are full of references to the principles of "democratic centralism." This is not some abstract concept that more often than not is saluted in a ritualistic way. It involves a scrupulous regard for the democratic rights of the ranks. The IMG leadership is fond of repeating that it is the right of the majority to rule, and that is certainly true. But to have the right to rule (or the right to exercise leadership) means to have in the eyes of the ranks a moral authority. This in turn reflects a mutual confidence. This does not exist in the IMG. The moral authority of the present leadership is

seriously compromised. It has been put to the test in this present dispute and it simply does not exist. This is the fatal flaw.

Take for example the behavior of the national leadership in the matter of the Scottish comrades. A "smash the Tendency" campaign (ref: C-59) was decided upon in London and several plenipotentiaries ticked off to travel there and do the job. And when the members of the Tendency resisted, they were entrapped and chopped down. This is crystal clear in the Anderson and Ricardo cases. The other cases were the work of the local body, the Scottish Committee. This committee, set up with an exclusive majority leadership, went to work to eliminate the Tendency in as direct a fashion as possible.

These are the "short cuts" referred to in the letter of the leadership to the International (ref: M-11). The mistake of the Scottish Committee was to correctly read the meaning of the behavior of the London leadership and to figure in forthright Scottish fashion that anything went in this campaign to "smash the Tendency." This is why the militant Grainger, a majority supporter, is so indignant in his letter to the commission (ref: M-37), when he says: "The Scottish Committee thus became the prosecuting agent of the National Committee. (A role in which it was eventually betrayed.)" This is why Cde Mac . . . . . (ref: S-112) finally resigned. The entire gambit of London encouragement, Scottish Committee action and London admonition accompanied by a wink is the kind of small-time bureaucratic fakery well-known in the labor movement the world over.

Inevitably this is accompanied by the little incidents of physical provocation. The breaking of the glass panel in the door of a Tendency member's home by a group of majority supporters seeking admission (ref: M-33), the dart games in Edinburgh where the central target is the name or picture of Joseph Hansen, editor of *Intercontinental Press* (not denied in our queries in Scotland). Or the visit of a "committee" of majority supporters to the flat of a Tendency comrade in London to intimidate him from selling the *IP* at some IMG-sponsored meeting, warning him cynically meanwhile that his protest will be meaningless since it will be based on verbal testimony (ref: M 32). How far is this from such things as the physical assault upon Ernie Tate by a group of SLL stewards in the presence of Gerry Healy, who later argued that he was merely trying to restrain the stewards (to their honest indignation, no doubt)?

Or consider the meaning of the action of the leadership in demanding that the Nottingham women sign a public statement which they contended contained a falsehood. These methods are not from our school, they are completely foreign to our tradition.

Preparation for this general campaign was accomplished during the dispute over Pathfinder Press and Cde Harris. At the heart of the entire dispute was the alleged role of the SWP in the Pathfinder Press dispute. Examine the correspondence between the SWP and IMG. The record is quite clear and no complaint was put before the commission. Nevertheless, the underground campaign against the SWP was designed to smear the Tendency in the eyes of the membership as "foreign agents." We heard much of this during our stay in Britain. Let all these allegations and fantastic stories that have poisoned the internal climate of the IMG be ventilated. Put them on the table and let



them be examined.

I conclude by stating that what is involved here is of direct significance to the future of the IMG. In a sense, it is a direct challenge to the serious revolutionists within the ranks and in the leadership to come to grips with the problem of the internal health of the IMG.

### C. Gormley Statement

I agree with the statement of the Fact Finding Commission on its enquiry into the internal situation of the International Marxist Group, but I think it necessary to make one additional comment to give some background into the situation in Scotland. It concerns the setting up of the Spartacus League.

In initiating the formation of the new youth organization, it seems to me the leadership of the IMG proceeded in such an irregular manner that difficulties were bound to arise. The leadership did not work out clearly, a priori, the organizational relationship of the SL to the IMG, e.g., what would be the primary loyalty of an IMG member who was also at the same time, a member of the SL especially if that member was part of the national leadership.

I do not know whether this problem created difficulties in other parts of the country, but certainly in Scotland, in Glasgow, it helped initiate organizational chaos. It was ambiguity on this question that precipitated the so-called crises in the branch which led to the first investigating commission sent up from London before the Upper Clydeside Shipyards occupation, and subsequently leading to the branch being placed into a virtual state of receivership. During this period, the leaders of the IMG branch were complaining that IMG members who were also members of the SL were being placed beyond the control (i.e., discipline) of the Glasgow IMG branch. The local IMG leadership claimed—and this was confirmed in our interviews—SL members who were at the same time members of the IMG and, moreover, part of the IMG national leadership, had seriously criticized the Glasgow IMG leadership before first having brought these criticisms into the local branch of the IMG.

Such organizational procedures inevitably lead to disasters. In this case, I'm in no doubt they contributed to the creation of a highly charged factional atmosphere in Glasgow and the breakdown in the relations between the Tendency and the national leadership. It's true IMG leaders will now, long after the event, say that they made "mistakes" in the way the SL was set up, but such admissions do not in any way cancel out the results of those mistakes. There is ample justification, in my opinion, for anyone with minority views in Glasgow believing that the leadership created these "mistakes" for narrow factional ends to obscure serious political differences.

### D. Martine Statement

I have signed the final report of the Fact-Finding Commission on its investigation of the internal situation within the IMG, because I agree in general with the facts presented in this report and with the recommendations of the Commission to withdraw all charges, disciplinary measures or "expression of grave disapproval."

The IMG leadership itself opened the way for the Fact-Finding Commission to take a road which inevitably must lead to a very one-sided report. When in a letter to members from October 71 (not dated) the leadership writes: "The National Committee has requested the International Executive Committee of the FI to establish a commission to investigate activities of the Tendency within the British section," and when Comrade Petersen in his "Introduction to documents concerning the Tendency in the IMG" (no date) writes: "The United Secretariat can best help by: a) making it clear that it does not sanction nor acquiesce to the breaking of discipline by supporters of international minorities; and b) setting into motion an international control commission which should concentrate on taking evidence from rank and file members (. . .)," then this IMG leadership approves of a very one-sided way of taking into account the political reality of the British section of the Fourth International. This reality, in the report of the Fact-Finding Commission, then becomes dissolved one-sidedly into pure formalism which is coloured by speaking of the "highly factional atmosphere that created prejudice against members of the Tendency." It is coloured further with the statement that "we take note of the encouraging fact that despite this bad internal climate members of the Tendency remained inside the IMG," which is said, is "testimony to the fact that they are loyal to the International." And in the conclusion, which I consider in this form absolutely irrelevant, there again we find the creation of "highly factional climate that marked the internal life of the section"—creation of the IMG leadership. We were asked very explicitly not to enter into the political differences between the IMG majority and the Tendency, and we did not do so. But let me mention a very important fact, confirmed to us by both the comrades of the majority as well as the Tendency, especially in Glasgow: There are political differences on almost all internal political points, and Comrade Anderson from the Glasgow Tendency went as far as waving some sheets of paper and telling us that there are even more political differences as can be seen till now; that they will come out during the pre-annual conference discussion. It appeared to us—Comrades Gormley and Diego did not contradict comrades Delphin and Martine on this—that almost the only agreement between both sides rests in being members of the Fourth International and therefore being members of the British section of the world organization.

In this sense we have to see clearly that we do not face a tendency of a traditional nature inside one of our organizations; we face the roots of two organizations, both linked to currents inside the Fourth International.

I don't think that it is necessary to point out the links of the IMG majority to the majority line of the Fourth International. That there are links between the Tendency and the minority inside the Fourth International, especially on political lines does in my opinion not need to be



proved either. It is most obvious in the women work and its line on this question of the Tendency. These links in themselves are within the rules of democratic centralism, but this phenomenon deteriorates when it comes to the point, where the former secretary of the SWP, co-thinkers of the Fourth International, states in front of the Fact-Finding Commission, that the IMG leadership has now "declared war on us," meaning the critical remarks of Comrade Ross about some SWP slogans, in a pre-conference discussion document, while they consider it perfectly normal, when Comrade Hansen in his pre-WC discussion document (International Information Bulletin Nr. 3, April 1971), titled "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," writes: "In seeking the source of the ultrared coloration of the IMG, the personal inclinations of the majority of (the IMG's) leaders should not be taken as the decisive determinant. It can hardly be questioned that some of them feel more comfortable in a red T-shirt adorned with their totem than in less imaginative dress" (p. 29).

I don't want to go here into the merits of calling one another "right wing" or "ultra-leftists," i.e., I am not judging political lines here. Comrades, however, should bear in mind, that a leadership which is constantly called "ultra-left" will start to fight back with the same kind of weapon, calling the other "right wing," which of course says as little about a political line as the generality of ultra-leftism.

To come back to the frequently mentioned "bad atmosphere" inside the British section. It is certainly true that this bad atmosphere exists, and it is true as well, that it is rather difficult to analyse an atmosphere through pure facts. It is part of the reality of the British section which the Fact-Finding Commission, the way its work was determined, is not able to fully translate to the comrades of the United Secretariat.

In no way however can I agree that this atmosphere in the report of the Commission then is mentioned *only* as highly provocative and created like that by the IMG leadership against the minority.

When comrade Campbell of the Glasgow Tendency at a branch meeting on August 31, 1971, states: "In reply to comrade Blair's question as to whether anything is to be noted I state that what is to be noted is the continuing betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution by the 'International' Marxist Group," then we have to ask ourselves, even if this statement was taken back later as being said in the heat of the moment—how a comrade can still want to be [a] member of an organization of which there even could be doubt, if it does not betray the Vietnamese revolution. Comrade Campbell in the report of the FFC is referred to as "a founder of the IMG," and I have no reason to question this. Isn't it a provocative behaviour when one of the oldest comrades of the Nottingham branch acts in such a way towards a majority of comrades who entered the IMG not very long ago through its youth organization, the Spartacus League?

Isn't it a provocative behaviour, when Comrade Campbell in a Red Circle in Glasgow on November 25th, which had as subject the Russian Revolution, instead of contributing to the discussion on the subject, starts criticising the speaker, Comrade Freeman with the words: "male

comrades at the demonstration for male chauvinism, attempting to sabotage the demonstration, failing to understand the nature of the oppression of women and using their influence as males over women to dissuade women from demonstrating"? The occasion was a women's demonstration on abortion in Glasgow, in which male comrades "were allowed" to participate, and which by majority vote did not take place in the street because of storm, rain and snow, but was transferred to the university. When male comrades of the IMG want to "sabotage" a demonstration and use their "influence as males to dissuade women from demonstrating," isn't this, if it would really be true, a reason to leave such an organization?

When comrade Anderson from Glasgow, refusing to put forward in the trade union of which he is convener, does not demand a political discussion on the contents of the resolution, but votes for it after it is presented by a PC member, then I certainly would call this a *politically* irresponsible attitude which does not help to create a "better atmosphere."

When comrade A. Harris, referred to in the report of the FFC as founding member of the IMG, and who is a member of the IEC and the United Secretariat, states at the November 71 National Committee of the IMG that he will not apply to discipline, and reaffirms this statement at the November United Secretariat meeting (see minutes of November NC of IMG) then I call this creating a highly provocative atmosphere.

When the Tendency comrades of Nottingham state to the FFC that they were not informed of the decision of setting up an IMG paper *Socialist Woman* sufficiently in advance and that nobody discussed with them the application of the October NC resolution on the subject and we then see the copy of the letter of Comrade Valerie Mollan from Nottingham to Leonora Lloyd in which is stated that the whole Nottingham women's group "feel that it would serve no useful purpose either to you or to us, for you to come all the way to Nottingham . . .," does this then show willingness on behalf of the Nottingham Tendency, the majority of them comrades who are in the movement or the IMG longer than many comrades of the present IMG leadership, to submit to discipline of the IMG leadership and apply the majority line? Does it show willingness to ease the "bad atmosphere"?

The same comrades of the Nottingham Tendency present to the FFC a witness of the former *Socialist Woman* Group, non-member of the IMG who tells us that the first thing she heard of the new *SW* journal of the IMG was the advertisement in *Red Mole*. Would it have not been the task of the Tendency comrades who led the SWG, as members of the IMG to discuss this question with the members of the SWG even if they were in disagreement with bringing out a new journal?

Was it necessary for the Tendency comrades in Nottingham who had the editorial board of *Socialist Woman* in their hands, to either insert or agree to the insertion of a fly-leaf in the last issue of the *Socialist Woman*, in which they state that they have nothing whatsoever to do with the new journal?

I shall stop here which however does not mean that I could not go on. These are only some examples of long-standing and experienced comrades of the Tendency behaving in a highly provocative way towards the IMG majority.

It is very formalist to state, as the report of the FFC does, that the IMG leadership bears the major responsibility of the deterioration in the [internal] situation within the IMG. Comrades of the Tendency have at least the same amount of political experience and organizational know-how as the IMG-leadership. Certain comrades of the Tendency have more, and it is their responsibility as well and to the same extent when today we find deterioration of the internal life inside the IMG.

When comrade King is cited today as one of the negative examples inside the leadership of the IMG, bringing with him the whole ballast of his Healy past, then I would like to state that Comrade Connie from the Tendency has exactly the same past and should be cited as well.

At last I would like to ask our overseas comrades and co-thinkers to ask themselves if through their constant observation of the IMG, their personal links to the minority and their political intervention they don't feel at least partly responsible for the deterioration of the IMG's internal life? No other section of the Fourth International in the last 10 years has received such a heavy attention by the SWP and the LSA/LSO, than the IMG. It is only normal that a young section like the IMG feels exposed to the whole world movement with every step it takes. It would be time to leave the past, where we did not have a British section and help through the International was necessary. Today we have a section in Britain which is well able to take care of itself. This section, like every other one—and especially every other young one—will learn through its own activities and its own mistakes.

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- Marty Dec 2013

## II. STATEMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT

### A. Statement of Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia and Ghulam

(The following addition accompanies Pia's signature: My signature does not imply any criticism of the Fact-Finding Commission, which fulfilled its difficult task validly; I view the statement as a political supplement to the Fact-Finding Commission Report.)

While we entirely concur with the conclusions of the Fact-Finding Commission on the organizational differences in the British section of the Fourth International, we regret that the way in which the report is drafted does not permit the reader to obtain a completely balanced picture on the background of these sanctions. This lack of balance is only partially corrected by the statements of the commission members which accompany the report. For that reason, we deem it necessary to make this statement, to accompany the Fact-Finding Commission Report and the unanimous recommendations of the United Secretariat.

1. The concrete application of the rules of democratic centralism in the process of party building distinguishes a Leninist party from any other type of party on the organizational level. Obviously, Marxists cannot dissociate organizational forms from political program. Nevertheless, historical experience has confirmed the autonomous importance of organizational principles.

These principles involve a series of rules and procedures which establish the general framework for the application of democratic centralism. But democratic centralism cannot be reduced to a set of formal rules.

Leninists believe in full democratic rights for minorities and freedom of discussion and tendencies, not for moral or formal reasons, but because they are convinced that there is no guarantee that a majority—or any specific group of leading cadre—is always right. Full democracy inside the party is, in the first place, a functional need, a precondition for working out a correct political line, which can only result from frank and open debates. It is also functional for maintaining the unity of the party, for making sure that comrades turn to the party and not outside the party when they have problems or differences to discuss, for making sure that the energy of all members is always turned toward party building. Authority ultimately comes from the respect engendered through experience.

Leninists believe likewise in full majority rule, in the right of the leadership elected by the majority to lead the organization, and in the normal duty of the majority to apply the majority line in public. Once again they do so not for formal or moral reasons but because there is no

other way to check in practice whether a majority line is correct or not, and to reopen the debate at a later stage on a higher level of experience. Not only is submission to majority rule in public activity the necessary precondition for harnessing all the party's energies towards identical objectives in combat, but it is also a clear indication of the basic loyalty of minorities. For what a refusal to submit to party discipline in public activity really expresses is that the minority has been convinced that by applying its line in public it can win more supporters outside the party than it can inside the party, after having won the membership's respect through its disciplined behavior. It must be stressed however that except in the most exceptional historical circumstances, comrades should never be asked to present a line in public with which they disagree.

2. Most of the considerations included in the Fact-Finding Commission's report start from the assumption that the main responsibility for upholding the principles of democratic centralism inside a Leninist organization lies with the leadership. There can be no dispute about this. But it cannot be applied in a mechanical way, without taking into consideration concrete circumstances.

The International Marxist Group is a very young organization, hardly five years old, which has grown rapidly during the last two years. An important part of the leadership has been in the organization only a short time. Under these circumstances to put the blame for all the organizational incidents on the majority in a one-sided manner, judging not on the basis of a concrete examination of the mechanics and background of each incident, but rather on the basis of the general abstract rule that on principle the main responsibility lies with the majority, does not permit an understanding of the real internal process inside the IMG.

There is no doubt that the IMG leadership has made many mistakes in regard to the minority and that most of the sanctions taken are indefensible. But there is also no doubt that minority comrades have behaved in a provocative way in several instances. When the leadership of the minority states that it would not recognise suspensions decided by the majority, such a statement clearly challenges the right of the leadership to lead the organization. When a leader of the minority takes the initiative of setting up a political book service without the previous agreement of the party leadership, this again indicates a very clear attitude towards this leadership. Under these circumstances the question whether the *formal* rules were or were not broken can at the very least not be the only one posed. One can easily acknowledge that the minority has operated more capably within these rules. Whether they respected the general principle of majority rule and abstained from any provocation towards a young and still partially immature leadership—that is an entirely different matter.

## B. Statement of Hans, Juan, Adair, Therese, Pedro

The members of the Fact-Finding Commission reached a unanimous conclusion concerning the responsibility of the majority leadership for the violations of the norms of democratic centralism in the International Marxist Group. The members of the Fact-Finding Commission were also unanimous in recommending that the disciplinary measures taken by the majority leadership should be rescinded. In light of the evidence gathered by the Fact-Finding Commission, we agree that these conclusions were correct, and we would commend the Fact-Finding Commission on the thoroughness of its investigation and the objectivity of its general conclusion.

Our statement is intended merely to indicate where we disagree with the criticisms leveled against the report of the Fact-Finding Commission by Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia and Ghulam.

1. The commission was *not* set up to "obtain a completely balanced picture on the background of these sanctions." It was set up on the initiative of the IMG majority leadership and with the approval of the United Secretariat "for the purpose of investigating the internal situation in the British section and to report back to the United Secretariat the circumstances and the actions which led to a series of disciplinary measures taken against members of a minority tendency. . . ." The Commission was also asked to make recommendations on specific disciplinary measures. Within the circumscribed scope of the inquiry the members of the commission were correct in taking the position that they could not permit themselves "to become involved in the political disputes existing within the section." Documentation on the political disputes is ample and easily available. What had to be investigated was the source of the intensely factional atmosphere and the disciplinary measures taken against the minority. In short, the inquiry concerned whether the norms of democratic centralism were being upheld in the IMG or were being violated.

2. The Fact-Finding Commission found that "the leadership of the IMG bears the major responsibility for the deterioration in the internal situation within the IMG." The conclusion implies that the minority shared *some* responsibility. It is obvious from this that the commission sought to reach a balanced, not "one-sided," judgment.

A balanced judgment does not mean determining how to assign equal responsibility to both sides. One side consisted of a minority seeking through political argument to gain a majority to its views. The other side consisted of a majority that represented more than a grouping inside the IMG; it held responsibility for leadership in the organization as a whole, and in this position it held the power to impose organizational measures besides arguing for its group views. As the leadership of the IMG, the majority held a special responsibility to safeguard the democratic rights of the minority. The majority leadership did not safeguard the democratic rights of the minority. It imposed organizational measures. Moreover, these measures constituted gross violations of the norms of democratic centralism. The Fact-Finding Commission cited three flagrant instances, and presented major pieces of

evidence concerning them. The Commission thus came to its conclusions not because of a "general abstract rule that on principle the main responsibility lies with the majority." It based its conclusions on a series of specific instances all involving concrete violations of the norms of democratic centralism which the majority was duty bound to uphold.

3. In their statement, Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia and Ghulam seek to excuse the abuses committed by the majority leadership of the IMG on the grounds that the IMG is "a very young organization," that it has a "young and still partially immature leadership," and that an "important part of the leadership has been in the organization only a short time."

It is an error for the leaders of the Fourth International to take a paternalistic attitude toward younger leaders, who today make up the bulk of the leadership of the sections. To adapt to the mistakes they make or to excuse or wink at practices alien to our movement miseducates the whole new generation being won to the Trotskyist movement. When comrades are entrusted with leadership roles, they must shoulder the full responsibilities of leadership. That is the only way it can be in the revolutionary Marxist movement.

The truth is that an important part of the IMG majority leadership is well seasoned; it has been in the Trotskyist movement for a long time. This sector failed to oppose the violations of the norms of democratic centralism. In fact the evidence gathered by the Commission shows that this sector was chiefly responsible for initiating the measures that were in violation of the norms of democratic centralism.

4. The main criticism leveled by Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia and Ghulam is that although two members expressed views on the question, the Fact-Finding Commission as a whole did not investigate or indicate the political background to the "sanctions" taken against the minority. However, such matters were beyond the scope of inquiry set for the Commission, as indicated above.

A much more important area of inquiry—if the Commission's work were to have been expanded—would have been determination of the character of the organizational measures employed against the minority and the meaning of this for the Fourth International. On the face of it, it is absolutely clear that the actions taken against the minority were alien to the norms and traditions of the Trotskyist movement. In what category, then, do they fall? One of the members of the Commission, Comrade Diego, who has had some forty years experience in the Trotskyist movement, put it down as "a mixture of irresponsibility, incompetence and just plain bureaucratic arrogance." In the procedures followed in the Scottish cases, he was struck by their resemblance to "the kind of small-time bureaucratic fakery well-known in the labor movement the world over." From his knowledge of the British Trotskyist movement, which goes back thirty years or so, he noted the resemblance of some of the violations of proletarian democracy to those practiced by the Socialist Labour League. Indeed, to what school belong such practices as demanding that comrades sign a public statement containing what they consider to be falsehoods, as entrapping members of a minority (Scottish cases), as removing the leadership of a branch solely because it was won over to a minority position, as censuring members for the way they

voted at a National IMG Conference, as censoring members without filing charges against them or giving them a hearing, as engaging in acts of physical provocation? In the case of the Socialist Labour League our movement has pointed out that such practices belong to the school of Stalinism. Can we be less honest in judging the import of something similar happening in a section of the Fourth International?

We do not believe that the leaders of the IMG majority consciously borrowed from the school of Stalinism. We think that they did not grasp the meaning of what they were doing. Nevertheless a most disturbing question remains: How is it to be explained that the majority leadership in a Trotskyist organization fell into such a pattern? And how could Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia, and Ghulam reach a position of trying to rationalize mistakes of such magnitude on grounds of the inexperience, immaturity, and lack of capacity of the majority leadership, and—still worse—on grounds that "minority comrades have behaved in a provocative way in several instances"? Are the victims to be blamed for violations of their rights because they "provoked" the authorities?

Yes, some very big questions are raised by a careful reading of the evidence assembled by the Fact-Finding Commission. However, they are not of the nature suggested by the statement of Walter, Pierre, Livio, Petersen, Kurt, Delfin, Pia and Ghulam.

5. In our opinion, the majority leadership of the International Marxist Group now faces a considerable challenge—that of rooting out the type of procedures that led to the deplorable situation found by the Fact-Finding Commission. The loyal and sincere implementation of the unanimous recommendations of the Fact-Finding Commission and the United Secretariat would be a big step in meeting that challenge.

**III. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (SWP)  
AND THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP (IMG)  
CONCERNING PATHFINDER PRESS/ALAN HARRIS DISPUTE**

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N. Y. 10014

February 8, 1971

LONDON  
Pat Jordan

Dear Pat,

Enclosed is a motion adopted by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party at its meeting of February 5.

It and the attached documentation have been circulated to our National Committee.

Comradely,  
Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

cc: Ghulam  
Adair  
Maude  
Ernest

**SWP POLITICAL COMMITTEE MOTION  
Adopted February 5, 1971**

The Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party voices the following opinion in relation to the facts made available in the correspondence between Comrade Pat Jordan, the National Secretary of the IMG; Comrade Jack Barnes, the Organization Secretary of the SWP; a copy of the November 28, 1970, statement by Comrade Alan Harris to the Political Committee and National Committee of the IMG; and the memorandum by Comrade Joseph Hansen:

1. The majority of the National Committee of the IMG abused its authority in censuring Comrade Alan Harris.
  - a) It failed to notify Comrade Harris in advance that he was to be placed on trial.
  - b) It failed to grant him a hearing when his case came up for consideration.
  - c) It notified the IMG of its disciplinary action against Comrade Harris in a way calculated to prejudice the membership against him.
2. The majority of the National Committee of the IMG

further abused its authority by singling out Comrade Harris for disciplinary action in a field in which it does not at present subject the membership as a whole to disciplinary action; that is, the way in which they make their livelihood.

3. The majority of the National Committee of the IMG further abused the objective norms of democratic centralism by taking these organizational reprisals against a leader of a minority that has expressed political criticisms of the majority and argued for a different line from the one followed by the majority.
4. After the promising beginning earlier in the year, which appeared to represent a decided break with the antidemocratic methods that have plagued the British Trotskyist movement in the past, the majority of the National Committee of the IMG, by resorting to organizational reprisals against a leading member of the minority, has raised a serious question as to the possibility of conducting a genuinely free discussion in the IMG.

The Political Bureau  
Socialist Workers Party  
NY

Dear Comrades:

The following resolution was passed at the last meeting of the National Committee of the IMG (held over the weekend of 25/26 July 1970):

The National Committee censures Comrade Alan Harris for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the United Secretariat to investigate the matter immediately because it will otherwise result in a serious deterioration of relations between two sections of the International. The NC empowers the Secretariat (IMG Secretariat) to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books under the control of the IMG.

N. B. Bearing in mind the legal position of the SWP it should be pointed out that this resolution in no way implies that the SWP is affiliated to the Fourth International.

We must explain that this resolution was passed after the committee had received a report of the informal discussions on Leader Books between Joe Hansen and comrades Ali and Jordan.

We cannot accept that there is any problem in "explaining to Pathfinder Books" that Red Books would be tak-

ing over distribution of its publications from Alan Harris. This being the case we are confronted with a position where the SWP refuses to supply publications to the official bookshop of the British Section, but instead insists on supplying them direct to a member of the minority tendency of the IMG.

We would ask you to consider a hypothetical case: Suppose that the IMG, as publishers of a large number of books by Trotsky, etc., refused to supply them to the SWP but insisted that these be distributed in the United States via a minority tendency (which for instance might take the position that the YSA should advance the slogan "Victory to the NLF" on mass demonstrations).

We think that in a case like this that you could be understood if you thought that the IMG was trying to support a minority—politically and with resources—of the SWP. We think that you could be understood if you considered this to be a gross violation of the democratic centralist norms and an attempt to get round the democratic procedures and processes of the SWP.

We do not accept the argument that a book distribution centre (we do not want to get into semantic arguments about bookshops and import-export agencies) is not a political centre. Selling books, having an address list and a manned office amounts to having a political centre. This has always been recognised as such by the movement. This is why the IMG national committee resolved—just prior to its National Conference—that its bookshop would be completely under democratic centralist norms (it should be added that this position was approved by the conference).

We ask you to fully co-operate with us in implementing the above resolution. We want to avoid confusing political issues with an organisational wrangle and would ask you to help us to remove this organisational difficulty. We would point out that such affairs as the creation of Leader Books is in complete violation of the decision of the National Committee of the IMG makes more difficult an objective political discussion. We hope that no one thinks that the minority tendency of the IMG will be strengthened by such actions. Quite the reverse: this tendency will become even more isolated the more it appears to be trying to circumvent the democratic norms of the IMG.

We should point out that this tendency is widely considered to be in solidarity with the SWP's criticisms of the majority position in the International. We would recall to your attention that this tendency first manifested itself when its leader, Comrade Susan Williams, appealed to the British delegation at the last world congress to be seated for the discussion on China in order to cast her vote against the majority. Furthermore it is well known that: a) about half the members of the tendency are ex-members of a section which supports the minority position in the International; b) that leading comrades sent from North America to participate in the work of the International played the leading part in founding the tendency; and c) that Alan Harris is a member of the United Secretariat designated by the previously mentioned section. Taking into account all these circumstances we think it would be in the best interests of a clear political discussion to avoid any action which could be construed as using organisational means to support a political minority.

We should add that we are going to pursue this mat-

ter in the United Secretariat because relationships between Trotskyists in different countries is involved.

We would ask for the earliest possible reply to the questions we have raised in this letter. We are going ahead with plans for the amalgamation of Red Books and Leader Books under the political control of the IMG. An early reply from you could help clarify things but we will be obliged to operate our democratically decided decisions as soon as possible. We cannot procrastinate because of the serious state of affairs (our political opponents are well aware that Leader Books operates independently from our organisation).

We intend to pursue this matter in an extremely serious manner: The British Trotskyist movement has suffered in the past from lack of understanding of the meaning of democratic centralism as applied to the task of building a mass section of an international revolutionary party. We would be failing in our duty of helping to construct a mass section of the FI in Britain if we did not take immediate and decisive steps to nip this situation in the bud.

We ask you to give us an undertaking that you will supply our bookshop with your publications without insisting that we purchase them from a concern which has been set up in violation of our democratically decided decision.

Revolutionary greetings,  
s/ Pat Jordan

London. August 22, 1970

To the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Dear Ernest,

The National Committee of the IMG at its July 25/26th meeting passed the following motion: ". . . that this NC censures Comrade A. Harris for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the US to investigate the matter immediately. . . ."

I wish to make a formal protest to the US that such a resolution was passed against me and in my absence.

I was not invited to attend the relevant part of the NC meeting in order to state why such a motion should not be passed. Nor was I informed that any such motion was to be considered by the NC.

To pass a motion of censure, behind the back of the comrade concerned, is a violation of the democratic norms of our movement. The more so when that comrade is known to hold a minority view on a number of questions.

Further, the manner in which I was informed of the NC decision makes the matter even more shocking.

I formally learned that the NC had passed a motion of censure against me on August 12 when the Letter to Members were distributed to the London branch and when Leader Books was placed on the branch agenda at the request of the branch executive committee.

I do not accept the motion of censure against me be-



cause I deny that by setting up Leader Books I have in any way acted against the principles and spirit of democratic centralism. If the majority of the NC think that I have violated democratic centralism, serious enough to warrant a motion of censure then they are duty bound to proceed with charges against me.

I therefore request that the question of my censure by the NC of the IMG be put on the agenda of the next meeting of the United Secretariat.

with revolutionary greetings,  
Alan Harris

c.c. Pat Jordan

Statement to the Political Committee on the letter to the SWP Political Bureau dated 31 July 1970.

Since the content of the letter to the Political Committee of the SWP is as yet for the information of the NC members, the tendency has not met to discuss this letter although large parts of it directly concern the tendency and serious allegations are made against it.

Four members of the tendency, three who are full members of the NC and the other an alternate member, protest most strongly against the contents of the letter sent to the Political Committee of the SWP. In our opinion it is a scandalous letter—full of unsubstantiated allegations, untruths and irrelevancies—and can only be motivated by dead-end factionalism.

Under the pretext of writing the SWP on the question of the sale of Trotskyist literature in Britain an outrageous attack has been made on the tendency in a manner which is quite alien to the democratic norms of the Trotskyist movement.

The method of substituting slanders for political polemics is not a new one and the 4th International has a long tradition and an exemplary record of struggle against this method.

The majority leadership of the IMG will only be able to come to grips with the political problems confronting the IMG by ensuring that a democratic and non-factional atmosphere prevails throughout the IMG so that the political ideas can be discussed in an objective manner.

We ask, what is the purpose of such irrelevancies as to how S Williams cast her vote at the last world congress; whether some members of the tendency have been members of another section at some time or another or have even played a role in the formation of the tendency? Is the purpose of these irrelevancies to create a feeling that comrades joining the IMG with previous membership in another section are "foreigners" whose loyalty to the IMG and the F.I. is in question? We doubt this can be the purpose because there are of course, many members of the IMG who have previously been members of other sections and who support the *majority*. The purpose of these irrelevancies can only be an attempt to create an atmosphere wherein the loyalty of *minority* members is in question.

Such methods do not guarantee a democratic and non-

factional atmosphere in which to discuss the political questions facing us in the IMG.

For our part we welcome comrades who join the IMG with experiences and previous membership in other sections of our international movement, and certainly do not question the loyalty of such comrades to the IMG regardless of whether they support the majority or minority positions. According to the letter, the tendency "... is widely considered to be in solidarity with the SWP's criticisms of the majority position in the International." We do not know the basis of such a statement. The political programme of the tendency is no secret. It is documented, for everyone to read, in the tendency statements and documents written in the pre-conference discussion bulletins of the 1970 conference of the IMG. As yet, the tendency has not discussed the international questions, but if it should do so, and if it did support the minority positions, so what? Would this be a disloyal act or a violation of democratic centralism? Does loyalty demand support for majority positions?

The letter states that "... this tendency will become even more isolated the more it appears to be trying to circumvent the democratic norms of the IMG." What does this mean? The tendency is either circumventing the democratic norms of the IMG or it isn't. If it is, then the leadership has the responsibility to lay charges and substantiate them. Otherwise it must refrain from making such wild and unsubstantiated allegations. The leadership must conduct itself in such a manner that it is clearly seen to be the defender and guarantor of minority rights.

As stated at the last NC meeting, Leader Books has not been set up by the tendency. It is not a political centre for the tendency and any suggestion that another section is materially aiding the tendency in order for it to have its own political centre is too serious an allegation to be raised in the irresponsible manner that it has and is another form of the "Paris gold" myth.

The letter should therefore be withdrawn and a further letter sent to the Political Committee of the SWP to inform it of the motion passed by the majority NC and referred to the United Secretariat for action.

Huff  
Sands  
Scott  
Williams

23 August 1970

873 Broadway  
2nd floor south  
New York, N. Y. 10003

September 14, 1970

Dear Comrade Jordan,

I just received the copy of your letter addressed to "The Political Bureau Socialist Workers Party." We had learned of the existence of this letter but were in the dark as to

September 26th, 1970

its content. We note that the copy you sent us is undated.

In accordance with your request, I will place the motion passed by the National Committee of the International Marxist Group, along with your comments, on the agenda for consideration by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

To help the Political Committee properly weigh the questions you have raised, I would appreciate clarification from you on the following two points:

1. You maintain that the private wholesale export-import book agency set up by Alan Harris constitutes a "political centre," that this center was opened up by a minority tendency in your group, and that this was in "gross violation" of the norms of democratic centralism. You imply, moreover, that the Socialist Workers Party played a key role in inspiring the formation of this minority tendency in the IMG "politically and with resources," and that the establishment of Leader Books by Alan Harris is in reality an attempt by the SWP "to get round the democratic procedures and processes" of the IMG.

In face of such allegations, am I correct in drawing the conclusion that in your opinion the Socialist Workers Party has departed from the traditions of Trotskyism; that it has, so to speak, "degenerated" and can no longer be regarded as a fraternal organization so far as the majority leadership of the IMG is concerned?

2. You state that Red Books has been named as "the official bookshop of the British Section," that "the creation of Leader Books is in complete violation of the decision of the National Committee of the IMG," that "selling books, having an address list and manned office amounts to having a political centre," and that your National Committee has empowered the IMG Secretariat "to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books under the control of the IMG," with which you ask us to "fully co-operate." Does this mean that you have placed a ban on any of your members, except those that meet with the political approval of the majority of your National Committee, from making their livelihood by selling books and other literature, particularly the books and literature generally regarded as "Trotskyist"?

An early reply from you on these points, so that they can be considered by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in conjunction with the organizational complaint registered in your letter, will be greatly appreciated.

Fraternally,  
s/ Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

cc: United Secretariat

Jack Barnes,  
Organisational Secretary,  
Socialist Workers Party,  
873 Broadway,  
NY 10003.

Dear Comrade Barnes,

The Political Committee of the IMG decided yesterday (25/9/70) to refer the question of your letter to me, dated 14th inst., to the next National Committee which will meet over the weekend of October 17/18. We are to mimeograph copies of it so that members of the NC can study it beforehand.

In the meantime you could perhaps furnish me with a piece of information: Barry Sheppard told me yesterday that the Pathfinder had made a big loan to Alan Harris in the form of books (this was the first I had heard of this); could you please tell me how much this was for?

Comrade Barry also referred to a debt we have incurred for international bulletins. Could you please arrange for us to receive an account? It would be useful to separate the 1969 ones from the 1970 ones; and also to list postage (in both cases separately).

Some time ago we wrote to *Militant* suggesting an exchange ad with *Red Mole*—apart from a brief word from Joe we have had no response. Would it be possible to look into this? We would also like to arrange exchange ads between ISR and INTERNATIONAL. You could perhaps arrange to let me know the procedure for arranging this. We are convinced that many readers of ISR would be interested in reading our magazine.

Comrade Barry also made reference to the question of votes of censure being covered in your constitution (if I understood him correctly). Could you please arrange for a copy of your constitution to be sent to me, at the above address, please?

Revolutionary greetings,  
Fraternally,  
s/ Pat Jordan  
(National Secretary IMG)

873 Broadway  
2nd floor South  
New York, N. Y. 10003

October 6, 1970

LONDON  
Pat Jordan

Dear Pat,

This will acknowledge your letter of September 26.

\* \* \*

Pathfinder Press has continued to maintain the same commercial relations with Alan Harris that were initiated

when he first opened a bookshop in London. During the period Alan was in Canada, Ernest Tate handled the bookshop, still on a private business, and then turned it back over to Alan upon his return. Throughout these years, Pathfinder found Alan Harris completely reliable in business transactions. It welcomed his decision to open an import-export wholesale service, since this coincided with its own plans for expansion. Consequently it has acknowledged his orders on the basis of the credit rating he established over the years. Outside this framework there have been no unusual financial transactions.

\* \* \*

Judy White, our National Financial Director, is sending you the information you desire concerning IMG's debt for *International Information Bulletins*.

\* \* \*

I spoke to Joe about his discussion with you on the exchange of advertisements between *The Red Mole* and *The Militant*. He said you had not yet responded to suggestions he made to you on this. If you would drop him or me a note indicating your agreement with his proposals, we could proceed.

\* \* \*

Write directly to the *ISR* on exchanging ads with *International*. I am sure they will be happy to cooperate.

\* \* \*

Separately I am airmailing several copies of the SWP constitution in which you can check the points you are interested in. Also I am sending you the statutes of the Fourth International in case you do not have them readily available.

Comradely yours,  
s/ Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

cc: Ernest

December 10, 1970

Jack Barnes,  
Socialist Workers Party,  
873 Broadway,  
New York,  
NY 10003

Dear Comrade Jack,

In reply to your letter concerning Leader Books, I have been instructed by the National Committee of IMG to reply along the following lines:

(1) If we considered that it was necessary to raise the question of the "degeneration" of the Socialist Workers Party we would do so in another manner: through the appropriate international committees.

(2) At its last meeting (October 17/18, 1970) the NC of the IMG passed the following:

"(1) that this NC reaffirms the previous decisions of the NC to have any bookshop and/or distribution service under the political control of the IMG

"(2) that we would guarantee Adair a job in a unified

company" (i.e., in a merger between Red Books and Leader Books)

"(3) that we would take over the financial responsibilities of Leader Books to ensure that any money invested by Adair in Leader Books should be refunded over a viable period

"(4) that the NC set up a commission of 3 consisting of George, Adair and Peterson to report to the next PC in a form that will allow it to take a definite decision on the form of the fusion. Comrade Adair and George to make available the account books of Leader Books and Red Books for inspection of the commission" (each section passed—17 votes for, 1 against)."

(3) In light of this decision we ask the comrades of the SWP to collaborate with us in implementing the decisions.

Revolutionary greetings,  
s/ Pat Jordan  
(for IMG)

Statement to the National Committee of the International Marxist Group presented to the Political Committee on November 28 by Alan Harris

Dear Comrades,

This statement is to re-affirm the nature of Leader Books and to motivate my position as outlined to the commission set up by the NC to carry out the amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books. The commission met on November 2, 1970.

In a report to the NC on 27/3/70, I offered to work full time for the IMG in order to promote our literature. Following the rejection of this offer I initiated Leader Books which involves me in a number of legal and financial responsibilities.

Leader Books is a import-export wholesale book service dealing almost exclusively with Pathfinder Press publications. In my opinion it is a big asset to the IMG and the FI to have such an operation located in Britain. It means that Red Books and other bookshops can obtain Pathfinder publications quickly and efficiently. As you know, these publications can also be obtained direct from New York by anyone not wishing to take advantage of the services that Leader Books provides.

I reject completely the concept that the circulation of Pathfinder literature is in anyway harmful to the IMG and the FI. If you think otherwise then you should take the matter before the appropriate body of the FI.

I earn my living through Leader Books. I consider this to be a legitimate, valuable and honourable way of securing a livelihood. In no way does my means of livelihood violate proletarian democracy, socialist morality or harm the work of the FI and its sections. The NC of the IMG by instructing me to carry out a merger with Red Books (Oct 17/18 meeting) exceeds its authority and responsibilities. I reject the concept of merger as instructed by the NC as it means the liquidation of Leader Books and denies me the right to earn a living in the way I have decided. I therefore reject the political and moral

authority of the NC in instructing me to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books with Red Books.

The motion of censure passed against me by the NC (July 25/26) is a violation of democratic centralism and is contrary to the constitution of the FI. I was not invited to attend the relevant part of the NC meeting in order to explain why such a motion should not be passed. I was not even informed that such a motion was to be considered by the NC. No charges have been levelled against me. The manner in which I was informed of the decision and the way in which the leadership presented the motion to the entire membership of the IMG makes the matter even more shocking.

I formally learned that the NC had passed such a motion on August 12th when the Letter to Members was distributed to the London branch meeting. Leader Books and the motion of censure was placed on the agenda of the London branch on two occasions by leading members of the IMG for a "discussion" (see my statement of protest August 26/70).

The motion of censure passed in my absence, without me receiving written charges, without my knowledge and distributed to the entire membership of the IMG, has created a situation where I have been pilloried before the whole membership thus making it almost impossible for me to get a truly democratic hearing throughout the organization.

I made a formal appeal to the last meeting of the NC (24/25 Oct) requesting that the motion of censure be withdrawn. This was rejected.

I therefore give notice that at the next national conference of the IMG I will appeal the motion of censure and request the conference to call to order the NC for usurping its authority through interfering with my democratic right to earn a living by distributing Pathfinder publications.

with comradely greetings,

Alan Harris

*MEMORANDUM ON CORRESPONDENCE  
RELATING TO LONDON BOOK SERVICE*

By Joseph Hansen

January 20, 1971

An undated letter from Comrade Pat Jordan, the National Secretary of the International Marxist Group, which was received by Comrade Jack Barnes, the Organization Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on September 7, 1970, stated that the National Committee of the IMG had passed the following motion at a meeting held over the weekend of July 25-26, 1970:

The National Committee censures Comrade Alan Harris for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the United Secretariat to investigate the matter immediately because it will otherwise result in a serious deterioration of relations between two sections of the International. The NC empowers the Secretariat (IMG Secre-

tariat) to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books under the control of the IMG.

Several issues in my opinion, are involved in this motion:

1. A disciplinary action, i.e., censure of Comrade Harris.

This action was taken against Comrade Harris because he opened a book service in London in order to gain his livelihood after he turned the assets of Pioneer Books over to the IMG in view of the stated inability of the IMG to provide him with a living wage as a full timer and its unwillingness to permit him to continue the operation of Pioneer Books in the headquarters on the same private basis upon which he had founded and operated it for a number of years.

According to Comrade Harris, he was not informed that such a motion was to be considered; he was not invited to explain why such a motion should not be passed; no charges were levelled against him; and both he and the rest of the membership were informed of the disciplinary action in an irregular way.

2. An appeal to the United Secretariat "to investigate the matter."

No violation of the statutes of the Fourth International concerning operating a bookshop or gaining a livelihood is alleged. Thus it would appear that no grounds for an investigation by the United Secretariat exist, and the United Secretariat has not instituted any investigation.

3. An assertion that a "serious deterioration of relations" with another section could occur.

This issue is referred to more directly in a subsequent explanation by Comrade Jordan and will be considered more fully further on.

4. An order issued to Comrade Harris to submit to "amalgamation" of his book service with Red Books "under the control of the IMG."

This, if carried out, would amount to liquidating the book service opened by Comrade Harris and denying him the right to make a living in London in accordance with his skills and experience.

In justification of the extraordinary resolution passed by the majority of the National Committee of the IMG at its July 25-26, 1970, meeting, Comrade Pat Jordan stated:

We must explain that this resolution was passed after the committee had received a report of the informal discussions on Leader Books between Joe Hansen and comrades Ali and Jordan.

This refers to conversations which I reported on at the time to the Political Committee. As I told the committee, the conversations appeared amicable to me and I could see no reason why, given goodwill on both sides, a comradely resolution of the differences on this point could not be reached. Evidently, I was mistaken.

To recall briefly the main points I made in the conversations with Comrades Ali and Jordan in connection with this particular dispute:

It was my view that Comrade Harris acted within his rights as a loyal member of the IMG in seeking to make his livelihood through selling books and that in providing

a wholesale outlet for Pathfinder Press in Britain and for the export of books of all kinds from Britain to other countries, the operation, even though private, could prove to be of positive value to the world Trotskyist movement. I stated my opinion that the IMG stood to make direct gains by this expansion.

I maintained that it was incorrect to conceive of Leader Books as being in "competition" with Red Books. I said I could envision the possibility of other retail outlets besides Red Books being opened, particularly in the book area of London, and that it would be very good, in my opinion, if the IMG leadership would discuss these possibilities with Comrade Harris, explore concretely what might be attempted, and seek to utilize his know-how in expanding in the retail field.

In response to queries from Comrades Ali and Jordan about the Socialist Workers Party getting Pathfinder Press to cut off relations with Comrade Harris, who has handled Pathfinder, Merit, and Pioneer books satisfactorily for many years, I explained that Pathfinder Press has no connection with the SWP so far as its business affairs are concerned, being a completely independent corporation although it concentrates on publishing material expressing a socialist point of view and receives strong moral backing in this from the SWP.

My efforts to improve the situation obviously did not meet with the positive response that seemed to me best calculated to reduce tensions and lead to restoration of comradely relations. In his letter, Comrade Jordan wrote with regard to the conversations:

We cannot accept that there is any problem in "explaining to Pathfinder Books" that Red Books would be taking over distribution of its publications from Alan Harris. This being the case we are confronted with a position where the SWP refuses to supply publications to the official bookshop of the British Section, but instead insists on supplying them direct to a member of the minority tendency of the IMG.

The facts are that the SWP has never refused to supply its publications to the British Section. Its publications consist of internal bulletins, educational material, and similar items.

In response to an inquiry, the management of Pathfinder Press affirms that it has never refused any orders from either the IMG, Red Books, or anyone else in Britain or anywhere else in the world. It has only insisted upon payment for orders.

To be noted in Comrade Jordan's explanation is the category of an "official bookshop of the British Section," plus the implication that this "official" bookshop exercises a monopoly on the sale of Trotskyist literature in Britain, one so tight that to supply Trotskyist books "direct to a member of the minority tendency of the IMG" will "result in a serious deterioration of relations between two sections of the International."

In arguing for this standpoint, Comrade Jordan continued:

We would ask you to consider a hypothetical case: Suppose that the IMG, as publishers of a large number of books by Trotsky, etc., refused to supply them to the SWP but insisted that these be distributed in the United States via a minority tendency (which for

instance, might take the position that the YSA should advance the slogan "Victory to the NLF" on mass demonstrations).

As noted above: 1) The SWP and Pathfinder Press are not identical, although the SWP favors and supports the aim of Pathfinder Press to publish a large number of books by Trotsky, etc. 2) Pathfinder Press has not refused to supply the IMG with books by Trotsky or any other author listed in its catalog. 3) If the IMG were in position to supply the American market with books by Trotsky or any other author of interest to the reading public in the United States, and wished to do this through an agency of its own choice, the SWP would certainly not stand in the way. To the contrary, the SWP would seek to facilitate such an operation.

As an example, there is the case of Comrade Ernest Mandel's book *Marxist Economic Theory*, which the author decided could be most advantageously printed in London and distributed in the United States by the Monthly Review Press. The SWP did everything it could to assure the success of this arrangement, including distributing literature describing the book and inviting comrades to purchase it.

The argument about hypothetical American cothinkers of the IMG majority taking the position "that the YSA should advance the slogan 'Victory to the NLF' on mass demonstrations" suggests several variants.

If they wanted to argue for this position within the SWP, their democratic right to do so would be guaranteed.

If one of them wanted to open a private bookshop to make a livelihood, the SWP leadership would help him or her to the fullest extent, doing everything possible to make it a success.

As to the possible connection of the slogan "Victory to the NLF!" and such a bookshop, Comrade Jordan drags this in by the hair. It is not the purpose of a book-

store to advance political slogans. The purpose of a bookstore is to sell books. It is to be noted that in the antiwar rallies in the U. S. the most extreme slogan used by comrades associated with an SWP headquarters bookstore has been: "Get Your Trotskyist Literature Here!"

The inappropriateness of Comrade Jordan's analogy is shown by the fact that Leader Books has never displayed a banner in its windows reading "For Mass Antiwar Demonstrations!" Moreover, despite the political differences that the minority in the IMG has expressed, in all public activities it has scrupulously adhered, so far as I know, to all the positions taken by the majority; and from all I have heard, the comrades of the minority are not among the least active militants of the IMG.

Comrade Jordan, one is forced to conclude, is mixed up on the function of a bookstore and the function of a political party.

The accuracy of such a conclusion is shown by the following contention made by Comrade Jordan:

We do not accept the argument that a book distribution centre (we do not want to get into semantic arguments about bookshops and import/export agencies) is not a political centre. Selling books, having an address list and a manned office amounts to having a political centre. This has always been recognised as such by the movement. This is why the IMG national committee

resolved—just prior to its National Conference—that its bookshop would be completely under democratic centralist norms (it should be added that this position was approved by the conference).

To be noticed first of all, is Comrade Jordan's position that nothing more substantial than "semantics" is involved in the difference between a wholesale and retail outlet. It can only be concluded from this that the majority leadership of the IMG has rejected Comrade Harris's offer to provide a wholesale service for Red Books. This is the reality of the situation described earlier by Comrade Jordan as being one "where the SWP refuses to supply publications to the official bookshop of the British Section. . . ."

As to the argument that "selling books, having an address list and a manned office amounts to having a political centre," the following observations can be made:

The experience of the radical movement is that a bookshop, as an adjunct, can make the headquarters of a party local more attractive; but a bookshop is by no means an absolute requisite to maintaining a headquarters. In fact, experience is not lacking in which bookshops have become liabilities.

On the other hand, it is true that a bookshop can be utilized as an initial point in establishing a political center. Experience shows, however, that such a development can lessen the attractiveness of a bookshop and even stand in the way of its becoming a successful financial enterprise. To survive, an "official" bookshop may in fact require a regular subsidy in one form or another.

Whether a weak local should try to underwrite an "official" bookshop must be carefully weighed. In this respect, a private bookshop has often proved to be the best arrangement. The experience in London itself since 1963 would seem to bear this out—at least up to now.

Comrade Jordan argues that the identity of a bookshop and a political center "has always been recognized as such by the movement." The truth is that his contention echoes the position taken by the Grant group when they sought to take over and destroy the bookshop established and built up by Comrade Harris following the Reunification Congress.

When the Grant group attempted their raid, accompanying it with all kinds of slanders of Comrade Harris, the United Secretariat came to the defense of Comrade Harris and argued against the way the leadership of the Grant group was abusing its authority as a majority.

Comrade Jordan asserted in his letter that no delays in resolving the situation in the way decided upon by the majority could be brooked. "We cannot procrastinate," he stated, "because of the serious state of affairs (our political opponents are well aware that Leader Books operates independently from our organization)."

It is not within the tradition of our movement to cite the opinion of our political opponents in settling a matter of internal concern. For those who know this, another argument was offered by Comrade Jordan in his next paragraph, i.e., the lack of understanding in the past in the British Trotskyist movement "of the meaning of democratic centralism as applied to the task of building a mass section of an international revolutionary party." To emphasize his point, Comrade Jordan stated: "We would be failing in our duty of helping to construct a mass section of the FI in Britain if we did not take immediate and decisive steps to nip this situation in the

bud."

A sister section of the world Trotskyist movement, understanding what is involved, would be failing in its duty if it did not call the attention of the leaders of the IMG majority to the difference between democratic centralism and abuse of authority.

Of greater concern is the following contention advanced by Comrade Jordan:

We think that in a case like this [the imaginary situation of the IMG distributing books in the U.S. via a minority tendency that advocated the slogan "Victory to the NLF"] that you could be understood if you thought that the IMG was trying to support a minority—politically and with resources—of the SWP. We think that you could be understood if you considered this to be a gross violation of the democratic centralist norms and an attempt to get round the democratic procedures and processes of the SWP.

In view of the implications, Comrade Jack Barnes in a letter dated September 14, 1970, asked Comrade Jordan for clarification:

1. You maintain that the private wholesale export-import book agency set up by Alan Harris constitutes a "political centre," that this center was opened up by a minority tendency in your group, and that this was in "gross violation" of the norms of democratic centralism. You imply, moreover, that the Socialist Workers Party played a key role in inspiring the formation of this minority tendency in the IMG "politically and with resources," and that the establishment of Leader Books by Alan Harris is in reality an attempt by the SWP "to get round the democratic procedures and processes" of the IMG.

In face of such allegations, am I correct in drawing the conclusion that in your opinion the Socialist Workers Party has departed from the traditions of Trotskyism; that it has, so to speak, "degenerated" and can no longer be regarded as a fraternal organization so far as the majority leadership of the IMG is concerned?

In a letter dated December 10, 1970, Comrade Jordan stated that he had been instructed to reply to this question along the following line:

1) If we considered that it was necessary to raise the question of the "degeneration" of the Socialist Workers Party we would do so in another manner: through the appropriate international committees.

This reply can only be characterized as an equivocation. Asked if he believes that the SWP has departed from the traditions of Trotskyism, Comrade Jordan says nothing. Asked if he believes that the SWP can no longer be regarded as a fraternal organization, Comrade Jordan again says nothing. He is even equivocal on the term "degeneration." His reply can be interpreted as meaning that the IMG majority leaders do not consider it necessary to raise this question at the present time; if they did consider it necessary at the present time, then they would do so in another manner. . . .

Comrade Barnes, in his letter of September 14, 1970, asked another question in his effort to obtain clarification.

tion from Comrade Jordan:

2. You state the Red Books has been named as "the official bookshop of the British Section," that "the creation of Leader Books is in complete violation of the decision of the National Committee of the IMG," that "selling books, having an address list and manned office amounts to having a political centre," and that your National Committee has empowered the IMG Secretariat "to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books under the control of the IMG," with which you ask us to "fully co-operate." Does this mean that you have placed a ban on any of your members, except those that meet with the political approval of your National Committee, from making their livelihood by selling books and other literature, particularly the books and literature generally regarded as "Trotskyist?"

In his reply of December 10, 1970, Comrade Jordan did not reply at all to this question.

From his silence, it can be concluded that had he answered, he could have answered only in the affirmative, and he found it embarrassing to state the bald truth that the majority leadership of the IMG has indeed placed a ban on any of its members, except those meeting the political approval of the majority, from making their livelihood by selling books and other literature, particularly the books and literature generally regarded as "Trotskyist."

In fact in his reply of December 10, 1970, Comrade Jordan quotes a resolution passed by the majority of the National Committee at its October 17-18 meeting reaffirming its previous position insisting upon the liquidation of the book service set up by Comrade Harris.

The way in which Comrade Jordan and those who agree with him regard the minority in the IMG has an important bearing in this whole matter.

In his undated letter, Comrade Jordan said the following:

We should point out that this tendency is widely considered to be in solidarity with the SWP's criticisms of the majority position in the International. We would recall to your attention that this tendency first manifested itself when its leader, Comrade Susan Williams, appealed to the British delegation at the last world congress to be seated for the discussion on China in order to cast her vote against the majority. Furthermore it is well known that: a) about half the members of the tendency are ex-members of a section which supports the minority position in the International; b) that leading comrades sent from North America to participate in the work of the International played the leading part in founding the tendency; and c) that Alan Harris is a member of the United Secretariat designated by the previously mentioned section. Taking into account all these circumstances we think it would be in the best interests of a clear political discussion to avoid any action which could be construed as using organisational means to support a political minority.

The context is different from this presentation. At the Reunification Congress in 1963, the development of the

British Trotskyist movement was considered to be of special importance. At the same time, the difficulties and obstacles were recognized as considerable in face of the sectarian course of the Socialist Labour League, the refusal of its leaders to participate in the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement, and the divisions among those who favored reunification—the Fourth Internationalists being divided into two warring groups, one centered in Nottingham, the other in London.

Outside aid was badly needed. The United Secretariat therefore did what it could to provide this aid. An appeal was made to the English-speaking comrades in North America. The Canadian Trotskyists responded as true internationalists and sent various top-level cadres at some cost to their own work in an immediate sense. In collaboration with the United Secretariat, they worked in model fashion, not without personal sacrifice.

To round out the picture, it should be noted that most of these cadres—as happens to be the case with a substantial number of Canadians generally—were not born in Canada. They were born in Britain. They were "Canadians" only in the sense that some of them had been won to the movement in Canada, or had had the opportunity—as in the case of Susan Williams—of working for a time in the Canadian Trotskyist movement.

Comrade Jordan leaves this out. Instead, even in a letter to the SWP he stresses that "about half the members of the tendency are ex-members of a section which supports the minority position in the International."

A sharp factional line is thus projected by Comrade Jordan, extending beyond Britain and tying in with the differences expressed at the last world congress. This goes counter to the efforts of the most responsible leaders of the world Trotskyist movement to avoid the crystallization of factional formations on an international scale.

Comrade Jordan's stress on the alleged "Canadian" origin and ties of "about half the members of the tendency" is cause for concern. It suggests that a bad factional atmosphere has been whipped up within the IMG. It is only too remindful of the factionalism that has repeatedly been such a problem to British Trotskyism in the past.

The assignment of aiding the British comrades in strengthening Trotskyism in their country was not ended on the initiative of the Trotskyists in either Canada or the U.S. It was ended unilaterally primarily on the initiative of the majority of the IMG leadership after the IMG was recognized as an official section of the Fourth International.

This was connected with a change in the orientation of the IMG that was challenged by some comrades in the IMG and that led to a political discussion of considerable interest as can be judged by reading the contributions made by both sides.

Contrary to the conclusion implied in Comrade Jordan's letter, the current differences within the IMG originated from a change in orientation undertaken by the majority leadership. The appearance of a minority tendency was not at all the result of unprincipled intervention by a "degenerated" section, seeking "to get round the democratic procedures and processes" of the IMG.

To summarize: Comrade Jordan, speaking for the IMG majority, does not give a true picture of the role played by those sectors of the world Trotskyist movement that responded to the appeal of the United Secretariat to help the British comrades. He presents a tendentious account



of the origin of the minority, implying that it was instigated by the leadership of the SWP for unfathomable reasons, that it consists to a large degree of persons coming under the general heading of "foreign agents," and that it therefore has no basis in principle for existence.

In resorting to organizational reprisals against a loyal minority, the leaders of the majority in the IMG have embarked on a course that could have serious repercussions within the Fourth International as a whole. It is to be hoped that they will reconsider this course and recognize that members of the minority have the same right as members of the majority to seek to make a livelihood doing what they are most skilled at—in this instance selling books.

If the majority leaders weigh more carefully the fact that the enterprise undertaken by Comrade Harris aims at concentrating on books of greatest political importance to the world Trotskyist movement and to the IMG, perhaps they will decide that the best policy is to give it the support it deserves.

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N. Y. 10014  
April 30, 1971

*Pat Jordan*

Dear Pat,

We have received no reply to or acknowledgment of our communication to you of February 8, 1971. It contained the motion adopted by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on February 5, 1971; copies of your correspondence including an undated letter to the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party, your letters of September 26, 1970 and October 12, 1970\*; my correspondence to you of September 14, 1970 and October 6, 1970; the statement to the National Committee of the International Marxist Group which has [been] presented to the Political Committee on November 28, 1970, by Alan Harris; and the Memorandum on Correspondence Relating to London Book Service by Joseph Hansen, dated January 20, 1971.

We know that letters going both ways may have been lost during the strike.

Did you receive this communication?

Comradely,  
s/ Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

cc: Ernest

\* This letter is correctly listed in the report of the Fact-Finding Commission as dated December 10, 1970.

IMG.,  
182 Pentonville Rd.,  
London N. 1.  
Britain.  
6/5/71

Jack Barnes,  
SWP.  
14 Charles Lane,  
New York City,  
N. Y. 10014

Dear Jack,

Your letter of the 30th ult., received yesterday, acknowledged.

We did, indeed, receive your communication of February 8th. We sent you on March 10th an acknowledgement and the text of a resolution passed by the IMG National Committee on March 7th. The resolution reads:

(1) That our reply should be more in sorrow than anger, regretting very much that relations between the SWP and the IMG have declined;

(2) That we suggest some measures to improve matters, e.g., more exchange of materials and informal discussions. A start could be made by exchanging minutes and for the two organisations to send each other all documents, circulars, etc.;

(3) We have to insist that a correction on questions of fact is sent to all those people who received Joe Hansen's memoranda;

(4) We have to protest against the way that the IMG was tried and found guilty of undemocratic procedures (and a general question of democracy in the IMG was raised) without any chance to defend itself (nor for that matter even knowing that such charges were going to be raised).

Passed 14 for, 2 against, 1 abstention (on the grounds that the letter was not strong enough).

Another minute is of interest:

Asked whether she would deny the fact that IMG paid £192 for the books received from Pioneer Books, Williams answered negatively.

I have not drafted the above mentioned reply because of pressure of work due to the IMG annual conference.

Please let us have your reaction to the suggestion of the exchange of more material. At present we receive SWP branch circulars and a host of material from the YSA. We do not receive SWP national committee minutes nor those of your political bureau and similar committees. Please instruct us on matters of security, etc.; we remember full well Joe's violent reaction on the occasion of some material being sent to the wrong address.

Please arrange to have sent to us by airmail one each of your Discussion Bulletins, we already receive the Information Bulletins. Please inform comrade Judy White that we have paid £40 to Martine for International Information Bulletins, this negates the invoice she sent us. We are selling the Bulletins and our practice will be to pay this money to Martine, about every other month. This is in keeping with a decision of our Political Com-



mittee. We realise full well that payment for SWP Discussion Bulletins should be made to the SWP—we hope that this will clear up any confusion on this matter.

We have received from the Spartacists a request to advertise the issue of their paper giving a "report" on the differences in the United Secretariat. In view of the lying and dishonest nature of that report we are not proposing to print the advert.

We have sent to you under separate cover a copy of our pamphlet on Bengal—we hope you can find it useful.

Since your move there has been some material sent to us at our old address (1, Toynbee St., London, E. 1.). It would appear that this mistake has been discovered because the mail stopped being re-directed from that address as mysteriously as it commenced—however, you might care to mention it to who ever is in charge. Re-directed mail is a convenient way for the cops to get a set of our material.

Revolutionary greetings,  
s/ Pat Jordan

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N. Y. 10014  
May 15, 1971

Dear Pat,

Thank you for your letter of May 6. I received it yesterday. We never received your letter of March 10.

I will circulate your letter to the Political Committee and we will await the reply to our communication of February 8 that you are working on. I can appreciate the pressure of work due to the IMG annual conference. We have the same problem mounting here now ourselves.

We will try to increase the exchange of material that you suggest. It would be a help if we had a more exact idea what you already receive. We will begin immediately sending you an airmail copy of our internal discussion bulletins as they come off the press. It would be very helpful if you would do the same. We do not have a set of the preconference discussion material of the IMG that is now coming out.

There are no special problems with security. If I remember correctly, Joe's "violent" reaction had to do with material for the SWP being addressed as such to ICP's box number. There's no problem with sending any of the material you want directly to the SWP at 14 Charles Lane.

We're surprised that any material was sent to your old address at Toynbee St. The comrades from the national office and the offices of our publications have not done so. They have sent all the material to Pentonville Rd. Would you please send us a list of all the material that came to 1 Toynbee St. and the date that it was mailed, if you can make out the postmark. That's the only way we can actually track down the error.

The Political Committee is planning to send a representative to observe your conference. He will be able to clarify

any remaining triangular problems of bulletin bills that exist between ourselves, yourselves and Martine.

Comradely,  
s/ Jack Barnes

## IV. DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACT FINDING COMMISSION BY MAJORITY AND TENDENCY COMRADES

### A. Pathfinder Press/Alan Harris Dispute

M 22

*On the Factionalism of the IMG Majority National Committee Members Concerning Pathfinder Press*

by Alan Harris  
June 1, 1971

Disciplinary action was taken against me by the National Committee of the IMG at its meeting on July 25/26, 1970, when the following resolution was passed:

The NC censures comrade Alan Harris for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the United Secretariat [of the Fourth International—A.H.] to investigate the matter immediately because it will otherwise result in a serious deterioration of relations between two sections of the International. The NC empowers the Secretariat (IMG Secretariat) to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books and Red Books under the control of the IMG.

I was not invited to attend the part of the NC meeting when this motion was passed in order to present my point of view. I was not informed that such a motion was to be considered by the NC. No charges were levelled against me. The NC did not inform me that such a serious decision had been taken. In fact I formally learned about the motion of censure when the nationally circulated Letter to Members was distributed to the August 12th London Branch meeting (see appendix number 1), and when a NC report on Leader Books was placed on the branch agenda. I protested as follows:

I protest that tonight I have formally heard for the first time that the NC at its meeting of July 25/26 passed a motion of censure against me.

Normal democratic procedures have been violated by not giving me an opportunity to be at the relevant part of the NC meeting to speak against the motion of censure. The motion of censure was therefore passed without giving me an opportunity to present my point of view to the NC and to give members of the NC an opportunity to hear this viewpoint and come to a democratic decision.

At the following branch meeting Leader Books was again on the agenda and I again protested as follows:

I protest on three accounts that leading comrades of

the IMG have placed Leader Books on the agenda of the London Branch for the second time.

- 1) Because the matter concerns another Trotskyist organisation which is not able to be represented here.
- 2) Because the dispute concerns a member of the IMG and United Secretariat, against whom a motion of censure has been passed by the IMG.
- 3) Because the matter has already been referred to the United Secretariat by the NC (I have already asked that the question of my censure be placed on the agenda of the next United Secretariat meeting).

I therefore decline to take part in tonight's discussion and reserve the right to present my point of view at the September meeting of the United Secretariat, not only on the "dispute" between Leader Books and Red Books but also on the question of my censure.

I made an appeal to the NC at its meeting on October 24/25 requesting that the motion of censure be rescinded. This was rejected.

How can the IMG majority leadership claim to adhere to the organisational norms of democratic centralism yet proceed by passing a motion of censure against a comrade, in his absence, without written charges, without his knowledge, and distributed to the entire membership of the organisation in a way calculated to prejudice the membership against him?

In 1963, at the time of the reunification congress of the Fourth International (7th world congress) the United Secretariat saw the development of a strong section in Britain to be of key importance. Important not only for Britain but for the Fourth International as a whole.

The SLL had moved into a factional, dead-end sectarian course and refused to come into the reunified movement. The forces favouring reunification in Britain, the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Nottingham-based International Group, were weak and hostile to each other.

To assist in the building of the British section the United Secretariat, at the request of the British comrades, asked the English speaking sections to help in anyway they could. It was logical that help came from Canada because of the political similarities that exist between the two countries and because the Canadian section continually recruits British emigrants.

The Canadian Trotskyists responded by releasing me in order to return to Britain to work under the direction of the United Secretariat.

With Healy pulling out of the Fourth International, the RSL became, defacto, the official section. Of course I was duty bound to join it. At the same time I retained fraternal relations with the International Group. The RSL under Ted Grant's leadership and the IG led by Coates and Jordan had decided, in line with the 7th world congress

decisions, to unify their organisations. The responsibility allocated to me by the United Secretariat was to help bring about the fusion as quickly as possible.

In 1963 it was almost impossible to purchase our literature in the UK. The SLL published a small number of books and pamphlets, most of which contained factional attacks against the Fourth International. A few duplicated pamphlets were available from Jordan's International Bookshop in Nottingham. The RSL had about 2000 copies of *France in Crisis* written by Grant, but nothing else.

It was difficult to see how a Trotskyist cadre could develop without at least the basic literature of the Fourth International being available and promoted.

On joining the RSL I learned about "WIR Publications," which was supposed to be a publishing house and mail-order book service combined. In reality it existed only in the minds of some RSLers and by name.

By decision and agreement of the RSL and United Secretariat I commenced to operate and expand "WIR Publications," on a full time basis, as a mail-order book service.

It should be mentioned that the RSL, like "WIR Publications," hardly existed either. The headquarters were always closed. There was no telephone. It was a herculean task to make contact with the official section of the Fourth International in Britain. The RSL's "monthly" newspaper *Socialist Fight*, came out twice in 1963. Deep entry into the Labour Party had turned the RSL into an underground and dead organisation.

The impending fusion with the IG and the regular opening of the headquarters stocked with only a small amount of socialist literature brought about some changes for the better. Some new recruits were made, the most prominent being ex-SLL members Roger P., Connie Harris, and Bob P.

In late 1964, after more than a year's discussion, the fusion between the RSL and IG finally took place. It was followed three months later by a split, taking the organisations back to square one.

While critical of many organisational and theoretical concepts of the Nottingham comrades, my sympathies were more with them than with the RSL. This created a big dilemma for the Grant leadership. According to them, a situation could not be tolerated where anyone who did not think exactly like them could operate the book service—so I was promptly fired.

I then initiated Pioneer Book Service from my flat as a privately owned concern. The RSL didn't like that very much. According to the Grant leadership's warped concepts of democratic centralism, no member of the Fourth International in Britain could operate a "Trotskyist" bookshop unless it was under the control of the leading bodies of the RSL. The leadership had to decide policy, legally own, and control any book service operated by members of the organisation. Not *all* members of course—but most certainly those members who were in political opposition to them.

The RSL leadership, because it was factional to the core, tried to make a big scandal over Pioneer Book Service. They sank so low as to accuse me of stealing "their" books (while conveniently forgetting about the large debt owed to me for unpaid wages). As a last resort they appealed to the United Secretariat, claiming that I had acted in an undisciplined manner and that I was a conscious stooge of the North American comrades,

working against the interests of the British section.

The United Secretariat clearly saw what was involved—an attempt to discredit one of its members by a factional, national leadership, through an abuse of its authority. The appeal was turned down.

The big rumpus the RSL leadership tried to create when Pioneer Book Service was set up was designed to blur over the political differences within the organisation, and to try to discredit and denigrate one of its members before the membership of the section and the International. In the process they turned democratic centralism into a farce.

So much for the organisational practices of the RSL!

With the authorisation and agreement of the United Secretariat, Ernest Tate came to London in December 1965, attending the 8th world congress where the IG and RSL were both made "sympathising groups" of the FI. After a short period working with Comrade Tate, I went back to Canada in March 1966 after completing my assignment. Before I left, premises were obtained at Toynbee Street and Pioneer Book Service (which was a privately owned concern) was handed over to Comrade Tate.

Good opportunities developed for the building of the Fourth International in Britain and in 1968 in response to a request from the International both Connie Harris and myself returned to Britain to assist in the building of the section. After the October 1968, Vietnam demonstration I recommenced the work of developing Pioneer Book Service.

At the 9th world congress in April 1969, the IMG became the official section of the Fourth International in Britain and the RSL was dropped from being a "sympathising" group. Recognition of the IMG as the section did not change the relationship between the IMG and Pioneer Book Service. I continued to operate the book service and carried out other responsibilities as requested by the IMG leadership.

A change in the relationship took place when the United Secretariat, at the request of the IMG NC, terminated the International aid project to Britain. This changed the situation for me as my wages had been paid by the International. It then became necessary to find an alternative means of earning a living.

In a statement to the PC (see appendix number 2) I proposed that the IMG move out boldly by raising the money to finance a bookshop, located in central London, with considerable stock and staffed by two comrades full time. Such an undertaking, would of course, be under the control of the IMG. If this idea materialised, I was willing to work in any capacity I could, providing the organisation pay wages on a par with those received when the International aid project existed. The IMG could not raise the necessary amount of money so the idea of a centrally located bookshop was dropped. A further proposition I put forward was that I personally could borrow sufficient money to open a bookshop for the IMG but that such a bookshop would have to be my personal responsibility on account of the loan involved. This was turned down by the leadership who argued that it was incompatible with democratic centralism to allow me to operate a private bookshop which is what I had been doing for many years.

Faced with the necessity to earn a living it was natural that I put to use the skill I had developed over the years—selling books. Leader Books (now Pathfinder Press, London) was started on a private basis as an import-export wholesale book distribution centre.

For the first time in Britain, sufficient stock of Trotskyist literature was available making it possible to promote this literature to bookshops, organisations, libraries, etc. Sales of our literature have increased enormously over the past year and this is obviously a big asset to the IMG and Fourth International. Red Books like many other bookshops are able to take advantage of the large quantities of Pathfinder titles in London.

The IMG majority leadership raise red herrings when they try to make a case that Pathfinder Press is in "competition" with Red Books. Even if Pathfinder Press became 100% retail, even if every other bookshop in the country started selling our literature, this could only *compliment*, and not impede the work of Red Books. It would mean that sales by Red Books would increase, to the advantage of the IMG and Fourth International.

Red Books is not subservient to Pathfinder Press (London). As far as I know, any bookshop, anywhere in the world, can place orders direct with New York.

The accusation that Pathfinder Press is a political centre initiated by the tendency and supported by Trotskyists in other countries is even more absurd. Since when do political bookshops, ipso facto, become political headquarters? Anyone visiting Collet's can see that they carry a broad range of Pathfinder titles. Does the majority leadership consider Collet's—a Communist Party front—to be a Trotskyist political headquarters? Or for that matter any other "political" bookshop that handles our literature?

The majority leadership by linking the dispute they have with me over Pathfinder Press with the Tendency is hoping to confuse the political issues on which the Tendency is formed. While Tendency members see the obvious advantage in increasing the circulation of our literature, they neither initiated nor are responsible for Pathfinder Press. Pathfinder Press is my personal responsibility.

The motion of censure which the NC passed against me requests the United Secretariat to "investigate the matter immediately." The matter was referred to the United Secretariat. This body did not institute any investigation presumably on the grounds that the statutes of the Fourth International are not violated when a private bookshop is opened by an individual member. The motion of censure also "empowers the (IMG) Secretariat to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books with Red Books under the control of the IMG." Such an "amalgamation" if carried out would mean the liquidation of Pathfinder Press and a denial of my right to earn a living utilising the skill I have.

The NC therefore abused its authority by instructing me to carry out an amalgamation with Red Books, and for this reason I am unable to comply.

Of course leading bodies of our movement have the right and responsibility to *discuss* with its members their job situation. With good reason a leading body can *request* that a comrade changes jobs if possible. It can in certain circumstances *request* a comrade to try and get another job which is considered to be more helpful in the work of the party. But a leading body cannot *order* or give *instructions* to a comrade on how he or she makes a living. Not unless someone is in a situation where proletarian democracy is being violated or where the work of the section and Fourth International is being damaged. If the majority leadership consider Pathfinder Press falls into either of these categories, it should state so and why.

Clearly the NC in its attitude and actions towards the setting up of Pathfinder Press has acted in an extremely factional manner. Instead of welcoming and assisting such a venture—which can do nothing but help the work of the IMG and the Fourth International—the reverse has happened.

It is because I hold political views at variance with the majority that the NC has embarked on this course. The motion of censure is an organisation reprisal against me for holding certain political views. The source of the political dispute is not of my making. That rests with the *majority* leadership which decided to change some political positions which had been held by the IMG and the Fourth International for some years, thereby making the development of a tendency inevitable.

By taking organisational reprisals of this kind, the majority leadership hope to blur over and solve the political questions in dispute. They, therefore, drag in all kinds of red herrings, in order to try and present a case that democratic centralism has been violated, that I am somehow disloyal, that I am in collaboration with Trotskyists outside of Britain who, for reasons unknown, are fishing in troubled waters against the interests of the British section.

The IMG majority leadership are merely emulating what the RSL leadership did in 1965.

I consider Pathfinder Press (London) to be a big asset to the IMG and the Fourth International. In no way have our democratic centralist norms been violated by the setting up of Pathfinder Press on a private basis.

The majority NC/PC have abused their authority and therefore violated our democratic norms. They have done this by:

- 1) censoring me;
- 2) failing to notify me in advance that I was to be placed on trial;
- 3) failing to grant me a hearing at the relevant part of the NC meeting;
- 4) notifying the membership of IMG of its disciplinary measures in a way calculated to prejudice the membership against me;
- 5) singling me out for disciplinary action for the way in which I earn a living when the entire membership is not subjected to the same discipline;
- 6) taking organisational reprisals against me in such a way as to try and politically discredit myself and thereby the Tendency as a whole;
- 7) instructing me to "amalgamate" Pathfinder Press with Red Books, knowing that by "amalgamation" what was really meant was liquidation.

I reject the motion of censure and the instructions about "amalgamation" for the reasons already outlined, and I request the national conference to do likewise.

**APPENDIX NO. 1**  
**EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO MEMBERS,**  
**4th August 1970**

**LEADER BOOKS:** Comrades may be aware of a somewhat unfortunate occurrence concerning the setting up of Leader Books by Comrade Alan Harris. The National Committee felt that the setting up of this book agency was detrimental to the interests of Red Books—the group

bookshop. In view of the fact that Leader Books was set up without the knowledge of the leadership and involves the SWP and the United Secretariat the NC passed the following resolution: "That this NC censures Comrade A. H. for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to investigate the matter immediately, because it will otherwise result in a serious deterioration in relations between two sections of the International. The NC empowers the Secretariat to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books under the control of the IMG." The Secretariat will be getting in touch with comrade A. Harris soon to carry out the NC decision. A letter has already been sent out to the SWP.

*APPENDIX NO. 2*  
*STATEMENT BY A. HARRIS TO THE PC OF THE IMG,*  
*19 March 1970*

*Future of PBS*

1. Continue operation as at present, mainly as a service to group members and immediate periphery. Bulk of trade is through the mail and is time-consuming. Expansion is impossible from 8 Toynbee.
2. Expand to cater for wider layers of people generally interested in radical literature. This requires a move to a more central position and involves some considerable outlay for stock, premises, fittings and staff. At least two persons needed on a fulltime basis.

The progress made since we first started the PBS operation from our bedroom in S. W. London in 1965 reveals that it is possible with the objective situation today to operate an efficient book service and store and make it a viable proposition—given the necessary labour and capital for such a project. This seems to be the better alternative. Since the last PC, some informal discussions have taken place regarding possible sources of finance. So far only source to materialise is a loan which A & C can obtain from parents.

The change in International aid requires immediate action on question of PBS. In view of the decision to remove the offices to Pentonville Road, I propose that notice be given to vacate the offices at 8 Toynbee at the end of April and for PBS to move out as soon as it is practicable.

C 73

*Extract from Minutes of the IMG NC July 25-26th, 1970*  
*Red Books and Leader Books*

Jenkins motion carried that this NC censures Comrade A. Harris for his unilateral action re Leader Books and requests the US to investigate the matter immediately, because it will otherwise result in a serious deterioration of relations between two sections of the International. The NC empowers the Secretariat to carry out an amalgamation of Leader Books under the control of the IMG. (14 for, 3 against.)

M-21

*RESOLUTION ON LEADER BOOKS*

(1) Conference rejects the so-called appeal from Comrade Harris. No disciplinary action has been taken against him, so there is nothing to appeal against.

(2) Conference affirms that the NC and the PC proceeded along Bolshevik principles in taking the position that all publishing activity and distribution should be under the control of the organisation.

(3) Conference recognises that Alan Harris, in refusing to carry out the decision of the NC to fuse Leader Books with Red Books, behaved in an indisciplined manner. Furthermore, that the leadership of the IMG bent over backward in making reassurances to Comrade Harris that his livelihood and investment would be guaranteed.

(4) Conference is aware that disciplinary action against Comrade Harris could, despite his violation of organisational norms be used as a diversion from the political discussions now taking place within the Fourth International.

(5) Conference confirms that all political contacts gained from Leader Books/Pathfinder Press must be passed on to the national office and in addition, that Comrade Harris must discuss regularly the operation of the enterprise with persons designated by the leadership. He must also give details of outlets to IMG publications to assist its wholesale operations.

(6) Conference rejects as irresponsible any attempt to use the censure motion against comrade Harris to damage political relations within the Fourth International and with its co-thinkers.

(7) Conference strongly disapproves of the attempt by the SWP to interfere in the internal affairs of the British section in relation to this question.

The above resolution was passed by the national conference of the International Marxist Group held in June 1971.

M-24

*SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON PATHFINDER BOOKS*

by Peter Petersen

Comrades will have read a bulletin submitted by Alan Harris on the question of Pathfinder Press.

The purpose of this short paper is to set the record straight on this matter and to counter the distortions and downright lies in that bulletin. It is unfortunate that the time, money and energy of the IMG has to be spent on this barren project. However, this is made necessary by the fact that whilst this question may be clear to most members of the IMG, comrades in other sections can be completely misinformed on this matter. Thus we can read in a memorandum written by Joe Hansen for the information of members of the National Committee of the SWP the following:

1. A disciplinary action, i.e., censure of Comrade Harris.

This action was taken against Comrade Harris because he opened a book service in London in order to gain his livelihood after he turned the assets of Pioneer Books over to the IMG in view of the stated inability of the IMG to provide him with a living wage as a full-timer and its unwillingness to permit him to continue the operation of Pioneer Books in the headquarters on the same private basis upon which he had founded and operated it for a number of years.

It is hard to imagine a statement which could contain more errors of fact in so few words:

(a) Comrade Harris did not hand over the assets of Pioneer Books—what occurred was that IMG purchased part of the stock of Pioneer Books on behalf of Red Books.

(b) So far as "the stated inability of the IMG to provide" Comrade Harris "with a living wage" is concerned, Comrade Harris was asked to run a book service for IMG. He said that he would require a wage of £30 per week. This is twice what we pay our professionals. I might add that had we agreed to pay this wage, we would have been breaking the statutes of the Fourth International which state: "No one on full time shall receive remuneration above the equivalent of the wages of a skilled worker" [Section vii, (k)].

(c) So far as the "unwillingness" of the IMG "to permit him to continue the operation of Pioneer Books in the headquarters on the same basis upon which he had founded and operated it for a number of years" is concerned, the facts are that as shown by the statement which comprises Appendix 2 to his document. It was Comrade Harris who took the initiative in saying that the old arrangements had to be ended.

But the most important error in the statement by Comrade Hansen is about disciplinary action having been taken by the IMG against Comrade Harris. The fact of the matter is that *no disciplinary action whatsoever has been taken by IMG against Comrade Harris.*

Comrade Hansen must have made his statements in good faith—one can only speculate about his sources of misinformation.

Comrade Harris, on the other hand, cannot be excused for starting his bulletin with a direct lie: "Disciplinary action was taken against me by the National Committee. . . ." The whole of Comrade Harris's bulletin is premised on this lie. All his conclusions, all his charges of factionalism, etc., flow from that starting point.

What are the facts of the matter?

It is true that a censure motion was passed against Comrade Harris. However, the IMG National Committee of October 17/18, 1970 passed the following:

(1) the NC is of the opinion that a vote of censure does not constitute disciplinary action against a comrade in the sense of the constitution. Rather it amounts to an expression of grave disapproval of a comrade's action.

(2) the NC is of the opinion that in general motions of censure are not good practice but instead it is best to specify the actions which comrades disapprove of. However, a motion of censure can sometimes be used as a means of avoiding the necessity of disciplinary action (16 for, 0 against, 1 abstention).

This decision arose directly out of a discussion about the pre-mentioned motion of censure. It was, furthermore, circulated to the whole membership via Letter to Members. Comrade Harris has no excuse whatsoever for sticking to his position that he has been disciplined.

There is abundant evidence that Comrade Harris has only recently discovered that a censure motion is an act of discipline against a comrade. Comrade Williams, who is known to share Comrade Harris's predilection for this gimmick of accusing the IMG of taking disciplinary action by this censure motion, has also made this discovery rather recently. Witness the following minute from the PC of 17/5/70: "Report of Stewart meeting in Oxford: Williams's motion: 'we should condemn the action of our comrades playing a role in disrupting the meeting' (2 for, 6 against)." This was only two months before the censure motion on Comrade Harris. I would ask Comrade Williams:

(1) Did she notify the Oxford comrades in advance that she intended to put them on trial?

(2) Did she grant a hearing to the non-PC members of the Oxford branch before she proposed her condemnation?

Fortunately the right-wing motion proposed by Comrade Williams was not passed. However, if we further delve into the files we come up with the following minute for the National Committee of 25/1/69: "M/C that Varney be censured for his activity in connection with the above (Unan)." When we consult the attendance at this meeting, we find that Comrades Harris and Williams were present, but that Comrade Varney was not. I would ask again of Comrades Harris and Williams:

(1) Why did they not protest that Comrade Varney had not been notified in advance?

(2) Why did they not protest because Comrade Varney was not present at the relevant part of the NC?

(3) Why did they vote for "disciplinary action" in the absence of the comrade concerned?

Apparently Comrades Williams and Harris have two standards—one for Comrade Harris and one for the rest of the movement. Their outraged cry about lack of justice and against undemocratic methods only applies when they are criticised. The real answer is that the discovery about censure motions being acts of discipline was made to further factional ends.

But what about the terrible crime of interfering with a comrade's right to earn his living—Comrade Harris's document exhibits a petit-bourgeois individualistic approach. It is axiomatic to being a member of a disciplined revolutionary organisation—an organisation of *professional* revolutionaries—that one accepts the right of the organisation to take decisions about where one should work, live and be active. How else can we build a Bolshevik organisation?

There is a simple answer to those, like Comrade Harris, who say that we go too far when we reserve such powers: the IMG, like all revolutionary organisations, is a voluntary organisation. Those who are not prepared to have such interference in their "private lives" are clearly not prepared to become professional revolutionaries. That being the case, the honest thing for them to do is to leave. The essence of Lenin's struggle against the Mensheviks on organisational concepts was a fight against petit-bourgeois individualism as exhibited by Comrade Harris.

After the ending of the agreement on International aid,

the IMG was informed by Comrade Harris that this meant a change had to be made in the mode of operation of Pioneer Book Services. At this point, I should point out that the reason why we ended this agreement about International aid was because we thought that the money which was being used to pay for professionals for the IMG should be used for other more pressing problems. I would remind comrades that this action of ending the International aid was agreed to by last year's annual conference. I would also point out that one of the effects of the method of International aid was that the IMG did not [decide] itself who was to work full-time for it. The dangers arising out of such an anomaly can be seen when one remembers that one comrade came to Britain on this arrangement and was, within a few months, one of the main leaders of a newly formed tendency, which conducted a political struggle against the majority of the organisation. This statement of comrade Harris came as a complete surprise to the leadership of the IMG. Until that point we did not know that Comrade Harris was receiving money under the International aid scheme. To this day we have never been told officially how much Comrade Harris was receiving. Furthermore, we are, quite frankly, puzzled by this business. We find it difficult to see why it was necessary to subsidise Pioneer Book Service. We have during the course of the past year established Red Books to a point where it earns enough to pay the wages of a full-time professional. Moreover, during this year the stock of Red Books has increased to several hundred pounds value. All this has taken place with no subsidy whatsoever from the organisation. We are now in the process of moving towards having an enlarged central bookshop, with an increased staff. I would add that this has been done in a situation where we have had strong competition from IS Books and . . . Leader Books/Pathfinder Press. The latter seems to have the ability to advertise far more widely than any other left-wing book concern. Our experience indicates that bookshops which have to be subsidised extensively are badly run. If Pioneer Books was receiving 30 pounds a week, this was a monstrous waste when one considers the needs of the Bengali comrades.

Faced with starting from scratch—the IMG leadership rejected the proposition of Comrade Harris that he would start a book shop providing that he could take all the decisions (to quote what he said at the meeting where we discussed the matter). We decided to proceed from the Bolshevik principle of centralising all the propaganda functions of the organisation—those who doubt that this has, until now, been an unchallenged concept should consult Lenin on "Party Organisation and Party Literature" in Vol. 10 of the collected works. The following is the most apt quotation:

Publishing and distributing centres, bookshops and reading-rooms, libraries and similar establishments—must all be under party control. The organised socialist proletariat must keep an eye on all this work, supervise it in its entirety, and from beginning to end, without any exception, infuse into it the life-stream of the living proletarian cause, thereby cutting the ground from under the old, semi-Oblomov, semi-shopkeeping Russian principle: the writer does the writing, the reader does the reading.

No doubt Lenin would have added: "the bookseller does the bookselling."

Furthermore, the 21 conditions of affiliation to the Third International had the following to say:

The periodical press and other publications, and all party publishing houses, must be completely subordinated to the Presidium, regardless of whether the party as a whole is at the given moment legal or illegal. Publishing houses must not be allowed to abuse their independence and pursue a policy which is not wholly in accordance with the policy of the party.

When the leadership of the IMG discovered that Comrade Harris had established a book concern in rivalry to Red Books against the express wishes of the organisation, it was very angry. This is what motivated the censure motion. Because comrades from all over the country were receiving circulars from Leader Books inviting them to subscribe to Intercontinental Press—a journal which they understood to be the de facto organ of the Fourth International (we might comment that it is extremely funny for a "wholesale concern" to solicit individual subscriptions in this way)—many questions were asked. This is why the item appeared in Letter to Members. This came as no surprise to Comrade Harris, who is known to see Comrade Williams quite regularly and undoubtedly heard from her about the motion. Of course, it was an oversight that Comrade Harris was not invited to the NC in writing by registered post in a letter sealed with the thumbprint of the National Secretary. However, Comrade Harris omits to state in his bulletin that he attended the PC prior to this NC and the one subsequent to it. Moreover, the normally alert defender of constitutional norms, Comrade Williams was present at the offending NC and did not raise the question of non-attendance of Comrade Harris.

I say quite unreservedly that had an infringement of the constitution taken place, and no one can doubt that it is unconstitutional to take disciplinary action against comrades in their absence, I would have been the first to point out that matters had to be put right. It was to clarify exactly this point that I raised the discussion, already mentioned, about the exact nature of censure motions.

But let us assume that we had set aside the censure motion and had another discussion—under those circumstances is Comrade Harris trying to suggest that the censure motion would not have been carried at a meeting at which he was in attendance? The members of the NC are quite familiar with Comrade Harris's eloquent defence of himself on this matter—so far they have not been persuaded by him.

So far as taking the matter to the United Secretariat, we did this because we understood: a) that Merit Press had made Comrade Harris sole agent of its publications; and b) that we had been told that a large loan had been made from Merit to enable Comrade Harris to start his enterprise. We received assurances on these two points: Merit was prepared to supply Red Books and that the loan was not a loan but a normal commercial transaction of allowing extended credit. This being established, the United Secretariat referred the matter back to the British section.



Comrade Harris has accused the leadership of the IMG of trying to obscure the political issues by this raising of Leader Books. That is extremely amusing coming from a member of the Tendency. The whole record of the Tendency, since they accused us to trying to substitute red circles for the IMG, of advocating abstention in the general election, of liquidationism, etc., has been that of obscuring political issues, raising red herrings (or red circles) to try to draw attention away from their own revisionism.

Under this smokescreen, they tried to smuggle into our movement revisionist concepts, like suggesting that one could convert the labour party into an instrument of proletarian democracy, of advocating the reshaping and replacing of Parliament (a Kautskian, "British Road to Socialism"-type concept par excellence); of abandoning the principled position of advocating solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution, the list is a long one.

But a further sign of irresponsibility is shown in the Harris document. As well as its petit-bourgeois individualistic spirit, which pervades every line, there is the whole account of the previous time Comrade Harris got into trouble over a bookshop. Why was all this put in?

There can be no doubt that Comrade Harris is writing for people in other sections and giving us a warning in the process. He appears to be saying "the RSL dared to try to discipline me over a bookshop; they were kicked out of the International. The IMG is trying to discipline me over a bookshop—you had better watch out." This is despicable. Apart from his distorted account of the RSL affair—that organisation was reduced to a sympathetic section for a whole series of political and organisational faults, including the total non-payment of subscriptions for the entire time they had been a section—Comrade Harris appears to be playing the dangerous game of trying to utilise the fact that there are differences in the international movement for his own factional ends.

No one can doubt that the Tendency thought that the establishment of the Leader Books would give them a centre, a base from which to get contacts outside the framework of the IMG. I am inclined to let them get on with that kind of operation—the kind of people who will be attracted to their right-wing petit-bourgeois political programme would be of very little use to IMG.

But in seeking to present to the International a picture of an ultrabureaucratic IMG disciplining its members because they step out of line and support positions of the International minority, Comrade Harris threatens to poison the present discussions taking place in the International.

It is clear from the Joe Hansen document on "Defending the Strategy of the Leninist Party" that there is a very close agreement between the positions of the Tendency in Britain and the positions of the SWP, which supports the minority of the International (it being unable to become a section itself because of reactionary legislation). Comrade Harris is now trying to suggest that we are witch-hunting him for these views. The previously mentioned Joe Hansen memorandum was circulated to the members of the Political Committee of the SWP which passed the resolution: I have appended it as an appendix.\*

After this conference, it will be necessary to correct the

misinformation in the Joe Hansen memorandum and circulate this correction to all those who received it.

This fact alone shows the damage to relations in the International which has already been done by the irresponsible behaviour of Comrade Harris. This annual conference of the IMG should reject the so-called appeal of Comrade Harris. It should reaffirm that the National Committee of the IMG acted along Bolshevik principles. As an earnest of the seriousness of its desire to do nothing which can be represented as taking organisational steps to solve political problems, it should not take disciplinary action against Comrade Harris, despite his obvious violation of party norms of behaviour. It should refuse to be provoked by his despicable behaviour in trying to poison relations between the IMG and SWP.

Nothing between now and the coming world congress should be allowed to cloud the very real political differences in the International. Instead, these differences should be clarified and analysed so that their underlying methodological basis can be demonstrated. The IMG will have to make a more systematic reply to the Joe Hansen document. But this will involve more than a defence of our position against charges of ultraleftism. We must explain why it is that basic and well-established Leninist political positions can be described as ultraleft. This, in turn, will involve making an assessment of the politics of the SWP, internationally and nationally. This kind of political clarification will be far more fruitful than getting involved in organisational wrangles over a miserable provocation which will result in no political value to the discredited leaders of the Tendency. Let them have a bookshop—it won't substitute for revolutionary politics.

\* See Part III, Correspondence between the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG) concerning Pathfinder Press/Alan Harris dispute.



## B. Nottingham "Socialist Woman" Dispute

C 2

*Minutes of Special Political Committee to hear charges laid against Sands, J O'B and MD; held in Nottingham on Wednesday December 15, 1971*

*Attendance:* Peterson, Clarissa (chair), Tyler, Watts, Windsor, Jenkins, Matthews (minutes), Singh, Sands, J O'B, MD, Williams, Luff.

Tyler gave a report from the fact-finding commission. Sands, J O'B and MD were given an opportunity to reply to Tyler's report and to make their own statements.

Questions were asked to clarify certain points.

As there was some misunderstanding as to the exact nature of the meeting on the part of the comrades with charges against them which had meant that they had not called witnesses the following motion was passed:

M/C that we regard this as a preliminary meeting to hear the charges and that another meeting be arranged in Nottingham as soon as possible, to suit everyone's convenience. This meeting should be arranged in the following manner:

1. Witnesses will be called and their evidence considered.
2. Both sides should then make summing up statements.
3. PC members should then withdraw to consider the cases as presented, and to make the appropriate judgments.

The motion was carried unan.

M/C that this meeting be held in Nottingham on Friday, January 7th (unan).

T-1

*Statement on the hearing of the charges against the Tendency women comrades in Nottingham, 1972*

The majority national leadership initiated the proceedings against Tendency women comrades in Nottingham through the setting up of the Fact-Finding Commission in March 1971.

Having done so, it failed to take the necessary steps to see that the work of the commission could be carried out in a responsible and democratic manner. (See Minority Report submitted by Pryce.)

The majority leadership supported the majority report given verbally to the national conference, June 1971 by Tyler, the NC majority member on the commission, although on its own admission "there was no precise way of knowing whether the resolutions of NC March 6/7 were implemented." (See Internal Information Bulletin for Members Only, July 2nd, 1970.)

Given the responsibility by the national conference to lay two charges against us, the majority leadership behaved in a dilatory and irresponsible manner.

Six months elapsed before the charges were processed; and then inadequate preparations made for our "trial." After this long delay the date of Dec. 15th, 1971 was fixed without any consultation with us as to convenience for us and for the only Tendency comrade on the Political Committee, which we protested. (See correspondence attached.)

The "trial" was as farcical as the whole history of this factional affair, initiated and carried through by the majority leadership setting itself up as the "prosecution," "jury" and "judges".

We submit that the documented evidence on the history of this whole affair shows that factionalism against us for our political views has caused the majority leadership to misuse their authority and abdicate their responsibility to ensure that an atmosphere exists within the organisation so that comrades are guaranteed a democratic hearing. It is now our opinion that this has been denied us both before the whole membership and within the "trial" procedures itself.

No written report has been made and sent to us regarding the decisions of the "trial" body—this is again a further indication of the attitude of the majority leadership regarding the rights of minorities and of the membership. We are informed by Comrade Williams that the 3 members of the PC who were present at both sessions of our "trial" reported to the NC on the 8/9 January 1972 that they found the 2 charges against us proven, but did not consider themselves a representative enough part of the PC to make any suggestions as to what our fate should be. So they passed the responsibility for this to the International Commission.

We are not, we might say, very surprised at their decision to do this—it is yet another indication of the inability of the majority leadership to measure up to the responsibilities required of it.

While we regret a further delay in this whole wretched business we will look forward to meeting the International Commission and will co-operate fully with the members of the commission in an endeavour to get our names cleared before the whole membership.

Sands, Margery and Jo O'B.

*Report on the procedure and findings of the special Political Committee meetings held in Nottingham on the evenings of Dec. 15th 1971 and January 7th 1972 and which constituted the body to hear the charges against the Nottingham Tendency women comrades.*

This is, we hope, the final documentation to be made by us in this very long and scandalous affair. It had its formal beginnings in July 1970, and now (end of Jan. '72), 10 months after the IMG takeover of *Socialist Woman*, we, found "guilty" of the charges laid against us, are still awaiting the outcome of this verdict since the IMG national leadership has avoided taking final responsibility and has referred its findings to the International Commission. We have not to this date had any formal communication from the leadership of the verdict and decisions on our "trial."

At the special PC meeting of Dec. 15th, Sands attempted

to get some definition of the status and procedures of the meeting. The only correspondence that the Nottingham tendency had received was the contents of the charges. After asking a couple of questions, the chairman, Clarissa, became angry and accused Sands of obstructing the meeting and refused her permission to ask further questions on procedure and status of the meeting. He challenged Comrade Williams to "go ahead and cable New York with any complaints."

It quickly became clear that the special PC was nothing more than a "Star Chamber." The PC members made no pretence at all that they were there to provide a genuine investigation into the charges against us. They did not constitute a "jury of our peers" but a "jury" who at the same time were the "prosecutors" and "judges".

We asked why the leadership had taken six months to process the charges against us. Clarissa answered that Sand's personal difficulties (the sickness and death of her daughter) and the laxness of the NC had allowed the situation to drift until faced with a letter from Tyler to the PC demanding action. (It should be noted that Comrade Tyler has played a key role for the NC throughout this whole affair.)

Sands challenged them to explain why, if they were so concerned about her personal pressures, had they not done everything in their power to ensure her knowledge about how the charges were to be processed. She had not been able to attend the National Conference in June but had understood a Control Commission had been elected, it had not occurred to her that the leadership which had been so intimately involved in persecuting and witch-hunting the women through the organisation would get themselves up as the jury and judge in our trial. The leadership had not informed us of our rights to call witnesses; had not brought certain key individuals such as George to present her vital evidence or Pryce who gave a minority report to the National Conference. The "trial" was fixed for mid-week making it impossible for the one Tendency comrade on the PC to be present. The farcical nature of the meeting was further indicated by the fact that of the 6 members of the PC present at the first session, 3 of them, Singh, Clarissa and Watts had not read the evidence which had been submitted by the comrades charged to the investigation commission over six months ago.

Comrade Clarissa had the sensitivity to realize how bad the entire proceedings would look if the "trial" ended that night and proposed a second meeting where we would be allowed to call witnesses to present evidence. This appeared to annoy other London comrades present who had travelled up from London obviously anticipating a one-session "trial".

January 7

Statements from Rose Knight and Ann Torode were read [appended]. Audrey Beecham, at the invitation of the chairman and chief "prosecutor," was present for the entire meeting. Although a member of an anarchist group, she indicated her friendliness to the IMG by mentioning two services she had done for the IMG not connected with this. She read the letter she had written to George (see minority report by Pryce to the National Conference) and answered questions. Her case was simple: that the IMG had no right to take *SW* and in doing so had

harmed itself in the women's movement; that the IMG had placed the Nottingham Tendency women in an impossible position and claimed that we had done our utmost to protect the IMG. The women of the Nottingham *Socialist Woman's* Committee had been outraged by the behaviour of George in not answering letters and by telling Val Mollan, the group secretary, to "hurry up and decide about the proposition for London *SW* Group to take over *SW* because we want to put out an issue for the demonstration"; that women were still asking at national conferences and meetings of women's liberation where Sands and Jo O'B were and how it was embarrassing all round to explain that the IMG wouldn't allow them to participate; that it had done great harm to the women's group to withdraw such experienced, able women.

Tyler then summarised the case for the NC against the comrades.

Sands summarised the defence against the charges: At the first meeting of the special PC, Tyler, a long-standing member of the NC, said "we would manipulate, factionalize, organise in order to gain political advantage—this is perfectly normal—there is nothing amoral about this."

This sums up the attitude of the majority towards the Tendency and the attitude of the majority towards the women's liberation movement. Nothing is too despicable or too disgusting to do to gain political advantage—inside or outside our organisation. These remarks sum up frankly the behaviour of the leadership and particularly, the National Secretary Peterson, who having once worked closely with the Nottingham comrades, engineered most of this mess and bears the real responsibility. Peterson misled the rest of the leadership (many of whom were not in the IMG in '68-'69) and was one of the main instigators of the factional atmosphere which prevented an impartial investigation into the real facts of this case, having falsely informed the membership that *SW* had always been an IMG paper. Tyler, conceded that the IMG perhaps did not have a *legal* right to *SW*, but a *moral* right on the basis of an IMG member initiating the discussions on *SW* and the work put into it by the IMG. What baloney and what a turnabout! Peterson in his infamous Dossier on *SW* made the legal ownership of *SW*, the IMG's entire justification for its takeover and now the considered opinion of our "legal expert" Tyler is that this has no foundation.

On the "moral" right of the IMG, this is just as clearly without foundation. We must ask, what about the work of all the women not in the IMG but in the YCL and other organisations who produced and distributed it? A. Torode's evidence shows clearly that even in initiating *SW*, the IMG as an organisation cannot claim responsibility. This substantiates our argument that its initiation was due to a group of women of whom one was a member of the IMG. The IMG trailed along, not showing any interest until it was clear that political differences had arisen and that minority members had a basis of support inside the women's liberation movement in Nottingham. This basis of support had to be taken away because the "Tendency weren't going to hold any fiefdoms outside the control of the IMG" as PC member Jenkins so succinctly put it.

If Tyler tries to show moral ownership by the amount of work and effort put into it by the IMG, there is a small point to be made to show that such work is vastly overshadowed by the loyalty and seriousness that subscribers

and sellers of the Nottingham SW had towards the paper. This is shown in a recent IMG Letter to Members which gives an itemized account of the debts to the IMG SW—almost £150 over 3 issues. When the old SW was wound up, it broke even, despite the fact that monies owed it by IMG and SL branches were paid to the new SW put out by the IMG.

Our evidence, from internal documents and statements from witnesses, shows clearly that neither legally nor morally did SW belong to the IMG. It was the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee—*independent*.

In the past period, nothing illustrates the factionalism and abuse of authority by the majority leadership so much as this whole affair does. Time and time again, organisational moves substituted for political discussion. In the case of the decisions taken by the NC and women's caucus in Oct. 1970, no effort at all was made by the leadership including George, the women's convenor, to discuss with us its implementation. Motivated by factionalism, far-reaching decisions were taken without discussion. For example, the NC took a decision to make Socialist Women's Groups the main organisational form of our intervention in the WLM and then at the following women's caucus meeting the role of SWG's and their function was discussed.

The NC adopted Windsor's document without it having been presented to the NC verbally or even read by the majority of NC members present. The NC misused its authority by imposing organisational forms in this area of work, knowing full well there were differences with those most active in the WLM, just prior to the opening of the pre-conference discussion period. The National Secretary is charged with the responsibility of seeing that decisions of the organisation are carried out. It was his responsibility in that area of work to ensure that members received all pertinent information, that members who are involved in areas of work that the leadership have specific ideas on, including operating instructions, are fully informed and the various political problems involved are resolved through mutual discussion between the pertinent individuals or bodies in the organisation. Not until mid-Feb. '71 did anyone contact us for the national leadership. Even then it was not with a view to working out together how the NC decisions might be implemented but for recriminations, denunciation and issuing of ultimatums. The Dossier, supposedly the facts of the case for the membership was already being distributed freely through the organisations and outside before any of us had even seen it.

Tyler told us at the first session of the hearing of our charges that our main line of defense should be that the NC had not the right to interfere with our work on the SW editorial board. Forgive us if we are a bit suspicious when the chief "prosecuting attorney" gives "defendants" advice on how to conduct their case, but does he think we're thick or something? The Tendency women understand the norms of democratic-centralism of the Trotskyist movement and do not confuse them with the Stalinist and social-democratic forms of operating. Despite our differences with the majority leadership on virtually every political question before the organisation, we uphold the right of the leading bodies of the IMG to direct the political work of its members. But it is not in the interests of the majority or minority to issue edicts from above

which will be misunderstood and/or carried out inadequately. Leadership does not only consist of making decisions but in educating the rank and file in the Marxist methodology to enable the entire organisation to further its political aims. A leadership which attempts to force a minority to fight for a political line it disagrees with, to transgress revolutionary morality through the manipulation of people we work with in the class struggle is not only abusing its authority but will be unable to take the revolutionary movement forward to leadership of the masses.

The IMG leadership and membership knew full well through documentation, letters and speeches that the Nottingham Tendency women were opposed to the IMG political line on women's liberation, were opposed to the transformation of an independent women's liberation journal into an IMG-front journal, and were opposed to the manipulation of the women's movement. Instead of recognising this and finding ways of working out together how to minimise the problems inherent in the situation, the NC threw curt orders at us—get it done! when?—yesterday! No time schedules—no procedural instructions—nothing but orders as if we were mechanical robots programmed to the wishes of Comrade Peterson and others.

We repeatedly tried to stop the leadership from taking the steps it did. Not only were we trying to stop the IMG from discrediting itself, but so were other women in the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee who had developed through our work a healthy respect for the IMG.

The Oct. 1970 [NC] took decisions to make *Socialist Woman* the journal of a national network of SWG's.

1) A national network of SWG's did not exist at the time of this decision, London having the only SW group outside Nottingham.

2) Having been set up through the autumn of 1970, how was the journal to move into a national framework? According to Tyler and Peterson, through the clever manoeuvres of Sands, Margery and Jo O'B—no other instructions.

3) How were the wishes of the Nottingham SWC to be taken into consideration? They weren't, as shown by the consistent and complete disregard of their letters and phone calls.

4) We told George that it was necessary for her to come up to explain the LSWG's (or IMG's) position to the NSWC. She agreed. Peterson told her "it was a trap" and not to come. (Peterson asked Audrey Beecham why he was not allowed to come up to explain the take-over to the Nottingham SWC, and she replied that they would have been willing to hear Leonora Lloyd if she had given them a written outline of her proposals in advance. Since this was rejected, AB could see no reason why a women's group should invite the male National Secretary of the IMG, who is not a member of a women's group, to explain something which should never have taken place—namely, the stealing of the journal by the IMG.)

5) We were charged that as members of the editorial board we did not disassociate ourselves from the duplicated slip which was inserted into the Nottingham SW on the March women's liberation demonstration. We asked the PC what they wanted us to say, and after a long delay they produced a statement to be published in the London SW. We refused to sign what would have been lies and asked the PC why they required and demanded

such a humiliating act from us. We have not had an answer to our questions yet. Despite Tyler's statement that it was not in the Stalinist tradition of public false self-criticism, it was just that.

Tyler pretends he has a great case against us when we stated that we were in the room when the duplicate slip was worked out by the members of the NSWC. Because of our loyalty to the women's movement and our refusal to manipulate them, women in the NSWC, knowing us to be members of the IMG, showed their loyalty to us by not involving us in their discussions as to how to handle the existence of a journal produced by the IMG and taking the name of their journal SW. In fact, AB in her testimony and Rose Knight both say that the IMG would have been treated much more roughly if the women had felt no sense of responsibility towards Jo O'B, Sands and Margery. It is also worth noting again, that Jane Browne, the SL member who typed and duplicated the insert in question has never been questioned or censored for this act despite her complete knowledge at that time of the situation. We can only ask is this because she is a *majority* supporter?

The factional motivation for this situation, which flows out of the political differences on this and other questions, is pointed up by a new situation developing now which makes the SW take-over a very hollow victory indeed—a victory that a heavy price has been paid for in the reputation of the IMG and Trotskyism. It appears likely that the IMG at the next National Conference will adopt a perspective held by at least part of the National Committee if not a majority of it, that the SWG's be disbanded and that SW be dumped. Yes, indeed, they served their purpose—gave a rationalisation and a stick to beat the Tendency with and now that's done (a little crudely perhaps), we can wash our hands of the whole question of women's liberation—which is what some comrades wanted to do in the first place and concentrate on the *real* issue the industrial struggle!

It was no accident that at this second meeting of the special PC, we were faced with Peterson, Jenkins and Singh, who first launched the attack against us on the PC in the summer of 1970; the three members of the National Committee who have been most assiduous in their attacks on us were our jury and judges. It is no accident, no coincidence, that only these 3 comrades had the stomach to stay the course, right to the finish. Peterson assured us that all the other members of the PC had valid excuses for their absence. It appeared that it would be extremely difficult to set up more farcical proceedings than the first special PC, but the leadership managed to excel that in the second, by not even a pretence of a representational body. The special PC didn't have a problem debating among the three of them about their verdict because they had established that to their own satisfaction a year ago. They are insensitive about the very big problem of justifying the leadership's behaviour to the women's liberation movement, to the rank and file of the IMG if we ever do manage an impartial, unfactionalised hearing within the IMG. We have no intention of letting this matter drop until we are cleared of the charges against us.

Sands, Margery, Jo O'B  
January 31, 1972

## STATEMENT OF ANN TORODE, LEEDS, TO IMG ON SOCIALIST WOMAN

It was with considerable surprise that I learnt that IMG had taken over *Socialist Woman*. Surprise not because I thought that the IMG would be incapable of such an action—but surprise because I could not imagine by what conceivable right or authority they could possibly have done it.

Toni Gorton, I met through our involvement in the VSC. In common with many women so involved, I was beginning to feel dissatisfied with my role in the movement. Toni, having been active in Canada, was surprised at the lack of specifically female consciousness in the British left—all parties included.

She showed me a Canadian document/pamphlet called "The Status of Women in Canada." My relations with Toni on this question were as two political women trying to work out a "correct" approach to the "woman question" in Britain—a question which we felt, correctly, would become important over here. I at no time felt that she was speaking for the IMG on this question (as opposed to other questions that the four of us discussed)—nor did she present herself to me as a spokesman. Nor could she have done, in that, from my own observation, I concluded that the members (the male section of the membership that is!) of the IMG were themselves being introduced to these ideas. I decided that their exposure to the "woman question," was mainly a result of the IMG's international connections, specifically Toni herself and Ernie Tate, who spoke at an IMG weekend school, causing amusement, and, in some cases disbelief, that "women" actually constituted a question!

All this is by the way, except as evidence that I could not possibly have assumed that I was working with Toni under IMG "patronage."

We produced a leaflet, of which I believe Toni still has a copy. We had decided, after much discussion, that the problem was to get the "working class movement in Britain to accept the question of women's status as a very real political issue."

To this end, we advocated the setting up of committees with a programme around the demands as outlined in the leaflet

- a) rights over our bodies—abortion, contraception, marriage based on love and respect, etc.
- b) nurseries and creches and community care for children.
- c) full legal rights
- d) equal pay.

We were inspired to this approach by what we saw at the time as a developing equal-pay campaign (the Ford women's strike and NJACCWER). We felt that unless a revolutionary orientation was taken, the incipient movement could easily be preempted to a middle-class reformism (either in the form of women setting up "councils" on specific questions or in the form of, say, the pre-school play groups association).

We were committed to a campaign of social action, "a militant dynamic movement."

The demands were seen as transitional and were based on a Marxist analysis of the position of women in capitalist society.

The committees were to have a programme "aimed at raising the consciousness of women and activating them

in the pursuance of these demands."

One of the purposes of the committees was to "educate and give confidence to their membership." Out of which purpose *Socialist Woman* was born.

(I am afraid that the arrogant and high-handed attitude of the IMG serves to confirm yet again that the small revolutionary parties in this country cannot bear to see the development of a real revolutionary movement outside their control and will resort to the basest manoeuvring to ensure that the dead hand of economism reigns supreme.)

January 4, 1972

To the International

January 5, 1972

Regarding *Socialist Woman*

I joined Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee when I came to Nottingham in 1970. I joined knowing that some of the women in the group were in the IMG. At the time I was a bit apprehensive about radical left-wing groups, but working with the IMG women helped dispel this attitude. They were always very frank about their allegiance to revolutionary socialism, equally, I never felt that they were in any way attempting to manipulate the attitudes of the group or impose decisions on us. Every action the group took was discussed within the whole group and decisions made, not on the basis of voting but as the result of extended discussion. This is in line with the present organisation of groups within the British women's liberation movement. Although the IMG women took the lead in the group at this point, they were never the majority. The group was expanding slowly and filled with a sense of optimism.

We were not aware that anything was wrong until we realised that the IMG was trying to establish that they owned our journal *Socialist Woman*. Like the other women in the group, I regarded that journal as the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, and the notion that it belonged to the IMG was astonishing. Even if our committee had had a majority of IMG women on it, this notion would still have been unacceptable to us. It would only have made sense if the Socialist Woman's Committee had in some way been affiliated to the IMG, or initiated as the result of an IMG decision in the same way that the later Socialist Woman's Groups have been. The Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee was in January 1971 part of a rapidly expanding women's liberation and *not* part of the IMG organisation.

When we received Jacquy Hayman's letter (29th December 1970), we discussed its implications within the whole group and decided that we wanted clarification on some important points; we wanted to know why the Socialist Woman's Committees wanted to set themselves up as a distinct and separate from other groups within the women's liberation movement. Valerie Mollan, our secretary, wrote back saying that the group did not like the idea of separating ourselves from the rest of the movement, and linking up with newly formed Socialist Woman's Groups, and we wanted a fuller explanation of this, why this tactic had been suggested. We never received an

answer to this letter. At our meeting on January 23rd, we learnt that the London Socialist Woman's Group wanted to make *Socialist Woman* the journal of the Socialist Woman's Groups and that they were prepared to meet us on Feb. 15th to "discuss" this action. The group was very angry; we were aware of a situation developing, and we were not considered important enough even to be given a full written explanation—no letter explaining the London *Socialist Woman's* position, or justifying their assumptions, was ever forwarded to us. Within the women's liberation movement this is a totally unacceptable procedure.

Toni Gorton, Mary Donnelly, and Jo O'Brien had explained the situation, but out of loyalty to the IMG they could not admit the whole situation to us; I consider that they were put in a very embarrassing position. They had to convey messages to us that were totally unpromising. After Leonora Lloyd's message that we should "hurry up" and make a decision because the London Socialist Woman's Group wanted to get a journal out for the March demonstration, we wrote a further letter refusing to meet Leonora without a full written explanation of the whole bizarre situation. Without any further communications with us, the London Socialist Woman's Group advertised a new address for *Socialist Woman* and a new subscription. Valerie Mollan wrote to Leonora and pointed out that if they intended to publish a journal called *Socialist Woman* without our agreement, it would have the gravest consequences for the London Socialist Woman's Group within the women's liberation movement. We realised that in spite of the pretence of taking our journal over democratically, we were being treated as people who had no right of decision in this matter. We repeatedly asked for a written justification of the London Socialist Women's Group's action. Finally we all received a copy of Leonora's letter. This letter made it plain to me that we were not just dealing with a Socialist Woman's Group, but with an internal organisation of the IMG; Leonora said that our letter was wrongly addressed to the London Socialist Woman's Group and should have been addressed to the IMG's Women's Caucus, which we did not know existed. This only further convinced the group that the IMG was using the London Socialist Women's Group as a "front" for their activities. Initially some women in the group regarded themselves as radical and had been drawn to the IMG, the *Socialist Woman* take-over completely altered this, leaving only distrust and hostility. Leonora's letter attempted to put women we all trusted in a completely false position—that of not making us aware of the complete facts of the situation.

It was an attempt to disrupt the close relationship in our group between the IMG women and the rest of us. It also uncovered a divisive situation within the IMG which further increased our distrust of this organisation. By this time we wanted no further communication with the London Socialist Woman's Group or the IMG.

At the March demonstration, we were put in the extremely embarrassing position of having to explain why there were two separate copies of *Socialist Woman* on sale. Valerie Mollan gave a statement of our position at the Leeds Women's National Coordinating Committee which followed the demonstration. Women at that weekend questioned Leonora about the affair after Valerie had held up the two separate copies of *Socialist Woman*

for everyone to see. Leonora refused to give an explanation and accused Valerie and Audrey Beecham of misrepresenting the situation, and finally said that she would not discuss it as it was an "internal" matter of the IMG, women there disagreed with her analysis. She was questioned further and asked to explain the action of the London Socialist Woman's Group in the journal *Woman's Struggle*. This confrontation further increased our disgust and anger; the situation was no further resolved by the explanation given by Leonora in *Women's Struggle*. It was a watered-down version of her letter to us and not a full and detailed explanation given by her she was asked to give. At later WNCC's, I have several times wanted to bring the question of *Socialist Woman* out into the open. I resisted only because I felt further discussion would put Jo, Toni and Mary in a worse position within the IMG.

It is impossible to eradicate the effect of this action on our group. We will always feel hostility towards the IMG not only for the taking over of *Socialist Woman*, but because this led to a split in the group. We lost not only young women in the youth group of the IMG, the Spartacus League, but also the three most experienced members of the group.

The only way in which the IMG could repair some of the damage it has done to our group, and its own reputation, is to return our three sisters, Toni, Jo and Mary, back into the group; I sincerely hope the result of this enquiry will lead this outcome.

Rose Knight—Nottingham Women's Liberation Group

*Copies of relevant correspondence and  
extracts from minutes*

*Extract NC Minutes, 10/11 July 1971*

*Socialist Woman Dispute*

M/C that Peterson and Jenkins consider concretely how to help the comrades concerned to carry out March 6/7 NC decisions. 13F 3A 2Ab.

M/C that the charges be laid before the comrades concerned in accordance with the constitution (unan.).

Motion put that Peterson submit to the PC a statement for the comrades concerned to make.

Amendment: change PC to secretariat, *carried* 2Ab. Substantive motion put: *carried* 2Ab.

**DRAFT STATEMENT TO BE MADE FOR  
PUBLICATION IN *SOCIALIST WOMAN***

We would like to place on record our support for the new nationally produced *Socialist Woman*. This paper is carrying on the tradition started by the Nottingham paper of the same name—as outlined in our draft manifesto for Socialist Woman Groups. We are pleased to note that several of these groups have been formed in last few months and that others are on the way. Although personal circumstances have prevented us from being as active as we would like to have been in the past period, we will be giving both the paper and the new groups as much support as we can. In particular, you can count

on us to help the distribution of the paper and the starting of new groups. We hope to be able to submit articles for consideration soon.

Wishing you the best of luck.

Editorial note: We hope that members of the old editorial board will soon be helping in the production of the paper again as soon as they are able to do so.

Drafted by the secretariat as agreed at NC July 10/11

**REPLY TO ABOVE STATEMENT**

To: Pat Jordan, National Secretary of the IMG

I have received the DRAFT STATEMENT TO BE MADE FOR PUBLICATION IN *SOCIALIST WOMAN*. We presume this statement was drawn up by the secretariat to be signed and submitted by us as a letter to the journal *Socialist Woman*.

We protest the use of this method which requires the signing and publication of a statement which contains lies (see documentary submission to the commission set up on *Socialist Woman*) as a proof of our loyalty to the IMG.

We are very surprised at your introduction into the IMG of methods which we consider to be in the Stalinist tradition and which the Trotskyist movement has vigorously fought against for decades.

We would like to know why you consider it necessary to resort to such alien practice and what you hope to achieve from it.

Yours fraternally,  
Sands for Anne Black, Jo O'B and Margery

*Extract from PC Minutes, July 31st, 1971*

*Socialist Woman Dispute*

M/C that comrades given till the next NC to sign declaration. Statement to be circulated.

To: Sands, Anne Black, J. O'B and MD, 17/8/71

Dear Comrade Sands,

The National Conference of the IMG took the following decisions in relation to *Socialist Woman*: that Sands, Anne Black, J O'B and MD should carry out the outstanding clauses of March 6/7 NC decisions and that a timetable is set for the carrying out of these decisions; that the incoming NC supervise the actions of these comrades in this connection and considers disciplinary action if these decisions are not carried out within the time limit.

At the first NC after Conference, a statement was prepared for consideration by you with a view to signing it and then publishing it in *Socialist Woman*. This was in accordance with the above Conference resolution. So



far you have not signed it. We would like to know: a) if you intend to do so and if so, this should be done by the next NC which will be held on Sept. 4th and 5th; and b) if you do not intend to sign the statement, what is your attitude to the carrying out of Conference decisions.

We would appreciate an answer in time for the National Committee.

Yours fraternally,  
F. Matthews  
pp. secretariat

As we do not have the other comrades' addresses, I would appreciate it if you could communicate this to the other comrades concerned.

5 Allington  
Lenton, Nottingham  
September 3rd, 1971

F. Matthews,  
Administrative Secretary, Political Committee, IMG

Dear comrade,

Your letter of the 17th August 1971 which was received by Comrade Sands has been passed to me to attend to, since as you are no doubt aware, Comrade Sands has recently suffered the loss of her young daughter.

Comrade Sands and I are surprised that we have not had a reply to our letter of July 28th. In this letter we pointed out that it is a Stalinist method to require members to sign statements containing lies. We are therefore surprised you again ask us to sign such a statement.

We repeat the question we asked in our letter of July 28th and to which we have not yet received a reply: Why do you consider it necessary to resort to such an alien practice and what you hope to achieve from it?

Yours fraternally,  
Margery

*Extract from NC Minutes, 4/5 Sept. 1971*

#### Socialist Woman Dispute

M/C that the Secretariat be authorised to send letters by recorded delivery to the comrades concerned which should be expressed in terms of demanding YES or NO to the original request. 18F 4A

*Extract of PC minutes, 2/10/71*

M/C(1) to ask tendency to allow representatives of the majority to address their meeting (there was a tendency meeting that weekend) on the general question of dis-

cipline and, in particular, on the proposed statement by the ex-editors of *Socialist Woman* and the statement of the Glasgow members of the tendency (see appendix). Comrades MacGovern and Peterson were appointed to attend. 9F none against, 1 Ab.

(See Letter from the Tendency to the PC, dated October 5th, 1971 and printed in Documentation Concerning Disciplinary Questions in Scotland, Appendix 19.)

*Letter from Secretariat, dated October 16, 1971*

Precisely same wording as Secretariat letter dated 17/8/71 on preceding page [above]; excepting date of next NC changed to October 23/24 and postscript omitted.

*Letter from J. Sands, Margery and Jo O'B, dated October 21, 1971*

National Committee,

Dear Comrades,

Re: Letter to Sands, MD and Jo O'B

In reply to your letter dated Oct. 16, we thought we had made it clear that we have no intention of signing statements which contain lies. We would draw your attention to questions that we asked in the previous letters of July 28 and September 3 to which we are still awaiting replies; and also the Tendency statement of October 5, which says clearly ". . . 2) . . . We consider that it is alien to the norms of the Trotskyist movement to require members to sign statements which contain lies. At the same time we would point out that the NC has refused to answer the questions raised by the Tendency comrades as to the purpose of such a demand and what is hoped to be gained by such a procedure."

We note that you have not addressed the Oct. 16 letter to Anne Black—does this mean that you do not demand her signature to the statement?

Also, may we draw your attention to the fact that *four months* have passed since charges were laid against us at the National Conference. To this date we have had no information from you as to how you intend to proceed. Are we correct in assuming that you have decided not to proceed any further with them?

Fraternally,  
Sands, MD, Jo O'B

*Extract from NC Minutes, 23/24 October 1971*

#### Socialist Woman Affair

M/C that the PC convene a special meeting of that body to hear the charges against Sands, Jo O'B, MD and Black. 18F 3A.

Procedural motion to refer whole matter to PC. 18F 3A 1Ab. *Carried*

Extract from PC minutes 20th November 1971

Socialist Woman's Dispute

M/C that Nottingham comrades make arrangements for members of PC to go up to hear the charges. Charges as agreed by last conference to be heard immediately. 1A

December 8, 1971

Dear Comrade,

This is to inform you that the special Political Committee convened to hear the charges laid against you by the IMG National Committee will take place on *Wednesday December 15th*. It will be held in Peoples Hall, Heathcote Street, Nottingham, starting at 7.00 p.m. We hope you will be able to attend.

Yours fraternally,  
F. Matthews  
pp IMG Secretariat

Extract from PC minutes, 11 December 1971

Special PC in Nottingham.  
M/C to accept Peterson's report 6F 1A

*Letter, Sunday, December 12, 1971*

Political Committee, International Marxist Group

Dear comrades,

Received your letter of December 8, informing us of the special PC to be convened in Nottingham, Wednesday Dec. 15, to hear the charges laid against us by the National Committee.

Aside from the extremely short notice given us as to the exact time and place of the PC, you have given us absolutely no indication of how this meeting is to proceed. You have done nothing whatsoever to facilitate our being present or being able to present our case with witnesses to testify on our behalf. We also note that Tony Roberts, the only Tendency comrade on the PC, cannot attend because he cannot travel to Nottingham during mid-week because of his work. Sands has examinations at college the first four days of this week (13-16th) as well as preparing to leave the country for two weeks on the 17th. Margery has a young child with difficulties in feeding, getting to bed and finding a baby-sitter in order to be at a meeting for 7 o'clock. We had intended to bring witnesses from London and Nottingham who also would find great difficulty in attending a mid-week meeting.

In view of the fact that it has taken the PC some six months to get around to calling this meeting, we suggest that a postponement of three or four weeks would not hinder the PC's efforts to discover the truth of this affair and would really allow the meeting to be convened on

a proper footing, with all witnesses present, all PC members present and the format worked out in considered and democratic fashion. In our opinion, this Political Committee meeting should be postponed until such conditions as mentioned above can be fulfilled.

Fraternally,  
Sands, Margery and Jo O'B

*Minutes of special Political Committee to hear charges laid against Sands Jo O'B and MD: held in Nottingham on Wednesday December 15th*

[Text reproduced here; see Document C2]

T-2

*Submission to Commission Set Up to Investigate the Socialist Woman Question, by Nottingham Women Comrades of Ex-Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, June 10, 1971*

We submit to the commission on the *Socialist Woman* affair that the Nottingham IMG women behaved in a loyal and serious manner despite the crude manoeuvring and factionalism by the IMG Women's Caucus and the majority leadership, and that we state the following:

a) *That Socialist Woman was, from its inception, the property of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee.*

*Socialist Woman* was begun on the initiative of the NSWG, which at the time had only a small nucleus of radical women and no broad base. The NSWG decided therefore to produce a journal to organise and help build a women's movement; it was to be educational, agitational and an organiser. This decision was made because we were unable to build a large group in Nottingham at that time because we had other political and personal commitments and lacked a radical milieu. This discussion and consequent decision was reported to the *Ruskin Woman's Weekend* and distributed as a leaflet as part of our report on the development of our group in Nottingham. This report was not challenged.

The following women constituted the editorial board:  
Comrade Sands: IMG  
Anne Black: Independent — joined IMG May 1969  
Jo O'Brian: YCL, then independent — joined IMG July 1970  
Anne Torode: Independent  
Marie-Claire: YCL, never functioned on editorial board as IMG (only recruited just before leaving England).

At a point of particular crisis, when Sands, who was the centre of this work was forced to withdraw, some members of Nottingham IMG stepped in to help with organisational work concerning the journal. This was particularly Comrade Tyler who took over [as] business manager for a period, making it clear he was not prepared to do editorial work.



Far from it being a considered decision by the IMG to embark on the projects of a Socialist Woman's Committee and the launching of a national women's paper, as claimed in the PC document on women (pre-conference discussion bulletin No. 5), the facts show that the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee was in existence well over a year and the journal, *Socialist Woman*, produced for a year before the first meeting of the IMG Women's Caucus was held in January 1970. It was nearly two years after the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee first existed that another Socialist Woman's Group was established in London. The facts show again that this development took place after it was known that the women comrades on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*, the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, supported the Tendency. The evidence confirms that the involvement of some IMG members in the women's movement was mainly a response to initiatives and reports made by Sands. This response was very limited since most members were passive regarding the women's movement and some even hostile.

We have consistently and constantly stressed that *Socialist Woman* was an independent journal and the property of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee. As late as July 25/26, 1970, Comrade Sands put the essence of this position to the IMG NC without any objections being raised. We can only conclude that with the formation of the Tendency, it became necessary for the IMG to "take-over" *Socialist Woman* and thereby destroy any "influence" or "base" we may have had in the women's movement. In short, that it was an organisational manoeuvre of the crudest kind to settle political differences in the IMG, and one which has had some repercussions far outside the group.

b) *That Socialist Woman was projected as an independent paper, having the role of organiser to help build a women's movement.*

The first editorial and the draft for Socialist Woman's Committees stressed the need for women to organise, mainly but not specifically as Socialist Woman's Committees. Its thrust was to radical women, because *at that stage*, they could best be mobilised to lay the basis for a movement to involve more and more women. It attempted to build the newly formed NJACCWER because this appeared to us to be a new and exciting development with the aim of supporting struggles of working women. In that it recognised the manifest nature of female oppression, it had the potential to involve broad layers of women. It had the *possibility* of becoming a women's liberation movement. This is why Comrade Sands attended the founding meeting and urged Comrade Petersen for the IMG to affiliate. However, the leadership of NJACCWER was lost to the reformists and its development was superseded by that of the independent women's liberation groups. *Socialist Woman*, therefore, while not abandoning its orientation to NJACCWER, felt it necessary to intervene in and help build the emerging women's liberation movement and its embryo expression, the Women's National Coordinating Committee, which was a *Socialist Woman* initiative at Ruskin.

The importance of *Socialist Woman* as a builder of

the existing women's liberation movement and its aborted possibilities for the future cannot be over-estimated. It was a radical, socialist journal by women for women and was seen as such throughout the movement; it always responded enthusiastically to the developing radicalisation among women and welcomed all developments. Its independent, non-tendency nature, enabled it to attract help from many other tendencies including CP, YCL, IS, Solidarity, anarchists, and individual Maoists, not to mention the international response which it achieved.

This would never have been possible if *Socialist Woman* had ever been projected or even thought of as an IMG paper. It was conceived as a non-tendency paper and *never* as a front journal for the IMG. The influence of the IMG has always been exercised through its members on the editorial board, particularly through Sands, who was the only IMG member on the editorial board at the start of *Socialist Woman* and who has played a key role in the work.

Three other members of the initial editorial board were subsequently recruited to the IMG through Sand's influence.

It is necessary to take up here the question of Comrade Sands' oft-quoted article from *International*—"Don't Call us Birds." To quote: "In Nottingham a modest start has been made with a group of women, under the initiative of *International*, who have come together on this question. It is vitally necessary for politically conscious women to involve themselves in this movement to help educate the new layers who will most certainly be drawn in and give direction to them." While not refuting any of the ideas expressed in this article (particularly the call for involvement of political women), we would take serious issue with the majority leadership when they use Sands' statement "initiative of *International*" to attempt to discredit her in the women's movement. Perhaps comrades would have preferred her to state the facts which were "under my initiative, passively endorsed by IMG majority who couldn't have cared less"—that Sands used the formulation she did should be recorded to her credit—it represented an act of loyalty especially at a time when women were only too ready to discredit their political groups as "male dominated." We find it despicable that the majority leadership have seen fit to use this act of modesty on her part (we have shown it bears no relation to the truth) to try to discredit her.

c) *That the responsibility for the deterioration of relations between the IMG and Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, and the factional removal of Nottingham women comrades from the women's movement rests with the majority leadership.*

After the National Committee accepted Sands' report (July 25/26)—"We have within the past two weeks recruited the last active member of the editorial board to the IMG. Within our general perspective of an independent journal we expect at least three non-IMG members to start functioning in the autumn"—a women's caucus was held at the summer camp (of a most unrepresentative nature and without any of the key activists in the women's liberation movement being informed it was to take place), which projected the view that *Socialist Woman* should become an IMG journal. The following PC meeting endorsed this view and concretised it by freezing the edit-

orial board of *Socialist Woman*. This, one month after the NC accepted Comrade Sands' report as quoted above! Tendency comrades voted against this decision and the fact that it did not become an issue in the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee was fortunate. In practice, all the members of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee decided editorial policy since each issue was fully discussed at meetings of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and not limited to the formal editorial board.

As we projected the growing radicalisation and deepening of the women's liberation movement found its reflection in the Nottingham group; with new members coming in we were able to build extremely quickly. The group rapidly became more representative and included previously unradicalised women. At this time (Sept 16th), Sands presented her document "*Socialist Woman* and the IMG" to the National Committee which again stated our position on the ownership and relationship of *Socialist Woman* to IMG. Regular reports were made to the Nottingham branch on work and activities of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, so there can be no foundation for comrades arguing that they did not know of developments in Nottingham.

On Sept 19th, 1971, nine months after the first national women's caucus meeting, a national women's caucus was called to discuss papers on analysis and orientation to the women's liberation movement that had been referred by the NC. We were very surprised and encouraged by the attendance (19 and 5 visitors), since up to this time few IMG members had shown any interest in the women's liberation movement and some were even hostile to it. It soon became obvious that the meeting had not been convened to develop the political understanding and work in the women's liberation movement but to do a job on the comrades on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*. It became very clear that the purpose of the caucus was to (censure) (discipline) us for alleged malfunctioning because we had projected through *Socialist Woman* a campaign on contraception and abortion on demand under the NHS for the Women's National Co-ordinating Committee. We were staggered to be told that we were "changing the line," that we were breaking IMG discipline. We had always taken the initiative in the women's field because of the lack of IMG interest. Abortion and contraception on NHS is part of the IMG women's caucus programme which we distributed at Ruskin, and it is part of the founding manifesto of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee and *Socialist Woman*; it is included in the document adopted by the NC25/26th April, "Introduction to Women's Liberation Movement Discussion" and it was projected at the May 16th Day School on women's liberation.

Despite our protestations that we were carrying out the IMG position and that there was no evidence of refusing any materiel that the IMG had submitted, our loyalty to the IMG was constantly attacked throughout the meeting and without any warning a motion of censure was rammed through against us. It was presented by Mathews, an NC member, together with John Presland, an alternative NC member. We had a situation where NC members were instrumental in getting a vote of censure against another NC member in a caucus meeting. Only *after* the motion was passed was there any political discussion of the issues at stake and another caucus

meeting had to be called to discuss the documents which should have been presented. A political discussion was blocked in the interests of getting a censure motion carried. Consequently Comrades Black and Sands issued a protest to the PC asking them to revoke the motion of censure on the grounds that it was undemocratic and outside the scope of the women's caucus. In its attempts to avoid revoking the motion of censure, the PC and NC have tied themselves up in knots and come out with the ludicrous position that a motion of censure is not a disciplinary action.

A great deal was made at the same meeting of a projected *Red Mole Broadsheet* which nine months later hasn't materialised, but [has been] abandoned in the interests of rushing out the March 6 issue of the new *Socialist Woman*. It is interesting to note that in the haste to get this first issue out for March 6, it was possible to produce it in 6 weeks, but it is now 15 weeks and the second issue has yet to appear. It was also reported by George at the caucus meeting that an "answer" would be given to Jo O'Brien's article in the *Red Mole* on her U. S. tour to be written by herself, FT and Branca Hoare. The nature of the differences never were expressed nor the nature of the "answer." Nine months later we are still waiting for it. The aim of the majority was to create an atmosphere of distrust, suspicion and hostility towards us.

The October 10th women's caucus decided that *Socialist Woman* was to come under the control of the IMG and the following NC (17/18th) endorsed this. Following this, no attempt was made to discuss the position with Nottingham IMG comrades or the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, and when the Nov/Dec issue of *Socialist Woman* was published, its "right to exist" was not challenged by anyone in the IMG.

In December, the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee received a letter from the London Socialist Women's Group (LSWG):

28th December 1970

Toni Gorton  
16, Ella Road  
West Bridgeford  
Nottingham

Dear Toni,

This letter is concerned with two main items on the women's liberation agenda in the early part of 1971.

Firstly, in connection with the March 6 demonstration, the London Socialist Woman Groups propose that we march as a group, and after the demonstration have a joint women's liberation meeting where there should be a speaker from *Socialist Woman*. We have suggested that there should be one main *Socialist Woman* banner, and, depending on numbers in each group, we should have individual branch banners or posters. Additionally, we would ask for any suggestions for a women's liberation symbol which we could use on the *Socialist Woman* banner instead of the existing one on the national banner, and also any proposals for better and original slogans in general.

Secondly, for the WNCC Conference on Saturday and Sunday, 9th and 10th January, each *Socialist Woman* Group is asked to forward the name of a speaker which

will be circulated and you should write to Hilary Wainwright at 26 Winchester Road, Oxford, as soon as possible, stating how many members will be attending and what accommodation will be required.

Finally, we feel, and we think you will agree, that there is a need for better communication in the future between all Socialist Woman Groups if we are to build our organisation into a much stronger and more unified women's liberation movement.

s/ Jacquy Hayman  
London Socialist Woman Group

This letter was discussed by the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee and gave rise to a discussion of the role and function of Socialist Woman's Committees, particularly as the letter included suggestion of a *Socialist Woman* contingent on March 6th and suggestions for our own new symbol. The response of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee indicated that the group felt very strongly about not separating themselves off from the mainstream of the women's movement, and were particularly concerned that the letter seemed to suggest the Socialist Woman's Committees were to be a "movement" as distinct from the women's liberation movement. A letter was sent to the London Socialist Woman's Group on January 14th; no reply has been received.

Thursday 14th January 1970

Jacquy Hayman  
182 Pentonville Rd, London N. 1.

Dear Jacquy Hayman,

Our group will do all it can to support the national demonstration in London on 6th March.

However, in your letter to Toni Gorton, you mention several points which we would like to clarify with you before we can make a group decision on them.

Firstly, there is the question of the differences, and the nature of these differences, between your group and other women's liberation groups. It is essential to determine in what ways, if any, the interests of a socialist women's liberationist differ from those of a women's liberationist, before we can consider what kind of co-operation (which you mention in the letter) you have in mind. There may already be much common ground on which a natural co-operation already exists.

Leading from these points, we would like you to tell us whether you feel there is any justification in separation from the general movement and, as an extension of this separation, for a meeting after the demonstration.

Perhaps you would explain these points so that we can tell you our decisions after our next meeting on January 24th.

Yours Sincerely,  
s/ Valerie Mollen

Following this, the January 17th women's caucus was convened in London, despite requests for it to be held in Nottingham to avoid the personal difficulties which prevented Nottingham comrades from travelling to London that weekend. We particularly wished to attend this

caucus as it was clear that discussion on the implementation of the October NC decisions was planned—point 2 of the projected agenda read:

2. Implementation of October Resolution.

- a) Establishment of Socialist Woman Groups
- b) S. W. Re-organisation.

When questioned, Comrade George stated she had not been in touch with Nottingham comrades since the October women's caucus, and that she did not know whether the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee were preparing an issue for March 6th. In spite of this lack of knowledge the caucus proceeded to:

- a) Remove *Socialist Woman* from the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee—to become a journal of the Socialist Woman's Committees.
- b) Elect a new editorial board.
- c) Make plans for a new *Socialist Woman* to be published in London for March 6th.

When we saw a copy of the minutes of the January 17th women's caucus meeting, we sent a letter to the PC:

31/1/71

To the PC:

We have just seen a copy of the minutes of the IMG/SL national women's caucus held in London on 17th January.

We protest most strongly that at that meeting steps were taken and decisions made to take over *Socialist Woman* which is the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee and make it the paper of a national network of Socialist Woman's Groups being set up by the IMG.

The IMG/SL women's caucus, although not having the power to do so, removed all the members of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee off the editorial board, elected a new editorial board—not putting any members on from the NSWC—which then proceeded to discuss the next issue of *Socialist Woman* to be ready for March 6th. A circular appealing for subscriptions changing both the subscription rate and the address of the paper, has subsequently been issued publicly.

All this was done, not only without having the power to do so and without any *consultation* with us who are most involved in the work of putting out *Socialist Woman* and in our absence, but *without any discussion with the NSWC*. In spite of a long-standing request for the caucus meeting to be held in Nottingham, the convenor called it in London knowing that Nottingham comrades would be unable to be there.

*Socialist Woman* has never been an IMG paper. It has always been the property of the NSWC. The influence that the IMG has in the paper is through the control of its members in the NSWC who, since the PC took a decision to freeze the editorial board some months ago, constituted the editorial board.

The IMG has no authority to take over the journal of a body which is outside its control.

It would appear that factionalism against Tendency members has now gone outside the IMG.

The actions and decisions of the caucus are manipulative and reveal a contempt for the NSWC who we are trying to win to the IMG.

We appeal in a most serious way to the PC to stop and re-think this whole question before irrevocable harm

is done to the work already begun in the women's liberation movement and to the name of the IMG within the women's movement and the left-wing in general. We request that a full discussion on this matter be held at the meeting of the next PC.

85 Rivermead  
Wilford Lane  
West Bridgeford  
January 29, 1971

s/ Antonia Gorton  
s/ Anne Black  
s/ Jo O'Brien  
s/ Mary Donnelly

In response to the circular changing subscription rates and address for *Socialist Woman*, the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee wrote to Leonora Lloyd as follows:

Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee  
85 Rivermead, Wilford Lane  
West Brodgedford, Nottingham  
11th February 1971.

Dear Leonora Lloyd,

It has come to our notice that you are advertising subscriptions to *Socialist Woman* to your own address, and have raised the subscription to 9/- from 5/-. We must point out that we are still publishing the journal and the ownership of it has not changed.

In our telephone conversation you stated that you wanted to publish an issue of *Socialist Woman* before the demonstration. Your advertisement for the raised subscription at your address leads us to believe that you intend to do this without our agreement. If this is your intended course of action, the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee would feel that this will have the gravest consequences for you in the women's liberation movement as a whole.

As we have received no reply to our letters, the group feels that it cannot enter into any negotiations concerning the journal *Socialist Woman* until we have some idea of your intentions in writing.

Yours faithfully,  
s/ Valerie Mollan (Secretary)

Following the January 17th women's caucus, George phoned Sands and informed her of the decisions reached by the caucus. George demanded that *Socialist Woman* be handed over to the new editorial board. Sands informed her that this could not be done without the agreement of the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee. Sands told her that a meeting with us or the NSWSC could be arranged if she wanted to come up to Nottingham to explain and discuss the situation. George phoned later to say she wanted to discuss with the NSWSC in the afternoon of Feb. 7th.

Sands informed the January 23rd meeting of NSWSC that Leonora Lloyd of the London Socialist Woman Group wanted to discuss with them the production of *Socialist Woman* in London projecting it as the journal of a national network of Social Woman Groups. The following letter was written as a result of that meeting.

Dear Leonora Lloyd,

[Text reproduced here; see Document M-19]

George phoned Sands again, Feb. 1st 71, to inform IMG women that it was our responsibility to get *SW* away from the NSWSC and that Peterson had told her not to come up and speak to the NSWSC as to do so would be to walk into a trap. Sands stated that: 1. The Nottingham IMG women had not been given any instructions or direction on how to implement the group's decisions; 2. That democratic centralism does not require that members manipulate people they work with; 3. That the NSWSC were expecting replies to their (two) letters and that they did not see us (Nottingham IMG women) as being the correct channel for such a discussion; 4. Also that if we failed to achieve the aims of the IMG, we would be accused of sabotaging the whole "operation" and it would be very much better if the women's convenor who was in complete support of the aims and was therefore capable and armed to fight wholeheartedly for it were to come up and do so.

The Feb. 13th PC endorsed the decisions of the January women's caucus and decided to compile an "information bulletin" for the membership, including "relevant material." On Feb. 18th, Peterson and Tyler met with us and presented us with the "Dossier" (we presume the Dossier is the aforementioned "information bulletin" containing "relevant material," though we must point out that the author or authors have been very selective in their choice of "relevant information"). We did not have a chance to read it before the meeting (not to mention before it was released and distributed to non-members of the IMG) and there was little opportunity to take up many of the points. However, it was clear that the Dossier sought to claim ownership of the journal which we *once again* categorically denied. Jo O'Brien, who was a founding member of the NSWSC was told that she didn't know the history of *Socialist Woman!* It was clear that Peterson and Tyler met us to restate the erroneous position that *SW* was an IMG journal. Sands informed them (at no time did they ask for this information) that the January-Feb. issue of *SW*, the journal of NSWSC, was at the printers. *The IMG majority leadership knew well before March 6 that the next issue of Nottingham SW was in the pipeline.* In spite of this knowledge, Peterson did nothing to stop or hold up the production of the new *Socialist Woman* which was being prepared by the IMG women's caucus. In fact, the abandoning of the *Red Mole Broadsheet* on women which had been in preparation for the previous five months, by decision of the Secretariat, would suggest that nothing was to stand in the way of producing the new journal *SW*. Come hell or high water, that must be on sale on [the] March 6 demonstration. This is why we were faced with two different *Socialist Woman* on sale on the March 6 women's demonstration, one from London and one from Nottingham. One published by the NSWSC and one from 182 Pentonville Road claiming to be the national journal of Socialist Woman Groups. This claim has subse-

quently been shattered for anyone who really thought that this was so by Leonora Lloyd's letter of April 22nd when she makes it clear that the new *Socialist Woman* is a front journal for the IMG.

At a work night of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee immediately prior to the March 6th demonstration, the fact that another journal *Socialist Woman* had been produced in London and would be on sale at the demonstration was discussed. The women decided to put an insert in their current issue of the journal (which the committee had been publishing for two years), and Jane Brown, a member of the Spartacus League, volunteered to type and duplicate it. No IMG women were involved in this discussion and had nothing to do with the contents of the duplicated slip.

d) *That this situation has led to serious repercussions and relations in the Nottingham IMG branch and the Nottingham women's movement.*

When the majority leadership of IMG set off on their course to remove SW from NSWC, they were aware of the likely repercussions in the women's movement. We had cautioned the leadership and asked them to reconsider their proposals (see our letter of Jan. 31 to the PC). But our appeals were ignored.

In claiming the journal to be an IMG journal, IMG has taken the position that ownership of a journal is not dependent on the body in whose name it is published, but on the fact that a member of a political group is on the editorial board and subsequently recruits other members of the E. B. to the political group which also gives some aid in the distribution and advertising of the journal.

The IMG majority have chosen to force the implementation of manipulative decisions on comrades who from the outset challenged their right to take such action. The majority leadership have never accepted their responsibility even to discuss with us the implementation of their decisions, nor were we sent a copy of the decisions taken by the leadership which they made on March 6/7.

The NC instructed the IMG comrades on the editorial board of Nottingham *Socialist Woman*:

1) To carry out the majority decision by facilitating as soon as possible the creation of *one* journal for the Socialist Women's Groups by means of the following steps:

- a) by attempting to ensure the cessation of publication of Nottingham SW;
- b) by attempting to ensure that the Nottingham SWC does not publish an alternative journal;
- c) by trying to ensure the transfer of subscription lists and all monies to the editorial board in London;
- d) by acting to retain or reconstitute a Nottingham SW group accepting a), b), c), and not to liquidate themselves into the WL movement;
- e) if they are unable to achieve a) to d), to issue a public statement in support of these propositions and accepting the decision of the NC of the IMG and disassociating themselves from the journal and any other journals its successor may produce.

We want an answer by the next PC.

2) That we should constitute a commission to investigate all the facts of the matter to make a report to the annual conference.

3) To show our earnest (?) we propose to assist the

comrades to carry out the decisions by

a) the IMG writing through its caucus suggesting that Petersen go to Nottingham to speak to the NSWC.

b) the IMG make available to the non-IMG comrades of the NSWC the important discussion material we have had in the past.

4) We pledge ourselves to correct the mistake that was made at the January 17 women's work caucus, so that members of the old editorial board are added to the new one.

5) We pledge ourselves not to take any unnecessary steps which will interfere with pre-conference discussion.

Daley's motion: IMG members are instructed not to sell, or otherwise aid the distribution of the Nottingham Jan/Feb issue of SW and any subsequent publication produced by the NSWC. Failure to abide by this decision is a breach of discipline. Carried 15 for, 2 against. Sec instructed to append statement on NC's attitude to disciplinary action in this case. Carried 13 for 2 agst 2 abst. We would expect in such a situation that the leadership would make a strong effort to discuss with us and inform us immediately of their decisions, but that was not the case, as our letter reveals.

Letter to Peterson

2/4/71

Dear Comrade,

There are a few things we would like to draw to the attention of the PC relating to the work of women comrades in Nottingham in the women's liberation movement, regarding which the national committee has taken some decisions. This letter is written by two of the three members of the IMG who are involved in the women's liberation movement in Nottingham. The third comrade is unfortunately on leave of absence due to extreme personal circumstances regarding her young daughter's condition, who as you are aware is a victim of leukaemia.

We understand that on March 6/7 there was a meeting of the NC at which certain decisions were taken regarding the women's work in Nottingham, and specific instructions were apparently to be given to the women comrades. No report was given by Jenkins (a member of the NC, and who was at that NC meeting) at the 10th March Nottingham branch meeting. We understood that he did not make a report because he was awaiting the arrival of the minutes to make sure what the decisions were.

On Sunday 14th March, at approximately 6.30 pm, Sands received a telephone call from London when Mathews, [with] Peterson at her side, read over to Sands the decisions of the meeting held the week previously. No discussion took place over the telephone, and at 8 pm there was a meeting of the NSWC. At that meeting Sands put the position of the IMG majority re the national network of SWCs, etc., and read out the editorial of the London *Socialist Woman*, dated March/April.

The consensus of the women at the meeting was to change the name of the women's group and to continue to produce a journal. In keeping with the normal practice of the women's group, no motions were moved and no votes taken.

At the end of the meeting, there were 16 women present, Sands and Donnelly who are IMG members, and two who are SL members. (Two women, one an IMG member,

J O'B, and a non-IMG member had been obliged to leave early since the y had other commitments).

At a subsequent meeting, which none of us were able to attend, but at which we understand there were two SL members, the new name of the women's group was decided upon. We consider it necessary to protest very strongly that after making such specific decisions, the NC failed to notify the comrades concerned what the decisions were and to give them the specific instructions.

Although we had the opportunity to read the relevant section of the NC minutes after the branch meeting of the 17th March, *up to this date we have not received a copy of these instructions*, nor had them explained by Comrade Jenkins who was present when the decisions were made. We think that in keeping with the spirit and principles of democratic centralism that when instructions to certain comrades have been decided upon, these comrades to whom the instructions are given, should as *quickly as possible* receive a copy of those instructions *in writing*, and be given every assistance by the leadership in the carrying out of those instructions.

Since we understand that one of your instructions was for us to make a public statement, would you please inform us as to the nature of the statement the committee has in mind, what it is required to contain, and how it is to be made public.

Yours fraternally,  
s/ M Donnelly  
s/ J O'Brien

No reply has been received to this letter. In reference to Point 5 of NC resolution, we consider the NC has violated this pledge in endorsing Leonora Lloyd's letter of 22/4/71 to the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. You already have a copy of the protest made by the Nottingham Tendency comrades concerning this.

How has this affair affected the Nottingham IMG branch? Statements have been made by leading members of the IMG, Jenkins and Tyler (the latter is also a member of the commission), that they believed the Tendency comrades to be disloyal—this is before the commission has even met to make its investigations.

Jenkins placed a motion before the branch, instructing the Nottingham women comrades to withdraw from the Nottingham women's group. None of the comrades concerned were present (two on leave of absence, and the other could easily have been informed of the motion by phone). Mary Donnelly protested at the following branch meeting that such a motion, which she understood to have been unmotivated, should be carried in the absence of the comrades involved in this work.

After instructing Comrade Donnelly to withdraw from the Nottingham women's group, Jenkins asked her to deliver copies of a letter from the IMG women's caucus to individual women in the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. She informed him that as per instructions, she had withdrawn from this group. When comrades requested to know the contents of the letters, Comrade Jenkins was at first unwilling to say. Finally he was persuaded to let us see a copy after the meeting, after stating that the letter contained an exposure of the disgusting role played by Tendency comrades in the SW affair. A resolution proposed by Said requesting the NC to hold the letter and refer it to the commission was defeated.

The branch therefore accepted this by-passing of the commission.

The facts show that the IMG majority leadership is responsible for the fact that two journals, both called *Socialist Woman*, were on sale on March 6th women's demonstration.

That Leonora Lloyd with the full support of Petersen refused to go to Nottingham to discuss with the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee the decisions of the IMG to take over their journal *Socialist Woman*. Correspondence from the NSWC was unanswered and ignored.

The majority leadership issued a dossier containing internal material, giving only selected items of the "relevant material" and designed to compromise Sands, who they knew would be unable to answer it publicly without being charged with breaking discipline. A letter by Leonora Lloyd in the name of the IMG women's caucus has gone out publicly claiming that the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee were dupes of a disloyal faction of the IMG who did not give them the real facts. No opportunity is given to the Nottingham women comrades to make a public reply.

Without any motivation, Nottingham branch has withdrawn leading women activists from the women's liberation movement in a period when experienced cadres are desperately needed to build the women's movement. It is to the Nottingham women's liberationists' credit that they told the Women's National Co-ordinating Committee that the two journals could co-exist.

We would ask, do the majority leadership not see or care what they have done to the Nottingham women's group? Are they indifferent as to what the women in the women's liberation movement think of the IMG and FI after the events of the past few months?

Finally, we claim that the events of the past period clearly show that the IMG majority leadership has schemed to remove us from the field of women's liberation, and had the leadership been honest about this, that they could have achieved it with much less damage being done to the name of the IMG and to the development of the women's liberation movement.

Antonia Gorton  
Anne Black  
Jo O'Brien  
Mary Donnelly

10th June 1971



*"Appeal to the National Committee from the Nottingham Tendency Members," Jan. 3, 1972, and Referred to the International Fact-Finding Commission by the IMG National Committee*

*Extracts from IMG National Committee minutes 23/24 October 1971*

#### Women's Work

Motion from Williams: NC urges all women comrades to give full support to actions organised on the abortion issue and express our solidarity with the international actions taking place throughout the world on November 20th.

Addendum from Jones: This is to be part of the normal activity of the IMG in its work in the field of women's work and implies no priority for an abortion campaign. Comrades will under no circumstances raise reformist slogans such as "repeal the abortion laws."

Addendum carried 17F 3A 2Ab.

Substantive Motion carried 16F 0A 6Ab.

*Extracts from Nottingham Branch of IMG minutes of Dec. 1, 1971*

"French gave report of the Midland's Women's Lib groups in Birmingham to discuss the possibility of establishing a regional structure. In the discussion on group reports, it was clear that many WL groups were in difficulties, unable to generate activities and with declining membership—Birmingham was an example of this. By contrast the WL group in Keele was considering affiliating to the SW groups. The question of the regional structure was not resolved, but three schools were to be held, the one on industrial work to be organised by us.

French criticised the activities of Sands, Marjory and Jo O'B in the abortion campaign and in the Birmingham meeting. In her opinion they have acted against the majority position of the IMG and in breach of democratic centralism. They were confusing younger comrades by associating with women obviously opposed to the IMG.

A discussion followed, the Tendency comrades giving a different analysis of the Birmingham conference and denying the allegations of French. It was agreed that French should write down her charges. A motion was carried: *This branch instructs Tendency comrades not to do any women's work at all.* For 9, Against 3.

*Appeal to the National Committee from the Nottingham Tendency members*

January 3, 1972

We ask the National Committee to rescind the motion passed by the Nottingham branch on December 1, 1971 and upheld at the meeting of December 8, 1971 (relevant excerpt given above). On December 8, Tendency comrades moved to rescind this motion. Defeated. For 3, against 11.

We ask the National Committee to rescind this motion on the grounds that:

1) The motion moved by R. Garner, organiser, and urged on by J. Atkinson, NC member, was put *after* the branch had agreed upon a written presentation of the charges and allegations in order to facilitate an orderly and fruitful discussion.

2) That the verbal report given by the women's convenor, Val Graham, was based on lack of knowledge of IMG national policy, and, motivated by factionalism, distorted the contributions and actions of the Nottingham Tendency women.

3) That only one of the Tendency women, Mary Donnelly, was present at the branch meeting and the other two were given no opportunity to rebut the arguments upon which the branch made its decision. It is normal to give notice of motion when decisions are to be made directly concerning absent members.

It is our position that Mary Donnelly and Toni Gorton acted in complete accordance with national IMG policy and with the agreement of the Nottingham branch of the IMG in connection with the (Nott'm) Women's Abortion and Contraception Committee. That at the East Midlands Regional Conference of Women's Liberation held in Birmingham, Nov. 27, far from harming the IMG's work, as alleged by Val Graham, we facilitated it and in no way broke democratic centralism. The factional nature of this motion is proved by the simple fact that Jo O'B is neither a member of the Abortion Committee or was at the Birmingham meeting.

In 1970, a motion was passed by the National Committee that Tendency women withdraw from the *leadership* of the WNCC Abortion and Contraception campaign as soon as possible. This was done. Free Abortion and Contraception on demand through the NHS remained a demand of the women's liberation movement. The IMG supports this demand.

At the early Nov. National Committee, 1971, a motion was passed calling on comrades to support actions taking place on Abortion and Contraception for Nov. 20.

At the Skegness Conference of Women's Liberation, the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group asked women to support Nov. 20 through demonstrations, teach-ins, meetings and so on. In Nottingham, through the initiative of the NWLG, an independent ad hoc committee was set up to plan for Nov. 20 and an ongoing campaign. Mary Donnelly and Toni Gorton joined and worked for the WACC in Nottingham. In Glasgow, a Nov. 20 demonstration was sponsored jointly by the Glasgow Socialist Woman's Group and the Glasgow Women in Action. In London an Abortion Group was formed.

The Nottingham branch of the IMG has previously taken a decision (again without our presence) that Tendency women were not to belong to the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. After this, we resigned from the NWLG and have not rejoined it. We have never spoken as members of it. We quite openly joined the Nottingham WACC, which is an independent organisation building actions around one of the four demands of the WLM which the IMG publicly supports.

*Nov. 10*—Jo O'B gave a report to branch on teach-in for Nov. 20—no questions or discussion. *Nov. 17*—F. Gorton reported to branch that Mary Donnelly and Toni Gorton were at WACC meeting and therefore unable to attend branch meeting—no questions or discussion. *Nov. 13*—Toni Gorton distributed WACC leaflets in Market Square in full view of populace and IMG-SL members—

never questioned by the branch. Nov. 20—Abortion Teach-In: MD at door taking money, Jo O'B ran projector and made two non-controversial contributions. TG asked a question which differentiated the tactics of the new women's movement from the old reformist organisations such as FPA and Brooks Advisory Centre (afternoon session available on tape). Nov. 24—FG reported to branch that TG was with Linda Sheppard, who was touring Britain for the American WONAAC—no questions.

The record is clear then, the branch completely accepted our involvement in this campaign—which was not projected as ending on November 20. At no time did it even question our participation or show any interest. Nov. 27, at the East Midlands Regional Conference of Women's Liberation which MD and TG attended, there were also the Nottingham women's convenor, Val Graham; two Nottingham SL women; and an indeterminate number of SWG-IMG-SL women. Approx. 40 women all together attended the meeting. Each group gave a report on its size, projects, state of organisation and perspectives. It was clear from the 11 reports given, the movement was in a weak, demoralised state. The discussion moved on to what precisely could the regional groupings do together? After waiting to hear what the IMG women's convenor would say, and hearing nothing, TG suggested that for a variety of reasons the most feasible thing was for the EM groups to set about an educational programme for themselves and that as a start individual groups should volunteer to organise day schools on each of the 3 main demands of the movement (education being dropped by mutual agreement). This prompted Val Graham to immediately volunteer the Nottingham SWG to organise the industrial school. The report of the Nottingham SWG about its activities and the volunteering to organise the industrial school were the only contributions made to the entire conference by Val Graham, Polly Lolly and Jane Browne.

From there, the meeting went on to discuss the January meeting in Bristol to plan the next national women's liberation conference. Again no direction came from the women's convenor. Toni Gorton suggested that the conference be a forum for a free exchange of ideas around the theme "How do we build a women's movement"; that all campaigns of the movement be discussed; that there be a combination of open plenary sessions with all views represented and workshops on specific items. This was accepted unanimously and the two delegates to Bristol so instructed.

During the day, Toni Gorton and Mary Donnelly did not project themselves at any time as members of the NWLG. Toni Gorton spoke as a member of the Nottingham WACC.

Leading women, Jane Cave and Pam Seymour of Birmingham and Shirley Moreno and Imogen Forester of Loughboro were informed before the meeting began that we were not members of the NWLG. Although puzzled by it, they accepted our participation in good faith, recognising us as women's liberationists if not formally members of any group.

In conclusion: The IMG's position towards the WLM is: 1. That programatically it supports the four main demands; 2. That the WLM must be brought to an industrial orientation, that is, by giving priority to those demands which the majority believes relate most to working women—equal pay, equal job opportunity, equal training and free day-care nurseries.

It is completely within the IMG's orientation towards the WLM for any member to work in campaigns around the four main demands. There is nothing contradictory or confusing about this. Indeed, for the Nottingham Tendency women, the only way we can do anything in the women's movement is to participate in such campaigns. The Nottingham branch has proscribed the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group; barred us from the internal women's discussions and the Nottingham Socialist Women's Group. The latter two actions effectively prohibiting us from working in industrial women's work. There are no independent campaigns on industrial demands or nurseries. The actions of the branch have put us very clearly in the position of trade unionists banned from trade-union activities or black people banned from black power organisations.

Val Graham alleges that our contributions led to a situation where "young IMG women are confused about the IMG's position." Not being able to attend the internal women's discussion, we are not able to say what kind of education they are given there, but from the public presentation of IMG policies we can hazard some generalities.

The IMG-SL women's lack of attendance at, and participation in, public meetings and actions of the women's movement point to:

1) An attitude of indifference, tokenism and tail-endism towards the WLM.

2) A lack of national focus and direction to the IMG's work in this field. If the IMG wants to make the industrial demands take priority within the WLM, then it must provide the forces and direction to do so. The truth is, that the IMG has not, and probably does not intend to, develop the industrial demands into a mass national campaign. Within the context, then, of a leaderless and somewhat demoralized women's movement; of each group, including the SWG's, "doing their own thing" on a local level; anything positive and *unifying* in content will gain primacy.

The IMG says it supports the four demands of the WLM: equal pay; equal job and educational opportunities; free contraception and abortion on demand through the NHS; free 24-hour day-care nurseries. It cannot say then "but if one of them, the A & C demand, finds support from the women and develops into a real campaign—then we do not support it"—this is nonsensical! Granted, political support does not always imply organisational support, but then, the organisation has to justify its abstention, particularly in this case, where the three women are not being withdrawn because their efforts are required elsewhere.

3) A lack of confidence in their own abilities to carry the IMG line competently, which reflects either their lack of political understanding of the line or the organisation's failure to train them in public speaking and articulating the ideas of the IMG.

The IMG has 250 members; it has numerous facilities including printing presses, large headquarters, full-time staff, a fortnightly agitational journal, a theoretical journal and *Socialist Woman*. The Spartacus League and SWG's add more women to the possible forces of the IMG within the women's movement. Despite all its resources and power, the Nottingham branch of the IMG feels compelled to again try to drive the Nottingham Tendency women into the ground, separate us from our sisters who are striving for their liberation, muzzle us and call down



the fury of yet more charges against us.

The logical question is "why"? We have said before that the IMG majority is afraid of really confronting our ideas. It has consistently obscured the political issues by creating a factional, witch-hunting atmosphere and by moving in on us organisationally to solve its problems. This last move by the Nottingham branch is the latest in a long list of organisational manoeuvres to solve political questions. We urge the comrades to consider seriously the implications of all these actions. We, women of the Tendency, will not quit the Fourth International as Nottingham NC member Tyler urges us to do, because we have political differences with the majority of the British section. We will not quit because our lives within the organisation are difficult, neither will we permit you to turn us into political zombies, inactive, silent and ghettoized.

You, the majority leadership have a great responsibility. Break with the traditions of British revolutionary groupings who split or drive members out when political problems arise. We urge you to use your authority to stop these punitive, factional actions and you will have contributed a great deal to the maturity of the British section of the Fourth International. We have shown our loyalty and determination to stay with the FI, you can only gain in stature and political understanding if you take your responsibilities for the organisation seriously by making it possible for *all members* to contribute their best abilities and experience to building the IMG. We ask you to rescind this motion and have a frank and serious discussion about the very real political problems facing us.

Sands, Luff, Geoff, Margery, Jo O'B

*FRENCH 14th-12-71 (Received by Nottingham branch 4-1-72)*

At the IMG branch meeting of the 1st Dec. 1971, I stated that I felt Comrade Toni Gorton had broken discipline through an intervention made by her at the Birmingham Regional WNCC meeting of the 27th Nov. 1971. I was asked to document this report. It was felt by Comrade Mary, also present at the meeting, that Comrade Toni had acted in accordance with National IMG policy, to support solidarity actions with the national demonstration of women in America, along with herself and Comrade Jo O'Brien, who had also participated in the Nottingham Women's Abortion and Contraception Committee and the Nov. 20th teach-in.

I wish to make it clear that the report does not concern the activities of Comrade Toni, or of the other comrades in the NWACC prior to Nov. 27th. This committee, set up by the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, was not attended by myself or by any other member of *Socialist Woman*. We were not invited to participate in it. I was made aware of its existence through a circular which gave notice of a committee meeting to be held on the 13th Nov. I received the circular after that date. The only information given through the branch was on 17th Nov. when Comrade Frank Gorton reported that Comrades Toni, Jo and Mary were attending such

a meeting that evening. The purpose of the committee was to organise a rally and teach-in on abortion and contraception on Nov. 20th and to organise the continuation of the campaign after that date. I consider that the participation of Comrades Toni, Jo and Mary in the committee and teach-in was in no way against IMG national policy to support solidarity actions and did not necessarily mean that they were involved in the planning and organisation of a local or national abortion and contraception campaign or that they were in political association with the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. The report I made at the 1st Dec. branch was based on what I had witnessed at the Birmingham meeting and was not a comment on the contributions of the comrades at meetings where I was not present.

I reported that I considered that at the Birmingham meeting of the 27th Nov., Comrade Toni made it clear that she supported such a campaign, which was being organised in Nottingham and apparently in London also. I considered that this went against the political line of the IMG majority. In the section of the meeting dealing with group reports, Rose Knight of the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group reported on the committee and teach-in. In response to questions on the report Comrade Toni replied to one from a member of the Loughborough WLG on what was being done on abortion and contraception further to the teach-in. Comrade Toni replied that the Nottingham Group had set up the committee, and that a committee had been set up in London also to organise a campaign round the demand for free abortion and contraception and that this as many of them knew was something which she was personally deeply concerned to. In the context where Rose Knight later argued that although some groups didn't regard the abortion demand as a priority, they did and that the Nottingham committee hoped to work with London on the campaign, I could interpret Comrade Toni's statement not only as public support for the Tendency position, but also as political association with the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, whose spokeswoman showed hostility to IMG and *Socialist Woman* on at least two occasions.

*Extract from IMG NC minutes Jan 8/9, 1972*

"M/C to refer to Fact Finding Commission. 17F.

M/C to ask Nottingham Cdes to make available information relating to this."

*Reply to the appeal by the Nottingham Tendency*

On December 1st 1971, the Nottingham Branch, by a vote of 9 to 3, instructed Tendency comrades not to carry out women's work on December 8th, a motion to rescind the resolution fell by a vote of 3 to 11. It is the opinion of the Nottingham Tendency that they were withdrawn because of the complaints of French which were not valid or proved.

A general problem exists with the Nottingham Tendency in regard to open work in those areas where po-

litical disagreements exist between the majority and minority: the Nottingham Tendency will not put the line of the IMG when they do not agree with it. This view has been expressed many times, especially by Sands, who evolved the formulation of abstaining from putting the majority line in women's work since to do so would be to lie to the working class and to herself. This is not an eccentric, but essentially abstract, theoretical belief since it was rigourously applied in the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Group. Given this position, it is not possible to direct Nottingham Tendency comrades into areas of work where disagreements with the IMG line exist. The Nottingham Tendency totally disagree with the IMG line on women and therefore have been withdrawn from this work.

It was understood in the agreement reached with the leaders of the Tendency that Tendency comrades should concentrate on defence work and not to open work in those areas where there are majority/minority positions. It is uncertain whether the Nottingham Tendency will accept this agreement. There are indications that, not content with not putting the line of the IMG in public, they will abstain from putting the line of the Tendency internally. The Nottingham majority has implemented the agreement.

Once this major motivation is understood, then irrelevantancies about the Birmingham meeting and the Nottingham Abortion Committee are revealed as extraneous to the central debate. In the "appeal," the point is made that "the factional nature of the motion is proved by the simple fact J O'B is neither a member of the Abortion Committee or was at the Birmingham meeting." All this proves is that this was not the basis of the motion. Tyler asked J O'B a question on the December 8th meeting. He furthermore stated that the answer to this question would determine, for him, whether the resolution should be rescinded for J O'B. The question was not whether J O'B had been a member of the Abortion Committee, nor whether J O'B had been to Birmingham. Tyler asked J O'B whether she would accept the norms of democratic centralism and put the majority position externally. She replied that she would not as she could not lie. The resolution of Dec. 1st 1971 was not, therefore, rescinded for J O'B.

It is to be hoped that the Nottingham Tendency will take advantage of the agreement with the leaders of the Tendency to stop issuing irrelevant appeals and uttering slanders on majority comrades and to enjoy the more solid rewards of engaging in defence work. The Nottingham majority, by their resolutions of the 1st and 8th of December 1971, have assisted the leaders of the tendency in implementing the agreement. The Nottingham majority gives an assurance that it will give whatever further assistance is necessary to ensure the complete implementation of this agreement.

A. Jenkins,  
for Nottingham majority

London, February 5, 1972  
*To the National Committee*

Comrade A. Jenkins in his "Reply to the Appeal by the Nottingham Tendency" is somewhat confused as to the agreement reached between Tendency and majority leaders at the November 1971 United Secretariat meeting.

To clear up any misunderstanding, the text of the proposals approved by the United Secretariat are as follows:

a) That every effort to be made to aid the integration of Tendency members into meaningful political activity. That Tendency members be given central responsibility in Latin American defense work and major expansion of British circulation of *Intercontinental Press*.

b) That Ghulam and Petersen lead in setting atmosphere among majority leaders conducive to promoting this integration.

c) That Adair submit statement to IMG National Committee clarifying position of Tendency on Ricardo's suspension.

d) That fact-finding commission begin work as soon as Diego and Gormley can make practical arrangements. Meanwhile Petersen and Adair to finish compiling presentation of written record.

It can be seen from the above that no decision was taken to withdraw Tendency comrades from work they were already engaged in.

Since the IMG supports the right of women to free abortion on demand and is not on record as being opposed to the National Abortion Campaign, the reasons Comrade Jenkins gives for the Nottingham branch withdrawing Tendency comrades from this work are unfounded.

fraternally,  
Adair and Williams

T-7

*On the IMG take-over of Socialist Woman from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee*

submitted by Connie Harris  
June 3, 1971

It is a well-known fact throughout the women's liberation movement in Britain, and possibly in other countries too, that the International Marxist Group has taken *Socialist Woman* away from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. This committee regularly published *Socialist Woman* from February 1969.

Knowing full-well that the NSWC would be selling its journal *Socialist Woman* on the March 6th demonstration (the first national women's liberation demonstration in Britain), members of the IMG women's caucus, with the full authority of the majority leadership of the IMG, produced and sold a new journal—also called *Socialist Woman*. Since the Nottingham-produced *Socialist Woman* was dated January-February 1971 and the IMG *Socialist Woman* was dated March-April, it appeared that two issues of the *same* journal were being sold. However, inside the January-February issue of the Nottingham *Socialist Woman*

was a duplicated slip disclaiming any connection with the new *Socialist Woman*. The new *Socialist Woman* claimed to be the journal of several newly formed Socialist Woman Groups.

Having taken *Socialist Woman* from the NSWC, Leonora Lloyd, the national convenor of the IMG women's caucus, quickly registered the name *Socialist Woman* in anticipation of proving legal ownership in the bourgeois courts if challenged.

The NC majority then banned all IMG members from selling the Nottingham *Socialist Woman* and any other journal the NSWC might subsequently publish. At the same time the NC made it clear that if the ban was not adhered to, it would be regarded as a breach of discipline.

The Nottingham branch of the IMG then instructed its members to withdraw from the Nottingham women's group. This decision was taken without any motivation, in the absence of the comrades concerned (Antonia Gorton, Jo O'Brien and Mary Donnelly) and without them being informed that the question was being put on the branch agenda.

The scandalous way in which the IMG has acted has destroyed the good relations that had been built up between the NSWC and the IMG. It has morally compromised the IMG and the Fourth International, jeopardised our work in the women's liberation movement and stopped the recruitment of several women to the IMG.

Added to this, the majority leadership blocked a serious discussion on the problems confronting the movement around the issues of women's liberation. Knowing that the women comrades were divided on such questions as analysis and strategy for women's liberation and that approximately one-third of the leadership either abstained or voted against the positions adopted at the October 1970, NC meeting, the majority leadership used its formal majority to impose its political line and organisational concepts on the membership. It then proceeded to carry out this line during the pre-conference discussion period, thereby facing the national conference with a fait accompli.

The IMG majority leadership sees women's oppression primarily as the exploitation of women in industry. In setting up Socialist Woman Groups, the IMG cuts itself off from the broader movement. By excluding ourselves in this way, we play right into the hands of people who think that women in political groups should be kept out of the women's liberation movement. The sectarian policy of the IMG majority leadership flows from a wrong analysis of the women's liberation movement and a rejection of the revolutionary potential of this movement (the political differences can be examined in the documents on women's liberation by the Tendency and the majority NC).

The purpose of this document is to explain why the majority leadership has proceeded in the way it has and to show that the methods used have nothing in common with Bolshevik norms. On the contrary, they are more akin to the methods of "front" politics.

Because some members of the IMG think that *Socialist Woman* has always been an IMG paper, it is necessary to outline briefly what the requirements are in order for the IMG to have ownership of any particular paper. It is necessary for the IMG to politically control, accept the full responsibility for the production, financing and distribution of the paper, and to legally own it. In addition, it has to be made clear to everyone concerned that it is a tendency paper for the IMG. It is politically dishonest to project a paper as an independent paper, getting support

for it on that basis and later claim it as an IMG paper. It is irrelevant to the question of ownership whether IMG members are in a minority or majority on an editorial board. The amount of support given by the IMG whether in the form of advertisements or in other ways is also irrelevant.

Members of the IMG will from time to time get involved in the production of papers and may even initiate them in a trade union branch, factory, college, school, socialist society, etc. IMG members may become editors and enlist the help of other members of IMG to help write, sell and finance such publications. This would not mean that such papers were owned by IMG, but that the IMG supported them. *Indo-China*, *Bullseye*, *Socialist Woman*, *Women Unite*, *Women's Struggle*, are some papers in which IMG members have been or are associated. But they are *not* IMG papers.

The documentary evidence attached shows very clearly that *Socialist Woman* started as the paper of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and became established in the women's liberation movement as the journal of that committee. It was projected as an independent paper and this character was maintained over a period of two years. On this basis it got support from individuals and political groups throughout the women's liberation movement.

How can there be such confusion by IMG members on this question? It is because the facts have not been presented correctly and *Socialist Woman* has been used as a pawn in the factional activities of the majority leadership against the Tendency. The work of the Nottingham women is highly respected in the women's liberation movement. The success of *Socialist Woman* and the fact that two of the four women chosen to speak at the March 6th demonstration were Antonia Gorton and Jo O'Brien reveals the good standing of these comrades. Instead of being pleased with their work and record, the majority leadership embarked on a factional course against them. Organisational reprisals were taken against them as a substitute for a democratic discussion on the political questions.

To counter the influence of the Nottingham Tendency comrades (who were on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*), a decision was taken by the majority leadership to set up Socialist Woman Groups in different parts of the country and for *Socialist Woman* to become the national journal of these groups. The IMG women's caucus reconstituted the editorial board by removing every woman from the existing editorial board and replacing them by women from the IMG caucus, none of whom were from Nottingham. This was done without having the *authority* to do so and without any consultation with the NSWC!

It is difficult to imagine a more crude factional manoeuvre. It was much too crude for Comrade Jordan, who, at the following NC meeting when the caucus decision came up for ratification, said the caucus had made a "mistake" in excluding all the Nottingham women comrades from the new editorial board. The NC majority corrected this "mistake" by making provision for one Tendency member to be included! The exclusion of the Nottingham comrades from the editorial board was more than a "mistake." Although directed at the Tendency, this "mistake" exposed the manipulative methods of the majority leadership and their contempt for the women we were working with in the NSWC. In protesting that their names had been excluded

from the new editorial board, the Nottingham comrades were protesting concretely against the organisational methods used. The inclusion of their names would not have fundamentally changed the situation, but their exclusion revealed clearly the attitude of the IMG majority leadership regarding the rights of the Nottingham women organised in the NSW. Neither the IMG women's caucus nor the NC have the authority to reconstitute the editorial board of a journal which does not belong to the IMG. They can have a *policy* that they would like to see a paper on which they have some influence move in a certain direction and be in favour of having "X," "Y," and "Z" on the editorial board. The women's caucus would discuss how to proceed to try and achieve this but *never* at the expense of proletarian democracy.

To manoeuvre and manipulate people with whom we are working is not within the framework of democratic centralism, nor is it the way we will build the revolutionary party in Britain. Such methods are the methods of "front" politics and are alien to the norms of the Trotskyist movement.

The action of the IMG in taking over *Socialist Woman* in this way, can only have serious repercussions for our work in the women's liberation movement, not only in Britain but internationally, too. It can only strengthen the existing fears that women who belong to male-dominated political organisations are in the women's movement to manipulate it and take the movement over. It plays right into the hands of our enemies who seek to foster and strengthen these fears for their own political reasons. These fears arise from the experiences which some women have had in political organisations which are dominated by male chauvinists, and also result from the anti-communist propaganda that persons joining broad movements are dupes and easily manipulated by radicals who "infiltrate" these movements for their own ends. All the more necessary it is then for communists to proceed in a manner which will destroy these fears and not strengthen them.

Right now in North America, our comrades in the SWP and YSA are fighting a witch-hunt against them in the women's liberation movement. Our opponents are trying to exclude them from the movement on the grounds that they are members of male-dominated revolutionary organisations. The real reason for this witch-hunt is that there are political differences regarding the orientation for the women's liberation movement and the kind of movement that it is necessary to build. The witch-hunters seek to discredit, isolate and exclude our comrades, hoping in this way to curtail their influence. The enemies of Trotskyism write articles for women's papers in a number of countries and in the bourgeois press attacking our comrades. One article was printed in Britain in the current issue of *Come Together*, the paper of the Gay Liberation Movement. The actions of the IMG in taking *Socialist Woman* from the NSW play right into the hands of our opponents, giving them ammunition to attack us with and leaving the IMG and Fourth International defenceless against the charges that we manipulate and take over papers.

Already, at a meeting of the Women's National Coordinating Committee, held in April 1971, the NSW made a statement before about 150 representatives of women's groups from all parts of Britain. This statement explained and condemned the take-over of their

paper. Leonora Lloyd is now required by the WNCC to explain the IMG's action at the next meeting.

The arrogant letter (22/4/71) which Leonora Lloyd sent to the Nottingham women's group in reply to their statement will only further discredit the IMG in the women's movement. The letter, though sent in the name of the IMG women's caucus, was in fact written by Leonora Lloyd in consultation with Pat Jordan. No meeting of the caucus was called to discuss the new developments and how best to deal with them. While copies of this letter have been sent to individual members in the Nottingham women's group, women comrades who make up the IMG women's caucus have not yet been given a copy. What are IMG members supposed to say when women in the women's liberation movement raise the matter with them, when they have not even been informed of the contents of this letter sent out in their name. Only women comrades who are members or alternates of the NC have so far been given a copy of the letter.

It seems the purpose of the letter is an attempt to compromise Antonia Gorton and the other women comrades in Nottingham before the women in the Nottingham women's group. What it *does* is to make a laughing-stock of the IMG and give proof beyond doubt that the IMG manoeuvres and manipulates women. In effect it says to the women: "Let's cut out any nonsense about *Socialist Woman* being the national journal of a network of Socialist Woman Groups. Don't address letters to any of these groups. Address them to the IMG, because the IMG is the behind-the-scene power controlling the Socialist Woman Groups. You really are such dupes. Didn't you realise that the IMG has been calling the shots all along?"

How can any serious person suggest that because Antonia Gorton wrote an article in *International* and because the IMG has given free publicity to *Socialist Woman* that the IMG has claim to the ownership of *Socialist Woman*. As a matter of interest at the time the article was printed, *International* was not even openly identified as an IMG paper!

In a dishonest manner, a quote is given from one issue of *Socialist Woman* in an attempt to show that because *Socialist Woman* published the IMG women's caucus "Programme for Womens Liberation," this was a valid reason for the IMG to claim ownership of *Socialist Woman*. No reference is made to the fact that the following issue of *Socialist Woman* draws its readers attention to the programme which had been printed and invited other women's groups and/or political groups to send in their manifestos with a promise that *all* such material received would be printed. Is this to suggest that *Socialist Woman* would become the journal of any one group, individual or tendency which had its manifesto printed in *Socialist Woman*? What nonsense such an idea is!

The letter contains several quotes from minutes of leading committees of the IMG. The dates of these quotes show that the IMG started taking a more serious interest in women's liberation when it became clear that leading women comrades on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman* who supported the Tendency positions also had differences with the majority leadership on questions relating to women's liberation.

The Tendency comrades active in women's liberation have behaved in a disciplined and loyal manner — despite the factionalism and provocations of the majority leadership. They withdrew from the leadership of the abortion

and contraception campaign as instructed, and relinquished their responsibilities for the journals of the Nottingham women's group. They have now withdrawn from this group on the instructions of the Nottingham branch. The comrades constantly appealed to the leading committees of the IMG and cautioned them as to the consequences of their actions. This was rejected as the attached documentation shows.

The growth of the women's liberation movement presents the IMG with a big opportunity to intervene in, learn from and give leadership to this movement, and at the same time win many new recruits to Trotskyism. To do this, it requires a correct analysis and strategy for the women's liberation movement, an end to organisational reprisals to solve political questions which can only be resolved by a full and democratic discussion throughout our movement. It also requires an understanding that the methods of "front" politics are manipulative of people we work with in the class struggle and must be rejected. This is the only way we will be able to start again to restore the good name of the IMG and the FI in the women's liberation movement.

#### **SUBMISSION AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE TO THE COMMISSION SET UP TO INVESTIGATE THE SOCIALIST WOMAN QUESTION**

Connie Harris  
May 30, 1971

In London on March 6th, 1971, 4,000 women marched together on Britain's first national women's liberation demonstration. At this demonstration two journals, both named *Socialist Woman*, were on sale. Each journal had a different editorial board. One of the journals, dated Jan/Feb 1971, was the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, which had been publishing *Socialist Woman* regularly since February 1969. The other, dated March/April 1971, was the first issue of a new journal, *Socialist Woman*, which claimed to represent several socialist women's groups.

Inside the *Socialist Woman* produced by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee was a duplicated statement:

*Socialist Woman* was originated by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee in Feb. 1969. A new journal has recently been produced in London, using our name and dated March 1971. This journal is nothing whatsoever to do with our committee. We were not asked to participate in the production of it, and none of us are members of the temporary editorial board, which was created to produce this magazine. There has been no conference of Socialist Women's Groups to discuss the possibility of making our journal a national journal.

We would like to disclaim any connection with the new journal. We would also like to make it clear that we do not wish to divide ourselves from any woman, whatever her political beliefs may be. UNITED WE STAND. . . . DIVIDED WE FALL.

I submit that the responsibility for this appalling state

of affairs rests with the majority leadership of the IMG. This leadership, motivated by narrow factional interests, followed a policy which, though directed at the Tendency comrades of the IMG, also extended beyond the IMG into the women's liberation movement and the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, particularly where Tendency comrades Antonia Gorton, Ann Black, Jo O'Brien and Mary Donnelly were respected activists and recognised leader.

I submit that the evidence attached clearly records that:

1) *Socialist Woman* was the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. It was publicly initiated by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee in January 1969, and has been regularly published as the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee since Feb. 1969, being recognised as having important things to say concerning the sex oppression and exploitation of women under capitalism.

2) *Socialist Woman* maintained its *independent character* and carried the policy outlined in the initial statement of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and for these reasons was sustained and sold by women of differing political affiliations and views throughout the women's liberation movement.

3) A good relationship developed between *Socialist Woman* and the IMG who had had political *influence* in the journal and publicly supported it.

4) By taking over the journal *Socialist Woman* from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, this relationship has been destroyed and the name of the IMG and the Fourth International harmed by the action of the women's caucus with the full agreement of the majority leadership of the IMG.

5) This was done during a pre-conference discussion period and without any democratic discussion within the organisation of the political issues concerning the question of women's liberation.

6) The documentary evidence shows that the Nottingham women comrades behaved in a loyal and serious manner to the IMG and the women's liberation movement. They appealed to the majority leadership not to proceed in the way the leadership intended, pointing out to them the implications for the movement if the IMG went ahead and produced a journal, *Socialist Woman*. Both the appeals and cautionings were disregarded by the majority leadership.

During 1968, several militant women's struggles took place around issues involving women's equal rights in industry: Ford strike for equal pay; strike of 800 women in Manchester and Coventry over equal bonuses; Irish Sewing Machinists' demonstration for civil rights; nurses demonstrating at House of Commons.

Early autumn 1968, Comrade Sands, encouraged by these struggles which were inspiring women throughout the country, together with non-IMG women formed the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. Under the name of Ann Torode and Antonia Gorton a *Draft Manifesto for Socialist Women's Committees* was issued (see appendix No. 1). The main thrust of this manifesto was to get women organising together in struggle around demands aimed at ending female oppression and exploitation. It projected the need to develop a programme for struggle around specific demands and to get this programme accepted as part of the general programme for the working class which would bring about a new society—socialism. The demands projected were: to write women back into

history, for full legal rights, equal pay for equal work, free access to birth control information and devices, abortions on demand, and for greater community responsibility for the care of children. Right from the start there was no ambiguity as to the nature of the struggle—it was to encompass *all* aspects of oppression and sex exploitation of women.

In October 1968, arising out of the Ford strike of militant women workers for equal pay, the National Joint Action Committee for Women's Equal Rights was formed (NJACCWER). This organisation was to campaign on issues around equal pay and rights for women and had considerable union backing and support. An attempt to limit it to campaign for equal pay only was defeated, since it was clearly understood that there was more involved in equal rights than just equal pay. A mass national demonstration was planned for spring 1969, and several branches of NJACCWER were formed in various parts of the country. Comrade Sands attended the founding meeting of NJACCWER through her own initiative and interest in this question.

The newly formed Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee decided to aid the development of the new women's movement by putting out a journal and the following statement was issued:

Early Jan. 1969. Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee is planning a Socialist Women's Bulletin. The immediate past period has brought forward a number of demonstrations on issues involving women; the Ford strike over equal pay, the nurses at the House of Commons, the AEF negotiations, the 800 women in Manchester and Coventry over equal bonuses, the Irish sewing machinists' demonstration for civil rights.

In October the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights (NJACCWER) was established. Branches are being started all over the country. This organisation is planning a mass national demonstration for spring and is having building activities towards it. All this and more contribute to a growing development of militancy of this one-third of the working class.

We feel that it is necessary to take advantage of the increased interest and activity around women's demands in industry and in the home, to establish a journal on this question. This journal will, we hope, bring socialist demands to this movement. We want to encourage women to use their power to further themselves and the cause of the working class as a whole. The journal will be radical, agitational, educational, militant.

Suggested topics are: the fight of the fishermen's wives for safe working conditions; discrimination against female students in the education system; how the NLF women are organised; the Ford strike, NJACCWER; statistics on wage levels and differentials; history of women during the Chartist struggle; biographical notes; abortion; Divorce Reform Bill; status of women in Cuba; discriminatory laws; the status of black women in Britain.

#### WHAT WE NEED:

**MONEY!** We are going to produce this bulletin on an irregular basis when the situation warrants it, approximately every two months. It will be duplicated with a printed cover and will sell for sixpence. Financial

backing will ensure you get your copy and that it will come out more frequently.

**WRITERS!** We want people who can write about things they know and/or who will send us useful articles for reprinting or even little items that illustrate ideas; i.e., during the debate on the Save the Argyles petition, a Labour MP asked "How many *women*, children and foreign tourists have signed it?" How many years have we had the vote?

Corresponding secretaries, salespeople; NAME. We haven't confirmed a name for the bulletin—got any suggestions?

**AND MEN!** this is your fight, too!

**DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IS JANUARY 20th.** If you miss the deadline, send it as soon as possible anyway. Temporary editorial board: Antonia Gorton, Jo O'Brien, Ann Torode. All correspondence to Antonia Gorton, 16 Ella Rd., Nottingham.

Right from the start then, this journal—even before it had been given its name—was projected publicly by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee to be a non-tendency journal available to all women to write for it, to sell it, etc., to make it a useful tool in the building of a women's movement and guide it in a socialist direction. One of the three members of the temporary editorial board was Antonia Gorton, so right from the start IMG had an *influence* in the paper.

At the National Committee meeting of the IMG on *January 25, 1969*, Comrade Sands reported on the work she was doing on the woman question and on the bulletin which was to be published approximately three weeks later. The NC adopted the report and urged comrades to assist in the distribution of the bulletin. This was the first time there had been any discussion in the NC on the work Sands was doing in the women's movement. At the next NC meeting, Sands made a further report which was accepted on the progress of the journal.

The emerging women's movement created little interest among the IMG membership, and few women comrades were involved. Comrade Sands together with the non-IMG members in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee developed the line of the paper and in the early stages some members of the Nottingham branch of the IMG assisted with the mailing out of the journal.

The paper *Women and the Struggle for a Socialist Britain* was written by Sands in the early part of 1969. Her purpose in writing it was to try to arouse more interest and activity by IMG members in the developing women's movement. She hoped more comrades would become aware that this movement was one which revolutionaries should feel some responsibility for and get involved in. (It should be noted that she also calls for NJACCWER branches to be set up—still showing that the thrust was towards women *organising* together rather than the form of organisation.)

At the summer camp in August, a class was held and informal discussions took place, but it was not until January 1970, that there was sufficient interest for a national caucus of IMG women to be held.

By this time, women had begun to come together in



small groups in various parts of the country discussing women's liberation and a conference was organised at Ruskin College, Oxford in February 1970, when 400-500 women attended. This was mainly organised through the initiative of several women involved in the history workshop. Jo O'Brien, who was one of the initiators of this conference, was on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*, and *Socialist Woman* was a co-sponsor of the conference.

IMG women's caucus intervened in this conference with a *Programme for Women's Liberation*. This programme was considered to be a skeleton programme to be taken into the existing organisations. While it projected that *Socialist Woman* had an important role to play in organising and uniting a movement for women's liberation, it does not project Socialist Women's Committees or groups as the strategy for building a women's movement. Nor does the fact that in recognising the potential role of *Socialist Woman* in the women's liberation movement, and stating this in the *Programme for Women's Liberation* which was published by the IMG women's caucus, make *Socialist Woman* an IMG paper. It does show, of course, that the IMG gave its support to *Socialist Woman*.

*Socialist Woman* established itself at the conference as having something important to say on the question of women's oppression. A member of the editorial board, Jo O'Brien, presented a paper and *Socialist Woman* held a workshop. Within a year of its first issue, *Socialist Woman* was firmly established in the women's movement and recognised as the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. There has never been any ambiguity about this so far as the women in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and throughout the women's movement were concerned. The editorials and contents continued to reflect the ideas and follow the policy outlined in the initial statement which the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee made before producing the first issue of the journal.

Since it was not a tendency paper, radicals in many political organisations bought and sold *Socialist Woman*. Many individual women and groups of women throughout Britain and some from other countries responded to the appeals in the journal for articles, reports, etc., financial help and for sellers. At the same time, there was never any secret about the IMG's influence in the paper, since Toni Gorton was known to be a member of the IMG.

*Socialist Woman* was the only paper regularly produced in the women's movement in Britain, and it seemed that its continued success was guaranteed. Since the IMG had a member involved in the paper from the start, had recruited another member of the editorial board and taken decisions to support the journal, it had every right to be pleased about the rapid success of the paper. Although no mention was made in Petersen's organisational report of the work in the women's movement, and it was left to Sands to get up and rectify this omission, a token resolution was later passed by the national conference. "This conference reaffirms the great importance of women's work in building a revolutionary leadership in the working class movement. It enthusiastically welcomes the decision to print *Socialist Woman* and pledges full support for this venture [added emphasis]. It instructs all leading committees, branches, working groups and members at large to draw up plans to extend and improve our work

in this field." (*Socialist Woman* had previously been a mimeographed paper.) Moreover the success of *Socialist Woman* also created a problem—for the majority leadership of the IMG.

Some political differences had developed in the IMG, and just prior to the March 1970, conference a tendency was formed. The two IMG members of the editorial board of *Socialist Woman* supported the Tendency positions. This need not have created a problem for the majority leadership since there was never any questioning of the right of the leadership to direct the work of the comrades concerned and so the IMG influence in the paper was guaranteed. However, the record shows that the majority leadership, motivated by narrow factional interests, set out on a course which resulted in the IMG taking away from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee the journal, *Socialist Woman*, by setting up a new editorial board, producing a March/April issue of *Socialist Woman* in London, thus creating a situation whereby two journals named *Socialist Woman* were on sale at the March 6th women's demonstration.

Since the only IMG women active in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee supported the Tendency, it was not possible to replace the IMG members on the editorial board by other Nottingham IMG members. The editorial board of *Socialist Woman* had to be got away from Nottingham. The way this was to be done was by making *Socialist Woman* the journal of a network of Socialist Women's Groups or committees throughout the country, ignoring the rather important question as to whether the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee would be in agreement with this policy. The big obstacle to be overcome was the fact that only one Socialist Women's Committee was in existence—the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee! Although many groups of women had been formed in a period of 15-18 months, none had included *Socialist Woman* in their varying names. The first step then was to get some *Socialist Woman* groups started. The minutes of the *March 12th, 1970 PC meeting* record that "Comrade Lloyd was seated to inform the committee that the London caucus was planning to meet to discuss setting up a *Socialist Woman's* group. The PC considered such a step necessary and opinions expressed in the discussion on women's work to be passed on to Sands."

At the April 25/26 NC meeting, Sands presented a paper, *Introduction to Women's Liberation Movement Discussion*. It outlined the downturn in the equal pay campaign, the virtual collapse of NJACCWER and the beginnings of a rise of women's liberation groups throughout the country and called for the IMG to orient towards this growing movement. The general line of the paper was agreed, and it was re-written in the light of discussion. While Petersen has claimed that the general line was never agreed, Mathews, who is no supporter of the Tendency, makes it clear that she understood the general line was adopted. The paper submitted by her to the following NC, *July 25/26, 1970*, dated *14th July 1970*, and subsequently printed in Sept. 1970 *Internal Bulletin on Women's Work* is based on Sands' paper and starts off: *Paper on Women's Work* (following on from discussion paper adopted at last NC). Sands' paper was not distributed to the membership until a motion moved by Williams at the *Sept. 13th PC meeting* for it to be distributed to the membership was carried by 3-F, 1-A, and 1-AB. Even

then, only part of the paper was circulated.

On May 16, a day school was held in London when theoretical questions of women's oppression were discussed and how a women's movement could be built which would encompass the women workers who were involved in equal rights issues in industry and the young women organising around other issues relating to women's liberation. Generally it was projected that a mass women's movement could be built around a number of issues—day nursery facilities, equal job and educational opportunities, and in particular there was general agreement that a campaign around abortion on demand under the National Health Service would reach out to all women and would particularly benefit working-class women. Comrade Jordan spoke out in support of such a campaign.

The July/Aug. edition of *Socialist Woman* concentrated on abortion as an issue and projected a campaign to mobilise women on this question. The editorial stated:

This issue of *Socialist Woman* considers birth control and abortion. The continuing public witch hunt on abortion by its opponents means that the women of this country must begin their own campaign. It should be a campaign which demands freely available contraception and abortion provided by the National Health Service. It should be a campaign run by women for women. We have seen what happens when abortion reform is run in any other way. There is an improvement in the situation for those who have money. Those who benefit most are some members of the male-dominated medical profession who make a lot of money out of a great deal of human unhappiness. We give further details of the suggested campaign in the magazine.

In the last issue we printed a Women's Liberation Manifesto produced by the International Marxist Groups. We invite all Socialist Parties and Groups to send us their relevant manifestos. We promise to print them and any discussion relating to them. *We are an independent editorial board* which needs your articles, letters and opinions. The Journal is still poor and still needs your donations. We have recently begun to experiment with printing techniques and presentation. If at times the quality of the Journal is reduced because of this, we hope that you will have patience with us.

Sisters. We produce *Socialist Woman* because we believe in you [emphasis added].

This shows clearly the good relationship between the *Socialist Woman* and the IMG at this time and emphasises the *supportive* role of the IMG.

On July 12th, 1970, the PC minutes record: "Women's Liberation: D. R. brought complaints re distribution and method of launching campaigns, etc. Nottingham comrade responsible for distribution will be contacted. Whole question to be taken up at NC."

At the NC meeting on July 25/26 Sands presented a report. The report states: "We have within the past two weeks recruited the last active member of the editorial board to the IMG. Within our general perspective of an independent journal we expect at least three non-IMG members to start functioning in the autumn." No one on the NC objected to this report or challenged the authority of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee to make such a decision.

At this NC, several papers were presented on work in the women's movement which revealed different positions

by women members on the analysis of the women's liberation movement, causes of women's oppression, and the role of *Socialist Woman*—*On Women's Work* by Mathews; *In Defense of the Abortion Campaign* by Williams; *Which Way for Socialist Woman* by Leonora Lloyd and Felicity Trodd. The papers were referred to the National Women's Caucus for discussion. The minutes record: "Socialist Women: Agreed that the organisation be informed of our women's work much more systematically than it is done." *Which Way for Socialist Woman* reveals quite clearly that at this stage it was recognised by the writers that *Socialist Woman* did not belong to the IMG. Point 5 states: "Most important of all, the paper must be brought under control of the IMG membership. The editorial board should more clearly reflect that membership. It is vital the NC discuss this and make concrete proposals."

During the first week in August at the summer camp a "women's caucus"\* was held. It was not attended by any of the comrades involved in *Socialist Woman*, nor by the national women's caucus convenor, L. Lloyd, none of these comrades were aware that the caucus was to be held nor were other women comrades who were activists in the women's liberation movement informed.

At the PC meeting following the camp on 23rd August 1970, Petersen reported that the caucus had been held and the view expressed that *Socialist Woman* editorial board should come under the control of the IMG and enlarged to have representation outside of Nottingham. Comrade Williams' motion "That the comrades concerned should be informed of this idea from the caucus at the camp" was defeated (2-F, 4-A, 1-Ab) and Petersen's proposal to freeze the present status of the editorial board of *Socialist Woman* was passed by 5-F and 2-A. Comrades Williams and Scott voted against it and spoke strongly against it, pointing out that *Socialist Woman* was not a journal of the IMG but the property of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee.

The PC's decision to freeze the editorial board was directed against the decision of Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee as reported to NC July 25/26: "*Within our general perspective of an independent journal we expect at least 3 non-IMG members to start functioning in the autumn.*" This did not become an issue within the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee since in practice the women's committee functioned as the editorial board; so the question of the formal editorial board as it appeared in the journal did not arise.

On Sept. 19, a national women's caucus was held and the meeting had every appearance of being "packed." The number present (19 and 5 observers) surprised the activists in the women's liberation movement as the majority of comrades present had not been active in the women's liberation movement up to this time. No agenda had been circulated, but since a number of papers had been referred to the women's caucus by the NC, it was expected that the discussion of these would constitute the main part of the meeting. It soon became clear that the most important purpose of the meeting was to discipline the comrades on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman* for promoting an abortion campaign for the women's liberation movement through the journal without having gone through the channels of the IMG first. Comrades Sands and Black

\* This was attended by approximately 10 IMG/SL comrades, at least half of whom were men.



strongly protested the manner in which George questioned their loyalty to the IMG in her papers, *What Campaign for Socialist Woman* and *Socialist Woman, the Abortion Campaign and WNCC* (see appendices 3 and 4).

Although attempts were made to hold a political discussion, most of the time was taken up debating the alleged malfunctioning of the comrades on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*. The National Women's Caucus had not met for nine months and Comrade Williams moved a motion: "that problems have arisen in women's work owing to the non-functioning of the caucus. We accept the points on caucuses as set out by the PC and from now on will seek to function more efficiently. We ask the convenor to call a meeting of the caucus every two months and to make adequate preparations for it." Although this was passed almost unanimously, another motion was also put: "The Women's Caucus is disturbed at the present situation of *SW* and censures the comrades concerned for the way in which they have functioned in not approaching the national leadership when taking political initiatives." [Motion was put by Mathews (in consultation with Bob Purdie who had been allocated to attend the caucus by the Secretariat) and John Presland who was "representing" a woman comrade who could not be present and it was carried by 9-F, 6-A, 2-Ab.] Comrades Black and Sands, the comrades who had been censured, sent a letter of protest to the PC drawing their attention to the unconstitutional method used in disciplining them and asked the PC to rescind it. The minutes of this caucus meeting (Sept. 19, 1970) also record: "Comrade George announced *Red Mole* to produce broadsheet on the woman question. Representatives to discuss with editorial board and commission proposed and accepted for deciding on material for inclusion in broadsheet."

At the Sept. 26th meeting of the PC, Williams moved the motion:

Problems have arisen in the women's work due to the non-functioning of the caucus. The PC recognises its responsibility to see that the women's caucus functions efficiently from now on. It recognises also that a full discussion on the issues involved in this work is required throughout the organisation and the PC undertakes to organise this discussion forthwith, and to arrange a serious attitude to this discussion within the organisation. The PC draws the attention of the membership that caucuses do not constitute a body that can take disciplinary action and that disciplinary action can only be taken by the conditions set out in the constitution. The PC therefore revokes the motion of censure passed at the women's caucus.

(This motion was defeated by 2-F, 6-A, 1-Ab.) Jenkin's motion: "the opinions expressed by the women's caucus be noted and the matter be referred to the NC; a discussion of our political intervention in the women's work to be discussed by the NC" (passed 6-F, 0-A, 3-Ab.). It was agreed "that the question of whether a censure is disciplinary action or not be discussed at next NC" (unanimous).

At the Women's Caucus on Oct. 10th, the letter of protest from A. Black was referred to the NC (see Appendix 3). Under an item *Red Mole*, Comrade George reported on the progress of the Women's Broadsheet and that "some comrades would be replying to Jo O'Brien's article

in issue 10 of *Red Mole*." (no further information was given, nor has the article so far been "replied" to!). Papers were submitted by George, Williams, Windsor (Windsor's paper of several pages was handed out at the caucus meeting). A motion moved by George "that this caucus recommends to the NC that it adopts those papers written by George and Windsor, together with *Transitional Programme for Women's Liberation* as being the basis for the programme and policy of the IMG in the coming period in this field of work" (voting: 7-F, 5-A, 1-Ab.).

At the NC Oct. 17/18, 1970, the women's caucus report was accepted, although Windsor's paper was not presented and put to the vote. Williams' paper, *In Defense of the Abortion Campaign*, was defeated (1-F, 10-A, 6-Ab); Sands' paper, *Orientation for the IMG Towards Women's Liberation*, was defeated (1-F, 11-A, 5-Ab) and George's paper, *Which Way for Socialist Woman*, was carried (11-F, 1-A, 5-Ab).

George also introduced a new paper which had not previously been discussed in the women's caucus, *Next Steps for a Women's Campaign*:

At the last Women's Caucus, the papers written by George and Windsor were recommended for acceptance by the NC. Following from these papers, here is a programme for putting the policy of these papers into effect, which arises out of the discussion round the papers.

1. At the next WNCC meeting propose full support for NJACCWER programme (equal pay for work of equal value now, equal opportunities including training, and childcare facilities) and solidarity with women strikers.

2. Put forward a very clear line in NJACCWER, calling for workers' control over question of deciding what is "equal work," etc; opening the books to ensure that the extra pay comes from profits, etc. Drawing attention to the Government's anti-trade-union proposals and their effect on moves towards equal pay.

3. Socialist Woman Groups should be set up wherever feasible and should be orientated towards drawing the WL movement closer to Marxism and our programme. We should in all ways seek to link up the WL movement with the working class movement, especially through NJACCWER.

4. *Socialist Woman* should be seen as the organ of these SW groups, giving regular news of their activities, and encouraging the formation of new groups. Its editorial board should have representatives from all the SW groups.

5. *Socialist Woman* editorial board should be determined by the caucus subject to ratification by the PC.

6. The abortion campaign should be handed over to the WNCC. The comrades concerned in it should seek to pass on this work to a committee as far as possible not composed of our members.

Because these papers revealed serious differences on analysis of the oppression of women, the women's liberation movement and perspectives for and orientation to this movement, Williams sought to have no votes taken until a full discussion had been held in the organisation. This was defeated. In spite of the fact that half the women comrades who were able to attend the caucus meeting, and one-third of the NC either voted against the papers which were adopted or abstained, and without any discussions by the membership the IMG's policy on women's

liberation was determined.

At the same NC meeting, a letter from Black and Sands protesting the vote of censure made against them by the Women's Caucus was referred back to the Women's Caucus and Petersen was to write to the Women's Caucus telling it: "that it is not the place of caucuses to pass censure motions." (By decision of the PC, Black should have been invited to attend this NC, but wasn't.)

The next National Women's Caucus was called for January 17th and Nottingham comrades requested it be held in Nottingham to ensure their attendance since it was understood that the implementation of the Oct. decisions of the NC were to be discussed. The meeting, however, was held in London and none of the comrades from Nottingham were able to be present. (Two comrades had sick children and a third comrade was on leave of absence for health reasons.) Comrade Windsor introduced *Notes Towards Definitions of a Socialist Woman's Committee or Group*, which was carried by 10-F, 5-A. After deciding to set up *Socialist Women's Groups or Committees at the Oct. NC* it became necessary to define what a Socialist Woman's Group was!

The motion by Williams "to ask NC to defer implementation of the decision made by NC to set up SW Groups nationally, which had not been discussed previously by the women's caucus, until the political discussions on women's liberation had taken place and a decision taken by conference" was defeated 10-A, 3-F. (Since the call had been made for the Easter 1971 conference, the pre-conference discussion could begin.)

In spite of the fact that no comrades were present from Nottingham to give a report, and Comrade George in answer to questioning stated that she had not been in touch with the Nottingham comrades since Oct. 17/18 NC meeting, and that she didn't know whether another issue of *Socialist Woman* was in production by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, she went ahead to make decisions to take the paper from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, change the editorial board, (removing all Nottingham women) and proceeded to make plans for a *Socialist Woman* to be printed in London for the March 6th demonstration.

On January 31st the PC endorsed the decisions of the caucus of the 17th Jan. with the proviso that provision should be made for "minority representation on the editorial board."

Comrades Antonia Gorton, Jo O'Brien, Ann Black and Mary Donnelly sent a letter dated 31st Jan. to the PC protesting at the decisions of the caucus.

COPY OF LETTER  
ADDRESSED TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE\*

To the PC: 31/1/71  
We have just seen a copy of the minutes of the IMG/SL national women's caucus held in London on the 17th January.  
We protest most strongly that at that meeting steps were taken and decisions made to take over *Socialist Woman* which is the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and make it the paper of a

\* Received by hand via comrade Susan Williams on February 10th. The grammar is as in the original.

national network of Socialist Women's groups being set up by the IMG.

The IMG/SL women's caucus, although not having the power to do so, removed all the members of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee off the editorial board, elected a new editorial board—not putting any members on from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee—which then proceeded to discuss the next issue of *Socialist Woman* to be ready for March 6th. A circular appealing for subscriptions changing both the subscription rate and the address of the paper, has subsequently been issued publicly.

All this was done, not only without having the powers to do so and without any *consultation* with us who are the most involved in the work of putting out *Socialist Woman* and in our absence, but *without any discussion with the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee*. In spite of a long-standing request for the caucus meeting to be held in Nottingham, the convenor called it in London knowing that Nottingham comrades would be unable to be there.

*Socialist Woman* has never been an IMG paper. It has always been the paper of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. The influence that the IMG has in the paper is through the control of its members in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee who, since the PC took a decision to freeze the editorial board some months ago, constituted the editorial board.

The IMG has no authority to take over a paper of a body which is outside its control.

It would appear that factionalism against Tendency members has now gone outside the IMG.

The actions and decisions of the caucus are manipulative and reveal a contempt for the women in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee who we are trying to win to the IMG.

We appeal in a most serious way to the PC to stop and re-think this whole question before irrevocable harm is done to the work already begun in the women's liberation movement and to the name of the IMG within the women's movement and the left wing in general. We request that a full discussion on this matter be held at the meeting of the next PC.

Antonia Gorton  
J. O'Brien  
Ann Black  
Mary Donnelly

At the PC meeting on Feb. 13 Petersen reported and proposed:

1) We ask Nottingham comrades to withdraw their letter of protest and re-think their position. Carried 5 for, and 2 against. 2) We issue an information bulletin to the membership which will include past decisions of the NC on SW together with editorial excerpts from the paper, adverts for the paper and other similar material. Carried 6 for and 1 abstention.

Williams' motion: "Since there are political differences within the movement and amongst the women comrades working in the women's liberation movement—differences which are being discussed out now in preparation for the coming national conference—no further organisa-

tional steps are to be taken until the political discussion has been held. The Political Committee is to inform the women's caucus not to proceed with putting out their proposed issue of *Socialist Woman* for March 6th since no discussions have been held with the Nottingham Socialist Women's Group who are putting out their current issue for March 6th as to their agreement" (defeated 2 for and 5 against).

Herb's motion: "In light of the report from Williams that Nottingham IMG women on the SW editorial board are planning to put out a March issue, the NC should arrange a meeting with Sands, the NC member involved, to establish whether this is the case; and, if so, to call her and other IMG members concerned to order so that they, as the editorial board, can stop the publication" (carried 5 for and 2 against).

Herb moved a further motion which was carried by 5-F, 2-A whereupon Williams made a statement:

Resolution from Herb:

"In light of indications that the tendency may be on a course for a split, following the Leader Books' issue and the action taken in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Group by Tendency members, the PC decides that it will issue a statement to the Tendency warning it that the leadership of the IMG will not tolerate any threats of a split or moves in that direction" (carried 5 for, 2 against).

Statement by Williams:

"The Tendency will continue to oppose political and organisational concepts which it believes to be contrary to the traditional concepts of our movement and will continue to resist all attempts by some of the majority to provoke the Tendency by their factionalism and organisational manoeuvres. We are opposed to organisational methods to settle political differences and we will continue to try to clarify these political differences through our documents and the discussions for conference. We refute therefore the allegation that we are on a split course. The question of Leader Books is not a Tendency question and is used again by the majority to try to confuse the political discussion."

Meanwhile the following letter was sent by the secretary of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee to Leonora Lloyd:

Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee  
85 Rivermead, Wilford Lane  
West Bridgeford, Nottingham  
11th February 1971

Dear Leonora Lloyd:

[ Text of letter reproduced here; see Document T-2. ]

On Feb. 18th Petersen together with Tyler met with the four women comrades in Nottingham and gave them copies of the *Dossier on the Relationship Between IMG and Socialist Woman*. This "Dossier" was compiled by Petersen without any consultation with comrades working on *Socialist Woman* and distributed apparently to some

non-members of the IMG, some of whom were members of the Spartacus League and "activists" in Socialist Women's Groups.

The following day, Petersen wrote a letter to Sands which was duplicated and sent out to NC members. Comrade Sands never received the original letter but in due course she received a duplicated copy as a member of the NC.

At the London Branch Conference on Feb. 28th the Jan/Feb. issue of *Socialist Woman* was put on the literature table for sale. Later in the meeting a March/April issue of *Socialist Woman*, which had been produced in London, was also put on the literature table, and an item "Socialist Woman" was added to the agenda. The London Branch passed a motion prohibiting comrades from selling the Nottingham issue on the women's demonstration on March 6th. A protest was made by Williams and Scott:

We protest at the way *Socialist Woman* has been placed on agenda of the London Branch when all the facts concerning the dispute of *Socialist Woman* have not been put before the London Branch. Political disputes cannot be solved in a democratic manner by such a method.

Text of reply by McGovern:

This protest is an attempt to confuse the real issues. The London Conference was asked to take a position on the question of sales of the London-published *Socialist Woman*, as against the Nottingham one. It was not asked to commit itself on the political dispute which led to the situation in which both were published. The facts put before the Conference were sufficient for it to be able to take a position on this matter. These facts were:

(1) That the London paper had been produced by an editorial board elected by the national IMG Women's Caucus, in line with a decision of the IMG National Committee.

(2) That the paper was being produced as the paper of the national Socialist Woman Groups, in line with a decision of the IMG National Committee.

(3) The IMG Political Committee had decided that the Nottingham IMG members concerned should not proceed with the publication of another issue of the paper.

These facts show quite clearly that the only *Socialist Woman* published by decision of the proper committees of the IMG, and in line with the decided policy of the IMG NC, is the London one. They also show that irrespective of any decision of the Conference, any London IMG member involved in the distribution of the Nottingham paper could have been liable to disciplinary action. It was therefore advisable that the Conference make the situation clear to all London members.

A full discussion will be held within the London and national IMG on this question. In this discussion the Tendency will, as in the past, have the full right to express their views, and to have their documents distributed. If they attempt to introduce into the discussion the idea that whenever any political question is in dispute, minorities have the right to take any action they please, irrespective of majority and/or leadership decisions, they will be creating confusion, and an atmosphere

in which a proper discussion will be very difficult. It will therefore be the Tendency which will be guilty of a far more real undermining of democracy, than that which they imply they are being subjected to.

On the Mar. 6th demonstration, two journals, *Socialist Woman*, were on sale: the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee Jan/Feb issue and the March/April issue put out by a new editorial board of members of the IMG Women's Caucus. The Nottingham journal contained a duplicated slip which stated:

*Socialist Woman* was originated by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee in Feb. 1969. A new journal has recently been produced in London, using our name and dated March, 1971. This journal is nothing whatsoever to do with our committee. We were not asked to participate in the production of it, and none of us are members of the temporary editorial board, which was created to produce this magazine. There has been no conference of Socialist Women's Groups to discuss the possibility of making our journal a national journal.

We would like to disclaim any connection with the new journal. We would also like to make it clear that we do not wish to divide ourselves from any woman, whatever her political beliefs may be. UNITED WE STAND. . . . DIVIDED WE FALL.

IMG comrades were not involved with this statement which was, however, typed and duplicated by a member of the Spartacus League.

At the National Committee on 6/7 March 1971 Petersen introduced a discussion on *Socialist Woman* question and two motions were passed. One gave specific instructions to Nottingham women comrades which was subsequently distributed to the membership in the national letter to members (undated but around the end of March or beginning of April since it started off with the statement by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, March 22, 1971, and referred to a PC meeting of March 28th). A second motion which was passed by the NC by 15 votes for and 2 against that "IMG members are instructed not to sell, or otherwise aid the distribution of the *Nottingham Jan/Feb Socialist Woman* and any subsequent publication produced by Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. Failure to abide by this decision is a breach of discipline" was not contained in the letter to members nor was a further motion carried by 13-F, 2-A, 2-Ab. instructing the secretary "to append a statement on the NC's attitude towards disciplinary action in this case." This letter to members also contained the information that "since then we have been informed that the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee is to change its name and produce another journal. Because of this situation the Political Committee of March 28th decided to set up the commission called for by the NC resolution. This commission will not be actually convened until the Tendency meeting of 3/4 April (we would stress that it has not, as yet, been claimed that the Tendency comrades concerned wrote the circular quoted above). Comrades wishing to give evidence to the commission should it be convened should contact the secretary."

It should be noted that the sentence in brackets ("we would stress that it has not, as yet, been claimed that

the Tendency comrades concerned wrote the circular quoted above") is an insertion by Petersen. No suggestion had ever been made at the Women's Caucus or at the NC or to any other body that IMG comrades had been involved in this statement; for what reason then does Petersen insert it in the letter to members?

At the March 6/7 NC meeting, Comrade Campbell raised the question of a vote of censure passed against her by the Glasgow Branch. The minutes record:

Motion presented by Campbell: The NC rescinds the motion of censure passed against Comrade Campbell at the Glasgow branch meeting on 2nd March, 1971, for organising the selling of the Nottingham *Socialist Woman* journal from Saturday 27th February to Monday, 1st March inclusive. The following points are noted: that no instructions had been given by the IMG regarding the selling of the Nottingham SWC journal. Comrade Campbell was only continuing the work of the last 2 years. That no formal notice was given that a disciplinary measure was to be raised. Furthermore, the motion of censure was passed on a minority vote (6/5/2).

Petersen pointed out that under IMG practice as decided by a previous NC a motion of censure did not constitute disciplinary action; therefore the point about no formal notice was invalid.

Campbell's motion defeated 4 for and 13 against.

Singh's motion "that the NC disapproves of the action of Comrade Campbell in selling the Nottingham *Socialist Woman* and displaying it together with *Socialist Woman*, but in view of the fact that no clearly stated decision not to sell the other paper had been made by the Glasgow branch, the NC feels it necessary to rescind the censure motion passed by the Glasgow branch" (Passed 10 for, 3 against, and 4 abstentions).

At this same meeting of the NC, March 6/7 a draft of a document on women's work for the forthcoming national conference was presented by Comrade George. This was referred back for re-drafting in the light of discussion, but a section of it headed "Perspectives for Socialist Women's Groups" was approved and was to be issued with the Letter to Members. This was carried by 13-F, 3-A, 1-Ab. and was subsequently printed in the Letter to Members referred to above. A motion put by Williams that no vote be taken until the pre-conference discussion had taken place was defeated by 3-F, 12-A, 2-Ab. (So we have the peculiar situation where part of a pre-conference discussion document has already been agreed to and a policy adopted before any discussion has taken place throughout the membership—see pages 12 and 13 of Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin No. 5.)

On March 15, Sands wrote a letter to Pat Jordan protesting the actions of the majority leadership in using organisational methods to solve political question and adversely affecting the work in the women's liberation movement.

March 15, 1971

Pat Jordan  
National Secretary  
IMG

Dear Comrade,

Although I have not received the original letter, I have received a duplicated "copy of a letter to J. Sands distributed to NC members and alternates for information."

At the joint meeting between the women comrades and yourself in Nottingham on 18/2/71, it was made clear that the issue as far as we are concerned is the abuse of the authority of the majority leadership in ratifying the actions of the women's caucus of 17/1/71.

While we were opposed to the decisions of the NC in October to set up Socialist Women's Committees in various parts of the country with the perspective of *Socialist Woman*—the journal of Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee—becoming the journal of these committees when set up, we were waiting for some directives from the leadership as to how the NC decisions were to be implemented. Meanwhile we continued with the work we have been doing for the past two years—helping to build the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and assisting in the production of its journal *Socialist Woman*. The Nov./Dec. issue was produced, distributed and sold without any comment from any body of the IMG and work commenced on the Jan./Feb. issue.

I telephoned and wrote the caucus convenor, Ann George, and asked for the next women's caucus to be held in Nottingham. At the NC meeting when the date for the caucus was discussed it was made clear that the Nottingham comrades had asked for the meeting to be held in Nottingham. Subsequently, both Sands and Williams talked to the convenor and asked to have the meeting in Nottingham. When Williams was told by the convenor that the meeting had to be held in London because of the women attending the PC meeting being held the day before the caucus meeting, Williams pointed out that the only comrades affected were herself and Mathews, and that it was possible for both comrades to get to Nottingham in time for the meeting the following day. However the meeting was held in London and since two of us had sick children and another had just arrived home with a new baby, we were unable to attend the meeting. We put this in detail to show both the desire and attempts to get the meeting held in Nottingham so that we could attend. In these circumstances and in the light of the decisions taken in our absence, it would seem that factionalism was a factor in not holding the meeting in Nottingham.

At the caucus meeting as was pointed out in the letter to the PC dated 31/1/71 without any consultation with us and in our absence we were removed from the editorial board of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee's journal *Socialist Woman*. The Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee had its journal of two years' standing taken away from it by a joint women's caucus of the IMG and SL. The caucus then proceeded to make *Socialist Woman* the journal for all socialist women's committees and proceeded to elect an editorial board which did not include any women from Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. These actions are the more outrageous for having been taken since Ann George, in answer to a question, stated that she had made no contact with IMG members of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee or any other women in that committee to find out what the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee's opinions were on such matter.

It is difficult to imagine a more factional way of operating and a more crude manoeuvre and manipulation of women with whom we are working, some of whom we had hopes of recruiting fairly soon to the IMG.

Tendency comrades who were present at the caucus meeting did not vote for any of the proposals for the new editorial board for *Socialist Woman* since they considered that given the circumstances the caucus did not have the authority to make these changes and they could not support such undemocratic methods of operating.

Although you were present at the women's caucus and intervened at times, you did not consider it necessary to advise the caucus that it was acting both undemocratically and factionally. Later, at a PC meeting you recognised that the caucus had made a "mistake" in not putting anyone from Nottingham on the new editorial board and "corrected" this mistake. I think that the mistakes that the caucus made cannot be rectified by adding a few names to an editorial board.

Since the caucus meeting, when arrangements were made with Ann George to come up and discuss with the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, you stopped her coming up because you said "she would be walking into a trap." The committee has written her three letters, none of which have been answered. Instead, members of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, when selling their journal, *Socialist Woman*, on the March 6 women's demonstration were faced with another journal called "Socialist Woman" being sold at the same time.

The goodwill which has been built up over the past two years between the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and the IMG has been destroyed, and our hopes of recruiting some more women to the IMG have been lost, for the time being at any rate.

In addition to protesting the abuse of the authority of the majority leadership on this question, I further protest the method of compiling your "Dossier" on the relationship between the IMG and *Socialist Woman* and its distribution. This dossier which is supposed to give relevant documentation for information was compiled by you with your own comments and emphasis added as you thought fit. No opportunity was ever given to me to add any comments or emphasis I might think relevant. This method of compilation and the sending of it out to IMG and SL members in the middle of such a serious dispute only serves to prejudice the discussion and make it impossible for a democratic discussion to take place throughout the IMG on the political differences from which this whole *Socialist Woman* dispute emanates. It is because we consider that it is necessary to have a full discussion on the question of the women's movement that we have constantly sought to get the majority leadership to have the political discussion first before taking organisational steps, since these must flow from our political analysis of the women's movement. You are well aware of our thinking in this connection.

However, you have thought otherwise—in so doing you will be able to face the conference with a fait accompli—but only at the expense of a democratic discussion throughout the organisation.

Sands

(Sands, unfortunately, has since been on leave of absence as her daughter has been hospitalised and it has been necessary for Sands to live at the hospital and give her full-time attention to Megan.)

On March 27/28, 1970 a meeting of the women's caucus was held where it was established by a non-Tendency member of the Spartacus League and a Tendency member of the IMG that at the meeting of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee referred to in the letter above, IMG and SL members were in a minority. At the PC Mar. 28 Petersen reported:

Two things were undisputed: 1. That the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Group had decided to change their name; 2. That they had decided to bring out a national paper. Our cdes were present with SL cdes at this meeting but it was not agreed definitely whether they were in a majority. No vote was taken: Williams informed the committee that this was the usual practice of the NSWC. Petersen proposed that we should set up a commission to investigate the question since the situation had changed since the last NC decision. He proposed that the composition should be: 1. Price. 2. Tyler. 3. MC + 2 other women cdes. After discussion JP and MTL were added to the list subject to confirmation by these cdes. Petersen pointed out that this question raised the issue of relations with the Tendency as a whole. King proposed the rider that the Commission be set up now but that it should not meet for 2 weeks (a Tendency meeting to take place meanwhile). Williams proposed that we do nothing until the letter from Nottingham arrived in reply to the NC letter (the reply was on its way). Defeated 1/6/0.

On April 2nd, the following letter was sent to the National Secretary of IMG by M. Donnelly and Jo O'Brien of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee protesting that they had never received a copy of the decisions of the March 6/7 National Committee which instructed them on specific issues. In the letter they also outlined the facts regarding the decision taken by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee to change its name and the name of its journal.

National Secretary IMG

2/4/71

Dear Comrade,

There are a few things we would like to draw to the attention of the PC relating to the work of women comrades in Nottingham in the women's liberation movement, regarding which the National Committee has taken some decisions.

This letter is written by two of the three women members of the IMG who are involved in the women's liberation movement in Nottingham. The third comrade is, unfortunately, on leave of absence due to extreme personal circumstances regarding her young daughter's condition, who, as you are aware, is a victim of leukaemia.

We understand that on 6/7 March there was a meeting of the National Committee at which certain decisions were taken regarding the women's work in Nottingham, and specific instructions were apparently to be given to the women comrades. No report was given by Jenkins (a member of the NC and who was at that

NC meeting) at the 10th March Nottingham Branch meeting. We understood that he did not make a report because he was awaiting the arrival of the minutes to make sure what the decisions were.

On Sunday 14th March, at approx. 6.30 p. m., Sands received a telephone call from London when Mathews, with Petersen at her side, read over to Sands the decision of the meeting held the week previously. No discussion took place over the telephone and at 8 p. m. there was a meeting of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. At that meeting, Sands put the position of the IMG majority re: the national network of Socialist Women's Committees, etc., and read out to the meeting the editorial of the London *Socialist Woman* dated March/April issue.

The consensus of the women at the end of the meeting was to change the name of the women's group and to continue to produce a journal.

In keeping with the normal practice of the women's group, no motions were moved and no votes taken.

At the end of the meeting there were 16 women present, Sands and Donnelly, who are IMG members, and two who are SL members, (Two women, one an IMG member, J O'B, and a non-IMG member had been obliged to leave the meeting early since they had other commitments.)

At a subsequent meeting (which neither of us were able to attend but at which we understand there were two SL members present), the new name of the women's group was agreed upon.

We consider it necessary to protest very strongly that after making such specific decisions, the National Committee failed to notify the comrades concerned what the decisions were and to give them the specific instructions.

Although we had the opportunity to read the relevant section of the 6/7 Mar. NC minutes after the branch meeting of the 17th of Mar., *up to this date we have not received a copy of these instructions*, nor had them explained by Comrade Jenkins who was present when the decisions were made.

We think that it is in keeping with the spirit and principles of democratic centralism that when instructions to certain comrades have been decided upon these comrades to whom the instructions are given should as *quickly as possible* receive a copy of those instructions *in writing* and be given every assistance by the leadership in the carrying out of those instructions.

Since we understand that one of our instructions was for us to make a public statement would you please inform us as to the nature of the statement the committee has in mind, what it is required to contain and how it is to be made public.

Yours fraternally,  
M. Donnelly  
J. O'Brien

At the PC meeting on April 12th, Petersen distributed copies of the letters from Sands, and O'Brien and Donnelly. It was then "moved and carried that the commission be put into effect."

On April 24th, the Nottingham Branch took a decision that the women comrades should no longer belong to the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group (formerly



Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee) and instructed them to withdraw from that committee. No motivation was given for this. No women comrades were present at this meeting and at the following meeting Mary Donnelly put a statement in the minutes protesting that it was against the norms of democratic centralism for such decisions to be made in the absence of all the comrades involved in the particular area of work and without having been informed that such a motion was to be on the agenda. On April 17th/18th, at a national co-ordinating committee of women's groups, when approximately 150 women representing groups throughout Britain met, the following letter was given to Leonora Lloyd by a representative of the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group.

STATEMENT OF THE NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP (originally Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee) TO LONDON SOCIALIST WOMEN'S GROUP.

We wish to make a protest against the following:

1. Your use of our name "Socialist Woman" for your journal. *Socialist Woman* was started in Nottingham two years ago by a group of women of whom only one member was in the IMG. The journal was not designed to express the viewpoint and opinions of the IMG who showed no interest in the journal at this stage. It therefore came as a complete surprise to those of us who are not in the IMG or Spartacus League when it was suggested that our journal was the *property* of the IMG and its newly formed Socialist Women's Groups. We totally refute this idea, and deny the fact that the IMG has the right to attempt to influence our group. As women dedicated to the growth of a Socialist Society we regard take-over bids of this kind as part of the capitalist structure that manipulates and freedom.

2. London *Socialist Woman* did not communicate with the group as a whole, but only with the members of our group who are in the IMG. The first thing that our group knew was that the London Socialist Women's Group wanted the journal to be published by a national editorial board made up of members of the newly formed Socialist Women's Groups. We wrote and asked the London Socialist Women's Group to explain why this had been suggested. We received no written communication of any sort in spite of repeated requests. Despite the postal strike our letters were delivered by people who would have been willing to bring back replies. Our group has many members who are not in the IMG and we feel that we should have been openly made aware of the London Socialist Women's ideas as to the ownership of our journal.

3. We regard the statement in your first edition that "It is impossible to unite all women" as directly opposed to the spirit and the reality of the women's movement. We are committed to the belief that all women can be united against this social system. As May Hobbs pointed out at the national demonstration on March 26, the women's movement is not composed entirely of middle-class women but of women from all backgrounds. Although the history of social change had shown us that those who have control over our society did not identify with the oppression of others, it also shows that people who are neither part of the ruling class nor part

of the working class frequently do identify with this oppression, and fight for an improved society. We are committed to the belief that working-class women are doubly oppressed in this society; we also believe that other women from different backgrounds are oppressed.

4. Finally we feel that the women's liberation movement require many kinds of journals and newspapers. The new *Socialist Woman*, concentrating on the needs of working-class women could have and still can co-exist with ours. We intend producing a new journal directed mainly at women outside the movement, and women who have recently joined. We hope all groups will support our wish to introduce as many women as possible to women's liberation. We had already considered changing the name and form of *Socialist Woman* before our name was used by the London Socialist Women's group. In accordance with our recent discussions we have also changed the name of our group to "Nottingham Women's Liberation Group."

Members of the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group Not in IMG or Spartacus League, Barbara Yates, Gillian Clark, Vrenchi Schmid, Sheila Marshall, Jenny Jones, Rose Knight, Audrey Beecham, Nicola Harwin, Doris Wardle, Sheila Maestri, Val Mollan, Ann Warren, Ivis Lasson, Sandra Harris, Dagniza Balodias

The Nottingham Women's Liberation Group made the following statement to the Women's National Co-ordinating Committee:

*Statement made by delegate of Nottingham Women's Liberation Group at the WNCC meeting on Sat/Sun 17th, 18th April.*

1. The Nottingham Socialist Women's Group, now the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, has been producing the journal *Socialist Woman* for two years.

2. At the time the members of Nottingham Socialist Women's Group were affiliated to different left-wing groups, only two members were also members of the IMG.

3. In January this year we received a phone call from the London Socialist Women's Group informing us that they wished to take over the publication of our Nottingham journal and publish in London. We wrote several letters to them asking them to put their views and proposals in writing before we met for discussion but received no reply to any of them.

4. Therefore we were surprised to find that on the March 6th demonstration in London there were two magazines on sale—one called *Socialist Woman* published by the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group and one also called *Socialist Woman* published by the London Socialist Women's Group.

There has never been a majority of IMG members in the Nottingham Group and as of January of this year there were 35 members.

The meeting decided that Leonora Lloyd should make a statement at the next National Co-ordinating Committee.

At the NC meeting (IMG) May 1/2, a duplicated copy of the letter to London Socialist Women's Group was given to members together with the following reply:

IMG Women's Caucus  
182 Pentonville Road  
London, N. 1  
22/4/71

Dear Sisters and Comrades,

[Text reproduced here; see Document M-17.]

In answer to questioning by Williams, Petersen established that a women's caucus had not been held to discuss the above reply nor been held to agree the letter sent in its name, but that it had been written by Leonora Lloyd in consultation with him.

Williams made a statement to go in the minutes: "The letter of 22/4/71 written by Leonora Lloyd by agreement with Comrade Petersen, has now taken the internal dispute with the IMG on the question of *Socialist Woman* publicly into the women's liberation movement."

This letter has little comparison with the facts of the *Socialist Woman* history. It suggests that if a member of a political tendency, initiates a committee which welcomes *all* women who want to work together for women's liberation irrespective of their political affiliation, if any, then that political tendency ipso facto becomes the owner of any assets, journals, etc., which the committee might accrue. It would seem that the real purpose of this letter, and a scandalous one, is an *attempt* to compromise the Nottingham women comrades, in particular Toni Gorton, in the eyes of Nottingham Women's Liberation Group.

What it in fact *does* is to give a crude and erroneous account of the workings of democratic centralism in a manner that can only serve to alienate women from the IMG and confirm their worst fears about bolshevik methods and practices. It is a telling account of "front" politics.

#### APPENDIX NO. 1

#### DRAFT MANIFESTO FOR SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COMMITTEES

The thesis must clearly point out that real freedom for women is only possible through communism. The inseparable connection between the social and human position of the woman, and private property as the means of production must be strongly brought out. That will draw a clear and ineradicable line of distinction between our policy and feminism. And it will also supply the basis for regarding the woman question as a part of the social question, of the workers' problem, and so bind it firmly to the proletarian class struggle and the revolution. V. I. Lenin, On the Woman Question.

It is vital that the working-class movement in Britain accept the question of women's status as a very real political issue and that it be discussed and acted upon with the same seriousness as any other aspect of the struggle. This draft is designed to give some guidelines to the formation of Socialist Women's Committees in Britain.

#### WHY A SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COMMITTEE?

Woman is victimised both on account of her sex and her state as a worker. Hence she is doubly oppressed. Women have particular needs which require particular demands to encompass them. A total programme must be developed aimed at raising the consciousness of women and activating them in the pursuance of these demands. The committees must force the left to make these demands part of their general programme for the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society based on the full utilisation of the abilities, talents and intelligence of both sexes.

#### WHY ARE WOMEN SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS?

It was only with the establishment of private property as the means of wealth and the consequent necessity for the formal establishment of paternity that women became subservient; previously they had been partners in the responsibilities of community life. Women were thereby relegated to a means of production owned and controlled by the male within the confines of the monogamous family.

Western capitalism offers many opportunities for women in the field of education; participation in political life; participation in industry; ability to define the size of the family—despite this, women today are only too aware of the limitations on their "freedom."

These limitations basically stem from both the conservative family structure and the needs of capitalism for a large captive group easily exploitable in terms of working condition, types of jobs and wages. Married women feel conflict between their role of mother and their role as a member of the community. Petty domestic routine and constant preoccupation with small children are not fulfilling activities for any adult individual; this, combined with financial necessity brings women into the labour force. The combination of running a home and working brings home to married women the full extent of their exploitation. The widespread inequalities in employment, both in terms of opportunity, training and wages/salaries, are, of course, burdens that rest equally heavily on the single women.

#### WHAT DEMANDS ARE NECESSARY?

As long as capitalist society prevails whatever gains woman establishes, in material form and in status, are always tentative and in jeopardy. The implementation of these proposals would represent a marked advance towards removing capitalism, the social and productive basis of women's subjugation: and at the same time take us forward to the establishment of a new society—socialism.

**MARRIAGE, ABORTION, BIRTH CONTROL:** Women must have complete rights over their own bodies; this means complete access to birth control information and devices—abortions available on request. Marriage to be based on mutual love and respect, not on enforced cohabitation for economic reasons—divorce by either partner, maintenance of children by the state. Children to be responsibility of community with state-run free creches and nurseries. Marriage is an aspect of life—not a ca-



reer.

**WRITE WOMEN BACK INTO HISTORY:** the role of women in history has been almost completely omitted by bourgeois historians, giving women the impression that their sex has never created, initiated or done anything worthwhile—women will only gain confidence in themselves when they know the contribution they have made and *can* make.

**FULL LEGAL RIGHTS:** such as the right to contract, the right to separate income tax returns.

**EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK:** There are almost 9 million women workers in Britain, representing about one-third of the labour force. Only one in ten receive equal pay to men. Average earnings in manufacturing industries are just over 10 pounds 10 shillings a week compared to about 22 pounds for men. There are only 8,000 female apprentices compared with over 300,000 males, and in many industries apprenticeship is the only door to advancement. In management, 5% of the total are women; 2 1/2% in science and technological. Some of the demands necessary are: equal pay for equal work, equal entrance to apprenticeships, full maternity leave with resumption of seniority rights, promotion on abilities not on sex, campaign to organise women workers, nurseries attached to the place of work, unions must have same minimum basic rates for men and women, no job rating discrimination. Militancy is the key word of the day. These demands will never be implemented if they remain an academic question. The campaign of the NUVB for Action for Equal Pay is promising—it must be supported by militants of both sexes right through the nation. The labour government with its Incomes Policy is not going to grant any concessions unless forced to by a militant, dynamic movement. The job of the committees will be to agitate and propagandise for the ideas contained in this document; to educate and give confidence to their membership; to hold public meetings and activities designed to raise the consciousness of the working class movement.

Prepared by: Ann Torode, 88 Parklands Drive, Loughborough, Leics and Antonia Gorton, 43 Bingham Rd., Sherwood, Nottingham—Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee.

### APPENDIX NO. 3

Dear Ann George,

I should like to register my personal protest at the tone and suggestion throughout your document—"What Campaign for Socialist Woman?" that the comrades working on the journal are in some way disloyal to the IMG, or have divided loyalties between the group and the WL movement.

As we have already, many times, pointed out, we see no contradiction between the two, I personally have stated in caucus, without being challenged, that we cannot as

serious people operate in any field with the idea of manipulating people in search of ideas and with no loyalty to that movement itself, but that our approach should be that we fight for our ideas which will take the movement forward; now any contradiction between this approach and the need to spread the ideas of the FI is not apparent to me. Since the FI transitional programme represents the political and programmatical framework for the advancement of all liberation movements. We know full well that unless the liberation movement generally are brought to an understanding of the need for a unified struggle against capitalism through the revolutionary party, that any gains they make are limited, however, this does not mean that we have some concept of limited support for these movements and that we do not recognise the need and right of oppressed sectors to organise themselves around the concrete problems which they share, or that we have no appreciation of the inherently anti-capitalist nature of their struggles. Surely what it means is that we intervene in the movement from an understanding of the deep and fundamental nature of the oppression with sympathy and understanding towards *all* its manifestations. Therefore, we seek to exclude no one from the struggle, but we fight against any *ideas* which oppose the dialectical link between the fight for women's liberation and the class struggle. It would, therefore, seem to me that the differences which have begun to manifest themselves between you and the comrades of *Socialist Woman* are essentially political and relate specifically to our assessment of the nature and depth of women's oppression and the consequent method of building a mass WL movement. Cde Sands and myself have begun to document our ideas regarding these key questions and I feel that the least we can expect from yourself as responsible for convening women's caucus and to some extent organising discussion within that unit is to openly discuss and encourage discussion of these political questions.

Your accusations of disloyalty and of operating outside the IMG against Cde Sands are all the more insidious and unpleasant in view of the fact that up until the present discussion, the only attempts made to initiate discussion in the IMG on the question of women's work have been made by Cde Sands. As a member of the editorial board of *SW* and a WL activist, there is nothing I want more than a clear orientation for our group in this field. The question of loyalty in our operations up to now can be effectively challenged, but I do not feel this is the most important and crucial discussion at this time. I would merely draw your attention to the section of Cde Sands' document "*SW* and the IMG," relating to your action in attempting to commit the IMG to an equal pay campaign initiated by the Liverpool WL group, with absolutely no discussion with other comrades involved or with group membership as a whole. Does this give me the right to question your loyalty to the group? I think not. In our present situation of no concrete orientation and little political understanding and discussion of the political questions involved, then no one (not even the women's convenor) can claim to hold the IMG line on w[omen].

This last point brings me to my major criticism of your action in producing a confusionist (most of the facts in your document no one would disagree with) and misrepresentational document openly attacking not the politics but the loyalty of comrades. In view of the fact

that WL was not discussed within the membership since then, how can you possibly make the assertion that the views as presented in the Internal Bulletin on Women's Work, Oct., 70 (which for some reason does not include your document) constitutes a minority position in our movement? To quote your document "the distortion and misunderstanding of Marxism which marks the minority's contributions must be cleared up." I would submit it rather pompous of you, to say the least, to assume that your political assessment of the WL movement as yet in my opinion undocumented, represents the views of the majority of IMG members. There can be no basis for such an assertion, unless there has been major discussions within the group from which I have been excluded?

Comrade, I would appeal to you to recognise your responsibility for helping to formulate *political* discussion within our movement around women's oppression and to foster a spirit wherein we can function as an effective women's caucus to fight for a correct appraisal and understanding of the WL movement within the IMG.

I earnestly request that this letter of protest be circulated to those involved in time for women's caucus, if this is not feasible then I request that it be made available in its entirety at the caucus. I must also inform you that a copy of this letter is to be sent to the NC for their consideration.

Fraternally,  
Anne Black

#### APPENDIX NO. 4

#### SOCIALIST WOMAN AND THE IMG

Sands Sept 16, 1970

\* Please note that Sands' document entitled "The nature of Women's Liberation" starts with the last four paragraphs on page 5 of the Internal Bulletin on Women's Work beginning "this paper was hastily prepared. . . ."

1. The decision to launch the abortion campaign was made by the ed. board of *SW* in line with IMG's turn to the WL movement and in line with the discussion at the National Women's School on May 16. The discussion was marked by an enthusiastic contribution by National Secretary Petersen on how vital free abortion was to working-class women and also by a lack of opposition to the contributions of A. Black and J. O'Brien (both editors of *SW*) which were in harmony with our general approach.

2. *SW* is the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, a body which is composed of IMG and non-IMG.

\* Also please note that the above-mentioned document was presented to the May 1970 (not July) National Committee, *the general line agreed with*, and taken back by Sands for re-drafting in the light of the discussion.

3. Of course the IMG comrades accept the discipline of the group in all their work including *SW*. What does Ann George mean by this and why does she ask if our membership of the IMG is of first importance? Ann George claims that she "supports and accepts that it (A & C) is a valid campaign for the movement, one that could involve many women." She has a difference of opinion with the *SW* cdes. on the *emphasis*. I infer (because she nowhere says it specifically) that she prefers an equal pay campaign. But if an A & C campaign has not been discussed by the group *neither has an equal pay campaign*. So, on a difference of opinion, she questions the loyalty of the Nottingham *SW* comrades and makes hard proposals presumably designed to limit their influence on the journal. I would suggest to Comrade George that in the interests of our past fruitful collaboration and the present extremely promising situation, that she earnestly and in a fraternal way discusses the *politics* of women's liberation work before trying to solve the problems through organisational means. It is quite true that the A & C campaign should have been discussed in the group. The fact that it was not, was due to a combination of circumstances: 1. that our general caucus work was inefficient; 2. that there was not enough collaboration between the convenor and the Nottingham comrades most active in this work; 3. that the convenor herself was not able to participate in the WNCC and the discussion in the May NC and so was out-of-touch with developments. If the *SW* comrades had felt there was *any* opposition to this within the group we would not have progressed on it. The IMG is not publicly committed to it yet. George has *not* made the case for an equal pay campaign. Everyone agrees equal pay is important but what George suggests is a typically workerist approach to women workers. *We are not in the industrial working class*. At the very most, the IMG has 15 women members who have taken any interest in this question. All of us are teachers, students, or housewives. The WLM has roughly the same composition. At this stage we can only *support* movements of working women that are initiated by them or an organisation such as NJACWER, which has an industrial base.

It is most irresponsible of George to say "certain comrades attacked the campaign I suggested. . . ." We did nothing of the sort. That item was the last item on the agenda of the WNCC at a time that was already considerably past the adjournment time. In spite of the fact that George had been in Liverpool the whole weekend and had ample opportunity to call the (7) IMG comrades together to explain what she intended to do, she never did. She would have committed the WLM and the IMG to initiating an equal pay campaign without any discussion in the group at all. None of us spoke against her. We suggested that in view of the late hour and the huge discussion which would most certainly ensue that the item be put on the agenda of the next WNCC. This was agreed. We would not have publicly spoken against George; but felt it would have been a big mistake for this campaign to be adopted at this time (which we did not express).

4. The IMG cdes. on the *SW* editorial board are absolutely committed to carrying the IMG line. If George is suggesting that *SW* become an open IMG paper and not an independent socialist women's journal, then she must docu-

ment this. If the IMG wishes to start its own journal, this is perfectly within its rights. However, we collaborate with other people both in the production and distribution of *SW*. They and the WLM would view the transformation of *SW* into an IMG paper as a manipulation of women by a male-dominated political organisation. This would in all likelihood kill its validity in this area of work. Because I could not follow the argumentation of the para. in George's paper, I hope we can clarify this in discussion and further documentation.

5. There is no sinister plot afoot when I suggested that it didn't matter if groups we set up were not called SWCs. I apologise if it appears "sinister" but I took a long time working out my position on this question and was not in a position to document it until recently. I believe that we should work in the existing groups and that to set up SWCs cuts us off from the mainstream of the WLM. It is much more profitable for us to put forward our ideas in a wider milieu than we would get by insisting women consider themselves socialist before working with us. (We do not do this in any other areas—Committees for Defence of TU's, Red Circles, ISC, VSC.) Further I believe that SWCs could act as a block between the WLM and the IMG. For instance at the last WNCC there were 7 IMG comrades, 4 of them representing SWCs (which is illegal) and none representing the IMG women's caucus! Why? Are we denying the necessity of making the caucus an open force within the WLM? Was it just an oversight or did it reflect a political attitude? This is just one of the questions which the caucus must take up.

A few points which have been raised:

a. *SW* Vol. 2, No. 5 was not rushed out for a "feminist" conference, although this was a consideration. The ed. board were disappointed with the quality of the first printed issue and because we doubled our run when we started printing we felt a real obligation to improve its appearance in order to make it easier to get into bookshops. In addition, we needed a new issue to send to the USA to accompany J O'B on her tour. Obviously in order to save postage money we had to have it ready a month beforehand.

b. The business side of *SW* is now almost totally under control and it just remains for a couple of comrades to pay up past bills and to report *in writing* any circulation defects for us to have a very smooth running operation.

c. I do not believe that it is necessary for *SW* to present its entire programme complete in each issue. No one else does it. *SW* is entitled to concentrate on one aspect or another. Also do we really want to turn *SW* into a left trade-union paper as some comrades imply?

Please let us work out these questions in a comradely way. If there are fuzzy formulations in documents or in articles, if there are contradictions, if there are wrong emphasis—let's work them out and clarify them together. None of us are professional revolutionaries; this area of work is very new to us and we've got a long way to go before we have a "perfect" understanding of it.

M-12

Copy of Letter to Toni Gorton from Peter Petersen on June 9, 1971

Distributed to whole membership by Letter to Members

First let me say how glad I am to learn that there has been an improvement in Megan's position.

I understand that you have ended your leave of absence.

I would like to draw your attention to something which happened whilst you were not fully operational. You may not, therefore, be familiar with all its details.

We received the enclosed letter.<sup>1</sup> (I have enclosed our reply).<sup>2</sup>

You will realise, of course, that as per the National Committee decision of March 6/7, 1971, a statement is required dissociating you from the new journal. Also it is self-evident that you should rebuff the statement made in the letter: ". . . *Socialist Woman* was started in Nottingham two years ago by a group of women of whom only one member was in the IMG. The journal was not designed to express the viewpoint and opinions of the IMG who showed no interest in the journal at this stage. . . ." You should also clear up the matter of the claim that "the first thing that our group knew was that the London Socialist Woman's Group wanted the journal to be published by a national editorial board made up of members of the newly formed Socialist Women's Groups." Seeing that the NC decided in October of last year to carry out this policy we are convinced that you must have explained this matter to the Nottingham SWC well before January of this year.

Perhaps you can clear up how it is that these women have come to these wrong conceptions. After all, you did write in your report on *Socialist Woman* dated July 1970:

. . . In Nottingham through the instigation of one IMG member, a socialist women's committee was set up. This committee saw as its aim the bringing of revolutionary socialist ideas into the new women's movement. It saw itself as a cadre group within the equal pay movement recruiting the most advanced women to it. The committee was composed at its founding of YCL, ex-SLL, VSC, IMG, LPYS and independents. *It quickly narrowed down to a hard core of four who are now all members of the FI.* (The committee has now 4 IMG, 2 independents as a core and an indeterminate periphery, [emphasis added]).

This means that nearly all these women (or all) joined the Nottingham SWC after July of last year. It is difficult to see how they could have got the impression that the "IMG showed no interest in the journal" unless it was from the "members of the FI."

I understand that you are coming down to the women's commission on Saturday. Please bring along the text of the statement you propose to make as this will facilitate the work of the commission.

Please note that I have sent copies of this letter to the members of the commission, the Nottingham organiser

1 Statement of the Nottingham ML Group.

2 Reply by L. Lloyd.

and the women's work caucus convenor.

Revolutionary Greetings,  
Peter Petersen

P. S. In case you have mislaid it, herewith the text of the NC resolution.

P. P. S. Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

TEXT OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION  
PASSED ON MARCH 6/7

The National Committee issues a resolution instructing the IMG comrades on the editorial board of Nottingham *Socialist Woman*:

(1) to carry out the majority decision by facilitating as soon as possible the creation of *one* journal for the socialist women groups by means of the following steps:

(a) by attempting to ensure the cessation of publication of Nottingham *SW*; (b) by attempting to ensure that the Nottingham SWC does not publish any alternative journal; (c) by trying to ensure the transfer of subscription lists and all monies to the editorial board in London; (d) by acting to retain or reconstitute a Nottingham *SW* group accepting (a), (b) and (c) and not to liquidate themselves into the women's liberation movement. (e) if they are unable to achieve (a) to (d) to issue a public statement in support of those propositions and accepting the decision of the NC of the IMG and dissociating themselves from the journal and any other journals its successor may produce.

We want an answer and action by the next but one PC.

(2) that we should constitute a commission to investigate all the facts of the matter to make a report to the annual conference.

(3) to show our earnest, we propose to assist the comrades to carry out the decision by (a) the IMG writing through its caucus suggesting that Petersen go to Nottingham to speak to the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee; (b) the IMG to make available to the non-IMG comrades of the Nottingham SWC the important discussion material that we have had in the past.

(4) We pledge ourselves to correct the mistake that was made at the January 17th women's work caucus so that the members of the old editorial board are added to the new one.

(5) We pledge ourselves not to take any unnecessary steps which will interfere with pre-conference discussion.

M-13

*Socialist Women Orientation: Petty-Bourgeois or Proletarian? or Why the IMG Prevented a Tendency Take-Over of Our Women's Work*

submitted by Anne George

Some points concerning Comrade C. Harris's document on *Socialist Woman*.

From the Introduction, p. 1: Re. registration of *SW*: I have registered all the "businesses" that have been managed by me on behalf of IMG—Red Books, IMG Publications, etc., because without this the bank would refuse an account. Anyone can use a name unless it is a trade-mark—registration does not imply "legal ownership" or monopolisation of the name. It is interesting that CH assumes that legal action was contemplated — by whom?

p. 5 of intro. The first para. is a blatant example of the BIG LIE. CH (a member of the Tendency) *did not* withdraw from leadership of the C&A campaign, but in fact distributed material on it at the Oxford WNCC and acted as its official spokesman at the pre-demo press conference. The Nottingham issue of *SW* showed our comrades as still on the editorial board.

Main doc. p. 1 CH oddly neglects to mention that Cde Sands was the *official* representative of IMG on NJACCW-CWER and that IMG appears on all NJACCW-CWER literature as an affiliated organisation.

p. 3 In view of the alleged statement that "little interest" was shown in the emerging WL movement (and by implication, *SW*) by our comrades, it is odd that, for example, almost before leaving the maternity hospital, I was being urged by Comrade Petersen to write to NJACCW-CWER, which I did, becoming a "corresponding secretary" and forming a branch *before* the second general meeting; that from the first issue of *SW* it is evident that *IMG cdes* were involved. Quote from editorial of Vol. 1, No. 1 ". . . For the next issue we will pay special attention to the status of women in education and immigrant women." (This was an article by me, commissioned before the first issue was printed, and published in the second issue.) "The Socialist Women's Committee which produces this journal has contacts in major cities and universities in Britain and hopes that women will join and build these committees. . . ." Who the heck were these "contacts"? Writers in the second issue not in NSW-C included Sabina Roberts, Leonora Lloyd, Margaret Coulson & Pat Jordan—not a bad display of complete indifference.

*SW* has been bought by many sections, but is widely sold mainly through the efforts of our own cdes. and contacts. In London, the evidence shows that the formation of a SWG has had a *qualitative* effect on sales of *SW*, as the (largely non-IMG) cdes distribute the paper to some 8 or 9 London bookshops, where before it was sold in 2 only. In the past, we have vigorously sold the paper—I have regularly sold between 50 & 100 on demos many times.

As to the Oxford conference, Jo O'Brien attended but one of the organising meetings, whilst I attended all of them, and was billed at the conference as an official *SW* speaker.

p. 14 I have never seen this letter before (though I do not doubt it was sent) and have seen only one letter from NSW-C. (Copies have gone to the commission.) On the other hand, a letter sent to the *SW* ed. board from London SWG, in December 1970, written as a result of discussion within the group, was never replied to. It posed making changes in the paper's orientation—turning it

into a national paper — and in my opinion was the ideal instrument for the cdes in NSWC to introduce the subject and — if they have the respect and political leadership so often claimed for them — win the committee over.

p. 23 A minor point of fact. CH was not present at the last WNCC and so is merely mistaken in saying that the letter on this page was read out at that meeting; in fact, we received it some 7-10 days later. The statement on p. 25 was not read out as given, in the formal terms as stated; "catty" might describe the tone better. At that WNCC we asked the Nott. women to meet with us before statements were issued publically, which they agreed to do, but obviously were later otherwise directed. When we received their letter it was obvious that it had to be answered immediately, in view of the fact that a public statement had been promised and we still wanted a meeting first. (Might I add that no criticism of this letter was made at the last caucus, although two almost identical letters from Tendency members were received on the subject.) As convenor, I was trusted to write a public statement for "Women's Struggle" based on that letter.

p. 29 I would suggest that the insert in NSWC SW had already made the dispute "public."

The above notes cover only some of the more glaring lies, inconsistencies and "mistakes" of CH's document. Unlike CH, I do not have the same amount of time to comb endlessly through documents, as not only do I have work to do in building the women's movement, but my work at the Centre as well.

#### *Some General Comments*

Comrade Harris has pursued the usual line of the Tendency in religiously omitting all political discussion and then accusing us of not having a political debate in the organisation. At the caucuses she attended, the same tactic was pursued, thus leaving us little time for the real debate, which is the political differences between ourselves and the Tendency.

First, we do not see women's oppression as being due to their work in industry, as CH asserts. If she says this because of the fact that we pursue an industrial campaign, then what are we to assume from the fact that she wants us to emphasise the C&A campaign? That women are oppressed because they have babies? And hence that women who are not also mothers are not oppressed? I am sure she no more claims that than we claim that women who do not work (and, specifically, work in industry) are not oppressed. To some extent all women are oppressed in a patriarchal, male-chauvinist society, but the famous double oppression of women consists in fact of *oppression and exploitation*. In that women are unequally exploited, they are *not* one class and have not been a class since class society first began. The extra exploitation of women workers increases their oppression, too.

There is a current within the WLM which declares that middle-class women are *more oppressed* than working-class women. The argument goes something like this: middle-class women are better-educated, but because they cannot fully utilise this education, they get very frustrated; they have higher sexual expectations; because there is no financial need for them to go out to work, they have a harder job to establish their right to work; because

they are more aware of the needs of small children, they have more guilt feelings than working-class women about leaving them to unsatisfactory substitutes; all in all, they are more psychologically "oppressed." All this can be clearly shown to be nonsense, the trouble being that it is dangerous nonsense. It arises because of a dismissal of "dogmatic" Marxism — Marxist parties are said to be "male-dominated" and therefore all the theories coming from them must be questioned and re-examined. This is a healthy attitude, so long as the theory is not rejected along with the male-chauvinism for no principled reason.

Another increasing danger within the movement is the move towards "do-it-yourself." A group's decision to run a campaign on, say nurseries, can all too easily end in that group setting up a play-group for their own children and a few others, or, as in one case I know of, a baby-sitting group for themselves. This arises from the fact that many women come into the movement because they have personal problems and see the movement as, at the very least, a way of getting their feelings "out of their system." At the beginning of the movement, this factor was not a dangerous one, because the women discovered together that their problems were common ones, that therefore they were caused by society, etc. But because, on the one hand, these women did not go on to develop a class, Marxist analysis of society, and on the other hand, women now coming into WL groups are already aware that their problems are not unique (because of the massive media intervention into this field over the past months) and the older members have already been through the discussions, many of them do see the groups as primarily for "consciousness raising" and group therapy. This is inherent in the middle-class psychological make-up of the groups. No one is condemning the WL movement because it is primarily middle-class (are we not ourselves?), but it is the orientation that is important; a movement is only of any real importance in so far as it orients towards the working-class, the only class capable of carrying through the revolution.

It is necessary to make these points here, because these are trends that are making themselves more clearly seen since the NC document was written, not to mention since the March 6th. demo, when our comrades took South London NJACCWER into the workshop and NSWC became the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group — all in order to take Marxist ideas into the movement, and not to cut themselves off from the movement.

In the opinion of many of us, the WL movement will eventually cut itself off. As the crisis deepens, the groups will retreat more and more into themselves. As women workers become more drawn into struggle, only those groups and individuals with an orientation towards this increasingly important section of the working-class struggle, will be doing any effective work. The rest will become a more radical, younger version of the Townswomen's Guild. Eventually, the political groups, like SW, will also have outgrown their function and become drawn into the revolutionary movement.

Just what is the function of SW groups? First, to bring to many women their first political training. Starting from the problems and ideas that especially interest them, we begin to increase their political consciousness. In this function, they can be compared with such organisations as VSC, designed to give us a political base to attract those interested in the Vietnam revolution. Second, to

ensure that women put off by the image of the WL movement are not lost to it, but can find a more compatible home. Third, to have a real base for the paper, which is our main means of influencing the movement as a whole, of getting in touch with other like-minded groups elsewhere. Fourth, as part of our work in combatting male-chauvinism within our movement, to show that we are capable of organisation, serious political work, recruiting, and producing a paper (which, incidentally, more of our male comrades are wanting to read).

Within the SW groups we do, of course, have problems. Perhaps the main one is trying to balance the political discussion. Because many of the women who come into the groups do so as a way of entering political activity (which, because of problems arising out of male-dominated political organisations, they cannot do any other way) we get pressure on us to widen the political discussion to include, for instance, basic Marxist readings, etc. Whilst we of course welcome this development we resist it, mainly for two reasons. First, we are not primarily a recruiting body, and so we encourage women who have reached this stage to go to Red Circles, SL or even straight into IMG.

Second, we are always aware (as the whole WL movement is) of the difficulties of new women coming in, which would be compounded if we discussed issues outside the WL movement. In any case, with a Marxist approach, a tremendous amount of political education can come within this apparently limited context. One way in which our comrades can help is by arranging fairly frequent meetings, in conjunction with our women SW activists, in the Red Circles and SL, which will draw these women closer to us. These could either be on some closely connected subject (like our W. London meeting on Ireland, which was in the same series as the Red Forums, though sponsored by SW), through actually asking the SW to arrange speakers, or through joint sponsorship (e.g., a forthcoming meeting on unemployment). The women should be kept informed of beginner's classes. So long as the relationship between SW and IMG is not hidden, and no pressure is put on the women, such an approach is not sectarian. (It would of course be both sectarian and almost impossible within any other WL Group.) We get over the problems arising from the constant flow of new members wanting to learn quickly the lessons we have spent months learning, through production of leaflets, pamphlets and our paper, which they can be given to read as they come to the group. In addition, by discussion of the WNCC meetings, by frequent "orientation" discussions on any campaign we are involved in, we can "recap" on many issues.

Of course, we have other problems. Our comrades of the Tendency have caused some of these for us, by e.g. their emphasis on certain issues, getting SW, and by implication IMG, a reputation for an over-emphasis on sexuality. This attack (with which I sympathise) has been led by the Maoists. It was also taken up by the SLL, who quoted from a Maoist attack on us, but without revealing the source of their material. We were accused of concentrating on sexism and ignoring the problems of working-class women. This attack was right insofar as it referred to the Tendency. Then the production, completely against the decision of the NC, of the issues of NSW SW at the March 6th. demo, put us in a dilemma. Unfortunately, it seems (and so we are told) that

our comrades are very much respected and have great influence in the Nottingham group, so we must suppose that it was this influence that led to our latest attempt (at the Leeds WNCC) to get a joint meeting, being completely ignored. This seems to indicate that the Nottingham and Tendency comrades in general are worried stiff about us getting in touch with their membership. At no point have they dared show the material we produced on IMG-SW. And the reason is because it would expose all the lies and shit they have been dishing out to the sisters.

But we shall overcome these problems. Our movement is growing fast. Our theoretical grasp of the issues is increasing. The paper is extending its influence and will continue to improve as we learn how to overcome technical problems, etc.

Forward to building Socialist Woman Groups! Forward with the paper! Forward with the struggles of working women! Forward with the struggle against male chauvinism and female passivity!

M-14

*Essentials of the Report of IMG Fact-Finding Commission on Socialist Woman Given to 1971 Annual Conference and Appendices on Socialist Woman Question, July 2, 1971*

The National Committee of the IMG established a fact-finding commission with the following terms of reference:

(a) to investigate the circumstances under which two issues of *Socialist Woman* were on sale at the March 6th demonstration.

(b) to investigate the carrying out of the NC and PC decisions prior to this event.

(c) investigate the carrying out of the NC and PC decisions after this event.

(d) to report to the 1971 Annual Conference on these questions and any others which it decides are relevant in assisting the conference, and the leadership that conference elects, in taking such action as those bodies deem necessary.

The FFC passed the following resolutions by 3 votes to 1:

Although there is no precise way of knowing whether the March 6/7 resolutions were implemented, the commission considers that there is sufficient evidence to make charges (appendix one) and recommends that National Conference instruct the comrades that they carry out all the outstanding clauses of the March 6/7 NC decisions and that it set a time-table for the carrying out of these decisions.

That the incoming NC supervises the actions of the comrades in this connection and considers disciplinary action if these decisions are not carried out within the time limit (number one).

Whatever was thought about the ownership of *Socialist Woman* either by the NC or by the Nottingham Socialist Woman Committee in October, 1970, decisions taken by the NC are nevertheless binding on IMG comrades. If Nottingham comrades thought or knew that implementation of this resolution would be impossible because of



their lack of political influence in the NSWC then they had a duty to make this clear to the PC as soon as possible after the October decisions were taken (number two).

The report of the FFC was approved by conference. We have included the text of the March 6/7 NC resolution as appendix two.

## APPENDIX ONE

Charge number 1 — against Sands, JO and MD

These comrades made no serious effort to aid the implementation of the NC decision to change the editorial structure of *Socialist Woman* between October 1970\* and March 18th, 1971. This is a negation of the right of the NC to direct IMG members in their political work and was the biggest factor contributing towards the situation whereby two journals, bearing the name of *Socialist Woman* appeared in the first week of March. Charge number 2 — against Sands, JO and Ann Black.

In their capacity as members of the editorial board of the Nottingham based *Socialist Woman* appearing in the first week of March the above comrades have collective responsibility for its publication and content. The publication of this issue was in direct defiance of decisions taken at NC meetings. Further, the insert amounted to a public attack on the IMG. The fact that the comrades as members of the editorial board did nothing to disassociate themselves publicly from the views expressed in this insert is a demonstration of their disloyalty to the IMG and their contempt for the right of the bodies of the IMG to direct the work of its members.

## APPENDIX TWO

Resolution of the March 6/7 NC

[ Text reproduced here; see M-12. ]

## APPENDIX 3

Next steps for a women's campaign (resolution adopted at October 17/18 1970 national committee).

At the last women's work caucus, the papers written by George and Windsor were recommended for acceptance by the NC. Following from these papers, here is a programme for putting the policy of these papers into effect, which arises out of the discussion round the papers.

(1) At the next WNCC meeting propose full support for NJACWER programme (equal pay for work of equal value now, equal job opportunities including training, and childcare facilities) and solidarity with women strikers.

(2) Put forward a very clear line in NJACWER, calling for workers' control over questions of deciding what is

\* The decision of the October, 1970, NC on *Socialist Woman* is included as appendix 3.

"equal work," etc.; opening the books to ensure that the extra pay comes from profits, etc. Drawing attention to the Government's anti-trade union proposals and their effect on moves towards equal pay.

(3) *Socialist Woman* groups should be set up wherever feasible and should be orientated towards drawing the women's liberation movement closer to Marxism and our programme. We should in all ways seek to link up the women's liberation movement with the working-class movement especially through NJACWER.

(4) *Socialist Woman* should be seen as the organ of these SW groups, giving regular news of their activities, and encouraging the formation of new groups. Its editorial board should have representatives from all the SW groups.

(5) *Socialist Woman* editorial board should be determined by the caucus subject to ratification by the PC.

(6) The abortion campaign should be handed over to the WNCC. The comrades concerned in it should seek to pass on this work to a committee as far as possible *not* composed of our members.

N.B. The resolutions referred to are available in the October, 1970, Discussion Bulletin on Women's Work.

M-17

*Letter of IMG Women's Caucus to the Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee, April 22, 1971*

IMG Women's Caucus  
182 Pentonville Road  
London, N. 1  
22/4/71

Dear Sisters and Comrades,

I have received a letter addressed to the London Socialist Woman Group. First, please note that it should have been addressed to the IMG Women's Caucus; not only does the LSWG consist overwhelmingly of non-IMG and SL members, it was not in existence at the time when *Socialist Woman* first started.

I hope that after considering this letter and having some discussion with us, you will consider withdrawing the letter you sent us and the statement you made at the recent WNCC, not because it was embarrassing to us, but because publication of the full facts will put your group in a rather bad position; it will look as if you were either in ignorance of facts intimately concerning your own group, or that you deliberately told lies, which we do not believe. Your letter and statement contained obvious errors of fact and showed much confusion about the real situation. Due to the fact that other Socialist Woman Groups have been told the facts by the IMG members in those groups, the Nottingham group remains the only one not in possession of all the facts, although they had the most right to be told them by the responsible people.

In your letter, for example, you say that *Socialist Woman* was started by a group of women, of whom only one member was in the IMG. The journal was not designed to express the view-point of the IMG, who showed "no interest in the journal at this stage. . . ."

FACT ONE: The Nottingham Socialist Woman's Committee was formed on the initiative of the IMG. In the August, 1968, issue of *International*, the journal of the IMG, Toni Gorton wrote in an article "Don't Call Us Birds":

The requirements now for an extension and deepening of the struggle are: (1) an explanation of the system which keeps women in subjection; (2) the overthrow of faith in promises and gradualism (equal pay in '68, not in '75); (3) unity in action and purpose, always remembering *class* solidarity before *sex* solidarity; (4) concrete demands such as: equal pay, free nurseries attached to the place of work, no loss of seniority due to maternity leave, minimum wage, more union organisation in the service industries.

. . . In Nottingham, a modest start has been made with a group of women, *under the initiative of International*, who have come together to work on this question. It is vitally necessary for politically conscious women to involve themselves in this movement to help to educate the new layers who will almost certainly be drawn in and give direction to them. . . . [emphasis added].

FACT TWO: Far from "showing no interest in *Socialist Woman*," the IMG has consistently advertised the journal in its publications, free of charge. Had this advertising been on a commercial basis it would have cost at least 200 pounds. (We will show you a complete file of this advertising.)

All over the country our members have sold the paper (and, of course, written for it) and treated it as our journal in the women's field, long before the present events took place. Do you imagine the paper could have grown so fast without such interest—if you had indeed been just a group of women in Nottingham producing and pushing the paper—especially when the movement was just beginning?

FACT THREE: Far from there being any misunderstanding about this relationship it was made clear in the February/March 1970 issue of *Socialist Woman*. This issue contained a "Programme for Women's Liberation," published in the name of the IMG Women's Caucus, and it had this to say about the journal:

*Socialist Woman*, a publication which declares itself in its name to be socialist, sells out every issue and cannot keep pace with the demand. . . .

While it may not be possible at this juncture to unite all the existing groups in one organisation, we must strive for more united campaigns around these issues. We see *Socialist Woman* playing an important role in organising and uniting the movement and hope that the growing movement will use *Socialist Woman* in this way.

We can show you copies of this issue.

The IMG has been discussing *Socialist Woman* and taking decisions about the line members of the IMG should put in. It ever since it was launched, mainly on the basis of reports of the IMG members of the Nottingham SWC. Here are the texts of some of the resolutions:

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF IMG NATIONAL COMMITTEE. July 25th-26th, '70

*Socialist Woman*: Agreed that the papers prepared for the NC must be re-discussed by the national caucus on women's work which should be convened as soon as possible. Agreed that the organisation be informed of our women's work much more systematically than it is done. [N.B. The last sentence should read "than has been done."]

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE. 23/8/70

Women work and *Socialist Woman*: Petersen's proposal of freezing the present status of the editorial board of *SW* accepted 5 for, 2 against. Williams' amendment "the comrades concerned should be informed of this idea from the caucus at the camp," 2 for, 4 against, 1 abstention. [N. B. There was no protest that the IMG had no power to do this.]

EXTRACT FROM NATIONAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS MINUTES 19/9/70

(a) Members on the editorial board of *SW* are under the discipline of the IMG. This means that all questions of importance are referred to the women's caucus, so that it may make recommendations to the NC. In the event of the caucus not functioning, reference should be made direct to the national leadership. Passed for 11, against 0, abstention 1. [N. B. Comrades Toni Gorton, Jo O'Brien and Anne Black were all present and voted for this resolution.]

Point 5 of minutes of NATIONAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS. 17/1/71

SW REORGANISATION: Cde George proposed 1) Suggestion from LSWG [made in a letter to the editorial board] that 1 page of each issue be devoted to SWG groups nationally; 2) *SW* to develop into organ of *SW* groups nationally; ed board to consist of 1 member from each *SW* group and members from caucus elected on a political basis. To meet same weekend as caucus. Discussion. M/C 11/2, 2 abst. Motion: Production centre to be moved to London for printing on new machine: M/C 11/-, 3 abst.

We are certain that you were not aware of these facts, otherwise you would hardly have written the letter in the terms you did, or made the statement at the WNCC (e.g., Rose Knight's statement that *SW* was entirely the idea of one person and had nothing to do with IMG). Most of you probably joined the Nottingham Socialist Woman Committee after the journal was established. Few of you were probably aware of the exact relationship between IMG and the paper. Few of you would have known of the political discussion going on inside the IMG about the role of *SW* groups and the paper. To make this relationship and the political aspect very clear, we append a document written by Toni Gorton, which shows that the line pursued by the Socialist Woman groups and the paper under its present editorial board is precisely that envisaged by Toni when the Nottingham Com-



mittee was still in its first days and the paper had not reached its present level of success. It was this policy which enabled both the groups and the paper to grow, and the desire to see the continuation of this policy that caused us to take the action we did.

Under these circumstances we think that it is best if you postpone any further statements until the Secretary of IMG and myself, as women's caucus convenor, have had a chance to further explain matters to you and have a full discussion. A public squabble can only do damage to the whole women's liberation movement, especially when it concerns misunderstandings which can be cleared up in mutual discussions.

We hope that you can arrange for the suggested meeting as soon as possible. As I promised at the Leeds WNCC to issue a public statement on the matter, the quicker the meeting can take place the better, of course.

We are glad to note that you say that our two journals can co-exist. Whilst there are obvious political differences, there is no reason why there should not be co-operation between us. You say in your letter that your group is "dedicated to the growth of a socialist society." So are we. I am sure that we can co-operate and, as you say, co-exist in the movement. The experience of many areas has shown that the existence of only one type of group actually hinders the growth of the movement, and I am sure the existence of many types of flourishing papers can only contribute to the movement. However, the unfortunate circumstances that led to the statement made by your representatives could have the opposite effect. There is an understandable suspicion in the movement about the activities of political groups such as ours; believing whole-heartedly as we do in the cause of women's liberation we think we have a part to play in the movement and have always tried to play that part openly. The IMG women's caucus was one of the first affiliations to the WNCC; we have never tried to hide our connection with SW, whilst keeping the groups open and non-sectarian. It is our firm belief that we have nothing to be ashamed of and nothing to hide in this matter that has led us to the unusual step of making public internal minutes and documents of the IMG.

With every best wish,  
Leonora Lloyd

M-19

*Copy of Letter Sent to Leonora Lloyd from Nottingham Socialist Woman's Group, January 29, 1971*

85, Rivermead,  
Wilford Lane,  
Nottingham  
29th January 1971

Dear Leonora Lloyd,

With reference to your request for a meeting with our group, I have been instructed to write a letter on behalf of the whole group.

After having made extensive consultations with the group, since our telephone conversation, I am instructed

by them to tell you that we feel that it would serve no useful purpose either to you or to us, for you to come all the way to Nottingham, without having given us prior information as to the reasons for your expressed desire to see us. If you would enumerate your considered reasons, in some detail, in writing, we then feel we could decide whether we have a mutual basis for further discussion.

As it is you who have approached us, and not we who have approached you in this matter, we feel we have every right to request your views on the matter in question before proceeding any further in this matter.

We should not like to waste your time or ours. And we feel, indeed, that it is our place to invite you to a discussion with us, as it was you who put forward a proposal to us.

A broadly based group such as ours needs full information to put before its members so that they may consider the matter fully, before going into further consultation.

I am sure you appreciate the delicacy of this matter, as it would be precipitate to meet for a discussion only to find that there is no common ground which would provide a starting point for consultation with you. If we can find common ground for consultation, after you have prepared us fully as to the content of your proposed discussion, we will then inform you of our decision on the profitability of calling a meeting.

Yours Sincerely,  
Valerie C. H. Mollan

Comments by L. L. This letter is very interesting in view of the fact that at the last Women's National Coordinating Committee a delegate from Nottingham declared that I had made no effort to get in touch with them, and also when we remember that the Tendency have constantly re-iterated that it was up to me, as convenor, to approach the Nottingham comrades.

In fact, of course, it was up to our Nottingham cdes to implement the NC decisions, and to call upon me to help them in this, if they felt they needed help.

M-25

*Women and the Struggle for a Socialist Britain*

by Toni Gorton

The entire question of women's role in society has deep implications for the radical movement. At a glance it cuts across class, religious, colour and social strata; investigation of its depths drags up tremendous problems. For the first time this question is being put into its proper perspective, the action early in 1968 at Ford by the sewing machinists took the struggle for women's equality right where it belongs—in the industrially organised working class. Subsequent manifestations have solidified this tendency.

If we were to consider this question historically, we should see that since the 19th century the known\* part

\* Little is known about working-class women's activities, i.e., during Chartist struggles.

of women's struggle was dominated by the middle-class women who saw that they were deprived of rights that were held by working-class men. Their struggles took the form of agitation for entry into the medical profession; rehabilitation of female prisoners; entry into Oxford and Cambridge; extension of legal rights, i.e., to their children; and through a variety of issues to the fight for women's suffrage which took such violent forms, many admirable and valiant fights showing a dedication and idealism that many at that time were amazed by.

At the same time that we respect what these women and their friends did, we must recognise the heritage that they left us.

1. Their movement was one of reform, i.e., of gaining certain demands which, once achieved, led no further.
2. Their movement was largely parliamentary-oriented.
3. They saw their problems in terms of male *vs.* female and not as inherent in the society they lived in.

To put it succinctly, the big dangers we face today in the women's equal rights movement are *reformism, parliamentarism, feminism.*

**GENERAL PROGRAMME:** The stage of the general movement for equal rights in industry is spontaneous and unco-ordinated as opposed to self-conscious and organised. Programme is largely those traditional demands of the labour movement. We must understand the meaning of those demands and introduce our *transitional programme* into the movement in order to deepen and extend the struggle.

The nature of the demand for equal pay now which was discussed briefly at the last AGM of the IMG has a transitional character, although in essence a purely democratic demand. [It] is a popular demand which responds to deeply felt needs on the part of many working-class women; it is a mobiliser; its significance is that it destroys the concept of women's wages as supplementary to the man's income and places women on equal footing with men economically. This has tremendous social implications and brings women into consideration of all the other means by which she is kept subservient.

In a period of wage restraint; of all-out attacks on the working class through every avenue possible from a rise of 25% on false teeth to "Industrial Reform," equal pay is not merely an academic question. A powerful movement on its behalf would cut across all the moves that the labour movement is instituting to stabilise and defend British capitalism.

This is the light in which we must frame our propaganda. We must show how the capitalist state stands in the way of gaining equality. *Workers' Control* is one part of our transitional programme which fits into the question very well. Such real needs of women workers such as school working-hours; nurseries attached to the place of work; in-factory hours union meetings; working hours (shift) are easily put forward within this concept of *control*. The pressing home of the need to take *industrial action*—work stoppages until the tripartite demand of equal pay—equal training—equal opportunity are met; this demand again poses the question of control and power—showing that the real power lies in the hands of those who produce, not in the hands of the bosses.

*Open the books* is the answer to the bosses who say they can't "afford" equal pay. *Price investigation commit-*

*tees* composed of housewives and women workers along with other members of the community to really determine if prices are being kept down, with the power of consumer boycott.

*Industrial Unionism:* A large problem for some 6 million women workers is that they are not in any form of union, remaining totally unprotected against the vagaries of the labour market and the whims of their individual employer. A tremendous campaign of *organising the unorganised* is necessary, particularly in the service industries. Industrial unionism fulfills the needs of women in largely unskilled jobs and small shops. (A union of the character of the American Teamsters Union would be valuable in this respect, since it will organise anyone it comes across—from fruit picker to nurse.) Many of the present women worker fights are for trade-union recognition.

**1. HOW DO WE ORGANISE?** Within the group itself, we must educate and elevate the level of discussion and activity on the part of group members on this question. Encouragement must be given to female comrades to develop their speaking and writing abilities. In each branch this must be regarded as a specific area of work that involves the entire branch and not just the women. We must be alert to opportunities to present our ideas. The group must put our literature and circulars in its own name as the opportunity arises. Student comrades must include this as part of the general programme of student demands. For instance, the upcoming struggles on the part of graduate teachers who will not be able to find jobs will be largely composed of women.

The group must consider *SW* as its journal (although not in name) where we have the political hegemony and control.

**2. SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COMMITTEES:** We should consider these committees as vanguard organisations, recruiting the most conscious and activist elements to them. They should be a focus for the revolutionary elements, a caucus within the broader movement; educational centres for the Marxist method of analysing this question and developing the programme. Their purpose is to develop female leadership of the women's movement and the class. Men would not participate in the committees. Recruitment at this time would generally take place among VSC militants, students, women who participate in the general left movement. At the same time we have the perspective of bringing in the most advanced women workers met through TU work. These committees must not be discussion groups alone; through *SW* they must carry on and initiate petitions, strike collections, demonstrations, be on the spot with local women strikes. Within the universities they must take up the questions of sex-discrimination in education, take responsibility for political leadership, link up with women in the broader community.

**3. NJACCWER:** It is not at all clear at this time what the Equal Rights Campaign is about to do. Its demo on May 18th was small but militant and significant for the high participation of working-class women. In Glasgow the CP has withdrawn from the local branch, which combined with shifts on the part of our membership ensures its virtual collapse in that city. But we can assume that

unless the NUVB (its initiator and organisational base) backs down, that nationally it will continue for a period. The problems with the organisation are many. The general council and many of the local groups, particularly those in factories are dominated by Stalinized elements. This is reflected in conservative organisational forms and outlook, confusing methods of operation and political sectarianism. There is considerable hostility towards students and revolutionary participants. The genuine rank-and-file militants such as Rose Boland and her comrades have not attended recent general council meeting which may be significant because they were definitely very involved in the formation of the campaign.

At the same time, we have some useful allies in the GC and on the whole it is committed to holding the disparate elements together which works in our favour. We must call for a conference of NJACCWER in which the GC will be democratically elected and not determined by who volunteers as is now the case. We must combat the conception of the campaign as non-political which is put forward as the reason for not wanting organisations to affiliate—just support. This campaign is political and is essentially a united front must have more formal guarantees of democratic representation on its leading body. The working committee which is the real power is divided between the CP, leftists of the variety of Ken Graves of the Voice papers, and Labour Party centrists.

Where we can, we must set up NJACCWER branches and attempt to take political leadership. The only way to make this campaign really viable is to politicise it, to combat the Stalinists and their fellow travellers politically. Student comrades should be sensitive in entering NJACCWER and in no case should students outnumber other participants. The local branches should be action-orientated with public meetings, support actions, where possible organising women for equal pay within factories, demonstrations, etc. Our programme should be put forward within the general context of these activities. Many valuable links with trade unionists have already been made through NJACCWER activities.

**SOCIALIST WOMAN** The journal was initiated by us and its organisational base is provided by us. Our political line is the general line. Its programme is and will continue to be primarily industrial, with at least one international article and articles of a social nature. It will be an organiser both of SWCs and strike-support efforts, such as the current petition it is circulating on behalf of the Ramsgate strike. SW will not be overtly an IMG journal, but we must make sure that it is not used by other groups as a recruiting device. IMG members should write for each issue, preferably under the label IMG. IMG must publish a pamphlet which can be advertised in SW and so make direct link-ups. SW will remain a publication of the Nottingham SWC and this puts the onus on the Nottm. branch to recruit enough women to constitute the majority of the editorial board (on which we are presently a minority). Financial problems are a headache right now due to the increasing circulation. Comrades should encourage consistent buyers to give donations and take out subscriptions.

We have, by our quick reaction to this question gained a leadership in this field by bringing out the journal when

we did, but we should not expect that this will last indefinitely. We must be alert to all items of interest and possibilities of activities which will make the journal a *necessary* paper for anyone interested in this question. To sum up: the journal can provide one of our most viable contacts with actual struggles, provided we use it well. SW hopes to call a national conference in Oct/Nov. which we must organise in depth for. SW is creating a new periphery for us which we must recruit from, so c's must be prepared to speak on this subject. We must bring in other questions such as the Arab revolution, Vietnam, Latin America (written from the women slant) in order to involve the readership in these other campaigns. We must consistently carry our position regarding TU affairs—an article every issue is one way of using the journal to good advantage.

The oppression of women introduced with the establishment of private property and class divisions can only be ended when our conception of a classless society has been achieved in reality. The historical process of the development of the proletariat into the vehicle for the overthrow of capitalism is consequently the process that will develop the struggle against the economic and social exploitation of women. The liberation of women can only be achieved as an integral aspect of the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to communism.

The problem for us today is to make the fight for women's rights an integral part of the proletarian class struggle, and to fight for the adoption of our transitional demands. We must endeavour to make "equal rights-equal pay" the property of women workers in particular and the labour movement in general.

This partial struggle will train and educate tens of thousands of young women workers to play their total role in the revolutionary party and will ensure that women are well-represented on the higher bodies of the revolutionary party.

[ Note. Although the original of this document is not dated, by perusal it is possible to say that it was written in the summer of 1969. — L. L. ]

N-42

*Minority Report from the Commission Set Up to Investigate the Socialist Woman Affair: submitted to the June 1971 IMG National Conference by Pryce, June 18, 1971*

I have attended the two meetings of the commission and read the evidence which has been submitted. It is my opinion, on the basis of this evidence, that *Socialist Woman* has always been the journal of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. Through its members in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee, the IMG has always had a political influence in the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and its journal *Socialist Woman*. It is clear to me from the evidence that the IMG has made a serious error in proceeding as it did in taking over the journal *Socialist Woman* from the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and producing a new journal of the same name for sale at the March 6 women's

liberation demonstration. It did this with the full knowledge that Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee would be selling the current issue of its journal *Socialist Woman* at the demonstration.

From the information available to me, it is clear that the Nottingham women comrades, to the best of their ability, put the proposals of the leadership of the IMG before the members of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee and complied with the instructions to give up their leadership of and activities in the Contraception and Abortion Campaign. On the instructions of the Nottingham branch, these comrades have now withdrawn from the Women's Liberation Group in Nottingham. They requested the leadership in a letter of April to inform them precisely what was to be the contents of the required statement and the method by which it was to be published. As far as I could discover from the evidence, they have not received a reply from the leadership and so they have not been able to comply with this instruction.

It is also my considered opinion that no useful purpose can be served by such a statement and request the conference to drop the charges against the women comrades as outlined in the minutes attached (Appendices 2 and 3).

In addition I want to make some comments about the attitude to and the functioning of the commission. The attached correspondence (Appendix 1) shows that the leadership made no serious preparation for the commission. It did not provide the commission with the terms of reference, nor the decisions which gave specific instructions to the women comrades concerned. (It is a fact also that the NC, having issued these instructions, did not communicate them in writing to the individuals to whom they were directed.)

At the meetings of the commission, I was given the impression that the attitude of the majority members of the commission was to get the business of the commission completed as quickly as possible since it was all rather a waste of time. Comrade Tyler, though not having the basic material before him, came to the first meeting of the commission with the allegations already worked out. It was only the fact that a copy of the instructions to the Nottingham women comrades was not available to the commission at its first meeting that a further meeting was called!

In spite of the fact that Comrade Toni Gorton was unable to appear before the commission, as she had requested and made arrangements to do so, because of a sudden worsening of her daughter's illness, the commission made no other arrangements to hear her, nor would the commission agree to hear verbal evidence from the other women comrades in Nottingham (Appendix 4). (These comrades submitted written evidence and were willing to be questioned on it.)

I put a motion to call non-IMG members of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee to give evidence since, as can be seen by the attached letter (Appendix 5), women in that committee have very definite views on the questions. This motion was defeated. Furthermore Comrade Jordan, although not a member of the commission, attached his own comments to the minutes of the first meeting of the commission. This appears to be an unwarranted intervention by him. I can only conclude, on the basis of evidence submitted, that the charges made are not based on the facts but rather on pre-conceived ideas, which were formulated in the factional atmosphere

which in my opinion unfortunately permeated our organisation in the period before the commission met.

I therefore request the conference to vote against the charges contained in the majority report against Antonia Gorton, Jo O'Brien, Mary Donnelly, and Ann Black.

#### APPENDIX NO. 1

To the PC IMG

May 27th, 1971

Dear Comrade Jordan,

On Saturday 15th May, I received a letter from the convenor of the women's commission set up by the NC asking me to attend a meeting of the commission on Saturday 22nd May. This was the first notification I had received from the organisation that I was on the commission, although I am given to understand that the members of the commission were appointed at least two months ago.

Even at such short notice I informed the convenor I would attend though it was not until the evening before the commission met that it was confirmed that the commission would meet the following day.

I attended as requested at 1.00 p. m. expecting that the procedures involved in such a commission would be explained and that all the necessary documentation would be available at the meeting to enable the commission to make a thorough study of it.

This was not the case: even the terms of reference were not available in writing to members of the commission. Gradually, as time went by, material began to get collected together since we happened to be meeting in the house of a comrade who had access to an NC-PC minute file. However, this was not adequate and after a few phone calls to various comrades we removed ourselves and made a journey to the headquarters. The office of the National Secretary was unlocked to enable the commission to make a search of the files and look through used stencils, but the necessary documentation was not found, so around 5.00 p. m. the commission adjourned.

I protest most strongly that the relevant material was not given to the commission at its first meeting.

It is irresponsible to call a commission and then waste the time of comrades in such a manner.

The setting up of a commission is a serious matter and the PC has the responsibility to see that the commission is given every assistance to function.

I request that all the minutes, documents, papers, letters, etc. relevant to the work of the commission be made available to me so that I can make an adequate study of it before the next meeting of the commission which is to be held on Saturday June 12th.

Yours fraternally,  
P. Pryce.

copy to M-T-W.

## APPENDIX NO. 2

Minutes of Control Commission on Socialist Woman, Saturday, the 22nd./5/71

Members present: B.S., M.T. L., M.C., P.B., J.P.

Agenda proposed by B.S.: -Clarification of terms of references  
-Presentation of informations  
-Clarification of facts  
-Conclusions

### TERMS OF REFERENCES

A. The purpose of the commission is to investigate the reasons behind the fact that two journals both called *SW* were published and publically sold during the first week of March 1971, bearing in mind the production of both journals was principally carried out by members of the same organisation, the IMG.

P. B. raised objections re-terms of references.

M. C. elected as chairman.

B. S. ammended: "bearing in mind that cdes of IMG were involved in both productions."

P. B. ammended: Last section of B. S. 's motion as follows: "and we investigate whether cdes of the IMG were involved in the production and sale of these two publications."  
P. B. 's motion carried 4 for, 1 abstention.

At this point it was agreed that M. T. L. would phone someone in possession of a copy of a Nottingham *Socialist Woman* (dated Jan-Feb—brought out in March) in order to get the list of names composing the editorial board as it would clear up the question of the first term of reference.

B. To consider whether the NC decisions taken on the *SW* question at its meeting on the 6/7th March were implemented by members of the former Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee who are also members of the IMG.

C. Further to investigate the publication of a duplicated insert which was circulated with the Nottingham-based *SW* publication mentioned above and draw whatever conclusions need be drawn from this action.

B. and C. accepted unanimously.

P. B. 's motion: We should hold a series of meetings.

No conclusions should be drawn at this meeting.

All members should have a copy of NC minutes, PC minutes, correspondence between *SW* caucus and all public statements that were made in relation to this. Following from this all cdes that want to appear before the commission should be given an opportunity to do so. All expenses should be paid by the IMG. After exhausting all the evidence, written or verbal, the commission can then make its recommendation.  
1 for, 2 ag., 2 abst.

M. T. L. phoned (see above): Nottingham-based *SW* editorial board: Ann Black, A. Torode, A. Gorton,

Jo O'Brien; business manager: Mary Donnelly.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS READ OUT AT THE MEETING.

- PC minutes, 23/8/70.
- Copy of letter to PC by Toni Gorton, Ann Black, Mary Donnelly, 31/1/71.
- Reply from P. Petersen.
- Statement of N'ham Women's Liberation Group (insert in March issue).
- NC minutes 6/7 March '71 (after publication of N'ham *SW*).
- Letter in reply to the statement (insert) by Leonora Lloyd 22/4/71. (including attached document by Toni Gorton: 1968-69).
- Letter from member of former N'ham SW C'ttee: Jane Brown (SL).
- Report on meeting of N'ham SW C'ttee which decided to change name of group, circa 2/5/71.
- Written evidence from Julian Atkinson, RG, MH, DL, SL. Plus further evidence from JA, RG, 14/5/71.
- Minutes of National Women's Caucus, 27/28 March '71.
- Letter from P. Petersen to J. Sands, 19/2/71.

P. B. I protest very strongly at the procedure carried out by this commission. And am appalled at the undemocratic character of the so-called impartial investigation. I have not had time to carefully study the written material available and I did not have all the available existing written material. Also cdes had no opportunity to appear before this commission and I will make a strong statement of protest to the NC.

B. S. reply: Bearing in mind that members were asked to send relevant information to the commission in letter to members, it would have been impossible to circulate all such written evidence to members of the commission prior to its meeting. In the event of charges being laid against cdes by this commission arising out of the written evidence, those cdes so charged will have full opportunity to appear before this commission or any other body which considers these charges in order to defend themselves. And if they so wish submit counter charges. Similarly, any support of cdes who have had charges laid against them will have the opportunity to submit evidence either verbally or in writing to the commission or other body considering the charge.

The following charges were proposed but not voted on as after discussion it became clear that crucial minutes or documents were not available.

1. The concerned\* cdes made no serious efforts to aid the implementation of the NC decision to change the editorial structure of *SW* between Oct 70 and March 1st. This is a negation of the right of the NC to direct IMG members in their political work and was the biggest factor in contributing towards the situation whereby two jour-

\* J. Sands; J. O'B; M. D.; A. B.

nals bearing the name of *SW* appeared in the first week of March.

2. Allegation against J. Sands, J. O'B., M.D., A. Black: In their capacity as members of the e.b. of the N'ham-based *SW* appearing in the first week of March, the above cdes have collective responsibility for its publication and content. The publication of this issue was in direct defiance of the decisions taken at NC meetings and IMG women caucus meeting. Further, the insert amounted to a public attack on the IMG. The fact that the cdes as members of the e.b. did nothing to disassociate themselves publicly from the view expressed in this insert is a demonstration of their disloyalty to the IMG and their utter contempt for the right of the leading bodies of the IMG to direct the work of its members.

Allegation (1) to be laid on the table since NC minutes not available. B. S. to find them.

Discussion followed, and it became clear that certain crucial minutes were not available to the commission.

We therefore set ourselves the task to find out the origin of the 17/1/71 women's caucus resolution on the e.b. structure of *Socialist Woman*.

Meeting adjourned till June 12th, 1 pm, at the Centre. (M. C. will not be able to attend.)

Comments by Peterson:

(1) The comrades made a mistake in thinking that the letter from the members of the former Nottingham Socialist Woman Committee was inserted in the issue of *Socialist Woman* on sale at the March 6th demonstration. The letter was sent much later to the London Socialist Woman Committee. However, this does not alter, in substance, the conclusion drawn, as will be seen from the actual text of the slip (see below).

(2) Concerning the origin of the women's caucus resolution on e.b. structure of *Socialist Woman*, this is quite straightforward:

(a) the following is an extract from a resolution passed by the National Committee of October 17/18, 1970:

"... (4) *Socialist Woman* should be seen as the organ of these SW groups, giving regular news of their activities, and encouraging the formation of new groups. Its editorial board should have representatives from all the SW groups. (5) *Socialist Woman* editorial board should be determined by the caucus subject to ratification by the PC. . . ." This resolution was included in an internal bulletin published in October 1970.

(b) the next women's work caucus discussed the implementation of this decision as instructed by the NC. A new editorial board was elected.

(c) at the next Political Committee meeting the report of the caucus was approved with the rider that the comrades had made a mistake in not electing members of the Tendency on to the editorial board.

TEXT OF SLIP INSERTED IN SOCIALIST WOMAN VOL 3 No. 1.

*Socialist Woman* was originated by the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee in February 1969. A new journal has recently been produced in London using our name and dated March 1971. This journal is nothing

whatsoever to do with our committee. We were not asked to participate in the production of it and none of us are members of the temporary editorial board which was created to produce this magazine. There has been no conference of Socialist Women's Groups to discuss the possibility of making our journal a national journal. We would like to disclaim any connection with the new journal. We would also like to make it clear that we do not wish to divide ourselves from any woman, whatever her political beliefs may be. UNITED WE STAND. . . . DIVIDED WE FALL." [Dated March 6th, 1971, issued by Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee.]

### APPENDIX NO. 3

#### Report of Commission on Socialist Woman

People to give evidence: S. Williams, Ader, A. Scott, P. Peterson. Apologies from Sands  
Attendance: B. S., P. B., J. P., M. T. W. Apology from M. C.

Minutes of 22/5/71

- 1) comments by Petersen should be detached from the minutes
- 2) Terms of reference should be as laid down in Letter to Members 12/5/71 (see below).
- 3) "fact-finding" to be substituted for "control" commission.

Letters read out:

- Mary D., 8th/6/71
- P. Petersen: document No. 23, part 3
- M. C.

2 pm. S. Williams gave evidence.

Letters read out:

- a) by A. B. 10th/6/71, a reply to A. George
- b) by N. B. re J. B. 10th/6/71
- c) also read out: introduction to document on *SW* by S. Williams

3 pm: Ader. Question of ownership of *SW* raised.

Warning given to the commission about the international effects any decisions could have.

3.15 pm: A. Scott: When asked whether he thought the comrades in Nottingham *SW* had prepared the ground as outlined by NC (Oct.) he answered that the majority comrades could not expect the minority (sic) comrades to push the line of the majority. The comrades were responsible for going up to Nottingham and fighting for their line.

3.30 pm: P. Petersen

4.30 pm: B. S. repeated charges formulated at last meeting (see text below).

Motion: Although there is no precise way of knowing whether March 6/7 resolutions were implemented, the commission considers that there is sufficient evidence to make the charges (mentioned above) and recommends that National Conference instruct the comrades that they carry out all the outstanding clauses of March 6/7th NC decisions and that it sets a timetable for the carrying out of these decisions.

That the incoming NC supervise the actions of the comrades in this connection and consider disciplinary action if these decisions are not carried out within the time limit (motion passed, 3/1).

P.B. moves that there be another meeting of the commission where the following people will be invited: A. B., J. O., A. Black, M. D., J. B., P. Petersen and S. Williams, J. A., etc. (all others who have submitted evidence).

Motivation: "I am against any attempt to come at a decision until we have exhausted all the democratic processes" (motion defeated, 1/3).

Votes on Charge (1): 3 for, 1 against

Votes on Charge (2): 3 for, 1 against

Resolution:

Whatever was thought about the ownership of *SW* either by the NC or by the Nottingham SW C'ttee in Oct 1970, decisions taken by the NC are nevertheless binding on IMG cdes. If Nottingham cdes thought or knew that implementation of this resolution would be impossible because of their lack of political influence in the NSWC, then they had a duty to make this clear to the PC as soon as possible after the October decisions were taken (passed 3 for, 1 against).

B. S. will give the majority report at the National Conference.

P. B. will give the Tendency report at the National Conference.

B. S.: If the above charges are later found to be proved, then disciplinary action should be taken against the cdes concerned (passed 3 for, 1 against).

Notes: Letter to Members 12/5/71

The NC instructs the special commission on the *SW* affair to:

- a) investigate the circumstances under which two issues of *SW* were on sale at the March 6th demonstration;
- b) investigate the carrying out of the NC and PC decisions prior to this event;
- c) investigate the carrying out of the NC and PC after this event;
- d) report to the 1971 Annual Conference on those questions and any others which it decides are relevant in assisting the conference, and the leadership that conference elects, in taking such action as those bodies deem necessary.

Charge no: 1: Against: T. G., J. O., M.D.

These cdes made no serious effort to aid the implementation of the NC decision to change the editorial structure of *SW* between October 1970 and March 18th 1971. This is a negation of the right of the NC to direct IMG members in their political work and was the biggest factor in contributing towards the situation whereby two journals bearing the name of *SW* appeared in the first week of March.

Charge no: 2: Against T. G., J. O., A. B.

In their capacity as members of the editorial board of the Nottingham-based *SW* appearing in the first week of March, the above cdes have collective responsibility for its publication and content. The publication of this issue was in direct defiance of decisions taken at NC meetings. Further the insert amounted to a public attack

on the IMG. The fact that the cdes as members of the e.b. did nothing to disassociate themselves publicly from the views expressed in this insert is a demonstration of their disloyalty to the IMG and their contempt for the right of the bodies of the IMG to direct the work of its members.

#### APPENDIX NO. 4

June 8th, 1971

To the Convenor of the Commission on "Socialist Woman"

Dear Comrade,

I wish to notify you that I would like to give evidence to the commission on women's work—but find it extremely difficult to get to London at this time because of financial difficulties and family sickness.

I understand that Jane Browne of the Spartacus League has submitted a letter in evidence, and would like to know the evidence it contains—also any new material which the Nottingham women comrades will not be aware of.

I wish to state here, as it seems unlikely that I will be able to appear before the commission on Saturday, that the Nottingham women comrades have, throughout this affair, been put into an almost impossible position—defending the IMG in the Nottingham Women's Group in the face of obvious manipulation and in the face of the utter contempt shown toward them by Leonora Lloyd, through the London Socialist Woman Group, in her handling of the matter of the *Socialist Woman* journal. Contrary to the assumption made in a letter from Leonora Lloyd to the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, they are, and have been, aware of our membership of the IMG.

The instructions of the March 6/7 National Committee—of which I was notified on March 17th—concerned, at that time, only myself, as Jo O'Brien and Toni Gorton were on leave of absence, and Ann Black not then involved with Nottingham Women's Group. They were almost impossible to carry out—files, etc. were not in my possession—there were no "monies." The Prinkipo Press received the last remains of money in the *Socialist Woman* account as it was closed.

No part was taken in handling, producing, or assisting in any way with any journal of the Nottingham Women's Group after instructions to that effect were given.

A letter sent by Jo O'Brien and myself to the National Secretary asking how the last part of the NC instructions should be carried out by us, has not *yet* been answered!

Finally, the Nottingham Branch of the IMG instructed us, with no motivation or discussion with us, to withdraw from the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. This, I wish to stress, is the *only* occasion upon which I have personally received any written instructions throughout this affair.

Shortly after this I was asked by Comrade Jenkins to deliver letters from the IMG women's caucus to the women in the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. When questioned regarding the contents of the letters, he said, "They are to expose the disgusting and disloyal behaviour of the women comrades who have smashed our work in the Women's Liberation Movement." After pressure from comrades in the branch, he gave me a copy of the letter. I



find it extraordinary that I should have been asked to assist in the delivery of letters from the women's caucus to a group from which I had been requested to withdraw the contents of which letters I was to have no knowledge of!

I might, at this point, say that although we disagree with the biased way in which the "Dossier on the Relationship between the IMG and *Socialist Woman*" was compiled, it was made available to activists in the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group quite a long time ago.

Altogether, it appears that at this point in time, the irresponsible and factional behavior of the majority comrades of the Nottingham branch of the IMG is seriously hindering gains that can be made for the movement in Nottingham, as is being done nationally by the women's caucus.

The IMG women's caucus has already gone far in discrediting the IMG in the women's movement nationally, as well as in the Nottingham women's liberation group, but its action of taking over the journal *Socialist Woman* in the particular way it did. The Nottingham women comrades have been put into the almost impossible position of defending the IMG in the women's group whilst being slandered and condemned without trial by the IMG in the Nottingham branch, and throughout the movement.

Because the women's group in Nottingham does not wish to organise any longer as a Socialist Women's Group and orient themselves *solely* toward industrial campaigns, it is assumed that any revolutionary tendency or dynamic is therefore absent. These assumptions are completely false, and are made upon no experience whatever.

This is a very important period in the growth of the women's movement—when political and organisational leadership is essential, and when many could be drawn toward the IMG. Yet—at this precise moment, without any discussion taking place and without any motivation being given, Nottingham women comrades have been instructed to withdraw from the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group.

The irresponsibility of this action is politically criminal, and seems to underline the possibility that factionalism toward Tendency comrades has a priority over revolutionary duty and responsibility.

Fraternally,  
Mary Donnelly

#### APPENDIX NO. 5

26 Park Town  
Oxford  
June 10th, 1971

Dear Leonora Lloyd,

Thank you for your letter of 22/4/71. I am in Oxford until mid-September, cut off from the two groups to which I belong in Nottingham. So I am replying to your letter as an individual who was a member of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee from October 1969.

You say that our letter should have been addressed

to the IMG women's caucus. I do not suppose any of us had heard of such a body. We addressed it to the London Socialist Woman Group because it was this group which you had proposed (by telephone) should take over our journal. The editorial on p. 1 of the first (pirated) issue does nothing to dispel this impression: nowhere is a woman's caucus or the IMG mentioned.

I pass on to your next point. I am sure it is true to say that *Socialist Woman* was started by a group of women of whom one was a member of the IMG. The IMG never expressed in the pages of the journal any direct proprietary interest. We were meaning, I think, open, public interest. Of course members of the IMG have helped us, just as we non-IMG members have helped the IMG from time to time. Since it was the very first journal of the women's liberation movement, *many* groups helped with the sales: not only the IMG. Incidentally, when I left Nottingham in March there was a large sum outstanding, owing to us by the London Soc. W. Gr. for copies of *SW* vol. II, no. 5, which had been taken on a sale or return basis and not returned. Some people felt this was a case of "then the helping hand struck again!"

I know *Black Dwarf* advertised *Socialist Woman* for a long time. But does this really imply IMG interest? Even if it does, such interest would not justify the take-over. I am a publisher of socialist poem-posters. They are advertised by Agit-prop and in Red Notes. But such "interest" does not give *them* control over *me*. *Red Mole* advertised us for a short time. The same applies.

Two lies were being circulated by IMG members in Nottingham just before I left—the circulators believing them to be true. The first lie stated that if one looked through early copies of *Socialist Woman*, one would find the participation of the IMG in its foundation clearly set forth. This is untrue. The second lie stated that there was always a majority of IMG women on the editorial board of *Socialist Woman*. It was against this lie that I (not Rose Knight with whom you may have confused me) spoke at the Leeds WNCC. Eleven issues were published. There was a majority of non-IMG women on the editorial board for three of these issues (vol. I, nos. 1, 2, & 3). The numbers were equal in the cases of four issues (vol. I, no. 4, vol. II, nos. 1, 2, & 3). Only for four issues out of eleven were there a majority of IMG women on the editorial board (vol. I, no. 5, vol. II nos. 4 & 5 and vol. III, no. 1). Not that this mattered. The non-IMG members including myself were present at editorial discussions. But never once do I remember any dissent. I do not know whether the IMG ever had a majority in the group itself. By the time of the proposed take-over in Jan. and Feb. 1971, the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee had a membership of thirty-five rising. Of these, only four were members of the IMG and 2 members of the SL. Heaven knows the IMG members commanded everyone's admiration for their initiative, dedication and drive: a number of non-IMG women were feeling drawn towards the IMG in consequence. But there were six or more non-IMG women who put a great deal of effort into the work of the group and another half dozen non-IMG women who came along, as often as not, to what was going on.

Another piece of justification for the take-over which I have come across both in London and Oxford runs as follows. The IMG members of the Nott. Soc. W. Comm. did not tell the non-IMG members what was going on. Had we known the full facts we should have welcomed

the take-over. Now, since leaving Nottingham, I have learned of the "Tendency" and to what extent it lies behind the take-over. The suggestion that IMG members should have told the Nottingham group all this is most absurd. Surely internal squabbles should be kept private—*within the section*. To the outside world the section should present a united front. It was the very loyalty of the IMG members of our group, and not malice, that kept us in ignorance. Although, had we been told the full story I doubt very much whether it would have helped you!

Now may I tell you, as an outsider to the IMG, how the whole thing looks. Big Brother or Big Brothers (not, I think, sisters) on your Political Committee wished to smother certain opinions that were being expressed in *Socialist Woman*. Perhaps also, we believe, the committee thought it time that the IMG had another publication in which to put over its policy. Obviously the easiest thing would be to take-over a going concern, and thus avoid all the fag of building up circulation, subscriptions, etc.

At one of our meetings (on Jan. 10th), a letter was read from London Soc. W. Group signed by someone with a name like Jacquay Hayman suggesting: a) that all Soc. Women's Groups should march together in the March demo; and b) that all should attend a separate meeting afterwards. This second proposal had a bizarre and slightly sinister ring about it. We wrote asking for an explanation. None was forthcoming.

Then at our meeting on Jan. 24th, we learned of your astonishing proposal that the Lond. Soc. W's Group should take over our journal and of your offer to meet us on Feb. 15th. I must confess that I wanted to give your proposal very short shrift. But under IMG influence we decided on the more sisterly course of asking you for a written explanation. The feeling of the group was that it would be a waste of time (which we could ill afford) to meet you to discuss a proposal which appeared utterly outrageous and unreasonable; and which we must reject unless reasons (and good ones) were forthcoming.

This request for an explanation was put to you once by telephone and twice by letter. You refused a written explanation. Your arrogant message (to the effect that would we please hurry up and decide on the take-over because you wanted to bring out an edition in time for the March demo) was received by the group who then told you categorically that we would agree to no take-over. In spite of this your group went ahead and stole our mag.

By doing this, you committed an illegal act: not a crime but a tort. We could have sued you or served an injunction. But of course we did not do anything so unsisterly and uncomradely. You doubtless counted on this and thus put yourself on the lowest level of capitalist expropriator who, if he can get away with it, will ask first and, if refused, just grab.

Some version or other of these facts is widely known throughout the left. It has resulted in great distrust of the IMG. For example, a week or so ago I learned that on May 21st, the IMG had commanded its branches in Oxford, Nottingham, and some Scotts town whose name I forget, to "take over the Claimants Unions." I have no doubt that no such order was given—perhaps help to these unions was suggested—but this rumour is an indication of how things stand.

Now I admire the IMG in the sense that I have many friends in it and many of them I admire exceedingly. I should like to loose my anger over what has happened and I should like then perhaps to mediate. To this extent I should be prepared to meet you and P. P. although I don't suppose you would wish to bother with one of us and I am pretty sure that the rest of the group (The Nottingham Women's Freedom Group as it is now called) will not meet you. But I must warn you that, while what appear to me to be lies are used as a justification for what has been done, then I shall continue my denunciations both in public and private. So, I am sure, will the rest of us.

With good wishes, too  
Audrey Beecham

C-44

*Extract from Minutes of IMG National Committee 23rd/24th October 1971.*

WOMEN'S WORK: Surgit reported.

Motion from Williams: NC urges all women comrades to give full support to actions organised on the abortion issue and express our solidarity with the international actions taking place throughout the world on November 20th.

Addendum from Jones: This is to be part of the normal activity of the IMG in its work in the field of women's work and implies no priority for an abortion campaign. Comrades will under no circumstances raise reformist slogans such as "repeal of the abortion laws" (Addendum carried: 17 f, 3 ag, 2 ab., substantive motion carried: 16 f, 0 ag, 6 ab.)

M/C that papers be written urgently on women's work for discussion in the leadership and SWG conference be postponed until this discussion takes place (unan).

C-54 A

*Extracts from Minutes of IMG National Committee 10th/11th July 1971*

*Socialist Woman Dispute*

M/C that Petersen and Jenkins consider concretely how to help the comrades concerned to carry out March 6/7 NC decisions (13 f, 3 ag, 2 ab.).

M/C that the charges be laid before the comrades concerned in accordance with the constitution (unan).

Motion put that Petersen submit to the PC a statement for the comrades concerned to make  
Amendment: change PC to Secretariat (*carried*, 2 ab.).  
Substantive motion put (*carried*, 2 ab.).

## C. The Disputes in Scotland

*Statement by the Tendency on the suspension of Comrade Ricardo from the IMG*

T-6

*Letters and Statements Relating to Majority and Minority Relations Since the IEC, Oct. 29-31, 1971, submitted by the Tendency, Dec. 19, 1971*

November 4th, 1971

Pat Jordan,  
National Secretary,  
International Marxist Group

Dear Comrade Jordan,

Since writing my last letter to you I now find it is impossible for me to make a journey down to London this weekend.

I regret that I will be unable therefore to explain to the PC at its meeting on November 6th why I consider the NC decision to suspend me for 6 months should not be implemented.

In view of this factor I would request the PC to defer the implementation of the NC decision.

In the meantime of course I will work within the framework of democratic centralism and carry out the decisions as decided upon at National Conference and by the leading bodies of the organisation.

Yours fraternally,  
Anderson

London 5/11/71

Pat Jordan,  
National Secretary,  
International Marxist Group

Dear Comrade Jordan,

Please find enclosed the statement from the Tendency regarding the suspension of comrade Ricardo from the IMG. I enclose several copies to facilitate business at the PC.

Please let me know what your requirements are regarding copies of the "Documentation concerning the disciplinary question in Scotland," submitted to the United Secretariat by the Tendency.

Will you please let me have 20 copies of the evidence submitted to the Commission set up on the *Socialist Woman* question as soon as possible since I have to send additional copies to the United Secretariat. (It was originally submitted by Connie Harris and subsequently endorsed by the Tendency.)

Revolutionary greetings,  
Connie Harris

On October 24th the National Committee suspended Comrade Ricardo from membership of the IMG for a period of three months.

The Tendency recognises that in a democratic centralist organisation, the majority has the right to suspend from membership any of its members. The Tendency in no way challenges the *right* of the majority to suspend Comrade Ricardo or anyone else. What is challenged by the Tendency is the manner and methods used by leading comrades in implementing political decisions and in the laying of charges resulting from the use of these methods.

The Tendency considers that in the given circumstances Comrade Ricardo acted in a responsible and disciplined manner and we are, therefore, opposed to the NC decision to suspend him. Consequently we will use our democratic and constitutional right to get this disciplinary action rescinded.

Meanwhile Comrade Ricardo will continue to work in the interests of the IMG and the FI and to meet with the Tendency.

5/11/71

### FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE PC

As a member of the National Committee, I am writing to complain about the failure of the Political Committee to carry out the NC decision of October 23/24.

(1) The decision to refer the charges against Comrade Anderson to the International Control Commission is in complete contradiction to the NC decision that Comrade Anderson be suspended for 6 months as from the next PC, unless an appeal was accepted.

With regard to Scotland, we are now in the amazing situation that Ricardo, who was on a less serious charge, is suspended, whilst Anderson is let off the hook. I know about international pressure, but what the ICC will make of such inconsistency I dread to think. We are simply giving the SWP and the Tendency more ammunition in their campaign to depict our disciplinary procedures as being arbitrary and partial. The King resolution partially recognized this, although had it been carried, yet another NC decision would have been overthrown.

What the PC is doing in practice is implementing the resolution that King moved at the NC: "The whole affair be referred to an ICC and no action be taken until then." Comrades, this resolution was defeated by 17 votes to 3 at the NC. I would remind the PC that they are subordinate to the NC. Whilst additional information must be taken into account, the PC cannot simply ignore the NC decisions; otherwise, why have an NC?

With regard to the *Socialist Woman* affair, I hope that the PC will implement the NC decision that the special meeting of the PC be called to consider the charges against AG, AB, JO and MD. We have pissed about on this long enough. The conference was 6 months ago. Resolutions have been passed at NCs like confetti and still the PC prevaricates. What do comrades, not on the latter select body, have to do to get the PC to carry out decisions?

The trouble is that you, the PC, are allowing yourselves to be intimidated by the SWP and its allies. Like Chamberlain you imagine that each act of appeasement will reduce the heat on us. This is incorrect. Each inconsistent action, each attempt to turn the boat around in mid-stream, will add to the arguments of the opposition. We have laid charges against these women comrades. Yet we don't have the guts to press them. Why? An outsider could well suggest because we can't substantiate them. Far from being ultra-liberal, we are preventing the women comrades having the means to disprove these charges. Do you imagine that these arguments will not occur in the SWP? We must proceed with the charges quickly, otherwise the SWP will make shit of us.

I am convinced that if we can demonstrate to the International that we are not moving against a tendency because of political disagreement, but we are simply dealing with gross violations of discipline in a fair consistent fashion, then we can come out of this mess unscathed. To make charges against comrades, and then not proceed with them, or not act upon them when proved is not fair, consistent, democratic, liberal and most definitely not impressive. I call upon the PC to act on NC decisions re Anderson and the women comrades.

Tyler

## ESTABLISHMENT OF CAUCUS OF MAJORITY SUPPORTERS IN SCOTLAND

At an informal meeting of supporters of the majority position within the IMG in Scotland, taking place in Glasgow on the weekend 6th-7th November, proposals for the establishment of a caucus of majority supporters were placed before the meeting. The proposals (given below) received an indicative vote of 13 in favour, 1 abstention, 0 against.

### PROPOSALS

#### 1) Preamble

The work of the IMG in Scotland has been considerably hampered by the internal situation in the last period. The political and organisational disputes between members of the Tendency and the rest of the organization have made it difficult to extend the influence of the organization, educate the membership, or develop perspectives for our work.

When the international implications of this situation are taken into account, it is clear that the responsibility placed on those members of the branch who accept the policies and leadership of the IMG is a heavy one. We therefore declare our intention to meet regularly as the majority caucus of the Scottish IMG, and we outline below the functions and terms of reference of our caucus.

#### 2) Functions of the majority caucus of the Scottish IMG

a) to counterbalance the advantages gained by the Tendency through their ability to meet and discuss the tactics

which they will apply within the IMG units.

b) to ensure the discipline and co-ordination of the majority supporters in face of the problems created by the internal situation.

c) to ensure the education, training and assimilation into the ideas and methods of the IMG and the FI of new members, in a situation where the factional atmosphere within the Scottish IMG cuts across this, and a large proportion of the majority supporters are recent recruits.

d) to ensure the implementation of the policies of the IMG and the decisions of the leadership of the IMG, where this is disrupted by the internal situation.

#### 3) Terms of reference of the majority caucus

a) The majority caucus is not a political tendency within the organization; is not seeking to fight for an alternative political line within the IMG; its role is to defend and ensure the implementation of the policies adopted by the last national conference of the IMG, and the decisions of the leadership elected by that conference. These are not the policies and leadership of one section of the IMG, but within the principles of democratic centralism, are the policies and leadership of the entire organization.

b) The meetings of the majority caucus are open to all members of the IMG who are not members of the Tendency; since their membership implies acceptance of the policies and leadership of the IMG. Votes in the caucus are indicative of the opinion of the caucus but are not binding. On the approval of the participants, we will seat members of the leadership, and visitors from other branches or sections of the FI, who are not members of the Tendency, at caucus meetings.

c) The caucus has been instituted as a result of the present internal situation in the IMG, and if there is any change in this situation, the caucus will not be maintained on its present basis.

This statement will be circulated to all members of the IMG in Scotland not in the Tendency, who are asked to become signatories to it and participate in its activities. Copies will also be circulated amongst the national leadership and will be available to members of the Tendency.

Motions put to meeting of majority supporters in Scotland, weekend of 6th-7th November. Votes recorded in order: For; Against; Abst.

The Scottish majority supporters at this meeting demand an immediate recall of the National Committee to discuss the unprincipled capitulation embodied in the Political Committee decision concerning Anderson which is blatantly contemptuous of democratic centralism within the National Committee and of the Democratic Rights of the Scottish membership.

Passed 9;3;4

That this meeting condemns the failure of the national leadership to prosecute charges against members of the Tendency who have broken the discipline of the organization.

Defeated 4;5;7

That the Scottish majority supporters present at this meeting demand that the National Committee discuss fully the failure of the PC to hear the appeal of Cde. Anderson and the substitution of an arbitrary and immediate overturning of the democratically arrived at decision to suspend Comrade Anderson from membership of the IMG. It further calls upon the PC to document for the membership its reasons for this decision. Passed 15;0;1

That this meeting requests the majority NC members in Scotland to raise all the above questions within the leadership, and to ensure the full attention of the NC to them. Passed 15;0;1

That future meetings of the majority caucus be convened by a committee consisting of Comrade Paisley, Comrade McGovern, and a representative from Edinburgh. Passed 8;2;4

That future meetings of the majority caucus be convened by the majority supporters on the Scottish Committee. Defeated 2;8;4

An indicative vote was taken on the terms of reference of the proposed majority caucus:  
13 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention

The following letter from J. Ball to Petersen has been circulated to NC members and Organisers but the comrades against whom Comrade Ball makes allegations have not yet been sent a copy.

Comrade Adair, upon receipt of the "Extracts from Open Letter to Certain Glasgow Tendency Members," (submitted by the majority) and sent to him from Brussels, telephoned leading Tendency comrades in Glasgow to get a copy of the complete "Open Letter."

He discovered that no Tendency comrades had to this date received a copy of the "Open Letter."

Comrade Williams telephoned Comrade Jordan for a copy and was told that he had not seen a copy but had taken the "extracts" down over the telephone.

Williams and Adair  
December 19th, 1971

*For the Attention of all NC Members and Organisers*

Letter from J Ball to Petersen.

Dear Comrade Petersen,

I wish to draw your attention as National Secretary of the IMG to a matter of considerable importance concerning the behaviour of members of the Tendency in Glasgow, and to ask you to bring it to the attention of the relevant bodies of the IMG and the International. I also wish to seek guidance as to the course of action which should be followed.

At the branch meeting on Tuesday November 23rd,

members of the Glasgow Tendency, notable comrades Joe and Gylda, raised criticism of certain members of the organisation, notably Comrades Allan (a recent woman recruit) and Ball. The same criticisms were raised in greater detail by Comrade Campbell in the woman's fraction of the Glasgow IMG. The main factual points around which these criticisms revolved were that at a demonstration called on abortion and contraception on Saturday 20th November:

(i) Comrades Allan, Ball and others had argued, at the outset of the demonstration, that a vote should be taken as to whether demonstrators should march to Strathclyde University, or should make their way singly there;

(ii) Comrades Allan and Ball had voted against marching as a body.

The branch asked the comrades to document their criticisms, as the time at its disposal for a discussion was limited, and the time at which the criticisms were raised had been allotted to a structured political discussion on women's work.

The following Thursday, a Red Circle meeting was held to discuss "The Potential for Revolution in Russia Today." The speaker was Comrade Ball. After the meeting had been in progress for about half an hour, Comrades Joe, Myers, Ricardo, Gylda and two women contacts came in. At the end of the meeting, one of the women raised the question of the conduct of Comrade Ball at the demonstration, and accused him of sabotaging it. A lengthy discussion then followed, in which Comrades Ball, Reuther and Reuther's wife (who is not in the IMG) argued with the women comrades concerned and attempted to point out what they felt to be some of the grosser factual errors in the assertions being made, and to explain their own positions.

During this entire discussion, most of the time was taken up by lengthy contributions from Comrades Joe, Myers and Ricardo, in which they repeatedly attacked Comrade Ball for male chauvinism, attempting to sabotage the demonstration, failing to understand the nature of the oppression of women and using their influence as males over women to dissuade women from demonstrating. The attack was clearly focused on Comrade Ball personally.

This is extremely serious. In an organised, systematic and unsolicited intervention, four members of the Tendency publicly attacked a fellow member of the organisation, at a meeting specifically designated for a purpose entirely different from that of discussing Saturday's demonstration. Such action constitutes a direct breach of discipline under section 10e of the constitution (actions detrimental to the interests of the IMG). Five contacts were present apart from Tendency comrades and the members of Women in Action. Three have been making enquiries about the Fourth International in Germany, where they come from, and one of these have been helping us with our work in Clydebank. The remaining two were completely mystified having come for the first time to the Red Circle for a discussion on Russia. Not only does such an action render the Red Circle itself a joke, but it also makes a mockery of the IMG.

Such a flagrant breach is consistent only with a split policy. Over the last month, the majority has leaned over backward to provide a framework in which differences can be discussed within the organisation, whilst maintaining an outwardly united face. In this context the action which took place on Thursday is the action, not of a loyal grouping, but one which considers its differences with the IMG majority to be so great that it cannot confine their expression to within the organisation.

I should like to make the personal point that I agreed to come to Glasgow specifically to work for the IMG. I have as yet taken no job, and my full time is taken up with political work. One of the early priorities I adopted was the building of the Red Circle, which was put into the hands of the Spartacus League by the IMG. The behaviour of the Tendency has already jeopardised an extremely important area of work and has possibly lost us the results of a month's patient work. This is entirely separate from the disastrous effect which their actions must have had on our work amongst women. If this is indicative of the future behaviour which can be expected, then no perspective of building the Glasgow branch can exist. I ask you to take this matter with the utmost seriousness, and to impress upon the leading members of the International to do likewise.

Fraternally,  
J. Ball

T-8

*Documentation Concerning the Disciplinary Question in Scotland*, submitted by the Tendency, Oct. 1971

Within the past few weeks, Comrade Sheila Lymond of Edinburgh has been expelled from the IMG by the Forth Valley Branch. Comrade Anderson of Glasgow has been suspended and charges have been laid against nine members of the IMG in Scotland. At the Scottish aggregate on 21/22 August "certain Scottish comrades" were "severely censured" for using their democratic right to vote at the National Conference of the IMG, 19/20 June 1971 (See Appendix No. 2).

All ten of the comrades who have charges against them or who have been expelled or suspended have joined the Tendency since the conference.

The purpose of this document is to outline the developments in Scotland over the past few months and to submit evidence which clearly reveals that a witch hunt is being conducted against members of the Tendency in Scotland.

Other comrades in the Glasgow branch, as can be verified from the branch records, have been as "indisciplined" and as "guilty" of contravening democratic centralism as it is alleged the Tendency comrades have. Charges have only been laid, however, against members of the Tendency as is shown in the letter to the NC from Com-

rade Blair (Comrade Blair is the Glasgow branch organiser and a supporter of the majority politically). This letter draws the attention of the NC to the fact that a war was being waged against the Tendency comrades in the Glasgow branch in the most unscrupulous, unconstitutional and undemocratic manner. Comrade Blair appeals to the NC to put an end to these practices and to guarantee the democratic rights of all members (See Appendix No. 1).

This report will outline some of the provocative and factional acts against the Tendency comrades in Scotland which the majority leadership of the IMG has initiated and condoned in its attempts to settle the political differences within the IMG by means of organisational reprisals. Furthermore, it reveals that this leadership initiated and allowed factionalism against the Tendency to interfere with and break up the normal democratic life of the Glasgow branch. The majority proceeded in a roughshod manner, having little or no concern for the democratic rights of the Glasgow branch and its members. A viable section of the Fourth International cannot be built under such circumstances.

The provocations and factionalism against the Glasgow branch do not begin with the disciplinary actions and the laying of charges against Tendency comrades, as can be seen by reference to the *Text of Statement made to the Glasgow Branch* by Gylda dated 13/7/71 and sent to the NC with a request for it to be circulated to the membership (Appendix No. 3). The majority leadership ignored the request.

In the months preceding the June 71 National Conference it became clear that political differences were developing in the Glasgow branch. Instead of dealing with these differences in a political manner, some comrades who supported the majority point of view acted in a provocative and undemocratic manner. During the pre-conference discussion period, Comrade Cameron, a member of the Glasgow branch and NC, sent a letter, which was also signed by five other members of the branch, to the NC. This letter (Appendix No. 4) constituted an attack on the majority of the Glasgow branch members and called for an investigation into the Glasgow branch. The Glasgow branch majority was accused of "capitulation to liberalism and pacifism" because it considered the use of such slogans as "Victory to the NLF," "Power to the PRG," "Create 2, 3, Many Vietnams" on demonstrations against the Vietnam War to be a question of tactics. The letter claimed that the branch had "been confronted with the worship of 'mass movements.'"

The following letter from the Glasgow branch organiser (Comrade Blair) to the NC was read out to the NC at its meeting on April 15, 1971. The letter explains fully the views of the Glasgow branch regarding the democratic procedure for discussing and resolving differences.

Glasgow, 30.4.71

Dear Comrades,

I understand that the NC is to be asked by Comrade Cameron to discuss a letter signed by himself and Comrades Scott, Windsor, Night, Sullivan and McPherson which makes certain allegations about the

policies of the Glasgow Branch, the political positions of certain members, and calls for the NC to institute a commission of inquiry into the affairs of the branch.

It may appear peculiar to members of the NC that as the organiser of the branch I am only in a position to "understand" that this letter is to be presented. I should therefore explain the history of this affair.

On 30th March Cameron intimated that he intended to refer the question of IMG/SL relations in Glasgow to the PC of the IMG and the PB of the SL. This was not done (see PC Mins 12th April) in spite of the fact that on 31st March it was stated by Cameron to the Glasgow SL branch that an "investigation was pending" (see relevant minutes). Attempts to clarify the matter were thwarted by Cameron's absence from the meetings of 6th and 13th April.

On 20th April the matter was raised in Cameron's presence. He

(i) denied that he had told the SL branch that an investigation was pending (note however that no amendment has ever been made to the SL minutes of 31st March)

(ii) stated that he was preparing a letter on the subject for the coming NC. He gave an undertaking that this would be available for distribution to branch members by the meeting of 27th April.

At this stage the branch passed the following resolution:

"This branch objects to the fact that Comrade Cameron has stated his intention to ask for an investigation of IMG/SL relations in Glasgow. The branch therefore declares that before such a step is taken the branch should be informed what is the basis for such an investigation and that an investigation should be conducted by the branch itself before any further public steps if these are necessary, are taken" (see minutes 20th April).

On 27th April Cameron arrived at the meeting without any letter prepared. On questioning he stated that:

(i) he had now decided it was necessary to deal with other political question and thus broaden the scope of the letter and the inquiry

(ii) other members of the branch (those named above) would be signing the letter. He gave a brief outline of the contents of the letter which contained amongst other things characterisations of the political positions and actions of 6 comrades in the branch and series of proposals for setting up a commission on terms which would hamper the freedom of action of the branch.

The branch then passed the following resolution:

"This branch recommends to the NC that it take no decision on the letter of Comrade Cameron and others which this branch has had no opportunity to discuss and which is being sent in violation of our decisions of 20th April. It instructs the comrades to prepare discussion materials on the questions they are raising in order to facilitate the working out of a series of perspectives for the branch to be discussed immediately after the forthcoming national conference" (see minutes 27th April).

It was also revealed at this meeting to the branch for the first time that the matter of Glasgow SL/IMG relations had been raised by Comrade Keats at the

SL NC on 18th April. The Glasgow SL branch had been informed of this but no word was given to the IMG branch on 20th April.

Cameron then undertook that he would supply copies of the letter "today or tomorrow" for members of the branch and in particular that Campbell and myself would receive these. They did not arrive. When I asked him at 7.30 am today to supply me with a copy so that I could make known my views on the matter to the NC he promised to do this by 4 pm. On telephoning subsequent to its non-arrival I now find that he has left on the 4 pm train for London.

I am sorry to bore comrades with such seemingly petty details but they are necessary in order to establish the fundamental point which was in the mind of the branch in passing the resolutions of 20th and 27th April. Namely that throughout this entire affair Cameron has quite deliberately avoided raising this matter inside the one place where it is proper that it should in the first instance be discussed: the Glasgow branch itself. Furthermore that he has managed to arrive at a position where the only documentation on political matters to be laid before the NC is that produced by Cameron himself and no opportunity whatsoever has been given to other members of the branch either to state their positions on the political questions involved or to defend themselves against allegations. Comrades will comb in vain through the minutes of the Glasgow branch for any reference to either the matter of SL/IMG relationships or the wider issues which I understand are now placed before you having been raised in the branch itself by any of the comrades concerned. No attempt has been made to open a discussion on the perspectives of the branch or to change the leadership. In fact the only occasion on which anything approaching this was raised was on 30th March by Comrade Owen who motioned: "In view of the fact there has been a serious deterioration of working relationships of the comrades of Glasgow IMG's EC which may have a damaging effect on the functioning of the branch the branch decided to hold elections for a new EC as soon as possible."

This was overwhelmingly defeated with Cameron himself stating that he considered the present personnel should be maintained until the conference after which it would be possible to have a full discussion on perspectives for the coming year and the election of a new leadership.

In the light of this position it seemed a trifle ironic that the final proposal read out to us on Tuesday night asked that the NC instruct comrades to document their political differences!

In my opinion the NC should:

(i) endorse the Glasgow branch resolution of 27/4/71. For you to take any other step would be a very bad blow against democracy in our organisation. The basic unit of our movement is the branch. It is here that in the first instance political differences should be discussed. It is quite unprecedented for the national leadership to take such a serious step as is proposed without the membership of the branch *even having had the opportunity to express their opinions on the matters raised*. It would be doubly undemocrat-



ic to do so in this situation in which not only has no discussion taken place in the branch but 12 members have been prevented from even seeing what positions are being put forward by this minority.

(ii) the NC should resolve not to discuss the political issues about the functioning of the branch which are raised in this letter. Such a discussion in the absence of the views of the majority of the branch being represented would be absolutely impermissible.

For you to take any other steps than these, which are precisely those I would have proposed had I been able to be present this weekend, would be a serious blow against democracy within our movement and an acceptance of the idea that comrades who find themselves in a minority on some question can automatically make appeal to the NC.

John Blair  
30th April 1971

In spite of the clear position of the branch as stated in the above letter, the NC decided to immediately send a "fact-finding" commission, consisting of Comrades King, McGovern, and Singh to investigate the Glasgow branch. This commission spent two days in Glasgow. According to the branch organiser, it concerned itself with investigating the political opinions of branch members and showed little interest in the work the branch was involved in.

At the PC meeting on May 15/71 Comrade King handed out copies of the commission's report (see Appendix No. 5). This report was accepted by the PC by 5 votes for and 1 against, despite the fact that no member of the Glasgow branch was present to discuss this report, nor was any member of the branch even aware of its contents. A request from the Glasgow branch organiser that he should be present, if and when the commission presented the report to the PC, was ignored. The report sought to divide the members of the Glasgow branch into two opposing political groups, which the commission labelled "A" and "B." These groups in fact existed only in the minds of the investigating commission.

It admonished these branch members who it seemed had still to make up their minds on the political issues being discussed in the pre-conference period, thus making it difficult for the investigating commission to slot such comrades into the commission's groups "A" and "B."

The report states:

These comrades who say that they support neither one group nor the other must make a political decision. The Fact-Finding Commission agrees with them that many organisational sins have been committed but before they can obtain the credibility amongst comrades to correct them, they must firstly show where they stand in the political disputes.

Perhaps it is too naive to think that the time when comrades are required to show where they stand in the "political disputes" is when they are required to vote on the issues, and not in the middle of the pre-conference discussion period. The "Fact-Finding Commission" appears to have been in a hurry to line people up politically.

This desire to pressurise comrades into making up their

minds was shared by the national secretary, Comrade Petersen, also. In the course of the pre-conference discussions, Comrade Petersen thought it necessary to send two "personal" letters to the Glasgow branch. The first advised that comrades holding certain views should "perhaps openly join the Tendency." The Glasgow branch in reply requested that the national secretary should reconsider his letter in the light of the views he had expressed in his "Open Letter to the Williams Tendency" during the pre-conference discussion period of the previous year. This request from the Glasgow branch prompted Comrade Petersen to reply:

... if Comrades consider it a slur that I put in a remark about 'openly join the Tendency' I will readily re-phrase that. Actually my original letter was hurriedly written and had I checked it over, I would probably have changed that. I would suggest that this be changed to 'perhaps form a tendency.' Seeing that the Glasgow practice is to minute nearly everything including it would seem grunts and groans, please minute this . . .

(See Appendix No. 6)

In a pre-conference discussion period, a time when ideas and differences should be raised and clarified, such letters as those from Comrade Petersen do not engender the best atmosphere for a democratic discussion—they do just the opposite.

No report was made to the June National Conference on the Glasgow branch situation—no mention was made of the "fact-finding commission" or the report it made following its investigations. The method of election of the NC at the conference, initiated by the majority leadership, effectively excluded from the NC those Comrades in Scotland who at that time indicated their support for the general line of the Tendency documents. Comrade Campbell who supported these views was dropped from the NC while Comrade Blair (although supporting the majority politically) was also dropped on the basis that he was organisationally soft on the Tendency and therefore did not possess the required qualifications for leadership despite the fact that he had been a NC member of the IMG since its inception. Both of these comrades were founding members of the IMG and have played a key role in building the Glasgow branch which, until factionalism became rampant, was regarded as the model branch of the IMG.

Just three days after the conference a provocative attack was made on the Glasgow branch by the Editorial Board of Red Mole (see Appendix 7). This attack was made in the national Letter to Members dated 23 June 1971 and circulated to the entire membership in a way calculated to prejudice the membership against the Glasgow branch. It was done without any prior discussion in the leading bodies of the IMG and without the knowledge of the Glasgow branch. Naturally, the Glasgow branch protested this attack and endorsed the letter which the branch organiser sent to Comrade Petersen (see Appendix No. 7). Instead of recognising the justice of the protest from the Glasgow branch, the majority leadership used this incident to pass a resolution submitted by Comrade King (see Appendix No. 8) which enabled the PC to take over important functions of the branch. This resolution prohibited the Glasgow branch from even

discussing one of the key areas of its work—namely the activities of its members working in the Spartacus League.

The PC's decision was based on the fact that the ideas of half the Glasgow branch members differed from those of the majority leadership.

At the time of the UCS work-in, the political committee sent Comrades King and McGovern to Glasgow together with a number of other comrades who made short visits from time to time. On the surface such actions appear very positive and encouraging. However, in the particular circumstances, the UCS development was exploited to take further organisational reprisals against the Tendency.

An atmosphere of hysteria and crisis was created. The PC instructed Glasgow comrades to give a written explanation in advance if they were unable to take part in any activity. No one could leave Glasgow without the permission of the PC or its representatives, Comrades King and McGovern. With two comrades being given full power to issue instructions and orders and control over all the activities of the branch, i.e. power to over-rule democratically-arrived-at branch decisions—on the nature of the intervention in the UCS situation for instance—the stage was set for a witch hunt of the Tendency members.

Comrade Anderson, a young trade union militant, was suspended in an unconstitutional and undemocratic manner. He was suspended by the secretary on the basis of a telephone call from Comrade McGovern, for allegedly violating democratic centralism—he refused to carry out a PC directive instructing him to speak at three IMG public meetings in Glasgow on a line with which he was in fundamental disagreement. A line which at that time posed the UCS work-in as "The First Step Towards a Scottish Workers Republic"—a line subsequently dropped by the majority leadership.

Comrade Anderson was also instructed to make a speaking tour of Britain and to present a resolution to his shop stewards committee. This resolution was drawn up by Comrade King without any consultation whatever with Comrade Anderson.

Comrade Anderson was informed of his suspension when he received the following letter:

182 Pentonville Road  
London N.1.  
5/8/71

Dear Comrade,

The Secretariat, having considered a report made by Comrade MacGovern on the question of Comrade Anderson, has decided the following: as the PC instructed Comrade Anderson to speak on behalf of the IMG at three public meetings in solidarity with Clydeside and as Comrade Anderson has refused to carry out this instruction. The Secretariat is left with no alternative but to suspend him from membership of the IMG. Further action will be considered by the next PC.

The Secretariat furthermore instructs members of the Tendency at present in Glasgow to render full co-operation to Comrade MacGovern in his efforts

to organise IMG solidarity with the Clydeside occupation. If they refuse to do so, we shall be forced to take disciplinary action.

Yours fraternally,  
F. Matthews  
pp the Secretariat

copies to Blair, MacGovern, Anderson, Williams and all NC members.

The Glasgow branch, at its meeting 10/8/71, refused to recognise the suspension and Comrade Anderson then received the following letter:

*Copy of letter sent to Comrade Anderson on 12/8/71*

Dear Comrade Anderson,

I am writing on behalf of the Secretariat to clarify the situation regarding your suspension. The Secretariat decided to suspend you from membership of the Glasgow IMG because it was felt that your actions in refusing to carry out the decisions of the Political Committee of the IMG and its authorised representative, created a situation which breached democratic-centralism so blatantly that immediate action was absolutely vital to carry out PC decisions in Glasgow which as you know involved our *total* commitment and solidarity with the Scottish working class.

We would invite you to attend any meeting of the Secretariat within the next four weeks to discuss the matter further with us. Needless to add, if you have changed your position and are now prepared to carry out the decisions of the PC in relation to the struggle in Clydeside etc. we are prepared to reconsider your suspension from the Glasgow branch of the IMG. Your status at the moment is that of a member at large and we regret that we did not make this clear when we informed you of your suspension. As a member at large you are responsible to the PC and the Secretariat and, as we mentioned earlier, we are prepared to consider any appeal against the suspension from you.

Yours fraternally,  
Clarissa  
pp IMG Secretariat

Again the Glasgow branch protested and refused to support Comrade King's attempt to prevent Comrade Anderson from attending branch meetings. The National Secretary then telephoned to say that Comrade Anderson could attend branch meetings but could not vote!

Meanwhile the IMG campaign around the UCS struggle, as directed by the PC representatives, continued. It consisted primarily in attempting to found and build branches of the Claimants Union in areas, some of which were geographically situated away from the Clydeside area. (Claimants unions are organisations set up for people on social security to help them get their full rights.)

Comrade Anderson was *instructed*, again in his absence, to move a resolution at the Glasgow Trades Council calling for support to a newly formed claimants union. Comrade Anderson was informed of this *instruction* when

he was presented with a copy of the resolution just before the start of the Trades Council meeting.

The procedure is for resolutions to be placed on the agenda, except in matters of real urgency, from a branch, after discussion in the branch. Comrade Anderson was attending his first Trades Council Meeting as the delegate from his trade union branch; he did not consider it appropriate to move the resolution without prior discussion in his trade union branch. (When it was subsequently moved by another member of the Trades Council, he voted for it.)

Again no discussion regarding the concrete circumstances in which a comrade is working was considered necessary.

At the IMG/SL aggregate meeting of Aug 15, 71 Comrade King ordered Comrade Ricardo to work full time to found a claimants union branch. Refusing to listen to the reasons why Comrade Ricardo was not able to do this, Comrade King announced that charges would be laid against him. Subsequently, on the basis of reports from Comrades McGovern and King, and without any discussion with Comrades Anderson and Ricardo the Secretariat decided at its meeting on 30/8/71 to draft charges immediately against these comrades and gave Comrades Petersen and Matthews the task of drawing up the charges.

These were presented to the NC as "draft" charges at its meeting of the 5/6 Sept 1971 (see Appendix No. 9). Again neither of the comrades having charges laid against them were invited to the NC to present their case as to why the NC shouldn't make the charges. The NC endorsed the draft charges. Later, the PC referred these charges to the Scottish committee. This committee decided at its meeting on 19/9/71 to call a Scottish aggregate to hear the charges. At the same time, the Scottish committee made further charges against the two comrades and against all other Tendency comrades in Glasgow.

In order to grasp the context of this escalation of the laying of charges on the part of the Scottish committee, it is necessary to look at the history of the Scottish committee.

A Scottish area structure was set up at the Scottish aggregate on 21/8/71. In the preparation for this meeting, a steering committee was set up. The Tendency was excluded from this committee, which in turn proposed a slate for a Scottish committee. This slate also excluded Tendency representation.

At the first Scottish aggregate the resolution was passed which "severely censured" Scottish Tendency comrades for exercising their democratic right to vote at the 19/20 June 1971 National Conference. At the same aggregate resolutions were put to the meeting calling for the expulsion of Comrade Lymond of Edinburgh and Comrade Gylda of Glasgow. No charges had been laid against these comrades and Comrade Gylda was out of the country on vacation and had no knowledge that a resolution calling for his expulsion was on the agenda.

Tendency comrades protested this undemocratic and unconstitutional procedure and after a recess to enable supporters of the majority to caucus, it was decided to refer the resolution re Comrade Lymond to her branch and remit the resolution re Comrade Gylda to the Scottish committee to investigate. A commission of three was set up and the Scottish committee subsequently laid charges against Comrade Gylda on the basis of a majority report since it never heard or discussed the minority report

from the commission (see Appendices Nos. 1 & 10). Comrade Lymond was subsequently expelled by the Forth Valley branch (see *Statement by Tendency on the Expulsion of Comrade Lymond* from the IMG by the Forth Valley branch on 12th September 1971.)

The charges laid against Comrade Stevens by the Scottish committee (see Appendix No. 11) has an interesting history.

It will be remembered that visiting comrades to Glasgow at the time of the UCS work-in were given by the PC full voting rights in the branch.

At the Glasgow branch meeting of 17/8/71 a visiting member from the Oxford branch, M. T., proposed that Comrade Stevens be instructed to pay some outstanding dues to the Spartacus League within one week. Comrade Stevens disputed the amount in question and stated his willingness to settle any amount outstanding immediately after clarifying the amount by consulting the financial records.

At the branch meeting a week later, another visiting member, G. F., proposed that, in view of Comrade Steven's "refusal" to obey the instruction of the previous week, the matter should be referred to the PC. This was rejected by the branch. Comrade G. F. then announced his intention of taking the matter to the PC anyway. (It might be noted that Comrade Stevens was not the only member of the Glasgow branch who, it was alleged, had dues outstanding to the Spartacus League—but she was the only comrade "instructed" and "charged".)

Comrade Campbell had charges laid against her by the Scottish committee (see Appendix No. 12). The alleged "crime" of Comrade Campbell, in sending out an agenda for a Women in Action meeting, was never raised with her at the Glasgow branch meeting or the Women's Caucus. Nor did individuals criticise this action to her.

The undemocratic method involved in the charge against Comrade Campbell is but another example of the witch hunt against the Tendency.

In addition to the "charges" outlined above, the Scottish committee laid a further charge against each member of the Tendency in Glasgow (see Appendix No. 13).

These charges it seems were threatened at the meeting of the Glasgow branch on 7/9/71 when all but one of the supporters of the majority withdrew from the meeting stating that they "were going to organise separately to carry out the business of the Glasgow branch of the IMG . . ." and declared their intention to lay charges against the members of the Tendency (see Appendix No. 14). This walk-out included five newly recruited members, some of whom had no experience whatever of working with Tendency members and did not even know any of them.

With the exception of one comrade all of those who walked out abstained from the regularly organised IMG political activities for two weeks, including branch meetings, Red Mole sales, Red Circles, Irish demonstration ad hoc meetings, as well as fraction and caucus meetings.

This manoeuvre by the majority supporters, hoping to exclude Tendency comrades from political life in the IMG, was supported by Comrade Petersen who was present at the meeting and set the scene for the charges subsequently laid by the Scottish committee.

It is not possible to go into all the details of the many other provocations against the Tendency but the procedure

followed and the methods initiated and condoned by the majority leadership outlined here could only have had a single goal in view—to drive the Tendency out of the movement. The branch minutes, protests and Tendency statements as appended to this report, record these provocations. These records also show that comrades in the Glasgow branch have fought continuously against the erosion of democracy within the organisation and for an end to the factionalism in order that constructive political work could be done and the political differences clarified.

The intervention of the majority national leadership has resulted in the fragmentation of our forces in Scotland, disrupted the political work of the branch and caused acute friction and bad feeling between members of the IMG. Such a situation can only hold back the building of a viable Trotskyist movement, able to intervene effectively in the unfolding class struggles in Scotland. Furthermore much of the good work done in the past by the Glasgow branch has been destroyed.

The Glasgow branch has been regarded as the model branch of the IMG and frequently alluded to as such by the national leadership. In April 1969, when there was a big downturn in the forces which mobilised against the war in Vietnam, the Glasgow comrades were able through a united front to organise four major activities against the war. These took the form of meetings and demonstrations, and new sections of the labour and trade union movement were involved. Comrade King in his investigating commission report was obliged to state that "The Glasgow branch has a good record of past activity. Its finances are invariably in good standing and its literature sales, particularly the Red Mole, are good."

The Tendency has made many statements of protest against the factionalism of the majority, the curtailment of the democratic rights of a minority, and the violation of democratic centralism as practised by the majority.

It was obliged to make a *Statement to the National Conference 19/20 June 1971* regarding the deterioration of democratic centralist norms (see Appendix No. 15).

On July 25th 1971 *The Statement by the Tendency on the Deterioration of Democratic Norms within the IMG Since the National Conference Held in June 1971* protested breaches of democratic centralism with regard to the Glasgow branch (see Appendix No. 16).

*The Text of Statement made to the Glasgow Branch by Gylda on Behalf of Comrades Gylda, Stevens, Ricardo, Myers, Campbell, and Owen*, dated 13 July 1971, outlines and protests the undemocratic procedures carried out by the majority leadership (see Appendix No. 3).

*The Statement to the Political Committee of the International Marxist Group, by Comrades Anderson, Joe, Stevens, Malcolm, Ricardo, and Owen*, dated 8th August 1971, again drew the attention of the leadership to the organisational manoeuvres designed to put pressure on and victimise the comrades in the Tendency (See Appendix No. 17).

The *Tendency Statement of August 12th* protested the suspension of Comrade Anderson and once more drew attention to the violation of democratic centralist norms with regard to this suspension and urged the PC to rethink their actions (see Appendix No. 18).

*The letter from the Tendency addressed to the National Secretary dated 5th October 1971* once again drew the

attention of the PC to the misuse of democratic centralism by the majority leadership (see Appendix No. 19).

The Tendency believes the building of the revolutionary party in Britain requires not only correct politics and strategy for intervening in the class struggle, but also a correct understanding of how to proceed when there are differences within the organisation; i.e. how to apply democratic centralism in practice.

Our differences with the majority on the assessment of the class struggle in Britain today, the stage we are at, and the task and perspectives for building the revolutionary party are clearly stated in a number of documents submitted by the Tendency at the 1970 and 1971 national conferences.

The Tendency considers that the political perspectives of the majority are responsible for the general disorientation that exists throughout the IMG today. Unable to move out and make the maximum gains from the excellent objective situation for Trotskyism in Britain today, the majority leadership makes a scapegoat of the Tendency and thereby throws a smoke screen around the political issues. The majority leadership uses bureaucratic practices in an attempt to isolate and drive us out of the organisation. Although we constitute only a little over 10% of the total membership, the majority leadership is fearful that in the crisis situation which exists in the IMG today the Tendency could make considerable gains.

We urge the membership to reject the non-Bolshevik practices of trying to solve political differences by organisational reprisals and [trying] to call for a halt to the witch hunt against the Tendency comrades.

Anyone who wants to safeguard the democratic rights of minorities—a fundamental concept of the Trotskyist movement—must break from the past practices and help to create a non-factional and democratic atmosphere in which comrades with political differences can function effectively.

The factional campaign against the Scottish Tendency comrades must end. The first step in this direction is to drop all the outstanding charges and rescind the suspension and expulsion.

#### *Appendix No. 1*

*To: Members of the National Committee (copies to Glasgow Branch & Scottish Committee)*

I would like to draw the attention of the NC to the procedure which is being utilised by members of the Forth Valley branch and of the Scottish committee in order to attempt to expel Comrade F. Gylda (Glasgow) from the organisation.

Comrade Gylda's expulsion was moved at the Scottish Aggregate on 22/8/71 by Comrade Shanks. On this occasion (i) Comrade Gylda was absent, (ii) Comrade Gylda had, because he was on holiday, received no notifi-

cation of charges against him, (iii) the resolution presented (see minutes of Scottish aggregate) was limited to generalities, made no charges of any specific nature in respect of statements made by Comrade Gylda and would in fact if passed have constituted a verdict given without trial.

In spite of the fact that the Standing Orders committee had refused to take cognisance of points (i) and (ii) above and recommend the motion be not discussed, the aggregate fortunately had the good sense to realise that any discussion would have been unconstitutional and decided to refer the matter to the Scottish committee. Instead however of asking Comrade Shanks to detail his charges and to ensure that the proper procedure was followed in notifying these to Comrade Gylda and in setting up a meeting to consider them at an appropriate time, the Scottish committee proceeded, despite the fact that still no specific charges had been laid before them, to set up a commission which it decided would meet this week in Glasgow and Edinburgh to hear "evidence" regarding the case. For this there can be only two possible explanations: either

- (i) The commission is in fact a court of inquiry which will pronounce a verdict on still unspecified charges without either Comrade Gylda or any other interested members of the organisation having the opportunity to defend the comrade's right to remain in the organisation, or
- (ii) The function of the commission is to collect evidence in order to formulate charges to be laid against Comrade Gylda: i.e. to do the job which those who devised the original resolution had failed to do. What this means is that the Scottish Committee is setting itself up as the prosecutor in a case which has not yet been devised!

Since I have had no report of this matter from the Scottish organiser and am not a member of the Scottish committee, I have no way of knowing what exact procedure is being followed. But I would ask the NC to examine two reports which have greatly disturbed me:

- (i) That this "commission" proposes to hear evidence from members of the SL as well as of the IMG
- (ii) that at least part of the testimony offered by Comrade Shanks consists in the evidence of members of another organisation — IS.

On the more general question of whether disciplinary action should be taken against Comrade Gylda for his actions in the course of preparing the April Glasgow Vietnam demonstration several points are relevant:

- (i) The majority of the Glasgow branch, not Comrade Gylda, were responsible for the slogans raised by our organisation on that occasion and for the lines of activity pursued.
- (ii) This fact was recognised by a "fact-finding commission" sent to Glasgow in May by the last NC who condemned the slogans raised and made certain proposals in respect of our future work in the field. No one has subsequently raised any complaint against the branch's work in this field. That commission did not recommend disciplinary action of any kind against any members of the organisation.

- (iii) At that time one of Comrade Gylda's presently most vociferous would-be prosecutors, Comrade Sullivan, was a member of the Glasgow branch. As such he was perfectly entitled, and indeed obliged if he felt that Comrade Gylda should be expelled, to raise the question in the branch. This was never done — by Comrade Sullivan or anyone else.

What is clear is that a number of comrades in the Forth Valley branch have taken a decision to wage war on the Tendency comrades in the Glasgow branch and if necessary to use the most unscrupulous and unconstitutional means to do so. Using the newly set up Scottish Area committee they intend to proceed with no regard for the democratic rights of members of the organisation. The NC has the duty to defend these rights by putting an end to the present procedures of the Scottish committee and ensuring that if any members of the organisation wish (as they are perfectly at liberty to) to bring charges against Comrade Gylda, this is done in the proper fashion and dealt with in the most democratic manner.

John Blair  
3rd September 1971

#### *Appendix 2*

*Resolution passed at Scottish Aggregate 21/22 August 1971.*

IMG Scottish Aggregate is gravely disturbed by the behaviour of certain Scottish comrades who abstained on the motion of solidarity with the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) at the Annual Conference. We recognise the ERP as the revolutionary army of the Argentinian section of the Fourth International and regard any prevarication on the question of total solidarity as an intolerable act of scabbing. The comrades concerned are therefore severely censured for their action.

#### *Appendix 3*

*TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE TO THE GLASGOW BRANCH BY GYLDA on behalf of Comrades Gylda, Stevens, Ricardo, Myers, Campbell, Owen.*

We consider that the actions concerning the Glasgow branch initiated and supported by the National Committee and Political Committee majorities over the last few months add up to a serious attack on the democratic norms of our movement. This inevitably makes the building of the section and its Glasgow branch more difficult than it would otherwise be. We feel our view is substantiated by the facts which we cite here.

1. During the period of the pre-conference discussion, Comrade Cameron indicated his intention to present a document of some kind concerning the situation in the Glasgow branch to the leading bodies of the IMG. After repeated promises to present this first of all to the Glasgow branch for discussion, Cameron produced his document, signed by five other members of the Glasgow branch, during a National Committee meeting. Members

of the Glasgow branch saw this document for the first time in the week following the NC meeting. To our knowledge the NC decided not to consider the contents of the document. However, the NC majority, on the basis of differences existing between Glasgow NC members (in the pre-conference discussion period!) decided that a 'fact-finding commission' be urgently dispatched to Glasgow. It was stressed that this was not an 'investigation' commission (no charges had been laid) but was referred to at a Glasgow branch meeting as an investigation commission by Comrade King. The commission returned to London and produced what we consider a biased report of the situation in the Glasgow branch. Its conclusion was that we should bury the 'petty' charges and counter charges made by members of the Glasgow branch and get on with the pre-conference discussion. The PC decided to take no action in relation to the Glasgow branch, except to arrange for a leading member to come and live in Glasgow at once. This arrangement was not made. The result of this exercise by the NC and PC majority and its supporters was that the pre-conference discussion was hindered and a situation of suspicion engendered. The pre-conference discussion period, during which the democratic exchange and development of all sort of ideas should be at its height, was turned into its opposite. Comrades in Glasgow asked what was the object of the exercise of the NC and PC majority. Subsequent developments have answered this question.

2. In the course of the pre-conference discussion period, the National Secretary saw fit to address two personal letters to the Glasgow branch. The first suggested that comrades who took certain views should "openly" join the Tendency. The majority of the Glasgow branch replied that the National Secretary should reconsider his letter in the light of his previous 'Open letter to the Williams Tendency.' The National Secretary then addressed a second letter suggesting that comrades who held certain views should join or form a tendency. Once again, in the pre-conference discussion period, precisely the period when ideas and differences should be clarified, a supporter of the NC and PC majority took steps which could in no way be interpreted as an attempt to engender the atmosphere for a democratic pre-conference discussion. Once again the question was posed. What was the object of the exercise?

3. The method of election of the leadership at the National Conference, with the full knowledge of supporters of the majority, effectively excluded from the NC the views of those comrades in Scotland who at that time indicated their support of the general lines of the Tendency documents, but were not members of the Tendency. The views of half the Glasgow branch, as seen by the majority, are not weighty enough to justify representation on the NC, but the Glasgow branch is important enough to justify a fact-finding commission, personal letters from the National Secretary, NC and PC discussions and resolutions, and the placing on the NC of three supporters of the majority from the Glasgow branch. (We agree with the statement of the Tendency presented to conference on the method of election to the National Committee.)

4. Shortly after the conference an attack was made on the Glasgow branch by the Editorial Board of the 'Week.' This attack was inserted in Letter to Members without discussion in the leading bodies of IMG. In Letter to Members, before the eyes of the whole IMG, the Glasgow

branch was declared guilty of sabotaging the work of the IMG. What was the object of this exercise?

5. The Political Committee decided to take over the running of the Glasgow branch. The PC resolution is clearly unworkable. The IMG in Glasgow cannot function without discussing seriously the development of the Spartacus League. The PC took its decision on no basis other than a recognition of the fact that the *ideas* of half of the Glasgow branch differ from those of the NC and PC majority. No charges have been laid. The out-going NC to our knowledge decided to take no action on the report of the fact-finding commission. What is the object of excluding the members of the IMG in Glasgow from participating in the work of the group?

6. We now hear that the National Committee has accepted the PC resolution on the Glasgow branch. For what reason?

#### *Our conclusion:*

We believe on the basis of the facts cited that the NC majority takes the view that there are two categories of members in the IMG—those whose ideas co-incide with the ideas of the majority and those whose ideas don't. The measures proposed by the NC and PC majority are punitive measures against the Glasgow branch. The charge which justifies these punitive measures is that we hold ideas different from those of the majority. We believe that the majority has embarked on a course of action which is designed to make punitive measures against holders of dissident opinions a normal method of operation in the IMG. We reject this method. It is incompatible with the building of a democratic centralist and Trotskyist organisation. In our opinion the NC majority, in relation to the Glasgow branch, has made factionalism against dissident ideas a priority above that of building the Glasgow branch.

13th July 1971

#### *Documents relating to the case:*

1. Letter 'To all members of the Glasgow branch' (Glasgow 29th April 1971) This letter is signed by Cameron, Mcpherson, Night, Scott, Sullivan, and Windsor (30/4/71) It was duplicated during an NC meeting and distributed to NC members before 'all members of the Glasgow branch' had seen it.
2. Letter of Petersen to Glasgow branch (received 11/5/71)
3. Letter of Petersen to Glasgow branch (date unknown but text in Glasgow branch minutes of 18th May 71)
4. All relevant NC and PC minutes (which presumably carry the text of resolutions on the Glasgow branch)
5. Various minutes of the Glasgow branch containing resolutions on Cameron's document, Petersen's letter and the latest PC resolution.

#### *Appendix 4*

#### *LETTER TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE*

Glasgow  
29th April, 1971

Dear Comrades,



We fully realise the seriousness of the step we are taking in writing this letter. It is no slight matter to ask the NC to conduct an investigation into a branch of the organisation. Nevertheless we feel compelled to do so. We have been forced to this conclusion by this progressive deterioration of the political situation in the G. branch, which is now such as to considerably impede its functioning as a unit of the organisation, discredit the group in Glasgow, and have severely damaging effects on the development of the local SL branch. We feel that the factional atmosphere in the branch and the political attitudes which dominate it are such as to preclude any satisfactory solution to the question at local level.

We shall attempt to indicate the extent of the problem by making the following points:

1.) A flagrant breach of democratic centralism has occurred on the question of our Indochina work. The campaign for the April 24th demo was run by our comrades along lines which can only be described as an abandonment of the solidarity position and a capitulation to liberalism and pacifism. We cite the following examples:

a) The slogans of the campaign and demonstration were accepted by the branch and proposed by our comrades on the mobilisation committee. At the meeting of this committee (on 28/2/71) which accepted these slogans, comrade Gylda argued publicly against solidarity slogans; the branch rejected a proposal to add the slogans "Solidarity with the Indochinese Revolution" and "Victory to the Liberation Forces." Linked to this was a rather disturbing procedure which will be explained to the NC.

b) The attached leaflets were produced and distributed by our comrades. We think they speak for themselves, and indicate quite clearly the political line of our work for the demonstration.

c) Comrade Gylda made a speech at S. U. on 24/4/71 at a post-demo meeting which was a disgrace to the group, and gave us considerable embarrassment. It was entirely consistent with the line of the leaflets, only rather worse, and was correctly described by an IS member as "liberal." There were a large number of group and SL comrades present at this meeting.

d) At its meeting on 20/4/71 the branch rejected a proposal that we advance on the demo the slogans "Victory to the NLF," "Power to the PRG," "US Imperialism Out" and "Create 2, 3, Many Vietnams." It decided that we should confine ourselves to the 3 official slogans. Comrade RT from Leeds was present at this meeting, and can describe the arguments the branch majority used.

Virtually the same slogans were used on the last Indochina demonstration in Glasgow last autumn. The most alarming aspect of the whole thing is that the branch majority does not understand, or pretends not to understand, that it is breaking with national policy on this issue. The whole question is merely one of "tactics." As for the signatories of this letter, we consider solidarity with the Indochinese Revolution and the combating of liberal-pacifist rubbish in the Vietnam movement to be of more than "tactical" importance.

2.) In our opinion, the attitude of the branch over Indochina is not a mere aberration. We were confronted with

a similar situation in the women's work. On 17/11/70 the branch decided to set up a socialist women's group. In fact, what was set up was an organisation known as "Women in Action," which we were assured by Comrade Campbell was a socialist women's group in all but name. When it became clear that this was not the case, the matter was raised in the branch 15/12/70. A discussion on the subject was held on 24/1/71. A resolution to set up a SWG was narrowly defeated, and one narrowly carried which defined "Women in Action" as a SWG "within the terms of the NC Resolution: (of 17/18 October 1970) and decided to continue to work in it until NC/PC Conference decided what a SWG was. On the basis of further experience with "Women in Action" the matter was raised again on 2/3/71 and finally, on 16/3/71 it was agreed to set up a SWG. Thus several months, during which a viable SWG could have been developed, were wasted. If it had been left to comrades Blair, Gylda, Cambell et alia or if there had been a different attendance at the branch that night we would still not have a SWG, and this bland ignoring of national policy would be explained by citing "tactical" reasons, i.e. the existence of the WIA group (which we ourselves had created). We attach two relevant documents (a resolution by Comrade Cambell which was voted on along with these two does not seem to be available). Since the SWG was established it has functioned entirely due to the efforts of Comrade Windsor, the SL women comrades, and two or three other women contacts.

3) We think that, in the case of both women's and Indochina work, the branch has broken with national policy in order to pursue an essentially right-wing course. We have been confronted with the worship of "mass movements," and the quite clearly elaborated argument that it is necessary to create a "broad front" over Indochina by watering down our slogans. In each case, the perspective of building a movement on a clear principled basis, whether a socialist women's movement or an Indochina solidarity movement, has been attacked as sectarian. We think that the right-wing politics which have emerged on these two issues are symptoms of a whole tendency which has manifested itself. We see the signs of retreat from a solidarity position on Ireland, which we suspect is not unconnected with proposals to remove Comrade Scott as convenor of the Irish fraction. We have also become extremely concerned at the attitudes taken by various comrades in the branch over e.g. terrorism, demonstrations, disruption of Tory meetings in the universities, "ultraleft" actions, the shouting down of TU bureaucrats—particularly at the logic of some of the arguments.

We would like to point out very clearly that we are not objecting to comrades holding opinions or arguing for them inside the organisation, and we would not dream of seeking to settle political arguments by some kind of bureaucratic intervention by the NC. But two things we think we have a right to insist on—firstly, that the branch must carry out national policy even if the majority of branch members oppose it; and secondly, that comrades have, not just the right, but the duty to document political differences. We think that, on Indochina and women certainly, some comrades in Glasgow must be reminded of both these duties. On the other points we have mentioned, we would also appreciate written contributions—and we would like to see Comrade Gylda express on



paper his views on the Labour Party as expressed in private conversation.

We also mention the above points in order to support our contention that what we have in the branch is not just one or two isolated examples but an incipient tendency with a generally right-wing approach to politics. Its main advocates are Comrades Gylda, and Campbell, consistently supported by comrades Joe, Ricardo and Myres. Comrade Blair, while usually retreating from the most extreme positions of these comrades, has frequently lined up with them in practice, has never led any political fight against them, and indeed has obstructed efforts to combat their ideas. As branch organiser, he must also take considerable responsibility for the present general state of the branch.

4) In addition to the specific breaches of discipline and the general political trend in the branch, we would like to say a few words about the political work of the branch over the last few months. Apart from the sporadic bursts of activity prior to Vietnam demonstrations which have characterised the Glasgow branch for a long time, the branch has maintained a remarkably low level of activity. Apart from the comrades assigned to the SL, who have generally worked very hard and made progress in this field, (we specifically include comrade Ricardo in this), very little has been achieved. Some rather low key work on women and Ireland, routine activities such as attendance at Red Circles, Mole sales (largely done by the SL), and very little else. Our industrial work has been uninspired and unproductive. Virtually all our industrial contacts have come through the work of the SL and/or from the Red Circle. We completely missed out on the postal strike and on a protracted local strike. The branch has recruited 3 comrades in the last year (2 of them last summer)—all from the SL. This situation of utter stagnation has been partly caused by the political problems, partly by the consistent failure of the branch to see what opportunities exist and to take advantage of them.

5) At present the most serious effect of the situation in the branch is the way it is affecting the SL. In fact we originally intended just to refer the question of IMG/SL relations in Glasgow to the NC. In contrast to IMG, the SL has been extremely active over the last period, has grown rapidly, and contains some very promising comrades. It has been, in fact, our one conspicuously successful sector of work over the last year or more. In our opinion, it holds the key to the future development of the group in Glasgow. However, we must state categorically that the branch has provided absolutely no assistance to its members in the SL, and has in fact proved a considerable hindrance. We give four examples:

a) The political line of the branch on Indochina and women has caused a lot of problems. On Indochina, the slogans for the demo rejected by the IMG were passed overwhelmingly by the SL the following night. We cannot see how open conflict between the two branches on this issue in the near future can be avoided. On women, the SL was overwhelmingly in favour of a SWG, would have set one up even without IMG, and has taken the responsibility for building [it] now it exists; apart from the potential or actual conflict on these issues, the line taken by the branch on these questions has created a lot of hostility in the SL towards the group, which we have tried to eliminate

by explaining national policy. How do we explain why the Glasgow branch is allowed to tramp all over national policy?

b) The branch has from the start completely failed to comprehend the relationship between the two organisations. Quite simply, it does not accept in any real sense the autonomy of the SL. IMG comrades in the SL are, as has been made clear more than once, expected to refer all questions of any importance to the branch, let it decide, and carry out its decisions. How can we create any real leadership for the SL under those conditions? Apart from Indochina and women, we have been expected to carry out this policy over such matters as the Red Circle, a local "underground" newspaper, and the question of allowing men into SWG meetings (!). The branch's latest application of this line has been to try and decide who should succeed Cameron as SL organiser and mandate all IMG members to vote for that comrade. They rejected out of hand the obvious candidate, whom the SL duly elected virtually unopposed (Comrade McPherson). The alternative suggestions made were utterly ludicrous, and showed contempt for the opinions of SL members, or ignorance of them, or an attitude of sheer factionalism (probably all three).

c) The attitude of leading members of the branch towards SL comrades has been, on a personal and political level, absolutely disgraceful. We name Comrades Blair, Gylda and Cameron, and we can present several SL members who will give specific examples.

d) The discussion of SL business in the IMG branch has been, in the first place, very lengthy (much longer than the youth reports prior to the creation of the SL) and secondly very detailed. The item "SL report" on a branch agenda means that branch members, who get SL minutes, have the right, which they exercise freely, to conduct an inquisition into the minutest details of the SL's work. If the NC operated on the same principle, it would probably last twice as long and discuss such things as why the SL notes had not been produced in time. In addition, the way in which SL business has been "discussed" over the last few months adds up to a campaign of harassment of IMG comrades working in the SL.

6) The atmosphere in the branch is almost indescribably bad. Because of the way in which political differentiation has taken place—over a long period, undocumented, arising over specific issues—personal and political enmities have become inextricably mixed up. As to where any blame for this lies—we have tried to modify the situation, and Comrade Blair has generally co-operated in this. We cannot say the same for Comrades Campbell and Gylda. At any rate, at present one half of the branch is scarcely on speaking terms with the other half. This situation of course has its effect on branch meetings. For political and personal reasons, these now consist of a series of bitter clashes in which political discussion is mere rhetoric, since one can predict the vote with reasonable accuracy beforehand. Comrades RT and MD can describe the meetings they attended on 20/4/71 and 27/4/71 respectively. The latter meeting was the worst internal meeting any of us had ever attended. For

2 1/2 hours the signatories (or four of us) were subjected to a barrage of abuse, laughter, jeering, name calling, constant interruptions, etc. As far as we are concerned it was a desperate attempt, by comrades who know that an NC investigation would expose their politics in theory and practice, to avoid such an investigation. In any event, it was a disgrace to the organisation. We do not see how we can continue to function politically in such an atmosphere.

Apart from the state of branch meetings, the hostilities have been extended to caucus meetings, to a minor extent SL meetings, and even the Red Circle. This leads to the sort of situation where leading comrades argue bitterly in front of SL comrades and contacts.

7) A whole series of verbal charges have been made against the signatories of this letter—mainly Comrade Cameron. For example; that we have "driven people out of the organisation," "used the SL for factional ends" (aimed at Comrades Cameron, Macpherson, Scott). That Comrade Cameron has engaged in "2 1/2 years of gossip and slander," "has never done anything to build the branch," "is doing enough to wreck it before he leaves," "has imported Stalinist tactics from the SLL," etc. (by Comrade Blair). Also we would like comrades to prove politically in what way we are anarchists, spontaneists, ultralefts, etc., instead of just flinging accusations. Further, we would be obliged for a definition of "petty-bourgeois logic" and how we employ it. These points may seem petty, but they are thrown around branch meetings in place of political analysis, and we will insist that the comrades who make them either substantiate them or stop substituting slanders and phrasemongering for politics.

We think that the above points serve to indicate that the branch is dominated by a right-wing tendency which refuses to declare itself, has used the branch to break national discipline already, and is likely to do so again. Further, that apart from the discredit brought on the group (this is only comparatively recent) and the stagnation of the branch (not recent), this state of affairs is having a very bad effect on an otherwise flourishing SL branch, and implicitly on the long-term development of our organisation in Glasgow.

We therefore make the following requests:

1) That the NC set up a commission to investigate the situation and to make recommendations for rectifying it. We undertake to substantiate before that commission, by way of documentation and witnesses, all the charges we have made in this letter.

2) That a leading comrade be sent by the NC to spend some time in Glasgow in order to help us build the branch on a firm political basis.

3) That the NC help us to recruit comrades from the SL in Glasgow in order to strengthen the branch and reflect the real success of our politics in Glasgow over the last period.

4) That the Glasgow branch meanwhile be reminded of its obligation to follow national policy.

5) That all comrades be reminded of their duty to document political differences.

6) That while the commission is at work no decisions be taken infringing the autonomy of the SL branch.

7) That recruitment to the Glasgow branch be frozen till the National Conference.

The last two points are simply aimed at holding the situation while an investigation takes place.

As regards the Glasgow branch resolution of 27/4/71 asking the NC to ignore this letter and instructing us to prepare contributions for a branch perspectives discussion after the conference (we do not have the exact text), we reject it. We are not opposed to the second point, but we feel that the problem is much greater than mere differences over local perspectives. We think there are important political questions involved—and that the situation *now* is so bad that a national investigation is called for. We accept part of the responsibility for letting matters get to this stage without calling in the NC. We accept that it would have been better if this letter had been circulated and discussed in the branch first—though we do not think that would have solved anything. But the problem is urgent. If the NC does not act, we have no confidence in the Glasgow branch to follow national policy on e.g. Indochina, and not to act in a manner which will disrupt the SL. We reserve the right to break the discipline of the branch where the branch breaks with national policy and to act to safeguard the SL. If the branch disciplines us for that we will appeal against its decision.

As for the charge that we seek to avoid discussion, it is ludicrous. We have continuously sought discussion in the branch. What we do not think is necessary is a discussion in the branch whereby the branch examines the charges against the branch and finds the branch not guilty. We do not think there is time for such exercises. We are all for discussion—we will substantiate all our specific charges and also produce an analysis of the political degeneration of the branch. To call for a national investigation is not the way to avoid discussion—and if that investigation finds our charges baseless, it is we who will be discredited. We have no fear of that.

Finally we reaffirm our political confidence in IMG in spite of our total lack of confidence in the Glasgow branch. We want to see a situation in this city where IMG is playing a real political role, by its activity in e.g. the industrial sector, and is providing real political leadership for the SL instead of trying to manipulate and foist rotten politics on it. We think this is impossible at present due to the political line of IMG and its attitude to the SL. That is what we want the NC to help us rectify.

Fraternally,  
David Cameron, Colin Macpherson,  
S. Night, W. Scott, Graham Sullivan,  
Elizabeth Windsor.  
30/4/71

(The statement and documents mentioned in the above as being "attached" were not included with this letter.)

*LETTERS TO THE GLASGOW BRANCH FROM PETER PETERSEN (Received 11/5/71)*

(1) I have been told verbally that the Glasgow branch passed by a small vote a resolution which questioned the correctness of the NC resolution criticising the Glasgow branch for not putting forward the slogan "Victory to the NLF."

(2) I am writing in a personal capacity because I have no means by which to raise this formally with any committee before your next meeting.

(3) I am therefore writing quickly to ask you to withdraw this resolution.

(4) I am extremely surprised that such a decision could be taken by the Glasgow branch—the slogan "Victory for the NLF" has been used on all our demonstrations since March 1968, and before that.

—it is absolutely implicit in the statement of aims of the VSC which has been our main instrument of intervention in this field for 5 years.

—it is embodied in our political practice of selling flags and distributing badges with the NLF flag on.

—it is the policy of the Fourth International to advocate using this slogan in those countries which have not got troops in Vietnam as the main focus (see Ernest Germain's report to the December 1969 IEC).

(5) I feel that an element exists of trying to avoid clarification of political differences. I am certain that some comrades oppose this being the focal slogan but instead of articulating their political positions are evading the issue on technical grounds.

(6) In the present situation in Glasgow, with the backcloth of the pre-conference discussion political clarity is needed, not formalistic wrangling.

(7) Whereas it can be argued that in some cases in the form of a united action committee that this slogan would not be appropriate (I cannot imagine any, and certainly don't think that the last Glasgow demonstration came into that category—what forces supported that demonstration which would not have if we had carried "Victory to the NLF"?) it must be stressed that the Glasgow branch went much farther. It went against the IMG itself carrying the slogan and by inference the SL too.

(8) Comrades who hold this position (especially those who hold that the NLF is "Stalinist") should articulate it in the form of documents, or perhaps openly join the Tendency, instead of taking refuge in disputes about the meaning of documents passed long ago. Those who think we should change this position should show what has changed since October 1968, when 100,000 marched behind the banner of VSC.

*FURTHER ON MY LETTER TO THE GLASGOW BRANCH*

(i) I have had some reports of the reaction to my request that the Glasgow resolution be withdrawn. I think it necessary to make some clarifications.

(ii) To clear up one thing: if comrades consider it [a] slur that I put in a remark about "openly join the Tendency" I will readily re-phrase that. Actually my original letter was hurriedly written and had I checked it over I would probably have changed that. I would suggest that this be changed to "perhaps form a tendency." Seeing

that the Glasgow practice is to minute nearly everything including it would seem grunts and groans, please minute this.

(iii) Some comrades have, I am told, raised the question of me pre-judging the investigation by my letter. It is necessary to be very clear about such a question. Marxists are never impartial when it comes to political questions. While I would not want to pre-judge any organisational questions (indeed I not wish (sic) unless it is absolutely necessary to give an opinion on such matters) on political questions it is absolutely vital to be forthright and not obscure matters.

(iv) Politically I see matters as thus:

(a) It was completely incorrect for the Glasgow branch to instruct members of the IMG and by implication those of the SL, not to carry "Victory to the NLF" on the April 24th demonstration.

(b) It was completely in order for the NC—in fact a duty—to point this out so that the mistake would not be repeated.

(c) The decision of the Glasgow branch challenging this position of the NC could only muddy matters and start a secondary argument.

(v) Arguments about the branch being the basic unit etc. must not be allowed to obscure politics. The latter applies in two sense only: branches have control over membership questions (subject to the authority of higher bodies) and discussions are conducted through branches. In no sense does this reduce us to a federation of branches. Tendency rights exist within branches and each member has the right [to] contact other members (I cannot understand the discussion in Glasgow about NEC members on the investigation team being accompanied).

*Appendix 7*

*FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE RED MOLE*

As comrades are no doubt aware, an extremely large and important struggle is taking place around UCS in Scotland. Upon hearing about this the EB of the Mole at once contacted our Glasgow branch for material and allocated 3 pages to editorial comment and other material relating to UCS. Despite faithful assurances and continual prompting our Glasgow branch failed to produce *any* of the material we requested despite the fact that the centre took the situation in UCS so seriously that it has even sent a comrade to Glasgow to help the comrades in their work. The excuse offered by the Glasgow branch for the failure to send material was that they needed time to consider things. This can be only construed as either the comrades failing to understand what will be involved in producing a weekly paper or that they have a federalist concept regarding the determination of the political line of the organisation. In something as important as the struggle in UCS the line of the organisation will of course be decided in consultation with the comrades on the spot but the determination of the line will ultimately be taken by the leading bodies of the IMG. If the centre decides it requires material the first duty of comrades is to supply it by the time requested and if they wish to question the views decided upon by the centre this can in no way be allowed to interfere with

the carrying out of decisions of the centre. As a consequence of the Glasgow comrades' action:

(1) The entire schedule for the next Mole has been disrupted.

(2) As it is politically speaking impossible for the paper to [come out] without carrying material on UCS two comrades in London have had hurriedly to write articles which are neither particularly good nor original. This is in no way their fault but can only harm the reputation of the paper and of the organisation.

(3) Editorial decisions regarding the line to take had to be made without the benefit of detailed material from our own comrades being available and makes it impossible for a firm line to be taken. This completely destroys the functioning of the paper as a *political* paper of the IMG and means that comrades in branches do not receive a clear line regarding our attitude to the struggle.

The matter will be raised at the next Political Committee.

For the E. B.  
A. Jones

(Comrade Blair, organiser of the Glasgow branch wrote the following letter which was endorsed by the majority of the Glasgow branch, to the National Secretary.)

a) To my knowledge this is the first occasion on which a censure of a particular branch has appeared in Letter to Members. Certainly it is the first time that such an attack has appeared without discussion in any of the leading bodies of the organisation or even to my understanding within the secretariat.

b) There are several factual inaccuracies contained in the material. The possibility of producing a broadsheet on the question of UCS was first raised in an informal fashion by Comrade King during his visit to Glasgow between 11th and 15th June. Several comrades attempted to produce material at this time and found it impossible to do so without on the whole repeating what had already appeared in the bourgeois and sections of the left-wing press. I discussed this question with Comrade Camillo at the National Conference, stating that it would be possible to write something and offering to attempt to do so that weekend but we concluded that it would be better for the branch to take out additional time to produce something worthwhile. It should be stated that an attempt by myself to discuss the matter with the author of the piece in Letter to Members was not with the reply "I'm too busy just now writing a book to discuss." I therefore undertook to try to get produced enough material for the inside 4 pages of the next Mole to take the form of a broadsheet which could be printed in larger numbers and sold separately. The comrades of the Glasgow branch discussed the matter on Tuesday 22nd June and decided that since this was an extremely important project for us which could have very important effects on our industrial work in the area, it was necessary to spend a little more time preparing the proposed broadsheet. Lest these facts be used for the purpose of making a factionally motivated attack on the Glasgow branch, I would like to point out to comrades that the discussion on this question did not proceed along what comrades might consider the expected lines in this branch. The main advocates of haste in production were Com-

rades Owen, Myers, Blane and myself while Comrades McPherson, Night and Campbell were the vocal advocates of further discussion.

Comrade Jones in his letter also states that all this took place "despite continual prompting." This, comrades, is quite inaccurate. The only contacts we had with the Centre on the matter were at conference and on Thursday 24th when I informed Comrade Camillo of our decision. It is further stated that "the Centre took the situation so seriously that it has sent a comrade to Glasgow." The only comrades who have arrived in Glasgow in the last fortnight are Comrade RH and Comrade MacGovern. The former who appeared on 23rd June stated quite specifically to myself and Comrade Cameron that his purpose was to assist in the development of the SL Youth Unemployment Campaign. He also stated that he was going to make a report to the National Industrial Fraction on the UCS crisis. At no stage did he take up the question of the urgency of production of the material mentioned although he participated in our discussions on Sunday 26th June of the form of the broadsheet. Comrade MacGovern arrived on 28th June in order to make preparations for his eventual return to Scotland. Again, he did not raise this matter.

c) Having said all this let me say that I have a great deal of sympathy with comrades of the Editorial Board on the question of the delays in production of material. Quite clearly the organisation has to gear itself to respond much more dynamically to such situations. It was precisely this argument which I used myself in attempting to persuade the branch to produce the material more rapidly. However, this is a very different matter from being prepared to tolerate the kind of slanderous half truths and political slurs (e.g. that we "have a federalist concept regarding the determination of the political line of the organisation") which appear in this piece.

(This letter was circulated in the Letter to Members 27/7/71 together with the following reply from A. Jones on behalf of the PC).

It is obvious that there are better things to do in the organisation at present than become involved in the ins and outs of the functioning of the Letter to Members. One of the things it would undoubtedly be better to spend time on is in fact ensuring that reports on important struggles reach the Mole as they break out and not when the news is becoming out of date.

However, as some comrades in Glasgow appear to have a persecution complex we had better clear the matter up:

(1) It should hardly need the Glasgow branch, or any other branch for that matter, to be informed that if there is an industrial struggle involving the jobs of 30,000 workers, then one of the first tasks of a branch is to send material to the newspaper. If nothing else were involved then the fact that it took nearly a month before any material from Glasgow was received by the Centre would be quite adequate grounds for a *real*, not an imaginary, vote of censure on a branch. The fact that the comrades in Glasgow, specifically Comrade Blair, were asked for material by at least Comrades Camillo, Jones and King (the first two on behalf of the Editorial Board of the newspaper and the other when in Glasgow specifically

to investigate the running of the branch) makes the situation still worse.

It is generally regarded as being desirable to have everything open and above board in a revolutionary organisation: however if some Glasgow comrades prefer otherwise perhaps in future it might be better if, instead of an open piece in Letter to Members a secret note is sent to a branch and then it explains to the membership itself why no reports of key struggles have been sent in. Similarly if some of the Glasgow comrades are feeling extremely formalistic we may take note of the fact that the Editorial Board of the Red Mole is not, according to the constitution of the IMG, a leading body of that organisation, and therefore very technically speaking the EB does not have the right to ask the Glasgow comrades to send it material. However, common sense breaking down and no material being received it is necessary to act. Perhaps we need to change the constitution so that we receive any material at all. However, now perhaps the daily functioning secretariat can deal with it. Indeed in a hundred years we may evolve a way of making the entire organisation function in a way perfectly in accord with the letter of the constitution. This will have nothing at all to do with making the IMG into a real Bolshevik organisation, but it may keep some people happy. It might also make them as quick at sending in articles on key workers' struggles as they are at passing resolutions dealing with the internal functioning of the Letter to Members and other such key problems confronting the British working class. This, however, is probably too much to hope for.

Having dealt with the only point of substance in the Glasgow letter, that concerning the failure to supply vital political material to the newspaper at a time when it was politically necessary, the other trivia can be dealt with briefly.

(2) As for the supremely irrelevant point of what Comrade Jones said to Comrade Blair at the conference, just to put the record straight, what he actually said was that owing to the fact that he was finishing a book on the question of the trade union struggle Comrade B had been put in charge of collecting material on Clydeside and any material should be given to him not to Jones.

(3) It is perfectly true that the Glasgow comrades were originally asked for material which it was intended to publish separately from the regular Red Mole. The reason why this was changed to an appearance in the Mole was due to the fact that the material was so late in arriving that all the time of the printshop was taken up with the new Mole and nothing else could be produced. By then it was a question of the Mole or nothing.

(4) What appeared in the Letter to Members was not a vote of censure. It was a piece of information inserted, as it stated, because it was necessary to explain to the membership the reasons for the non-appearance of material concerning the most important workers' struggle then taking place. Quite correctly we were under attack from other tendencies for apparently having no interest in UCS. It was therefore necessary that the membership should know that this was not an incorrect and frivolous political position of the organisation, but that we had in fact taken all possible steps for our press to cover the struggle but had received no material. The decision to put in such a note was therefore taken by Comrades Camillo and Jones.

(5) The question of factionalism had absolutely nothing to do with the insertion of the item in Letter to Members. This is easily shown by the fact that Comrade Blair himself personally informed the Centre that members both of the majority and the minority of the Glasgow branch had voted not to send material to the Mole. Not even Comrades Camillo and Jones are such blinkered sectarians that they believe you can score factional points by attacking decisions which your own majority supporters [took].

(6) Just to repeat, the Mole EB would be extremely delighted if comrades should send in material so that we can produce a newspaper which truly reflects the activities and priorities of the organisation. It is undoubtedly the case that even if this was done there would still be many inefficiencies and shortcomings in the functioning of the paper. We are perfectly prepared to take responsibility for these. What we are not prepared to do is to take responsibility when the non-appearance of vital material is due to decisions taken at a local level at variance with priorities of the Centre. If some comrades spent rather more time on articles for Mole and rather less moaning about the paper and in writing internal documents, we could have paper that could secure the Mole in the position of the best left wing paper in Britain. If however we fail to receive material on subjects such as one of the most important workers' struggle this decade, the Mole and the IMG will become a joke. The consequences of that will be rather more serious than the wounded pride and factional paranoia of some comrades in Glasgow.

#### *Appendix 8*

Extract from *Minutes of PC for July 3rd, 1971*

Glasgow

Motion from King: In view of the situation in Glasgow, the PC decides:

1. In the event of any dispute concerning the recruitment of any person, the question be referred to the PC who shall have the right to decide on any person's eligibility for membership.

2. The affairs of the Glasgow SL shall not be on the agenda of the Glasgow IMG branch with the exception of the nationally agreed discussion on the possible fusion of the SL & the IMG.

3. The PC shall decide which members of the Glasgow IMG shall work in the Glasgow SL.

4. The task of the Glasgow branch is to carry out the decisions of the majority. In the event of any dispute relating to this, the (IMG's) PC shall have the right to decide and interpret those decisions.

5. A commission shall be established to settle any problems arising concerning the Glasgow branch in between PCs. This commission to consist of Singh, Clell, McGovern, King & Glasgow organiser in a non-voting capacity.

*Amendments* delete point 5. Defeated 3-7-1

Substitute for point 2: The Glasgow branch shall not discuss the affairs of the Glasgow SL or mandate IMG comrades as to how they will operate there. Relations between the two branches shall be conducted via liaison between Comrades Blair and McPherson. Defeated 3-5-3

Resolution passed 9-2-0

That T. S. be invited to the next NC. Passed 9-2-0

That the Glasgow organiser be invited every time Glasgow is on the agenda with all that that implies. Defeated 2-9-0

### *Appendix 9*

#### *DRAFT OF CHARGES TO BE LAID BEFORE ANDERSON AND RICARDO TO BE APPROVED BY NC*

##### *Charge 1:*

Under clause 9e of the constitution and based upon the appended statement of King, the NC lays charges against Ricardo in that he refused to assist Ferguson in establishing a Claimants Union in Clydebank. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution.

##### *Additional information:*

a) King, who had been delegated responsibility by the PC (see resolution of PC July 31st, 1971), warned Ricardo on August 15th at the IMG/SL Aggregate that this was an instruction based upon the PC resolution of August 14th, 1971, which stated that "UCS work shall take priority over all other work in Glasgow."

b) King pointed out that the work to establish the Clydebank Claimants Union is part of our UCS campaign.

##### *Charge 2:*

Under clause 9e of the constitution and based upon the appended statement of King, the NC lays charges against Anderson in that he refused to sell UCS broadsheets at John Brown Engineering. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution.

##### *Additional information:*

a) King, who had been delegated authority by the PC (see resolution of PC July 31st 1971) asked Anderson to sell the broadsheets at the IMG/SL Aggregate on August 15th.

b) Note PC resolution of August 14th which stated that "UCS work shall take priority over all other work in Glasgow."

##### *Charge 3:*

Under clause 9e of the constitution and based upon the appended statement of MacGovern, the NC lays charges against Anderson in that he refused to speak on behalf of the IMG at three public meetings in solidarity with Clydeside. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution.

##### *Additional information:*

a) MacGovern had been delegated authority by the PC (see PC resolution July 31st).

b) MacGovern offered to draw up a mutually agreeable political statement for Anderson to make at the meetings. MacGovern stated that this was a concession to make it easier for Anderson to carry out the PC instructions.

##### *Charge 4:*

Under clause 9e of the constitution and based upon the

appended statement of McPherson, the NC lays charges against Anderson for refusing to put a resolution to Clydebank Trades Council calling for support for the Claimants Union and asking the Trades Council to accept a delegate from the Claimants Union at their meetings. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution.

##### *Additional information:*

a) This was a Glasgow branch resolution passed at the meeting 24/8/71.

b) Note PC resolution of August 14th which stated that "USC work shall take priority over all other work in Glasgow."

In accordance with clause 9e of the constitution, the above charges shall be made in writing at least two weeks before they are considered at the appropriate meeting. The accused can attend.

### *Appendix 10*

#### *Text of Charge Against Gylda*

Comrade Gylda is charged with breaching democratic centralism inasmuch as he publically argued against the slogan of "Victory to the NLF" at the April 24th Vietnam demonstration committee, at its meeting on 28th February 1971, so permitting members of the IS, CFB (ML) and the anti-imperialist solidarity front to witness divisions within the IMG and a deviation from the national line. He is further charged with failing to ensure that the work of the committee proceeded along the line of national policy, inasmuch as the leaflets (Vietnam-April 24th international day of action and important notice) put out by the committee did not include the slogan "Victory to the NLF" and failed to explain the revolutionary nature of the struggle in IndoChina. Finally, he is charged with failing to put forward the national line of the IMG at the post-demonstration meeting at Strathclyde University Union, by omitting to explain the revolutionary nature of the struggle, by omitting to call for Victory to the NLF, by deviating from the fundamentals of Marxist analysis by appealing to the "deep humanitarian instincts of the British working class" and to the "democratic instincts of the working class."

F. Paisley for Scottish committee

### *Appendix 11*

#### *Text of Charge Against Stevens*

Under clause 9(c) of the constitution and based upon the appended statement of Sykes the Scottish committee lays charges against Stevens in that at [the] Glasgow branch meeting of 24/8/71 she refused to carry out the branch decision of 17/8/71 instructing her to pay dues to the Spartacus League. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9(e) of the constitution.

F. Paisley for Scottish Committee

### *Appendix 12*

#### *Text of Charge Against Campbell*



Under section 9(c) of the constitution and based upon the appended statement of McPherson, the Scottish committee lays charges against Campbell in that she initiated activity with relation to Women in Action without prior discussion in the womens caucus or branch, which action directly contravened the decision of the Glasgow branch 13/7/71. This action is a breach of discipline under clause 9(c) of the constitution.

On Sept. 9 Comrade Tennent received a letter from Campbell outlining a proposed agenda and discussion on the future activities of WIA.

1) At no time did Campbell consult the womens caucus or the Glasgow branch about the proposed agenda which women comrades received 2 days before the meeting, along with all other members or supporters of WIA. Campbell's proposals in this letter constituted an initiation of a far-reaching political and organisational discussion in the WIA without any consultation with the caucus or the branch.

2) Our comrades' role in WIA was defined by womens caucus 11/7/71 "Division of labour between SWG and WIA. Only necessary that one member of caucus attend WIA meeting to report to SWG and make political interventions during WIA discussions." Glasgow branch meeting of 13/7/71 passed a resolution accepting the directives of the womens caucus. Despite this decision of the Glasgow branch which directed comrades' work in WIA, Campbell drew up, produced and distributed an agenda for WIA which proposed an exhaustive discussion on WIA future work and perspectives.

McPherson  
s/ F. Paisley for Scottish committee

#### *Appendix 13*

##### *Text of Charge Against each Tendency Member in Glasgow*

Under section 9(c) of the constitution and on the basis of the documents listed in the appendix to the charge and on the appended statement of Comrade McPherson the Scottish committee lays charges against in that has violated the norms of democratic centralism by refusing to recognise the authority of and to carry out the decisions of higher bodies. This amounts to breaking discipline under section 9(e) of the constitution.

##### *Statement by McPherson*

As a member of the Tendency the comrade charged above has consistently refused to recognise the decisions of the Secretariat, subsequently endorsed by the NC, to transfer Anderson to the status of member at large and that the comrade has consistently insisted on Anderson's rights to vote in the Glasgow branch despite the aforementioned decision of the Secretariat.

F. Paisley (Scottish organiser)  
for Scottish committee.

#### *Appendix 14*

##### *Minutes of Glasgow branch meeting 7/9/71*

Statement of non-Tendency members of the Glasgow

branch. "In view of the fact that the Tendency members of the Glasgow branch of the IMG refuse to accept democratic centralism in that they refuse to 'carry out the dictates of any individual or committees' and in view of the fact that the Tendency members of the Glasgow branch are politically hostile to the IMG in so far as they maintain that the IMG is continuing to betray the Vietnamese revolution, we are unable to conduct the business of the IMG in the presence of the Tendency members. We therefore are (1) going to organize ourselves separately to carry on the business of the Glasgow branch of the IMG, and (2) lay charges against the members of the Tendency.

"We also wish to make it clear that our activity in organizing separately has been made necessary by the continued hostility and opposition of the Tendency members over the past period, chief instances of which were (1) the refusal of the Tendency members to contribute to or take part in any way in the campaign around the UCS struggle, even though this struggle was central to the whole struggle of the British working class in the present period and was regarded as a priority area of intervention by the IMG; (2) the continued hostility shown by the Tendency members with regard to the activities undertaken by the IMG in solidarity with the nationalist minority in the north of Ireland and their armed vanguard, the Irish Republican Army, as shown by Tendency statements and proposals, such as not to sell the IMG publication which called for victory to the Irish Republican Army." Chairman adjourned meeting at 8.30 p. m.

#### *Appendix 15*

##### *STATEMENT BY TENDENCY AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE, 19-20 JUNE 1971*

We are of the opinion that the 1971 conference of the IMG, as compared with last year's conference, marks a step backward from the point of view of democracy. Equal time with the majority National Committee presentation was not given for the presentation of Tendency documents on the pretext that the Tendency had nothing "relevant" or "new" to say, despite the fact that many comrades had not previously heard their positions and that new questions were going to be discussed. This was carried to the point of absurdity when the Tendency was given 10 minutes on the completely new question of women's liberation and 7 minutes to present its point of view on the youth question—a discussion which involved whether the Spartacus League was to continue or to be liquidated, through fusion, with the IMG.

The majority of delegates obviously did not consider the policies of the Tendency to be "irrelevant." Almost every speaker, in one way or another, spoke for or against the Tendency positions.

A completely new and undemocratic procedure was introduced when the convention, under the initiative of leading comrades, voted to ban all members of the Tendency from attending the nominating committee, thereby preventing the Tendency from expressing their views on the composition of the new National Committee as a whole.

Further, instead of proceeding democratically by electing a National Committee which reflects the genuine strength



and influence of the Tendency, a way was found to limit its representation to the minimum.

This was done by electing the National Committee based on proportional representation of declared members of the Tendency.

We are opposed to this method of proportional representation since this is not in the best interests of selecting the leadership.

We consider that the leadership should take into account regional representation, the age and composition of the organisation; the tendencies and currents, political level and experience of individuals and the necessity to maintain continuity. The procedure adopted is not only a factional attack on the Tendency but a denial of the right of representation for non-members of the Tendency who do not support the political positions of the majority.

#### *Appendix 16*

*Statement by the Tendency on the deterioration of democratic centralist norms within the IMG since the National Conference held in June, 1971*

At the end of the IMG National Conference held on June 19/20 the Tendency read a statement protesting the violation of democratic centralist norms of the Trotskyist movement regarding the rights of minorities. Since the Conference there have been further violations of these norms resulting in a further erosion of the rights of the Tendency.

Prior to the National Conference the PC decided to move a leading comrade of the majority to Glasgow where political differences had developed in the branch. This decision was made without consultation with or the agreement of the Glasgow branch. No report was made to the National Conference on Glasgow and the steps decided upon by the National Committee.

The week following the conference an attack was made on the Glasgow branch by the editorial board of Red Mole. This attack was made in a national Letter to Members, without discussion in the leading bodies of the IMG and circulated to the entire membership in a way calculated to prejudice the membership against the branch. The first information the Glasgow branch members received about this was when they received the Letter to Members at the branch meeting and read that they had been declared guilty of sabotaging the work of the IMG.

The PC at its meeting of July 3rd took some extraordinary decisions affecting the functioning of the branch. The PC took its decisions based on the fact that the *ideas* of half the branch differ from those of the majority leadership. No charges have been made against the Glasgow branch members but they have been declared guilty of sabotaging the most important work of the IMG—the production of its newspaper—before the whole membership.

The NC at its meeting on 10/11 July endorsed the decisions of the previous PC. No member of the Glasgow branch was in attendance at either of these meetings and at the NC meeting a motion to read out a letter from the Glasgow branch organiser to the National Secretary was defeated. We protest those undemocratic and factional actions and decisions against the Glasgow branch.

At the Nottingham branch conference held in June the Tendency comrades were excluded from the branch executive committee, although they are experienced comrades and constitute a substantial part of the branch.

The majority leadership at the NC meeting (10/11 July) decided that a statement should be submitted to the Nottingham women Tendency comrades for them to issue publicly to confirm their support and loyalty to the journal Socialist Woman and Socialist Woman groups. Such a procedure is not in keeping with the norms of our movement and has much in common with practices of opposite organisations—in particular the SLL and CP.

At the same NC the majority leadership refused to elect Susan Williams to the PC, although she has been on the PC for several years, is a founding member of the Tendency and continues to play a key role in it. By removing Susan Williams from the PC, the NC cut the Tendency representation on the PC by half although support for the Tendency as shown by the voting at the Conference has doubled. Having reduced the Tendency representation on the PC to one full member the majority leadership refused the Tendency an alternate member although two alternate members were allocated to the majority. In addition the NC refused the Tendency the right to nominate its own representatives to the PC from its NC members.

The NC majority further violated the norms of democratic centralism by changing a democratic practice recognised in the statutes of the Fourth International, that the elected leadership body has the right to attend meetings of all subordinate bodies. The NC decided to take away from the NC members who are not members of the PC, their right to attend PC meetings if they so wished.

We protest these breaches of democratic centralism and appeal to the majority leadership to rethink and change these decisions.

Susan Williams for the Tendency 25/7/71

#### *Appendix 17*

*STATEMENT TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP by Comrades Anderson, Joe, Stevens, Malcolm, Ricardo, and Owen*

The comrades who have appended their names to this statement are taking this step in order that the undemocratic activities of the Political Committee in relationship to the Glasgow branch, can be shown as having the most dangerous implications for the International Marxist Group. We will attempt to show the Stalinist methodology behind the moves to control a minority tendency, and so doing, we hope we can explain the position of the comrades in Glasgow as well as relaying a warning to all comrades. This statement describes the most recent events in the campaign by the national leadership against democratic procedure in the Glasgow branch. Comrades should refer to the earlier statement of 13th July 1971.

The first point to note is that the Glasgow branch is already under the control of the national leadership concerning the Spartacus League, following the resolutions of the Political Committee of 3rd July 1971 and ratified

by the NC of 10th July 1971. We are not allowed to discuss any aspect whatsoever of the SL except the idea of fusion with the IMG.

Comrade McGovern was instructed at the PC meeting of 31st July 1971 to control the political work of all Glasgow comrades in relation to all aspects of the UCS situation. This comrade arrived in Glasgow the same weekend. In practice he will control not only the UCS work, for he, not the branch, will decide the political importance of all other work in relation to the UCS, by instructing us not to engage in other activities. In reality this means that all aspects of work in the Glasgow branch are under the control of an individual acting on behalf of the PC.

Comrade McGovern was present at the industrial fraction meeting of 1st August 1971. He explained at this meeting the decision of the PC to reverse the decision of the Glasgow branch of 27th July 1971, where the branch decided not to hold public meetings in the surrounding areas of Glasgow (Coatbridge, East Kilbride, and Cumbernauld). Furthermore, he stated that Comrade Anderson was instructed to speak, not only at these local public meetings but on a projected speaking tour of Britain. On top of this, Comrade Anderson was instructed to present a resolution to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee in his factory, to which he is a delegate as convener of DATA shop stewards. It reads as follows:

In view of the grave attack on the entire working class of Scotland posed by the decisions of the Tory government in relation to UCS, this Joint Shop Stewards Committee resolves

- 1) to express solidarity with the workers of UCS in their struggle against the government;
- 2) to call on the STUC to organise a massive response from the Scottish workers, in the form of strikes and occupations in solidarity with UCS;
- 3) to immediately stop work and occupy John Brown Engineering for a period of 48 hours in solidarity with UCS;
- 4) to call on the workers in other industries in Scotland to follow our example.

At this fraction meeting, Comrade Anderson attempted to present his views concerning the idea of holding public meetings; however, Comrade McGovern saw fit to halt any real discussion by holding the authority of the PC over Comrade Anderson's head. He refused to discuss the characterisation of these meetings which Comrade McPherson termed "opportunistic" and Comrade Night termed as a "peg to hang our hats on."

No consideration was given to the results of the previous attempt to hold a public meeting in Glasgow on the UCS issue, held on the day after a demonstration of 40,000 people, at which 1500 publicity leaflets were distributed, *not one person* outside of our own ranks or contacts attended.

At the branch meeting of 3rd August 1971 the majority comrades explained that these public meetings were not so much concerned with the building of solidarity with the UCS struggle but in building the SL branches in the local towns proposed.

Let's have a little more detailed look at these points. First

of all, does the action proposed by the PC conform to the Leninist norms of democratic centralism? Has it ever been the practice of a Trotskyist organisation to place a single individual in control of a branch with the PC's authority? Can the comrades of the PC give any precedent for instructing comrades at a fraction meeting? Since when were any PC instructions carried out before branch discussion?

The fact of the matter is that these manoeuvres conform to the norms of bureaucratic centralism—the hallmark of Stalinist methodology. The PC has usurped the democratic rights of the Glasgow branch, and of every branch, to hold a discussion and take a decision on issues that confront them.

It should be made clear to whom the PC is passing its instructions (via comrade McGovern). Comrade Anderson is the one to whom the instructions are being passed. Why? It is true that he holds almost every position of importance inside his union in its official capacity. It is true that he is an industrial militant in a fairly large engineering company. By holding the position of convener of DATA shop stewards and his position on the Joint Shop Stewards Committee he has a certain amount of influence. This is the reason for the statement by Comrade McPherson that Comrade Anderson is the "best" (?) comrade for the task of speaking at public meetings, to which all other majority comrades agreed.

However, when we talk about somebody being the "best" person to speak at public meetings, surely we mean he or she should be the most capable of presenting the IMG (majority) line as well as being an industrial militant. But this is not the case with Comrade Anderson. Comrade Anderson does not work in UCS, has no special knowledge of the situation and considers that all other comrades are in a similar position. He is a member of the Tendency. He disagrees with the general line of IMG industrial work, and holds fundamental disagreements with the specific activities of IMG concerning the UCS situation. Does this constitute the "best" comrade to represent the IMG majority position?

Between the 1st August 1971 industrial fraction meeting and the branch meeting of the 3rd, Comrade McPherson's opinion had altered to considering Comrade Anderson as being the "only alternative speaker" rather than the "best." In connection with the proposed public meetings, the majority comrades, in particular Comrade McGovern, gave certain "concessions" to Comrade Anderson. Comrade Anderson's presentation was to be a "mutually agreed statement" not specifically on UCS but on the general trade union situation. Comrade King was to be the main speaker, available to present and explain the IMG majority line, and answer any awkward questions.

At the branch meeting of 3rd August, Comrade Anderson was at pains to point out that the majority comrades had at no time asked for any details about the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, nor his relationship with this committee at any previous industrial fraction meeting or branch meeting. Nor do any of the PC comrades have the least inkling of these considerations.

The resolution which was presented by Comrade McGovern to the industrial fraction of 1st August, took no account whatsoever of the level of consciousness of the shop stewards committee. Although Comrade McGovern

made it clear that our only intervention could be propagandistic, the resolution fails completely to meet the need of developing the committee from its low political level. This resolution represents a clear departure from the method of the *Transitional Programme*, and reflects the ultra-left course of the national leadership.

We reject the statement by Comrade McGovern concerning disagreements with the national leadership taking decisions. It was said that "if Comrade Anderson had disagreements with a national body taking decisions, then he (Comrade McGovern) did not know why Comrade Anderson was a member of IMG." We do not disagree with the national leadership making decisions, but members of the IMG do not necessarily have to agree with these decisions. We do oppose the method of arriving at these decisions concerning the Glasgow branch of 31st July 1971. No comrade representing the opposing point of view was present, neither was there any written material pertaining to the UCS situation. The PC took decisions specifically about public meetings, without knowing the full contents of the discussion inside the Glasgow branch.

Comrade McGovern's role in these events is further illustration of the degeneration of the IMG. At the NC meeting of the 10th July 1971, Comrade McGovern was the only majority comrade who voted against the decision to restrict the discussion in the Glasgow branch on the SL. Now Comrade McGovern is cast in the role of dictator over the Glasgow branch—overriding the last remnants of democratic discussion in the branch. The conclusion is inescapable. Comrade McGovern has been forced *to change his mind*, in line with the dictates of the majority leadership. This is yet another example of Stalinist methodology in action.

We conclude from the above that the majority comrades in the IMG are participating in an organisational manoeuvre designed to put pressure on and to victimise the comrades of the Tendency.

We oppose all such anti-democratic methods, all efforts to impose monolithic control on comrades, and we call for the most open discussion in the organisation before reaching a decision.

We call on all comrades in the IMG to demand the recognition of the democratic rights of the Glasgow branch.

These are your rights also; if you come to disagree with the majority leadership you will be threatened with the same restrictions.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

4th August 1971

#### ADDENDUM

Further to the anti-Leninist methods of the PC, Comrade Anderson has now received notice of suspension from membership in the IMG (5th August 1971, received 8th August 1971) from the Secretariat. This measure was carried out by the Secretariat without any discussion or consultation in the branch. The letter contains a warning to the Tendency—obey all instructions from Comrade McGovern or suffer similar treatment!

The comrades who have put their names to this statement wish to make one point very clear. The actions of Comrade Anderson have their full support, meaning, that

if any of the comrades had been put in the same position, they would have done exactly as Comrade Anderson has done.

Contrary to the ideas of the Secretariat and the PC, Comrade Anderson is not an individual who represents himself; he is one of the comrades in the Glasgow branch who holds that neither the PC nor the Secretariat has the right to instruct and suspend comrades without a full discussion.

8th August 1971

#### Appendix 18

#### Statement on Behalf of the Tendency 13/8/71— to the Political Committee

The decision by the Secretariat of the IMG to suspend from membership Comrade Anderson of the Glasgow branch constitutes a serious violation of the norms of democratic centralism.

In the first place, Comrade Anderson was suspended by a body whose powers to take such decisions are not ensured within the constitution of the IMG. In the second place, he was suspended in his absence without any preliminary charges being laid against him and, in the third place, he was not given the elementary democratic right to reply to any such charges.

Such an undemocratic procedure is alien to the Trotskyist movement which was founded, in part, to oppose such methods.

The action taken against Comrade Anderson is not, however, an act taken against an individual but a factional move against the Tendency which has political differences with the majority leadership of the IMG. The attempt to overcome these differences by organisational manoeuvres will neither solve them nor create an atmosphere conducive to their democratic discussion. Since the last Conference, the Tendency pledged to abide by the political line adopted by the majority, although retaining severe differences with it. To abide by such a line does not mean, however, to accept the *initiative* in publicly putting it forth.

It was clearly untenable on the part of the PC to expect a minority member to take responsibility for being the chief spokesman at public meetings on the UCS events when sharply disagreeing with the IMG line—a line which had already been criticised by Comrade Mandel in a letter to the PC. It was not only the duty of the majority comrades to take the responsibility in putting forward their line—a line which the minority comrades would publicly abide by and defend—it was clearly more advantageous that such a line should be put forward by comrades politically in agreement with it.

The victimisation of Comrade Anderson is merely the latest example of the victimisation of the Glasgow branch many of whom are Tendency members. It follows on from the removal from that branch of many of its democratic rights under the suspicion of a "disloyalty" that has never been proved.

The Tendency calls upon the PC to rescind this undemocratic decision—passed by a body without the authority to do so and in clear violation of all democratic procedures—which clearly constitutes a factional move against

minority members and a departure from Bolshevik norms.

A. D. Scott—on behalf of the Tendency

#### APPENDIX 19

#### LETTER FROM THE TENDENCY 5/10/71 TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrade Jordan,

In reply to the request made by the PC on October 2nd for two of its representatives to meet with the Tendency in order to a) discuss the internal situation of the IMG in Scotland with a view to the Tendency comrades withdrawing their statement made at the Glasgow branch meeting on August 24th and, b) to find out whether the Tendency Nottingham women comrades would sign the statement drawn up by the Secretariat for publication in the journal *Socialist Woman* (dated 10/11 July, 1971).

The Tendency could see no purpose in meeting with the two representatives of the PC to discuss the above questions, for the following reasons:

1) We consider that the Tendency comrades in Glasgow have acted in a responsible and loyal manner in face of provocative and factional moves by supporters of the majority.

The statement made by the Glasgow Tendency comrades clearly shows that we are prepared to carry out the decisions as adopted at the National Conference held in June 1971. We fully understand that the NC/PC has the responsibility to apply the line of Conference and decide policy and actions on new issues as they arise. These are not the questions in dispute.

What is disputed is the manner and methods used by leading comrades in implementing political decisions. For leading comrades to issue "instructions," often without any discussion with the comrade(s) concerned, is to turn democratic centralism on its head. While it is the responsibility of a minority to carry out majority decisions, it is the responsibility of the majority to make it possible for the minority to do this. A majority should not put impossible demands on a minority which they know in advance cannot be carried out by a minority. For instance, we do not know what there is to be gained by "instructing" a comrade to speak publicly on behalf of the IMG on a line with which he/she disagrees. Such a procedure is not only undemocratic but also unproductive for the movement as a whole. (In the specific case of Comrade Anderson, we would point out that he was "instructed" to speak on behalf of the IMG at three public meetings at a time when he was opposed to the line as expressed in the Red Mole—i.e., along the line of a "Scottish Workers' Republic"—a line which has been subsequently dropped by the majority).

What could be gained by "instructing" a comrade, in his absence, to move a resolution at a trades council without having any prior discussion with that comrade as to whether he was able, as a delegate from his trade union branch, at his first trades council meeting, to do so. We think it is more consistent with the democratic norms of our movement to discuss fully with comrades, the type and method of intervention possible in a given situation and not to issue "instructions" to be carried out under the guise of democratic centralism.

2) As regards the statement which the NC are demanding be signed by the Nottingham women comrades of the Tendency, we can only repeat what has already been stated in their letters dated 28/7/71 and 3/9/71. We consider that it is alien to the norms of the Trotskyist movement to require members to sign statements which contain lies. At the same time we would point out that the NC has refused to answer the questions raised by the Tendency comrades as to the purpose of such a demand and what is hoped to be gained by such a procedure.

In making the decision not to meet with PC representatives, as already outlined, it does not mean that the Tendency representatives are unwilling to meet with the leadership to discuss the political work of the organisation and the Tendency in helping to build a viable section of the Fourth International in Britain.

Yours fraternally, S. Williams, for the Tendency,  
October 5th, 1971

#### *Message to the PRT/ERP, Argentina*

The 1971 Annual Conference of the International Marxist Group (British Section of the Fourth International) extends its warmest fraternal greetings to the comrades of the PRT (Argentinian Section of the Fourth International) and the ERP, the revolutionary army they are in the process of building. Your recent militant actions which have been welcomed by the Rosario workers and have upset the trade union bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie have shown in a very concrete way some of the possibilities which are opening up for the Fourth International. The fact that the capitalist official you arrested and released after your demands had been met was also a British official was no accident. It shows the very real links which exist between British and Argentinian capitalism and that is why we are more enthusiastic than we would normally have been at your action. Comrades, we solidarise with your struggle, with your militants who have fallen in battle, and with all the victims of bourgeois repression. We are confident that you will deepen and extend the armed class struggle till the Argentinian partners and agents of U.S. imperialism have been completely smashed.

VICTORY TO THE ERP/PRT  
VICTORY TO THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

*Statement by the Tendency outlining their reasons for abstaining on the "Message to the PRT/ERP, Argentina."*

The delegates attending the June 1971 national conference of the IMG were asked to endorse three messages of support to comrades involved in struggle in other countries: 1) to the NLF (East Bengal); 2) to Ceylonese revolutionaries; 3) to the PRT/ERP, Argentina.

We voted in favour of the first two resolutions and abstained on the third. The reasons why we abstained are as follows.

a) the resolution did more than express solidarity with our Argentine comrades in their struggle against the reactionary capitalist government of President Lanusse;

b) it went further than expressing sympathy for the comrades who have been murdered in cold blood by the Command Radio-electrico;

c) the resolution completely endorsed the specific action of the kidnapping by the ERP of Stanley Silvester, British Consul in Rosario. In fact because Silvester happens to be British, the resolution claims "we are more enthusiastic than we would normally have been at your action."

We are not in principle against the kidnapping of bourgeois politicians or diplomats. As far as we are concerned it is a tactical question; whether the gains justify the action; whether it pushes the class struggle forward; whether it assists in the building of the revolutionary party, etc.

We abstained from voting for the message because we are not convinced that this is the actual case in the Silvester action. Further, we consider the majority leadership used the resolution as a factional manoeuvre. Unlike the East Bengal and Ceylon resolutions a recorded card vote was called for immediately the Argentine resolution was presented.

The majority leadership did not see fit to consult with the Tendency on this question or even inform us of the text of the resolution prior to hearing it read out at the conference. We would have voted in favour of any resolution which expressed sympathy for our comrades killed in battle, which called for support and solidarity with the PRT/ERP.

July 25, 1971

T-9

*Further on the Disciplinary Question in Scotland, submitted by the Tendency February 1972.*

*MINUTES OF THE SCOTTISH AGGREGATE, SUNDAY 10th OCTOBER, 11 am.*

PRESENT: Williams; Camillo; Petersen (visitors); Night; Tennent; Anderson; Malcolm (left 1 pm); Scott (ditto); Carlos; Owen; Stevens; Myers; Campbell; Gylda; Joe; Ricardo; Blair; McAndreas; McGovern; Muir; Mark; McPherson; Smith; Sullivan; Westworth; Paisley; Shanks; Clancy; Mayfield; McEqan; Madden; Grainger; McKP; APOLOGIES: Jack; AWR; King; Evans.

MOTION: "At the Scottish aggregate meeting on August 21/22 a motion was passed severely censuring certain comrades for abstaining on a resolution at National Conference. This aggregate recognises that the presentation and passing of such a motion of censure is a gross violation of the basic democratic rights of members to vote on or abstain on resolutions presented to Conference. This aggregate therefore removes the

vote of severe censure on the comrades concerned." FOR 8 AGAINST 9 ABST 4 Lost.

Campbell asked for the following statement to be minuted: "Despite the fact that the motion was defeated no one voting against it spoke on the motion to motivate this."

*INTERNATIONAL REPORT:* Petersen. Questions. Proposal that possibility of a tour publicising events in Bolivia be looked into; agreed unanimously.

*DISCIPLINE:* Question asked re disciplining of Lymond. Arising; *Motions:* "This Aggregate rescinds the termination of membership of Comrade Lymond passed at the Forth Valley branch on 12th September. Lost. FOR 13 AGAINST 13 ABST 2. "This aggregate decides to take no action on the question of Comrade Lymond's expulsion as the matter has already been referred to the NC. Passed. FOR 16 AGAINST 8 ABST 2. *Motion:* "That this aggregate drops all the charges laid by the Scottish Committee on the grounds that these charges are part of the undemocratic methods employed against comrades by supporters of the majority." FOR 10 AGAINST 18 ABST 1.

*LUNCH*

*ANDERSON.* Charges against Anderson along with additional information read and motivated by Paisley. Statements made by McGovern and McPherson. Questions and discussion. *Charge One:* "that he refused to sell UCS broadsheets at John Brown Engineering. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution." McGovern motion to withdraw. Passed. FOR 17 AGAINST 8 ABSTENTIONS 2. *Charge Two:* "That he refused to speak on behalf of the IMG at 3 public meetings in solidarity with Clydeside. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution." Motion to drop charge: Lost. FOR 9 AGAINST 17 ABST 1. Vote on charge being found proven: FOR 17 AGAINST 9 ABST 1. *Charge three:* "for refusing to put a resolution to Clydebank Trades Council calling for support for the Claimants' Union and asking the Trades Council to accept a delegate from the Claimants' Union at their meetings. This amounts to breaking discipline under clause 9b of the constitution." Motion to drop charge. Lost. FOR 9 AGAINST 17 ABST 1. Vote on charge being proven: FOR 16 AGAINST 10 ABST 1.

Disciplinary action:

Motion: "Comrade Anderson is suspended herewith from membership of IMG. He is however invited to work under the direction of a unit of the group. The suspension shall last for a period of 6 months. Thereafter the position shall be re-considered. Lost. FOR 10 AGAINST 14 ABST 2. "That Comrade Anderson's membership of IMG be terminated forthwith." Lost. FOR 3 AGAINST 21 ABST 3. "This aggregate considers that Comrade Anderson is guilty of a breach of discipline under section 9 of the constitution as outlined in the statements by McGovern and McPherson and recommends to the NC that he be suspended from membership for a period of 6 months and

invited to work with the IMG during his period of suspension." Carried. FOR 12 AGAINST 8 ABSTENTIONS 6. "No action." Lost. FOR 12 AGAINST 15 ABSTENTIONS 0.

**RICARDO.** Charges laid by Paisley: "That he refused to assist Ferguson in establishing a Claimants Union in Clydebank when requested by Comrade King who had been delegated powers to direct all comrades' work in relation to the UCS campaigning in Glasgow." Motion to drop charge: FOR 10 AGAINST 13 ABSTENTIONS 2. Discussion. Motion that charge proven: FOR 15 AGAINST 8 ABSTENTIONS 3.

Disciplinary action: "Comrade Ricardo is suspended forthwith from membership of the IMG. He is however invited to work under the direction of a unit of the group. The suspension shall last for a period of 6 months. Thereafter the position shall be re-considered. Lost. FOR 9 AGAINST 12 ABSTENTIONS 4. "That Comrade Ricardo's membership of the IMG be terminated forthwith." Lost. FOR 3 AGAINST 19 ABSTENTIONS 3. "No action." Lost. FOR 10 AGAINST 14 ABSTENTIONS 1. "This aggregate considers that Comrade Ricardo is guilty of a breach of discipline under Section 9 of the constitution as outlined in the statement of King. It recommends to the NC that he be suspended from membership for a period of 6 months and invited to work with the IMG during his period of suspension." Carried. FOR 11 AGAINST 10 ABSTENTIONS 4.

**CAMPBELL:** Motion that no charge be heard until such time as both Tennent and Campbell are present. Carried. FOR 10 AGAINST 8 ABSTENTIONS 3.

**STEVENS.** Motion "We drop the charges against Stevens." Amendment: "On the ground that they are a factional fabrication." Amendment lost: FOR 8 AGAINST 11 ABSTENTIONS 2. Motion carried: FOR 16 AGAINST 5. Statement (Owen): "I protest that the decision taken at the Scottish aggregate today to drop the charges against Comrade Stevens made no reference to the factional and fabricatory nature of the charges which had absolutely no basis in fact as the addendum below irrefutably shows. In my opinion the failure to make reference to the factional and fabricatory nature of the charges implies that there was a basis for laying them. This constitutes an implied slander on the character and honesty of Comrade Stevens (Note: Comrade Stevens's prepared defense against these charges will appear as an addendum to the minutes.)" Arising. Motion: "Comrade Stevens is instructed to start a weekly payment to the SL treasurer with a view to paying off her debts to the SL. The amount of the debt should be discussed between Stevens and the IMG EC." FOR 5 AGAINST 9 ABSTENTIONS 7. Motion: "We instruct the Glasgow branch to investigate the matter of Comrade Stevens's alleged debts to the SL and take appropriate action." FOR 17 ABST 4 Motion: "All comrades of the IMG who work in the SL should have their financial situation investigated." FOR 18 ABSTENTIONS 3.

**GYLDA.** Motion to drop charges: Carried. FOR 10 AGAINST 7, ABSTENTIONS 2

**CAMPBELL** again! Comrade Tennent had still not returned to the meeting: Arising: Motion: "The charge be dropped." Lost. FOR 9 AGAINST 11. "The charge be referred to the NC." Carried. FOR 7 AGAINST 5 ABSTENTIONS 7. Statement (Campbell): "I protest most strongly that we have been forced to remit this charge to the NC which clearly should not have to deal with such trivia. It was clearly shown to the aggregate that the charge was completely baseless and that the charge should be dropped. Despite this the aggregate decided to proceed with the charge at some future date when Comrade Tennent could also be present, who incidentally is not even laying the charge. I appeal to the NC to have these ludicrous charges dropped immediately."

**OTHER CHARGES.** Note that charges against Gylda, Campbell, Stevens, Owen, Ricardo, Malcolm, Myers, Joe and Anderson of violating the norms of democratic centralism by refusing to recognise the authority of and to carry out the decisions of higher bodies were dropped at an earlier stage in the meeting.\* Arising: Statement by Myers: "I would like to point out that the charge laid against me by the Area Committee is completely without ground: a) I was not present at the branch meeting of 31/8/71. b) In connection with all statements made by the Tendency and in connection with Comrade Anderson's suspension I have never been in attendance at any of these meetings.

The A. C. in its haste to discipline Tendency comrades has omitted even to consult branch minutes for evidence. In fact I am not being charged on the basis of Appendices 1 & 2 but for being a member of the Tendency. Also in relation to the letter of 24/8/71 I am indicted in connection with another Tendency statement—again on this occasion I was not present at the branch meeting. Yet again I am being victimised on the basis of being a Tendency member.

**NC MEETING:** Motion to ask Secretariat to organise next NC in Glasgow. FOR 10 AGAINST 6, ABSTENTIONS 2.

**ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS.** Referred to A. C.

**ADJOURNED:** 8 pm.

**STATEMENT** (Shanks, Sullivan, Grainger, McKP): "We consider the decision taken by the aggregate to drop charges against Gylda has allowed a person who has crossed the boundary of class solidarity and sabotaged the work in the Glasgow branch to remain within the FI"; (McEwan, Westworth, Madden): "We consider the decision taken to drop the charges against Gylda is irresponsible in not hearing charges of such gravity."

\* By FOR 12 AGAINST 7 ABSTENTIONS 5. An amendment to add that "We drop the charges because they are undemocratic was lost by FOR 7 AGAINST 13 ABSTENTIONS 4.



STATEMENT BY RICARDO—22/10/71.

Presented to the NC Oct. 23/24 1971.

The purpose of this statement is to record my defence against charges laid against me by the NC and to appeal the recommendation of the Scottish aggregate to suspend me from the IMG for 3 months. The procedure adopted in reaching a decision is in my opinion, an incorrect one. The charges were drawn up initially by Comrade King of the PC who ignored the Glasgow branch as a functioning unit of the IMG. The NC was requested to prefer these charges and agreed to do so at a meeting to which I was not invited. Following that, the Scottish committee (a body of 6 people designed to give political leadership in Scotland) was asked by the NC to arrange a meeting where these charges would be heard. The SC agreed and called a Scottish aggregate meeting for October 10th. At this meeting the situation regarding attendance was reversed. I was present, but Comrade King was not. I was found guilty of charges which had been initiated by Comrade King despite King's absence, when the charges were heard. The punishment for this offence, however, was to be decided by the NC—the body which laid the charges.

Concerning the charges themselves, suffice it firstly to give an account of relevant events. Everything relative occurred at an IMG/SL aggregate meeting which had no terms of reference, except 'to discuss' our work in relation to the UCS crisis. Even this was in contradiction to what took place. Although he knew that as a member of the Tendency I was opposed to the policy of building Claimants' Unions as our main strategy to combat the increasing unemployment, Comrade King suggested that I undertake the building of the Claimants' Union in Clydebank. I submitted what I considered to be valid reasons for not doing so—that I was moving, and soon to take up studies which would prevent me from doing this work. King chose to ignore these reasons, and stated that he was not *asking* me, he was *instructing* me. He demanded a 'yes' or 'no' reply to this order. I appealed to the meeting for some discussion over the reasons which I had submitted in order to arrive at a balanced decision. This appeal failed and I was forced to reply to Comrade King's order. Faced with such a limited choice, my reply was 'no.'

I would like to make one point *absolutely* clear. I accept fully the method of democratic centralism for building the revolutionary party. It follows and is true that I accept the right of the national leadership to make decisions in between conferences. What I do not accept is the mode of operation whereby the membership acts mechanically to instructions which do not consider particular circumstances or differing ideas. The introduction of this mode of operation as a norm in our movement could have very severe consequences. We have an example which illustrates the danger. In the period when the 2 PC representatives, Comrades King and McGovern, were in Glasgow, I was not the only comrade who received instructions/orders. Comrade Blair, a supporter of the majority politically, was also instructed by Comrade King to undertake a certain task. He too refused. It later transpired that Comrade Blair's circumstances were such that it would have been almost impossible for him to carry out this task *at all* let alone efficiently. In a period when important struggles are taking place, this mode of operation would

have much more drastic effects.

In referring you to the case of Comrade Blair, let me not forget to mention that Comrade Blair has not been charged with violating democratic centralism. The question is posed (not for vindictive reasons): "Why was Comrade Ricardo charged and Comrade Blair not?" The only answer can be that a dual standard exists. One for supporters of the Tendency, and one for the majority supporters. The disciplinary action taken against me can only be understood when placed in its proper context, i.e. the present witch-hunt of the Tendency comrades in Scotland which began before the National Conference and culminated in an expulsion of one of our comrades and charges against nine others.

The leadership, seeing political ideas developing in conflict with theirs, have made it standard practice to combat such ideas with organisational reprisals and by making it almost intolerable for comrades with opposing views to have a political life in the IMG.

If we are to build the Trotskyist movement then the question of democracy and minorities is of vital importance. We cannot expect to understand or cope with varying events in our society unless we have democracy in the organisation.

We cannot expect to protect the democratic rights of *any* comrade in the movement if the rights of a minority are eroded. I therefore make an appeal for the rejection of this mode of operation and ask that *all* charges be dropped against the Tendency.

P. Ricardo

*OUTLINE OF ANDERSON'S DEFENCE TO THE  
SCOTTISH AGGREGATE MEETING OF 10TH OCTOBER  
1971*

The three charges laid against Comrade Anderson decidedly oppose all the democratic norms of a Leninist organisation. The charges have no foundation and have been endorsed by the National Committee without either direct written or verbal communication between the accused and this body.

The charges are based entirely on factional motivations. On the first charge no discussion took place, while the second charge involved a restricted discussion. The issue in the third charge was discussed without Comrade Anderson's presence and he was instructed without his own point of view being considered.

*CHARGE 1:* The first point to note about this charge, as with the others, is that Comrade King acted in a completely undemocratic manner. The Tendency have made it clear, and Comrade Anderson will re-emphasise the point once again: we do not accept the dictates of a single individual without regard to the circumstances (see statement 17/8/71).



At the Spartacus League/International Marxist Group aggregate of 15th August 1971, Comrade King shouted to Comrade Anderson about the sale of the Red Mole broadsheets (Comrade Anderson was at this time leaving the meeting slightly earlier because he does not live in Glasgow). There was no discussion at this meeting or at any previous meeting concerning the sale of the Red Mole at his factory.

Comrade King nor any of the comrades at that meeting had any knowledge of Comrade Anderson's work position. Neither the National Committee, the Political Committee or the Secretariat had any knowledge of Comrade Anderson's work as convenor of Shop Stewards at John Brown Engineering. What right had they to instruct Comrade Anderson in this manner?

**CHARGE 2:** On the 1st August 1971 at an industrial fraction, Comrade McGovern instructed Comrade Anderson to speak at three public meetings and a projected national tour of Britain. Comrade Anderson attempted to explain his attitude towards the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) campaign, but was cut short by Comrade McGovern. Remarks which had been made by some majority comrades which were politically incorrect were not allowed to be discussed.

When the matter was brought up at the branch meeting of 3rd August 1971 Comrade Anderson was again instructed. Comrade Anderson refused to speak at these meetings because of his serious disagreements with their nature and method, the general line of IMG trade union work and moreover with the attitude of the IMG majority towards the UCS struggle.

Under these circumstances there could be no talk of a "mutually agreeable political statement." As far as Comrade Anderson was concerned he could not adequately assume to be representative of the majority IMG political line.

**CHARGE 3:** The third charge is based on the fact that the majority have no knowledge of Comrade Anderson's work in Clydebank Trades Council, nor have some of these comrades any idea of the workings of a Trades Council. The resolution was presented at the branch meeting of 17/8/71 (Comrade Anderson was not present when this matter was raised because he was attending an important trade union meeting), and carried. At the branch meeting of 25/8/71, although Comrade Anderson was again not present (he had left the meeting before the matter was raised, for the same reason as in Charge 1), he was instructed to present the resolution to the Clydebank Trades Council the following night.

When Comrade Anderson made the so-called refusal to Comrade McPhearson on the night of the Trades Council, it was not because he did not agree to present the resolution. A resolution has to be passed through the delegate's trade union branch and placed on the Trades Council agenda before it can be discussed. This fact was the reason for Comrade Anderson's so-called refusal.

There have been precedents in the Glasgow IMG branch in attempting to sort out the political differences between comrades. In one particular case a comrade disagreed with the IMG line on the invasion of Czechoslovakia (the comrade sided with Russia). Because of this very basic disagreement, the Glasgow branch did not ask him to

Speak at public meetings on this issue; instead we invited the comrade to document his differences, give an educational on the subject and generally to discuss the issue so that the majority would have the opportunity to convince the comrade of his mistaken analysis.

However, for the majority of the Glasgow IMG branch, political differences are overcome in a factional manner.

All comrades should be aware that these charges are so undemocratic as to warrant complete contempt. They add up to actions by comrades who are engrossed in Stalinist methods together with a disregard for the political life of other comrades.

#### *A Brief History of an Undemocratic Proceeding and an Appeal to the National Committee*

At the 1971 Annual Conference a resolution in solidarity with the ERP was put to a vote. Several delegates abstained on this vote, among whom were four delegates from Scotland, Joe, Gylda, Owen and Lymond.

At the Scottish aggregate meeting on August 21-22nd, in the absence of at least two of the four comrades concerned, a resolution was presented by Shanks and passed by a large majority, 12 for 4 against 1 abstention. The text of the resolution reads (Resolution No. 6):

IMG Scottish aggregate is gravely disturbed by the behaviour of certain Scottish comrades who abstained on the motion of solidarity with the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) at the Annual Conference. We recognise the ERP as the revolutionary army of the Argentinian section of the Fourth International and regard any prevarication on the question of total solidarity as an intolerable act of scabbing. The comrades concerned are therefore severely censured for their action.

At the Glasgow branch meeting of 7/9/71, at which comrade Petersen was present, Gylda presented the following statement on behalf of the Tendency comrades:

We regard the passing of resolution No. 6 at the Scottish aggregate meeting as marking a further stage in the degeneration of democratic norms in the IMG. Several comrades were subjected to disciplinary action (severe censure) for abstaining on a resolution at Annual Conference. We regard the censuring of comrades for exercising their democratic right to vote as a method of operation justly condemned by our movement in the past. It is a method of degenerate Stalinism. We intend to raise the matter at the next Scottish aggregate and seek to have the vote of censure reversed.

Comrade Petersen confined his remarks on the matter to insisting that a vote of censure did not constitute disciplinary action.

At the Scottish aggregate of 10th October 1971, at which Comrades Petersen and Camillo were present, Gylda presented the following motion:

At the Scottish aggregate meeting of 21st-22nd August a motion was passed severely censuring certain comrades for abstaining on a resolution at Annual Conference. This Scottish aggregate recognises that the presentation and passing of such a motion of censure is a gross violation of the basic democratic right of members to vote on or abstain on resolutions presented to Conference. This aggregate therefore removes the vote of severe censure on the comrades concerned. This motion was defeated 8 for 9 against 4 abs.

Not one comrade spoke against Gylda's motion. Comrades Petersen and Camillo had nothing to say on the matter when it was raised. However, when the matter was referred to some hours later, Comrade Petersen did intervene to point out that a vote of censure did not constitute disciplinary action.

*What is involved:* Four comrades have been censured and branded as scabs for exercising what is a basic right of every member.

*Why did it happen:* How did we reach a stage at which comrades (not just a handful, but 12 out of 17 present) are so miseducated as to believe that passing a vote of censure on comrades for abstaining on a resolution is an acceptable method of operation in the Trotskyist movement? The answer is clear. The factionalism of the majority leadership leads to the abandonment of *matters* of principle on questions of organisation and democratic norms. Who can express amazement when comrades new to the movement carry factionalism to its grisly conclusion?

We appeal to the National Committee to remove this scandalous vote of censure.

Gylda, Joe

*Correspondence re "Open Letter to certain members of the Tendency in Glasgow."*

Glasgow. 8/1/72

Dear Comrade Petersen,

I have learned of the existence of a document entitled 'Open letter to certain members of the Tendency in Glasgow.' To date no member of the Tendency in Glasgow has received a copy, although 'extracts' from this letter have been submitted for consideration by the International Commission.

The Glasgow Tendency members would be grateful if you supplied them with copies of the 'open' letter as well as copies of the 'extracts.'

Yours fraternally,  
Gylda

20 Jan. 1972

Dear Comrade Jordan,

In connection with my request for copies of the 'open

letter' by Comrade Ball, I write to inform you that to date I am still without copies. I asked Ball when it would be circulated. He replied that we would get it when he had time to duplicate it. I hope the Centre will take the necessary steps.

Fraternally,  
Gylda

*Resolution passed at the National Committee meeting 8/9 January, 1972.*

- 1) Copy of "Statement from J. Ball to Petersen" and circulated to the National Committee be distributed to the comrades who are criticised in the statement
- 2) That "Extracts from an Open Letter to Certain Tendency Comrades in Glasgow" and which has been submitted to the International Commission by Comrade Jordan shall be circulated to all National Committee members.
- 3) Comrade Ball to send the full text of the "Open Letter" to the comrades to whom he has addressed it.

To this date, February 13, 1971, the requests contained in the letters from Comrade Gylda and the decisions as above have not been carried out. No members of the Tendency in Scotland has received a copy of the "Open Letter" addressed to them.

C-49

*Extract from Political Committee Minutes Aug. 14/71 "Glasgow Situation: Resolution by King passed unan."*

1. The PC reaffirms that the work around UCS be under the direction of the Political Committee and its representatives, Comrades MacGovern and King; and in their absence Comrades MT and McPherson.

2. The UCS work shall take *priority* over all other work in Glasgow; comrades absenting themselves from any duties assigned to them in relation to UCS must provide a written reason in advance for their non-attendance.

3. Comrade JS to keep his car in Glasgow in view of the vital need for transport in that area. Comrade RD also to take his van to Glasgow.

4. The NC of the SL to be asked to appoint a member to immediately go to Glasgow to assist the work of the SL in Glasgow.

5. No comrades working in Glasgow from any other area shall leave [without] permission of the PC or its representatives.

6. The IMG as an urgent priority must move at least one leading cadre into Glasgow.

*Extract from IMG PC Minutes July 31st 1971*

M/c that all the resources of Glasgow IMG are to be put at the disposal of this campaign which will be under the political control of Comrade McGovern. (unan.)

M/c that PC decided at its meeting on July 31st that the Glasgow IMG, under the direction of Comrades McGovern and/or King, will hold public meetings on the UCS crisis. All members of the IMG are instructed to work for, support and organise any meetings Comrades McGovern or King consider necessary. Any members failing to carry out the decisions of the leadership will be answerable to the PC. (unan.)

M/c that the broadsheet be referred to the secretariat. (unan.)

C-54 B

*Extracts from minutes of IMG National Committee 10/11th July 1971**Scottish organisation including Glasgow question*

M/c that Red Mole carry legend "Occupy Clydeside, First steps towards a Scottish Workers Republic." 14 f, 2 ag, 6 ab.

M/ that area organiser to go to Glasgow as soon as possible and organise the work of Glasgow branch with regard to UCS. 2 ab.

Procedural motion put to continue NC discussion with Glasgow resolution and UCS.

C-59

## CORRECTION TO MINUTES OF PC 15th May 1971

## Under Glasgow

(1) Fact-Finding Commission report. The voting was 5 for, 1 against since Jenkins was also absent when the vote was taken (he had taken McGovern to the station by car).

(2) Motion moved by Williams was defeated: "No action except to inform the Glasgow organiser that it is urgent for the pre-conference discussion period to commence and to invite the 3 NC members to the next PC meeting" (the wording had been passed to Matthews for the minutes.)

(3) King's motion, which was carried by 4 votes for, 1 against and 1 abstention, "that a leading comrade from the PC goes to Glasgow when the Tendency is in Glasgow to discuss with the branch" was omitted.

(4) An amendment by Matthews that the Tendency should inform the National Secretary where and when it is going to have discussions with branches on conference documents, also omitted.

N. B. The above mistakes occurred because a different person typed the minutes from the person taking them at the meeting. Also there was an element of confusion caused by us having to vacate the meeting place twice under pressure.

## TEXT OF LETTER FROM TENDENCY TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE

"The Tendency has been informed of the PC decision that a leading member of the majority is to be sent to Glasgow when the Tendency comrades attend the Glasgow branch for a discussion with its members on the conference documents.

"We protest this decision. We think it was factionally motivated, the mover of it claiming that it was intended to 'smash the Tendency.'

"We consider that such a motion is designed to create an atmosphere of intimidation and reveals a complete lack of confidence in the members of the Glasgow branch—particularly the NC members.

"Such a procedure can only work against the norms of democratic centralism. The pre-conference discussion period should be one in which there can be a free and frank exchange of ideas around documentation for the conference.

"We consider the decision made at the last PC cuts across this concept by creating an atmosphere of intimidation.

"We therefore request the PC to rescind its decision."

## COMMENT BY PETER PETERSEN

First, my own position. I abstained on the question because, although I agree in principle with the motion, I thought it would be clumsy to operate.

It is rich that the Tendency should talk of PC being factionally motivated. The Tendency has degenerated to the extent that it sees everything through the prism of its own factional outlook. Members of the Tendency do precious little else now than engage in advocating the line of their Tendency. Their first and overwhelming loyalty is to their Tendency. The IMG is way [down in] the order of their priorities. This letter is ridiculous when it speaks of "intimidation"—it is a theme constantly harped upon by the Tendency, particularly by Williams, that there is an undemocratic atmosphere in the IMG. This is a lie as the facts can show. In no other Trotskyist grouping in Britain is there such a free atmosphere of the exchange of ideas and written material. No obstacles are placed on the Tendency whatsoever in putting its point of view over. This lie is not intended for consumption in the IMG—the membership of the IMG are well aware of the true state of affairs. It is intended for the eyes of people outside of Britain.

The Tendency has to explain how it is that despite having complete freedom of expression it has made so little progress and on the contrary is politically isolated and, in wide circles within the group and the Spartacus League, held in contempt. Instead of admitting that this arises from the bankruptcy of its political positions, which continue to evolve to the right, it seeks to blame the major-

ity on the grounds of "intimidation," etc.

The facts are that the majority has bent over backward to facilitate a free discussion within the IMG. We have [spent] hundreds of pounds in circulating the material of the Tendency. We have given over hours and hours of discussion in our committees and other units. We have been soft on the question of the amount of activity done by members of the Tendency.

We are paying a big price for this policy. The pre-conference discussions are being artificially polarised and real political problems which need sorting out are being neglected. Over the past year the Political Committee has not been able to give attention to a whole series of questions which need fundamental discussion. The time of the full-timers has been inordinately taken up with time-wasting discussions. The energies of the leading comrades—physical and mental—have been diverted away from the important tasks.

Now on top of all this the Tendency is saying black is white—this is disgusting. No matter what the outcome of the present discussions the behaviour of the members of the Tendency will not be forgotten. They will only have themselves to blame if there is complete lack of confidence in them.

P.S. Comrade King wishes to point out that the remark of "smashing the Tendency" made by him was posed in a purely political sense.

M-15

*Statement by MacGovern concerning variations on reality contained in the statement of six members of the Glasgow branch, dated 4th August 71*

Comrades who have read the above-mentioned document will not have failed to notice that I am cast as the lead heavy in the events they so compellingly describe. I very much defend everything I did, but unfortunately in three particular instances their reportage departs somewhat from the facts, and I would like to correct these, so that history will have a full account.

1) On page 1 para. 5 they say ". . . Cde. McGovern saw fit to halt any real discussion by holding the authority of the PC over Cde. Anderson's head. He refused to discuss the characterisation of these meetings which Cde. McPherson termed "opportunist," and Cde. Night termed as a 'peg to hang our hats on.'" What I refused to do was to get involved in a discussion about what Cdes. Night and McPherson did or did not say: what I wanted to do was have a discussion about why Cde. Anderson opposed holding these meetings; unfortunately Cde. Anderson thought it better to rest his case on the quotes from the aforementioned comrades. This method of argument is totally alien to a revolutionary organisation, it reeks of the internal life of a Labour Party Ward. I did not consider that I had made an overnight journey at short notice in order to get involved in that kind of sterile exchange. Far from "stopping any real discussion," I added section 2 of the resolution referred to as a result of a point made in discussion by Cde. Anderson.

2) On page 2, para. 7 I am quoted as having said "if Cde. Anderson had disagreements with a national body taking decisions, then he (Cde. McGovern) did not know why Cde. Anderson was a member of the IMG" (their quotation marks).

My recollection of what I said is rather different. The remark was made in response to Cde. Anderson saying that he did not have confidence in the ability of the national leadership to take correct political decisions. I then said that if Cde. Anderson felt that way then I did not know why he was a member of IMG.

Both versions of this incident are totally irrelevant. My remark has no bearing on the disciplinary proceedings against Cde. Anderson, which are based on clear and undisputed facts. I take this point up because (a) I want to show how these comrades are using half-truths and misquotations in order to build up a case that they are being treated undemocratically, and (b) if any of my irrelevancies are to be quoted I would prefer them to be accurate irrelevancies.

3) Much more serious however is para. 8 on page 2, which I quote in full, "Cde. McGovern's role in these events is further illustration of the degeneration of the IMG. At the NC meeting of the 10th July 1971 Cde. McGovern was the only majority comrade who voted against the decision to restrict the discussion in the Glasgow branch on the SL. Now Cde. McGovern is cast in the role of dictator over the Glasgow branch—over-riding the last remnants of democratic discussion in the branch. The conclusion is inescapable, Cde. McGovern has been forced to change his mind, in line with the dictates of the majority leadership. This is yet another example of Stalinist methodology in action" (their emphasis).

There are several points to be made about this, and I will resist the temptation to make ironic remarks about the telepathic abilities of the Glasgow Tendency.

a) None of the signatories to the document are NC members, and none were present at the NC meeting of July 10th 1971; who told them that I voted against the resolution?

b) Such use of information concerning positions taken by individual NC members at NC meetings is a very bad principle because:

i) rank-and-file members have no way of confirming whether or not the information is accurate.

ii) if NC members are aware that the positions they take could be the subject of factional use, against the political positions with which they are in general agreement, they will be looking over their shoulders, and discussion and the free taking of positions will be restricted.

iii) the development of a situation as outlined in (ii) would inevitably lead to restrictions on the information given to the membership about NC meetings.

c) In this particular case pure speculation about the reasons for my apparent change of position is made the basis for an extremely serious charge, with no evidence to support this speculation being presented.

d) There is in fact a perfectly reasonable explanation, which should not only dispel the shadow of the Lubianka Cellar from the organisation, but demonstrates the complete consistency of my action.

I opposed the resolution referred to on methodological grounds, because I did not think it correct to restrict the freedom of the branch until there was concrete evi-

dence that, following the National Conference, the Glasgow Tendency (who had a majority in the branch) would refuse to carry out the majority political line. I made two points clear at the NC:

- i) I supported the conception of taking the Glasgow SL out of the cockpit of the Glasgow IMG branch, and allowing it to work without being subject to constant surveillance by the IMG
- ii) I recognised the right of the PC and NC to take this action, notwithstanding that I disagreed with the actual resolution.

The failure of the Glasgow Tendency to take adequate action on the development on the UCS crisis, and their refusal to organise public meetings, constituted exactly the kind of concrete evidence which, to my mind, justified the national leadership intervening and imposing its control on the branch. It was with this conviction that I readily and unhesitatingly accepted the commission which the PC gave me.

At the Glasgow branch meeting of August 10th, 1971, where the signatories distributed copies of their statement, I pointed out these inaccuracies, and appealed to the comrades to delete these sections from their document. They have chosen not to do so. I ask all comrades not to be swayed by such methods but to judge the events on the basis of clear facts.

Robin MacGovern  
2/9/71

M-18

*Statement of the Tendency on the expulsion of Cde. Lymond from the IMG by the Forth Valley branch on 12th September 1971.*

At a meeting of the Forth [Valley] branch on Sunday 12th September, Cde. Lymond, a member of the Tendency, was expelled from the IMG.

There had been a previous attempt to expel Cde. Lymond by the Scottish aggregate on the 21-22nd August. At this meeting a resolution was put calling for her expulsion despite the fact that no charges had been laid.

At this meeting the Tendency comrades strongly protested at this undemocratic, unconstitutional and factional attempt to expel Cde. Lymond. In face of these protests supporters of the IMG who were intent to expel her, were obliged to pull back in order not to violate the constitution and the democratic norms of our movement quite so flagrantly. After a brief adjournment to enable the majority supporters to caucus, the following resolution was presented to the aggregate and passed:

This aggregate regards that with the essentially vague nature of the constitution, this expulsion motion is constitutional, but should not be proceeded with as it stands.

More detailed and specific charges will be laid against Cde. Lymond to be dealt with by the Forth [Valley] branch at a meeting no less than three weeks from this date.

Subsequently Cde. Lymond received the following:

*Charges against Comrade Lymond of the Forth branch*

The following charges will be placed before the meeting of the Forth branch to be held at the time recommended by the Scottish aggregate of 22nd August 1971, in the resolution of Cde. Evans of the Forth branch:

1. That when approached by a member of the Edinburgh Women's Lib group (in which Cde. Lymond had played a leading role since its inception) over the question of setting up an SWG in Edinburgh as the Women's Lib group had proved to be overwhelmed by lethargy, Cde. Lymond deliberately dissuaded this person from acting along these lines, saying, among other things, that it would alienate some of the members of the Women's Lib group who did not favour socialist-oriented groups. Throughout this period (beginning in the middle of March 1971) Cde. Lymond had full knowledge of the position of the IMG on this question. This action on its own constitutes a breach of the discipline of the IMG, but was magnified by the fact that Cde. Lymond at no time during the discussions of the branch mentioned the person as a contact, or indeed mentioned her at all.

2. That the Women's Lib group petition circulated in the end of March/beginning of April was met with some apprehension by some of the reactionaries involved to varying degrees in the Edinburgh Women's Lib group (the rejection of the petition by these elements was due to the demand concerning 24 hour nurseries.) Because of this a motion was put at a WL meeting to remove the "offending" clause. Cde. Lymond abstained on this vote and the motion was carried as a direct result of this abstention.

3. This is a more general section, concerning the general unprincipled behaviour of this the only IMG member of the WL group.

a) As already illustrated above Cde. Lymond was loath to refer to potential contacts who could be of help in building at least a Socialist Woman Group in nature if not in name. This type of behaviour happened at least once more to the knowledge of the IMG members in Edinburgh over a contact brought to a Red Circle by the comrades involved in Irish work. This Red Circle was given by Cde. Lymond on the Topic of Women's Liberation but the contact was not followed up by Cde. Lymond, despite the fact that the address of the contact was known to her.

b) It would also seem that Cde. Lymond was loathe to put forward the basic literature, and therefore opinions of the IMG on the Women's question; this is substantiated by the fact that when Cde. Lymond was told that a member of the WL group in Edinburgh was very impressed by Cde. Coulson's article in *International* and wished there to be copies of *International* on sale at the WL group meetings none appeared.

The comrade who is preferring the charges has come to the conclusion that action such as is outlined above is incompatible with the politics of revolutionary Marxism and the IMG, and would appear to reek of populism

and reformism; because of this Cde. Lymond's membership of the revolutionary international must be terminated.

D. Evans (Forth Branch IMG)  
23/8/71

As can be seen by the above no specific charges have been made against Cde. Lymond. She is not accused of violating any clause of the constitution.

Anyone having the minimum understanding of the basic concepts of democratic centralism will easily recognise that the so-called charges are not "charges" at all. This "charge" sheet is a clear exposure of the methods which are being used by majority supporters in their factional attempts to get rid of the Tendency. These methods are taken up by Cde. Lymond in the statement she made to the Forth branch and which is attached.

The basis of the factionalism against Cde. Lymond is that she submitted a document to the IMG National Conference held in June 1971 which opposed the setting up of Socialist Women's groups, and that she subsequently joined the Tendency.

The real reason for her expulsion is made clear in the final paragraph of the "charge" sheet which states that: "The comrade who is preferring the charges has come to the conclusion that actions such as outlined above are incompatible with the politics of revolutionary Marxism and the IMG, and *would appear* to reek of populism and reformism; *because of this* Comrade Lymond's membership of the revolutionary international must be terminated" (emphasis added).

Cde. Lymond has been expelled not because she violated democratic centralism, not because she contravened the constitution in any way, not because she has acted in a manner detrimental to the IMG and the Fourth International, but because she holds some political views at variance with those of the majority.

We strongly protest at this method of solving political differences by organisational reprisals. It is a method which is alien to Trotskyism. It is the method used by such bureaucratic organisations as the Stalinists and Healyites.

The Tendency does not recognise the expulsion of Cde. Lymond any more than it recognised the "suspension" of Cde. Anderson. (See Statement to the Political Committee of the IMG signed by Cdes. Anderson, Joe, Stevens, Malcolm, Ricardo and Owen dated 4th/8th August 1971 and the Tendency Statement dated 13th August 1971.)

For the reasons outlined in this statement, we will not sever political relations with Cde. Lymond. She will continue to be a member of the Tendency (as is Cde. Anderson) and we will continue to collaborate with her as we have in the past.

Submitted by Susan Williams for the Tendency.  
17th September 1971.

*Statement made by B. Lymond to the Forth Valley branch  
12/9/71 in reply to the charges laid by D. Evans*

More important than the actual content of the charges laid is the method in which this disciplinary action has

been raised. I therefore propose to deal with this first.

Symptomatic of the method employed was the first attempt, at the Scottish aggregate of August 21/22, to bring charges against me. In this case I received an unsigned letter, 13 days before the aggregate, which as charges merely stated that I had acted contrary to the IMG policy within the Womens Liberation Group and had prevaricated on the question of setting up a Socialist Woman Group. Leaving aside the question of whether or not this motion was constitutional, it shows a lack of concern on the part of the proposer of the motion for any real investigation of the question. Specific charges were not laid, nor was there any attempt on the part of the proposer to inquire fully into the matter before taking action of this sort. This latter is shown by the fact that the first step which was taken was to place a disciplinary motion before the Scottish aggregate. Never at any time has any criticism of my activities in the field of women's work been raised at Edinburgh working group or Forth Valley branch level. Why were my activities not criticized at the time they are supposed to have taken place, or if the "information" only came to light at a later date, why was it not brought up at a meeting then? If a comrade is thought to be acting in an incorrect manner, it is more normal in an organisation such as ours to confront him with the criticisms of his actions, before moving straight to disciplinary action of this extreme kind. Neither has any attempt been made to investigate the matter in an unbiased fashion, e.g. by an investigating commission gathering evidence from as many sources as possible, not merely from one or two.

In order to make any real consideration of this motion it is necessary to review the history of our women's work in Edinburgh. The greatest limitation was our lack of numbers—I was the only woman member. Correct or not, it was not then our practice to involve male members in this work. In October 1970 a Women's Liberation Group was formed in Edinburgh. The people who came together to form this group were virtually all socialists of one kind or another, and saw the group as being firmly socialist in orientation. The group very nearly came to be called a socialist woman group or similar name, but there was opposition to this from people who were not entirely convinced of their own political commitment to socialism, and who felt that such a name would be off-putting to many people such as themselves. Spokesmen of this viewpoint in October/November 1970 were Robin Scholes and Sylvia Harvey, both of whom became far more politically committed during the period of their association with the Women's Liberation Group.

Until early in 1971 the Edinburgh Women's Liberation Group remained very small, and my own participation also fairly slight although regular, as I was busy with student work and the early struggles against the IRB. In February 1971 the group held a very successful teach-in, which gave it the opportunity to grow. It was at this point that the group launched its nursery campaign, without sufficient prior consideration, largely due to the political inexperience of those involved, for at this time the group was beginning to draw into it women who had never been involved in political activity before.

Now to review the development of national policy on the question. At the October 1970 IMG NC, the paper of Comrade George on women's work was adopted, which, among its proposals, suggested that SW Groups should

be set up wherever feasible. In the minutes of the immediately following Edinburgh branch meeting, the only mention of this NC debate in the NC report given by Comrade Paisley, is that an internal discussion on our women's work was to be opened. This hardly gives the impression of a firm policy decision on SWG's, and certainly I received no such impression from national internal communications, such as the Letter to Members, or from the one NC member in our branch, who, one would expect, would be in the best position to communicate national thinking to the branch and to open up a discussion in the branch on how to implement a national policy decision.

The first time that the question of setting up a Socialist Woman Group in Edinburgh was discussed in an IMG meeting was on July 16, 1971, at a Forth Valley branch EC meeting when, for the first time, a women's caucus was set up and I was instructed to pose the SWG alternative within the Women's Liberation group. *At no time previous to this was I asked or instructed to set up a Socialist Woman Group nor was there any real discussion on the question held within the branch.*

Around the beginning of May I received, as working group organiser, a questionnaire from Comrade George asking a) whether there was an SWG in the area, b) what perspectives there were of setting one up. After discussing this at a working group meeting (May 3rd or May 10th) and at an EC meeting (May 7th), I replied that there was a perspective of a split taking place within the Women's Liberation group after a socialist policy and constitution had been pushed, and that at this point a Socialist Woman Group, in nature if not in name, would come into existence. At this time I was most unsure as to what exactly was implied in the term "Socialist Woman Group" i.e. whether it should be a broad open socialist grouping or whether its membership criterion should be fairly strict and the group be largely under our own control. No other group member cleared up this point to my satisfaction, and at both the WG and EC meetings referred to above, discussion on this point was extremely brief. Obviously little importance was attached to this question at that time.

Thus it would seem that the failure to set up an SWG in Edinburgh prior to the 1971 National Conference is the responsibility of the branch as a whole. From the action of the branch after the conference in setting up an SWG, it would seem that branch members saw decisions taken at the conference as the crucial ones, not what had been said previously.

Even now, two months after the decision was taken, the SWG in Edinburgh is only barely in existence, and to do this it has taken the efforts of 4 IMG members, plus a comrade who has now been recruited, of whose existence I was unaware until July 1971. I feel that I was quite right in judging that it would be unfeasible to set up an SWG in the period March-June, since at that time there was no proposal to put extra comrades into women's work.

I do not deny that I opposed—and still oppose—the policy of setting up SWG's. It is no crime, however, to hold a view opposed to national policy. However I have endeavoured since the branch made its decision to proceed with the implementation of the policy, to see that it was carried through successfully.

As to the specific charges laid in this motion. In the

first place there is an extraordinary vagueness in their wording—people referred to are not named, and few places and dates are included. It was difficult to prepare a defence against such vague charges, but as I have now been informed of certain of the names omitted in the original charge, I shall proceed to deal with them.

*POINT 1)* The unnamed comrade is apparently Jackie Freeman. Firstly, her attendance at Women's Liberation meetings was somewhat less than regular, and partly through this and partly through previous knowledge of the comrade (e.g., she gave no help in the attempt to organise the socialist society at Moray House during the past year when we were both students there) I made what appears to have been an erroneous judgment of her political seriousness. For this reason I did not mention her as a contact, being also unaware of her connections with IMG members in England.

I cannot specifically remember the conversation referred to in this charge. During this period I had discussions about forming some kind of a socialist women's grouping with various people, some of whom were favourable to a certain extent, others who were definitely opposed, and others who were as yet unsure. I felt that the numbers who were definitely in favour, and who were willing to actually work for such a group were too small (2-3) to make it feasible at that time. This would probably have been the opinion which I put forward to Jackie. I cannot remember such a definite proposal from Jackie as it is implied in this charge, and feel that if it had been of the nature the proposer suggests, I could hardly have forgotten the whole incident so completely. This blowing up of what cannot have been more than a casual conversation at most seems quite unwarranted, and derives its credence solely from the word of one person.

*POINT 2)* This charge contains a factual error. The implication is that if I had not abstained on the vote then the motion to drop the "24 hours" would have been defeated. The voting was in fact 5 for the motion, 2 against, 1 abstention. Immediately after voting I knew that I had made a mistake and have never made any attempt to hide the way I voted or my realisation of my mistake. At the Angela Davis demonstration on the afternoon of the same day (March 6th) I discussed what had happened over the petition with several people, including Jackie Freeman (who gave much of the information for this particular charge) and in these discussions clearly showed my anger at what had happened and my opposition to the changes made to the petition.

*POINT 3a)* I am not absolutely sure if I did have the address of the comrade in question. My failure to visit her was due to being on teaching practice and being away at 4 separate interviews in the south of England, as well as having the usual number of meetings to attend, etc. Shortly after the Red Circle I received the clear impression from other members who knew the contact better than I that she had left Edinburgh, apparently for the summer, and as neither she nor the person she was living with were mentioned again by other members in my presence I continued to assume that she was not in town. It is amusing to see the interpretation here placed on what was at worst laziness. Certainly it was not motivated as the proposer suggests.



*POINT 3b)* This is completely untrue. Immediately I heard that the article had been praised in this way I obtained copies of *International* and took them along to meetings. Previous to this I had not looked at the issue in question, and was unaware of the article. If a meeting did elapse before I took the *Internationals* to a meeting then it could only have been because I was unable to get copies in time from the comrades in whose hands they were.

Thus the charges contain untruths, as in point 2) and point 3b). I have admitted my mistake in the question of the abstention in point 2). There thus remains the non-following up of a contact which I have explained, and the conversation referred to in point 1), which hangs on the word of J. Freeman as transmitted by Comrade Evans.

However it is not really for what I did that the proposer wishes me to be expelled, but for my political position. If I had voted for the majority documents at conference, would these charges have been brought? Somehow I doubt it.

A grave threat is being made at the present time to democracy in our organisation. The 21/22 August Scottish aggregate and the present motion are examples of the methods being used to throw members of the present Tendency and their supporters out of the organisation. And where will it end? Having got rid of this Tendency, what is likely to happen when next a dissenting voice is raised? Members whose experience of democratic centralism was gained in this period are likely to consider such methods as the norm. These then are the implications of a motion such as the one before us—think carefully, comrades, about these implications.

M-20

#### EXTRACTS FROM GLASGOW BRANCH MEETING MINUTES OF 31 August 1971

Letter from secretariat to Anderson. Statement Anderson:

Comrades Anderson and Malcolm view the letter of the Secretariat dated 24/8/71 as contemptuous of the rights of comrades in a revolutionary organisation.

We want to make it clear that we will carry out the general line of the 1971 National Conference and are therefore not "flouting conference decisions."

We will not carry out the dictates of any individuals or committees. However, democratic centralism does not require an individual to be subject to the arbitrary dictates of an individual or committee regardless of the circumstances. We are of the opinion that all comrades have the right to discuss the specific problems and tactics in their geographical area before taking decisions.

This point of view falls in accord with the principle of democratic centralism. The point of view expressed by the Secretariat is in our opinion completely erroneous and invalid.

Therefore we are in complete accord with the Tendency statement of 17/8/71. We also support the branch

resolution concerning the suspension of Comrade Anderson in the Glasgow branch minutes of 17/8/71

Motion. Glasgow branch endorses the statement of Comrade Anderson. Passed, for 7, against 3, abstention 1.

Tendency statement. "The Tendency fully support the statement made by Malcolm and Anderson with regard to the letters addressed to them by the Secretariat and dated 24/8/71. . . ."

INDOCHINA . . . Statement. Campbell: "In reply to Comrade Blair's question as to whether anything is to be noted, I state that what is to be noted is the continuing betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution by the 'International' Marxist Group."

M-26

#### ONCE MORE, PERSPECTIVES IN GLASGOW

Document submitted for discussion by the Glasgow branch of the IMG, 10/1/72

##### 1. *Why Perspectives Now?*

(i) The Glasgow branch of the IMG has passed through an exceptionally trying period. During this period, a bitter internal struggle has exhausted and demoralised the branch, has minimised the gains made out of the intervention of the last few months, and has severely damaged the prospects for growth and recovery of equilibrium of the branch. It has been correctly pointed out that one of the fundamental reasons for the current disequilibrium is the lack of clear *perspectives* for the building of the branch. This can only be corrected through a period of critical evaluation and the establishment of firm political guidelines for the branch in the coming period.

(ii) The national IMG is going through an important phase of development. It has been decided to fuse the IMG and the SL to create a new organisation; this coincides with a stage at which most units are by now doing serious and systematic agitation work—particularly amongst the industrial working class. The IMG now ranks as a serious contender, on the revolutionary left, with the other major revolutionary organisations, and is moving into a position to challenge them for hegemony of important fields in its agitational work. We should not allow the particular problems of the Glasgow branch to obscure this, and should instead begin a constructive attempt to shape our own work in such a way as to fit in with national priorities and activities.

(iii) The re-organisation of the branch has shown itself to be deficient in certain respects which can and must be corrected. A careful discussion of perspectives is a necessary accompaniment of this process. However, it should be realised that in the present state of the branch, no 'final' solution will be possible and a continuous process

of re-organisation will be necessary. What is necessary is that each stage of re-organisation should be understood and discussed as fully as possible, so that a full assessment of shortcomings and apparent successes may be made.

## 2. *The State of the Working Class in Scotland*

The context in which we are now working is that of a ruthless and premeditated ruling-class offensive against the working class. Its aims are: the intimidation and demobilisation of the working class through unemployment, on the one hand, and the I. R. A. on the other—intimidating the militants and shackling the Unions to the state. The offensive also parallels a major attack on uncompetitive and unprofitable industries—like Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, Mining—in which the government have adopted the formula 'kill and cure.'

The result has been a massive political response on the part of the working class, which has now been diverted and headed off, leaving the working class temporarily disadvantaged, leaderless, and atomised.

This response was led by an alliance between the CP in the yards and left and centre bureaucrats on the Boiler-makers' Union. I centred on the UCS struggle, but drew in substantial layers of the working class outside the yards (not to mention the petty bourgeoisie and even the bourgeoisie). The alliance has now been fractured with a virtually certain separation of the yards into a three-yard unit excluding John Brown, and the possible American takeover of John Brown by Breaksea Tankships. The key figure in negotiations is now clearly McGarvey, indicating the successful isolation of the CP by the right. This struggle has now very largely petered out. We have to understand *why* it has petered out, and what the *effects* of its petering out are likely to be.

Certain objective factors are important: the fact that the struggle was essentially defensive in character; the fact that the workforce contains within it large layers of older and less militant workers; the inherent Social-Democratic consciousness of much of the working class, even in Clydebank. However, the role of the CP is crucial in obtaining a full understanding of what happened.

The CP:

(a) ran the struggle as a 'protest' in which no real sanctions were ever taken against any of the ruling class.

(b) [words missing.]

essential meaning of "gaining the widest possible public support," as borne out by the tactics of the CP in refusing to take effective sanctions for fear of antagonising "public opinion."

(c) used an extremely skillful brand of demagogy to suggest that what they were doing was extremely revolutionary and left-wing, raising the question of workers' control very directly in their *talk*—whilst at the same time manoeuvring carefully so that a real test of *power* within the yards never came about. The management structure was not changed, work continued *exactly* as normal (with the working class paying the liquidator for the work

of the men he had sacked)—and whenever the question of a serious challenge to the ruling class was posed (e.g. solidarity strikes), the issue was shirked.

(d) never attempted to *extend* the struggle beyond the yards. Not only did this jeopardise the whole force and strength of the UCS work-in itself, but it created a situation in which the problem of the yards is seen as a *localised* one which can be solved by a *localised* struggle—with only passive (financial) support from outside. The *separation* of political from economic struggle, so typical of British Labourism, is once again displayed.

The working class now faces the winter's wage and redundancy struggles leaderless and at a grave psychological disadvantage. The recent sacking of 3000 workers at Hoover over a go-slow is an indication of the extent to which the ruling class now feels it can put the boot in. However, we should not overlook the possibility that a new lease of life will be taken after a period of retrenchment. Although the working class is at a disadvantage as a whole, it has suffered no crushing defeat and in many sectors is unbowed and determined. What can now be discredited is a major political struggle against redundancies in the near future.

The only event which could transform this situation is the re-opening of the struggle against the IRA when the second commencement order goes through on the 28th February. This is in itself dependent on the subtlety and care of the bourgeoisie. If the act is applied at a period when the balance of forces in a given sector is against the bourgeoisie, a wave of militant action in support of, say, a victimised Unionist is a possibility. Even in this case, the movement will be very spontaneous and politically unfocused.

*Within the working class*, the effect will be the creation of polar opposite currents: an increasingly militant and dissatisfied current whose main political complexion will be *syndicalist* (i.e. without organised political expression), and seeking to use the framework of the official and unofficial Union movement to wage essentially political struggles) and probably anti-TU leadership; and a backward, capitulationist current which will find its strongest expression in the poorly organised Unions. This is merely the continuation of a process which has been in motion for some period of time.

*Within the organisations of the working class*, the effect will be markedly different in the Labour and Communist Parties. An understanding of this is important because:

(i) On the question of the Labour Party, there has been a great deal of confusion which needs to be dealt with: particularly in relation to our growing work in the Trade Unions.

(ii) The *Communist Party* presents a very important subjective factor in the West of Scotland in determining the direction and content of the struggles of the working class. It is impossible to make a serious challenge for the hegemony of the left within the working class without first dealing with the Communist Party in Scotland.

In the *Labour Party*, a separation of 'political' from trade union activity isolates the leadership from criticism. A Labour Party trade union official or activist is not *expected* to account for his party's 'industrial strategy'

because it does not have one, and does not regard the organisation of industrial action as its business. The Labour Party is therefore bypassed *organisationally* by the struggles of the working class: it has no effect on them, and they have little effect on it. If the CP in Clydebank sell out a strike, it hurts them. The Labour Party simply does not organise its militants to sell out, take up, or do anything in a strike. The effect of the Labour Party is on the working class

[words missing.]

aspirations of the working class into acceptance of reformist aims and methods of struggle. As such, it is not the political *expression* of the working class, but a *determining* factor in shaping working class ideology. However, it is precisely because the political *programme* of the Labour Party (better capitalism) is not now realisable, that there is not even a major return to the Labour Party at the ward level. The prospect of Social Reform which could be offered in a previous period is simply not now available.

The consequences of this disillusion are *not* an automatic break with Social-Democratic ideology. Workers who cease activity in the Labour Party frequently retain a *reformist* conception of political action, unless a concrete alternative is posed. What arises, therefore, is a growing contradiction between the trade unions and the Labour Party over the question of program (and implementation), which we should aim to exploit heavily. We should resist particularly strongly the argument, common to the SLL, that "The solution to the struggle of the UCS workers is to put the Labour Party into power with Socialist Policies/without illusions/etc." This argument bows above all to the capitulationist current mentioned earlier: it is one step away from the argument that "you are betraying the workers by *failing* to struggle for the defeat of the Tory Government and the placing in power of a Labour Government etc., . . ." and two steps away from the argument that *instead* of struggling inside the yards, one should work for the return of a Labour, etc. In other words, it conveys to the workers the mistaken idea that, even if their present struggle is unsuccessful, their problem can later be relieved by voting Labour. The key point for us to struggle on is the necessity for *independent working class action of a political nature*. Every strike is political, and we should bring out the political implications and suggest methods of struggle and demands which come to grips with the political problems: for example, for the extension of the UCS struggle to the working class outside the yards, for the transformation to an occupation-strike, etc. It further follows that we should in general adopt a position with regard to the relationship between the unions and the Labour Party of attempting to increase the tensions between them by getting the unions to *make demands on the Labour Party*—in other words, struggling to reduce the ideological hold of the Labour Party on the working class by exposing the contradictions between the unions (which the working class need for the defence of their daily conditions, and should attempt to use as a vehicle for the carrying out of political struggle against the bourgeoisie) and the Labour Party (which the working class need like a hole in the head and have lost all chance of using for any form of struggle whatsoever).

The Communist Party is both guilty and suspect. Its

militants *are* expected to account for their conduct in industrial struggle, and it *is* responsible for their organised intervention. Therefore:

- (i) There are severe internal contradictions on industrial strategy, which centre on the relationship between electoral and industrial work.
- (ii) The CP is *held to account* by working class militants for its behaviour in industrial struggles. A major part of its attraction is precisely its *ability to organise* in industry. This means that the question of *how* it organises is highly relevant to its members and potential recruits.

For this reason, the CP cannot make substantial gains out of its present strategy, because it continually leads the workers up to a certain point and then leaves them hanging—the winding up of the liaison committee being an example. It cannot chart a *revolutionary* course for the working class, because it does not follow through the logic of its political initiatives. Having mobilised the workers in a political struggle, the CP says "great—all these people have been mobilised. Now that they have been mobilised, many of them have moved to the left. So now we can get them to join us and vote in a Labour Government with a difference." It therefore does not have an interest in continuing or extending a struggle once begun, particularly if this means breaking up alliances with the right. Hence the refusal to denounce McGarvey for his sellout, the treatment of Reg Birch, total unwillingness to do serious work on the Irish question in Scotland, etc. Only if, as in Europe, the CP were a mass party with a prospect of taking parliamentary power, would it be able to exert the type of pulling power necessary to make gains out of industrial struggle, given the basic strategy of the British road.

However, the party remains the only leftwing force with any strength in Scotland. This is why the breaks from it have been few, and it continues to play a key role in the West of Scotland. This will remain the case until a serious alternative has proved itself in struggle. What will therefore occur is a division *within* the party on industrial strategy, which will take the form of a polarisation between those who wish to concentrate on electoral activity, and those who wish to concentrate on industrial struggles. This is, in a sense, an accurate reflection of the problems facing the working class as a whole.

We should realise that this will not take the form of the 1956 or 1963 divisions, which were essentially over questions of *international communism*—in the first case, Hungary, in the second, China. The determining factor in producing these splits was the CP's historical and political links with the Russian bureaucracy. We cannot explain the present split in these terms: thus, the leading exponents of a concentration on industrial struggle (the Sid French tendency) are ultra-Stalinist in their attitude to international questions. The essential issue is *British* tactics and strategy. Our ability to make gains will depend on our ability to analyse and criticise this correctly.

#### *Other tendencies on the left*

In terms of their impact on the struggles of the working class, none of the left tendencies are significant. Their importance lies in their *role in building the future revolutionary party*. We should consider briefly *why* there are

so many left groups in Britain, and why they are so split up and isolated. We will then be able to see our own role more clearly.

Stalinism in Britain took root nowhere on a mass scale, except perhaps in Scotland. The dominant ideology in the working class remained Social Democracy, perpetuated by a particularly traitorous and bourgeois Social Democratic Party. In addition, the severe defeats suffered by the working class in the 1920s meant that at a time of great revolutionary upsurge elsewhere, Britain was already in a period of reaction and decline. The impact of Stalinism on Britain was therefore wholly disastrous. It created no native revolutionary tradition except in parts of Scotland; it jellified an entire generation of intellectuals and working-class leaders in a reformist and Labourist ideology.

Thus, not only was there no mass working class revolutionary tradition by the 1960s, but there was no nucleus around which a revolutionary tradition could be reconstructed. The isolation of the SLL from the International, and the organisational and political weaknesses of that body during the 1950s, removed the only direct inheritance of the Bolshevik tradition in Britain.

With the onset of a new phase of crisis within the imperialist system, and of a particularly acute crisis in Britain, the inability of Social Democracy to solve the social problems of capitalism led to a widespread disillusion in the possibility of reform, coupled with an upsurge in the militancy of the working class. There was a widespread realisation that alternative leaderships were necessary, but no obvious candidate emerged. The molecular radicalisation which occurred, particularly amongst the youth, began to result in the emergence of a number of small poles of attraction, and a process of growth on the left began in which the *overall* growth has been continuous, but the groups themselves have grown, shrunk, split, fused, and changed political direction. None of these groups has fully comprehended the nature of the period we are in, and all are in a process of political evolution. The key task facing the left in Britain today can be summed up as follows: *Building a leadership*. This is not just a practical, numerical task (i.e. growing), but a *political and theoretical task*. There are no shortcuts; however, the IMG plays an irreplaceable role in the process, and possesses a number of crucial advantages.

However, it would be wrong to see the struggle between other tendencies and ourselves as a "survival of the fittest" struggle in which the biggest emerges victorious. Lenin's faction remained a small minority in the workers' movement until right up to the point of revolution. Its historic contribution was in assembling and training a *cadre* which served as the nucleus of the party which took power, when the objective circumstances were right. Our work is not important just in its own right, but in the *effect it has in getting our ideas over*, both inside and outside other tendencies.

Thus, on the question of Ireland, the major *idea* that we wish to get over (that the British working class should fight for the defeat of its own bourgeoisie in Ireland) has had a major impact on the IS group, and is creating very severe tensions within [sentence runs off page]. Without the IMG, organised politically to get this idea over in the most effective way, this crucial notion would not have been raised with the force and power which it has, and we would not see the present phenomenon of,

for example, IS branches openly defying leadership policy.

The most important factors in determining our role in the revolutionary left are:

1. Our membership of a revolutionary international. With the final breakup of the [Comintern] the complete disarray and heterogeneity of the world CPs, and the recent total confusion of the Maoist groupings, this fact is of central importance. Our politics are defined *internationally*: our goal is the world victory of the proletariat.

2. The *leadership* of the IMG is international: a continuous process is at work in which the experience, material assistance, and theoretical abilities of the world Trotskyist movement can be drawn on. Given the immense backwardness and chauvinism of the British working class (to which both the IS and the SLL have increasingly capitulated), this is of central importance in overcoming chauvinism and particularism in the IMG. The correctness of our stand on the Irish question is not an *accident*: it is a direct *result* of our internationalism, and we can boast with a reasonable degree of satisfaction that this has been an important and direct consequence of the influence of the F. I. in Britain.

3. The current stage in our development: beginning with tiny forces a few years ago, in competition with two larger and more experienced Trotskyite tendencies, we have built a credible and viable alternative which is beginning to take on and challenge these two organisations in a whole series of important areas.

4. Our use, in practice, of scientific Marxist *method*, extended by the analysis of the present epoch developed by Lenin and Trotsky. From the application of this method flows our ability to produce concrete analyses and strategies which lead us to the heart of the revolutionary process. Without knowing *how* to intervene in sectors of struggle in which we are engaged, without understanding *how* these sectors contribute to the overall development of the revolutionary process, we cannot hope to play a revolutionary role. In fact, it is very much the *defects in theoretical method* which are leading to the current crassness of IS's politics: and as such their current practice is a direct consequence of the very basis on which they were founded.

In Glasgow, we need a far fuller attention to internal discussion and [remainder missing].

The problem which arises in Scotland is the *unevenness* of development, compared with the rest of the organisation, of our theory and practice. Consequently we need:

(i) [to] pay much more careful attention to the discussion of *national* policy and perspectives. This, we must recognise, cannot be carried out through the formal ritual of the 'branch educational.' A far more satisfactory approach is through the holding of well-prepared weekend conferences, to which members of the national leadership are invited, to introduce and guide discussion.

(ii) A fuller participation in the national activities of the organisation: we should ask for representation on the functioning national commissions: the women's commission, the industrial commission, and possibly the FI commission. I propose that permission be requested of the PC to place Comrade Allan on the women's commission, Comrade Blair on the industrial commission, and possibly a representative of the anti-imperialist fraction on the FI commission. In addition, we should prepare

more carefully our participation in national cadre schools, particularly the coming industrial school on February 26th in Sheffield and the school in Edinburgh proposed for February 19th.

(iii) Careful attention to our criticism of other tendencies. Only by careful analysis of their deficiencies and errors can we advance our own understanding and at the same time make gains from them.

#### *Positions of other tendencies*

The *IS group* began its present growth with a national call for unity and a recruiting drive at the level of a bingo club. It comprises two basic elements: a state-capitalist theory overlaid with a basically syndicalist account of working-class struggle (see Clynes' articles in the *Mole* and the *International*). It also contains in the membership a substantial number of dissidents who entertain illusions about its being a Bolshevik organisation. Numbers of these left with *Workers' Fight*, but there seems to be a major internal struggle developing [sentence runs off page].

We should criticise their political practice on three main lines:

(i) *opportunism*: subordination of principled politics to the making of immediate short-term gains, and, in particular, recruits. The letter from Duncan Hallas in the *Mole* on the Irish question is a classic opportunist position. Comrades should read "What Is To Be Done" for an excellent analysis of, and attack on, opportunism.

(ii) *Economism*: which is directly linked to opportunism: the subordination of political work within the working class to "immediate economic issues." The whole of *IS's* politics reeks of it, and examples are too numerous to mention.

(iii) *National Chauvinism*: one of the consequences of their state capitalist theory. The basis of *IS's* work is the assumption that only a revolution in the advanced capitalist countries can bring about world socialism, and so this is the only important task confronting us. Therefore, our key task is work amongst the industrial working class in Britain, and the colonial struggles are not worth bothering about in practice. This is a crude simplification, but the polemic by Mandel in "The Mystifications of State Capitalism" and "The Contradictions of State Capitalism" are an excellent exposition of the Menshevik basis of *IS's* practice.

The *Socialist Labour League*, now devoid of all pretense to membership of an international, represents a less serious obstacle in Glasgow than elsewhere. The most important characteristics of the *SLL*, apart from their complete bureaucratic isolation, are their reformist attitude to the Labour Party, which mechanically applies the analysis derived from postwar experience; and their *catastrophism*—continual re-assertion of the imminent collapse of capitalism, which drives the membership mad in a period varying from two months in the weakest to a period of years in the really thick. A full analysis of the politics of the *SLL* is contained in Tony Whelan's "Credibility Gap"—and also in Mandel's "Marxism and Ultraleftism." We should make considerable gains from the periphery of the *SLL* and from dissidents. Contacts should be followed up carefully, and the *EC* should be consulted about any contacts being seen.

*The Communist Federation of Great Britain* (the "Struggle" group) represent an extremely important group from our point of view. Maoism is in a general state of crisis following the recent right-wing turn by the Chinese leadership. At the last *NC* but two, it was decided to take a formal orientation towards this group, which we should now concretise. A carefully worked-out approach should be made, in which we formally propose:

(i) unity in action, on a local basis, in Irish work, student work, and possibly some areas of industrial work (e.g. organisation of joint schools, public meetings, etc.)

(ii) exchange of speakers for public meetings and educational

(iii) debates

(iv) discussion on key areas of difference, notably

(a) The revolutionary process in the colonial countries

(b) The class nature of Soviet Russia

(c) The class nature of China

(d) The theory of "socialism in one country"

From this we expect not simply gains in numerical terms, but successful unity in action and an important advance in theoretical clarity.

#### *Nationalism*

Nationalism in Scotland appears to comprise at least two currents: a petty-bourgeois nationalist current which forms the leadership of the *SNP*, and a syndicalist working-class current which has detached itself from classical Social Democracy and is seeking a political expression for its aspirations. It is with this current that we should seek to establish a relationship. Our main areas of intervention should be the John McLean Society and the *ASNTU* for the present, and we should try to build up from a propagandistic intervention to a concrete involvement of contacts in joint work.

We should in addition initiate the study of the theoretical problems involved in the question of nationalism in Scotland.

[words missing.]

and can never be. We support national demands under certain circumstances, because we see national struggles as part of the process leading to the emancipation of the working class on a world scale. If we supported the call for a Scottish Workers' Republic, it would be because:

(i) the objective possibility for a transfer of power to the working class in Scotland (i.e. mass organisations of working-class power, weakness of the bourgeoisie, etc.)

(ii) the English/British bourgeoisie were actively involved in the political suppression of the working class in Scotland.

(iii) the English working class remained passive or actively assisted the bourgeoisie in this process.

However, we insist that such a revolution is *worse* for the working class than a revolution on a British or international scale, after which the proletariat of the various nations could decide democratically on Union or separation.

We should demarcate ourselves rigidly from petty-bourgeois nationalism which makes no distinction between the interests of the working class and those of the ruling class, and make it quite clear that *only* the proletariat are capable of solving the tasks which union frustrates. We are totally opposed to the raising of the question

of a Scottish state without the raising of the question "whose state?"

### *Priorities and Activities of the IMG in Glasgow*

Our main priority, consistent with that of the IMG nationally, is that of gaining a political base operating in the working class.

In this we distinguish ourselves utterly from the economist tendencies such as IS in insisting that IMG cadre operate politically in the working class, as opposed to simply engaging in economic struggle.

We also undertake to organise a political intervention *in the struggles of the working class*. In other words, a working class revolutionary is distinct from every shade of activist or reformist in that he sees the key problem in any situation as how to raise the ideas which most clearly identify the long-term interests of the working class. In the UCS struggle, we start from the very clear notion that the fight against redundancies can only be won through a united struggle of the working class, and that the struggle involves sanctions against the ruling class — because the ruling class are *responsible for redundancies*. This immediately raises the question that if capitalism cannot run the system, then the workers should: hence the democratisation of the occupation; i.e. the creation of a process in which the workers actually go through the experience of running their own lives. Even so, we *insist* that workers' control *in one yard* is not possible, and argue against all reformist ideas that the workers can actually run the yards under capitalism.

To this analysis correspond the two slogans of "extend the struggle" and "turn the occupation into an occupation-strike."

This concept of intervention breaks with the notion that a political militant in the working class is someone who is a worker and goes on demonstrations about Vietnam: the problem is how to raise political issues in working class struggles.

Although this is our main strategic priority, we have to recognise that we face a basic problem of initial accumulation. We cannot organise the type of activity that political militants demand: organising contacts in other factories, forming fractions and cells in unions and cells in factories, producing regular bulletins and leaflets, etc.

Hence we have to realise that *all our work* relates to this main priority. We cannot *separate* Irish work, women's work, student work as an *addition* to industrial work: our problem is to *raise the issues* of the working class struggle in *all our work*. Thus, if we start from the position that the unemployed should organise, and that in this they should be given all possible assistance, then we will raise in our student work and our work amongst women the ways in which they can assist the struggles of the unemployed. If we say that the working [sentence runs off page]. At an earlier stage in our development, we overcame this by a commentary style of activity. Because of our small numbers, we were forced to concentrate on commenting without playing an active role. The launching of VSC and of the SL attempted to overcome this, by concentrating our forces on one *issue* (Vietnam) in the first case, and one milieu (the youth) in the other. For a number of reasons, both have failed to bring us a major breakthrough in the working class, although extremely important gains were made. The SL in Glasgow

was particularly successful in this respect, and it is likely that, had it not been for the extended struggle within the IMG, these gains would have been extended and consolidated. However, this has not been the case, and we are left with the problem of building up a reliable and regular intervention in the working class.

We cannot return to a commentary style of work. Why is this? Because the IMG *nationally* has changed to the extent where this style of work would put us completely at variance with the rest of the organisation. For example, if the IMG launches a national campaign on low and unequal pay, through the SWG, we cannot just hold Red Circles on it. We have influence in an active SWG, set up by ourselves, there is a national SWG conference coming off, and every prospect of a successful intervention in this campaign exists. We can do it precisely because we are a national organisation: we have national speakers, a paper, national policy, etc., to assist us in our work.

Secondly, we now have the *forces* to make a systematic intervention in *one or two* priority areas of work, by concentrating our forces. This is a style of work we have totally failed to assimilate. Our industrial work should not be the sum of its parts: it should take people out of their own, individual activities and weld them into a strike force by *concentrating on priority work*. The task of leadership in this field will be to decide *which* areas to concentrate on and build them — not simply to cover each one of ten disparate areas.

This involves taking up slack and creating free time in some periods, and working very hard in others. We can no longer tolerate the argument: "I have to attend a union meeting" if work in the union has not been identified as a priority. The organisation comes first. Equally, we have to avoid the situation where all members of the organisation are committed and overstretched in peripheral activities, so that no time is created for immediate and unified response to an external development (such as the Hoover redundancies).

We shall aim to make gains in two ways:

(i) organised and planned interventions in workers' struggles: strikes and threatened redundancies;

(ii) development of work on the periphery of the working class where a breakthrough enables us to build an intervention *in* the working class. For example: our work in the Clydebank CU in itself does not lead us to make direct gains in the working class. But by starting in an area where we can build a working force, we can take the work into the working class through the building of a paper and an action committee on unemployment. A second example is the work in Edinburgh in a hospital workers' group: the work was begun by the Socialist Woman Group. Thus, out of an *opening* created by our work on the periphery, we are enabled to *move in* to open work in the working class. Indeed, our work in such areas cannot in the long run be considered successful unless it leads to such results.

### *Priorities in Industrial work*

We should maintain an *active* continuous presence in:

(i) Clydebank, where we should direct our Claimants' Union work towards the building of a Clydebank unemployment paper and an action committee on a modest



scale. We should aim to link the Claimants' Union much more directly into the employed working class through starting CU activities in which assistance from them is needed (such as the committee and the paper) and by trying to raise our demands on unemployment via the Claimants' Union. We should, in addition, use our experience of fighting the SS to assist us in intervening in strikes, either as the CU or openly as the IMG, depending on the situation. (This tactic has been used very successfully in the miners' strike in Edinburgh and in Coventry.)

(ii) Caterpillar, where we should aim to bring our contacts into a functioning unit of the branch, and use this as a basis for extending our intervention in the factory and the area. We should in particular look into the possibility of [sentence runs off page].

(iii) we should service the proposed campaign on low and unequal pay, which will be organised through Socialist Woman, but in which the industrial fraction should play a supporting role with the aim of opening out areas of IMG intervention.

#### *Areas of low level and contact work*

These areas are crucial in the sense that we look for openings. They are not areas which require allocation of large numbers of cadre, but require a systematic intervention over a long period, with the aim of creating openings for active work. They must of necessity receive lower priority than our active work, and obviously than branch activities.

(i) The ASNTU, where we should be prepared to make our intervention part of a more general orientation towards Scottish republicanism by involving ASNTU contacts in our own propaganda work, such as the Red Circle and industrial schools, and if possible in our other work in places such as Clydebank.

(ii) ETU/PTU

(iii) Youth Trades Council, where we should attempt if possible to link our work to activities specifically on the problems of apprentices.

(iv) DATA

(v) ASTMS

(vi) the NUR

Comrades involved in work in the Unions should prepare reports for the industrial commission, and attempt if possible to contribute material to the T. U. Bulletin and the Mole.

#### *Irish Work*

If our industrial work is the main *strategic* priority (to be precise: gaining a political base operating in the working class), it must be absolutely clear to every member of the organisation that our immediate tactical priority is our Irish work. This flows directly from Marx's dictum that "no nation which enslaves another can ever itself be free." It is in the *interests* of the British working class to support the overthrow of its own bourgeoisie: if it does *not* do so, then firstly it is asking for the strengthening of the confidence and repressive power of that bourgeoisie, and secondly it has assumed a form of consciousness which betrays a clear misunderstanding of the nature of capitalist society: without which understanding it will not be able to take power itself. As long

as the British working class can be bought over to the side of reaction by the bourgeoisie, so long will that working class be incapable of developing a revolutionary perspective in Britain.

In no way can we compromise through the qualification that our Irish work must be subordinated to the building of a mass movement. The purpose of our Irish work is to get over to the working class *where its interests lie*: to use the issue of Ireland to *explain* the necessary tasks facing it. We must absolutely avoid all confusion about this: the moment we see our main task as being merely the creation of a movement 'on Ireland' or some such bizarre formulation, we have completely lost sight of the way in which a revolutionary party operates.

The building of a mass movement on partial demands is justified only as a *tactical* measure necessary to build up the forces with which to make an impact on our own slogans. This sort of turn arises as the result of the need to *compromise* with centrist elements in a united front, and should be seen as a step on the road to defeating those elements and bringing about a movement on the Victory Slogan. It is precisely in these terms that we justify our intervention in the Anti-Internment League and in the free speech campaign.

Now that such a tactic for building in Glasgow is exhausted, we commence an extremely arduous task. There are no shortcuts: what we must do is to build up a base in two initial areas: Irish exiles and students. This base will then have to be mobilised to make a more solid impact on the working class itself. Particularly in Glasgow, this is not an easy task: only systematic and long-term [sentence runs off page].

responsibility of the Irish fraction, but as that of the *whole organisation* thus, the question of Ireland should be raised in our work amongst women, in our work amongst students, and in our work in the working class. In particular, we should attempt to mobilise these layers by drawing them into ISC activities. A big psychological boost would be given to the ISC by *one* careful and clandestinely prepared public meeting in, say, the Barras which we succeed in mobilising sufficient people to defend: we cannot do this simply from the Irish fraction alone. A very careful planning operation is required for this type of action.

I would concretely suggest that the Irish fraction draw up a date, plans and publicity for this action, and the EC then work out an overall plan for mobilisation: also that this be one of the main priorities of the organisation in the coming period.

In addition, it is obvious that mobilisation for the coming ISC conference and demonstration are key priorities.

#### *Women's work*

A systematic and confusing ambiguity has penetrated all our work in this field: between work *amongst* women and work on the *questions relating to the struggle of women*. Until this ambiguity is resolved, many inanities will continue to be uttered. We raise the question of the oppression of women, and involve people in struggle against it, in *all* sectors of the population. We *also* raise general political questions in our work amongst women. It is a negation of revolutionary practice to do other-



wise. However, we realise that at the current stage in the development of the working class, its consciousness is such that *separate organisations* of women are necessary to lead the struggle against the oppression of women. This is not a political or moral principle: it is a deduction from the current situation. In general, we are in *favour* of such organisations intervening *also* on questions *other* than the oppression of women, however, because our *main task* is to show people that it is *capitalism* which is responsible for their oppression. We are thus opposed to a separate women's organisation which intervenes solely on the question of one aspect of the oppression of women and [we] fight to counter arguments that any organisation should be so restricted. This is the duty of revolutionaries everywhere—to fight forms of action and ideas which lead to a misunderstanding or a partial comprehension of the nature of society: against Social-Democratic or reformist concepts in trade unions; against studentist or vanguardist concepts amongst students; and against feminist ideas amongst women. Our aim is to demonstrate to women in struggle the cause of their oppression, and hence lead them to revolutionary consciousness. This is *not* just a question of struggling with them on the question of abortion and then asking them to join the party; it is a question of raising amongst them questions and demands which lead them directly to an understanding of their oppression and all its roots. It is for this reason that we intervened in the women's movement to create the Socialist Women's Group; the argument is not about *organisational form*, but about the demands and slogans which are raised, and the analysis which is used.

Our aim is quite clearly to develop Socialist Woman as a group capable of fighting against the oppression of women. It is also necessary to plan interventions which lead to [the] role of capitalism being raised. The institution of the family serves under capitalism a number of distinct roles: (i) it is a unit of consumption, in which the labour of the housewife is used to organise consumption for the entire family; (ii) it uses the labour of the housewife to bring up and educate the children in the family. As a consequence, bourgeois society erects a fabric of ideology which justifies this role for woman. She is inferior, her place is in the home, her function is primarily sexual, etc., etc. At the same time, the position of women *outside* the home is also that of an inferior: both through the social conditioning of men into believing in the inferior status of women, and through the construction of a set of social relations which makes it actually more difficult for women to achieve equal status: the fact that she has to rear the children, the fact that no special allowance is made for women to take time off for pregnancy, the fact that they are not given access to information or facilities for abortion or contraception, the fact that their education is geared [sentence runs off page]. Our job is to struggle against *all* these forms of oppression. However, our point of *focus* is determined on a tactical basis by a number of factors:

(i) the nature of the consciousness of the women with whom we are working;

(ii) the areas in which the *idea* that women should be freed of their oppression can have greatest effect, and still more important, can contribute most to the overall aim of the overthrow of capitalist society;

(iii) the social forces at our disposal.

We begin with the clear assertion that it is within the working class that it is most important to fight the oppression of women. This flows, not from a moral judgment or a feeling that working class men are more chauvinist than others. Nor does it flow from an economist desire to work with workers: it flows from a recognition that the interests of the whole working class lie in the ending of female oppression; and that it is *most important* to overcome it within the working class. The oppression of women, as with all forms of oppression, has its reflection in the brutalisation of the oppressor. Precisely because the woman is subordinate to the man in the family, the social relationship man-woman in the family gives rise to a diminution of class solidarity amongst men. Precisely because men and women do not confront each other as equals in the family, the ability of men to see the social relations of capitalist production are diminished. Precisely because a substantial part of the man's economic life centres around the need to provide for his wife and family, his class solidarity is diminished and his instinct for individual (family) self-preservation is increased.

Since our aim is the emancipation of the working class, we therefore take it that the most important place to raise these demands are in the working class. Then what *social force* can we expect to arouse in this task? Obviously, one of the most important such forces will be working class women. On what demands should we centre our intervention? *Firstly, those which* raise the question of the *status of women in the family*, and those which raise the question of the *status of women at work*. We have to get over the idea that (a) the family is a structure whose functions should be exercised by the whole of society; (b) that society should accede to women the right to equal status at work as part of the process of breaking them free from the family and breaking down the divisions in the working class.

Our *initial* forces, however, came not from the working class, but from amongst the largely petty-bourgeois and middle-class women involved in women's liberation. Our first task was to demonstrate to these women the class origins of their oppression by persuading them to campaign on issues relating to the specific exploitation of working-class women: hence the nursery and equal pay campaigns, the campaigns to organise working women such as the cleaners, etc. From this we should now attempt to build a base for *Socialist Woman* amongst working-class women, and use this base to fight on a full program of action relating to the emancipation of women: these are summed up in the draft document on women, viz:

For economic independence and equality for women  
(For equal pay, against low pay; No discrimination against women in Social Security and services)

For the means to cultural equality  
(Social provision for children; Equal education and training)

Against sexual repression and exploitation  
(The right to choose whether or not to have children, free abortion and contraception on demand, the right to standards of living which make such choices real, support to the rights of gay people)

Above all for the development of class solidarity and consciousness

(For working class support for women's rights, for unionisation and full participation of women in TUs and in struggles for democratisation; For all demands against unemployment and redundancies specifically to include women, support for women involved in working-class struggles—women on strike, wives of strikers, etc.) To develop class consciousness and a revolutionary socialist perspective [sentence runs off page].

Again, however, we need to relate this very closely to our work amongst the working class *in general*: our aim is to see the IMG and the SWG working *together* on specific campaigns in the working class, in such a way that the issues raised by SWG in particular can be complemented by the more general approach of the IMG. From this it follows that the main campaigns of the SWG should be worked out in such a way that the IMG can co-operate in them: for example in a school on industrial work, a section on the work of the SWG amongst women in industry should be included: in IMG public work, such as the Red Circle, the SWG should be invited to co-operate in mounting joint meetings, etc. To concretise this relationship, the women involved in SWG should become part of the industrial fraction, which should cover work amongst women as one of its responsibilities. The section on organisation will spell this out.

#### *Anti-Imperialist Work*

This has as yet remained in a relatively undeveloped state. There are several objective factors: firstly, the decline of the Vietnam solidarity movement, coupled with the upsurge of political activity within the working class, which has tended to draw in behind it militants who had previously concentrated their efforts on building movements on the periphery of the class. There are certain subjective factors: the fact that, as an organisation, we have had to devote our priorities, in the last 10 months, to attempting to assemble a working class cadre. At the same time, we have to recognise that:

(i) We are the only tendency on the left which has conducted systematic anti-imperialist and defence work in this country, over the last two years.

(ii) It can be said with some justification that our work on the Irish question has been both principled and effective.

In view of the immediate priority of assembling an effective base in the working class, we cannot expect this to be an area of mass work in the near future. Anyone who begins from this assumption will naturally become somewhat frustrated, which will do neither the comrade nor the organisation much good. We do have, however, a need for sustained propaganda work outside the organisation, and internal educational work, which is done on a longterm and systematic basis. We also need to develop a capability for mounting effective public activities in response to events: meetings or demonstrations.

This requires some things to which we have not paid attention. Firstly, it requires regular activities into which a periphery can be drawn: meetings, paper sales, campaigns. Secondly it requires a cadre who, as with the Irish fraction, are prepared to spend a great deal of time doing contact work, self-education, and theoretical work. In itself, this requires a cadre who have great experience

and knowledge of the left in Glasgow, which fortunately we possess. The problem facing us is to convert this potential into reality.

As with all fractions, there is a real problem of creating a social or geographic *base* from which to operate and build out. We should therefore take an initial orientation to work based on Glasgow University and the West End. This should take the form of a carefully prepared international discussion group meeting regularly (weekly or fortnightly) in the University; regular sales of *Indo-China* in the university and West End Pubs, and if possible the establishment of a regular bookstall in Glasgow University which projects the discussion group. The aim of the group is to draw around it an initial cadre of contacts and sympathisers who are interested in the international revolutionary movement and willing to use these as a nucleus from which to organise mobilisations, public meetings, and paper sales. It is also to develop an ability to intervene in the activities of other groups with the aim of putting forward our politics and bringing towards us contacts.

Attention should be paid to work with overseas contacts who may be expected to operate in the F. I. or the revolutionary movement in their country. An initial involvement in the Glasgow University International Club would be of value in this respect. The fraction should also provide copies of the publications of other sections for contacts, and should appoint a comrade responsible for this work.

In particular, the fraction should attempt to prepare a sales and subscription drive for *International*, for *Intercontinental Press*, and for *Quatrieme Internationale*. Contacts requesting such literature should be referred to [sentence runs off page].

On the side of educational work, the fraction should also be responsible within the branch for the circulation of international information bulletins, for the provision of IMPRECORR, and literature on international questions: and should investigate the possibilities for one or more *cadre schools* on international topics. The arrangements for such activities should be cleared through the EC to avoid clashes with other group activities.

Finally, we should investigate the possibility of co-ordinating the work of the fraction with the IMG's national anti-imperialist work, by placing a comrade from the fraction on the anti-imperialist and FI commission.

#### *Student Work*

Our student work, strangely enough, has suffered most of all through the existence of the Spartacus League in recent months. The reasons for this are very clear: since the SL is doing all the work of the IMG (i. e. it has the same program and the same sectors of intervention), no rational division between student work and other work within the SL has been possible. The Claimants' Union and Irish work presenting such a drain of activities, student work has inevitably suffered.

Politically, the situation which has arisen in Glasgow is transformed by the recent upsurge over Thatcher's Bill. This resulted in Glasgow in the emergence of the SocSoc federation as a temporary leadership for the movement, in a loose coalition between ourselves, the Maoists, and the CP, which is likely to fall apart under any provo-

cation. The movement is very large and very non-political (slogans such as 'keep the NUS alive' indicate the level of awareness of most of the participants). Our aim is twofold: to use the mobilisation to raise consciousness about the reasons for the government attack, and to pose methods of struggle capable of meeting this attack. On the former question, we have made a lot of headway because of the capturing of the leadership by the Federation. This temporary advantage is not likely to last. On the second question, every possibility of launching an exemplary occupation in Strathclyde exists, but is unlikely to be followed elsewhere. The CP will do their utmost to head off such an attempt, and their control of SocSoc will make this job more difficult.

[Beginning of sentence illegible] at the same time as meeting another important political need in Strathclyde: the building of a militant left alternative to SocSoc, which also groups around itself the left within SocSoc for a political fight in that organisation. In order to do this, we should single out one issue on which SocSoc should be mobilising and is not: e.g. Ireland; and wage a struggle for action on the question. This entire concept dictates a united-front type of organisation: its political definition has to be carefully worked out so as to pinpoint the deficiencies of the Stalinist politics in the University. A successful struggle could well win over several important CP militants to us.

In the long term, we cannot expect the wave of militancy developed over the government Bill to extend or deepen, and should not base our work on the assumption that it will. Far more important will be the bringing into the Universities of the issues on which we are campaigning *outside*. A very good example is provided by the recent miner's strike. Although it is possibly too late for us to intervene at this stage in Glasgow, we should try to use the work being done in the East by (a) getting students to go out to the pits to help with the organisation of claims and with the pickets (b) organising united-front solidarity meetings within the Universities. Similarly, we should very much concentrate on Irish work within the universities; for which the forms of struggle have to be carefully worked out. Likewise, we should attempt to build up support within the universities for our work on the oppression of women, and for our work on unemployment.

Outside Strathclyde, shortage of cadre presents great difficulties for us. Because we expect to devote much attention to industrial work, we shall have to pull some people virtually out of student work, particularly in Glasgow. An essential requirement is a student *caucus* meeting once a week, which unites the experience and resources of all those operating in the field. The best time for such a meeting would be a lunchtime during the week.

### *Red Circle*

This *must* become a high priority for the organisation. It is necessary to create again an outgoing and public image in Glasgow, for which a central focus for our work is essential. The *two* main general political activities which we should concentrate on are Mole sales and the Red Circle.

The Red Circle should specifically be seen as a bridge organisation: that is, a group from which contacts are brought into the activities of the group, won over to our

politics and recruited. This means placing it on a more activist basis: it also means adopting a reasonably flexible attitude towards it. The events of the Red Circle should reflect the events going on in the organisation: thus, the work we are doing on the miners' strike should very much lead to a Red Circle on the strike, from which we would hope to draw people into solidarity work on the strike.

Publicity for the Red Circle needs a far higher level of organisation. General posters should be kept up in the town, and publicity should be organised systematically in the universities for important Red Circles.

### *The Spartacus League*

It will be noticed that no mention has been made of "youth work." There is a very good reason for this: it does not exist. That is, there is now nothing that we do amongst youth that we do not do everywhere else. This is, in itself, one of the main reasons why the SL is being fused.

What we *can* do is firstly unpack an ambiguity, and secondly sort out a division of labour. The ambiguity is, again, the ambiguity between *work on the problems of youth*, and *work amongst youth*. The first we have never done, the second we do all the time: but we should be able to find ways of continuing to do it without a separate youth organisation. The division of labour is between the various *sectors* of youth: students, young workers, and school students. For the present we should accord schools work a low priority: however, student work must assume a fairly high level of priority for the present. Amongst *young workers*, our work will be much more difficult, particularly in the absence of any strong youth movement in the trade unions, or amongst apprentices, for example, there are no major perspectives for our intervention amongst young workers as such, i.e., on a program of demands specifically related to their situation. It follows that our work amongst young workers will become part of our general political work.

The fact that there has always been this ambiguity about youth work has meant that the SL has functioned, basically, as a "young IMG." This would enable us to build it quite effectively in the next period, were it not for the exhaustion and decimation of the SL by the internal struggle within the IMG. The *actual* situation now is that there are five non-IMG members in the SL, and eight IMG members. A careful rationalisation of the membership of the SL would withdraw about four IMG members from the SL who are no longer doing SL work. It is therefore, on the basis simply of a rational division of labour, very difficult to sustain the SL *as a unit*. What is therefore required is that the youth fraction of the IMG, together with those SL members who are operating in this field, should form a cell of the IMG as laid out in the section on "organisation." Recruitment from the areas in which this group intervenes should be to the SL, except in the case of a particularly high level of commitment and understanding. We should explain to these recruits that the internal democratic structure of the SL will not exist in the period up to fusion, and that joining the SL is to be regarded basically as probationary membership of the IMG. SL members of the cell should, however, have full voting rights within it. In addition, SL members should participate in the Irish and student fractions as

relevant.

The group which now constitutes the SL should continue to project itself as the SL within the University, but should make plain that it is the youth organisation of the IMG, as well as explaining the policy-formulating structure carefully to contacts. [words missing.] Strathclyde, Glasgow and Jordanhill amongst students, and the development of student work in other institutions of higher education; the building of the Red Circle; Irish work in the centre and in Coatbridge. The group should also be responsible for attempting to re-create some of our links with East Kilbride, and should assist with the work in Cumbernauld. The prospect of beginning work in Hamilton should also be investigated.

### Organisation

Getting down to what might be termed the nitty gritty: What is quite evidently lacking in the branch is

(i) a proper centralisation in the fraction. Only two of the fractions meet regularly (the Irish and the Youth fraction), and the others function more or less, but without any collective discussion on policy. This *must* be overcome.

(ii) a rational division of labour: some comrades are doing everything, and others nothing.

(iii) an adequate concept of priorities: this means that we find ourselves engaged in far too *many* activities, without the chance to decide which are the most important; whilst when an important activity *does* come up, such as the student day of action, a few comrades are left doing all the work.

The reasons for this are *political*: they arise from a wrong concept of division of labour—by fields of work (i.e. issues raised) and not places worked in. This has resulted in:

(a) inefficient organisation: because, for example, there is only one comrade from the Irish fraction in the youth fraction, we have not succeeded in developing Irish work in places such as Strathclyde. Because we have kept comrades in women's work separate from the comrades in Industrial work, we have not succeeded in providing the close relationship between these two fields of work required

(b) uneven development. Because we have confined each fraction to discussing only its own field of work, instead of the work of the *whole* of the branch, comrades become stale and one-sided in their development. It can also lead to severe demoralisation; when the work of one fraction is not proceeding, comrades lose sight of the overall functioning of the branch.

(c) actual non-functioning: the plethora of weekly meetings cannot be maintained.

(iv) We have fetishised the branch educational, which is a farce and should be stopped. Two errors give rise to this: firstly, the concept that confrontation is good for you; second, a "hands up" approach to organisation which cannot continue.

From now on, we should concentrate on trying to build groups by *places* of work and not issues raised. Concretely,

1. Regular branch educationals should be abolished, and replaced by three main functioning fractions, coupled with fuller branch meetings at weekends, about once a month as practical.

2. There should be three main *working groups*, and two caucuses: west group, central group, east group, student fraction, Irish fraction. Each branch member should be assigned to one and only one working group: fraction assignment should be according to a combination of the needs of the organisation and the situation of comrades.

3. The West group should be the present anti-imperialist fraction, and should initially undertake the program of activities outlined in the perspectives for anti-imperialist work.

4. The central group should comprise the present industrial fraction, and should undertake the program of activities outlined in the sections on industrial and women's work. Comrades Allan, Austen, and Mark should be added to this group.

[Beginning of sentence is off page] on student work, on the Red Circle, and on the Spartacus League: comrades Scott, McGovern, Tennent, Knight, and Ossowski should be added to this group.

6. Each group should take an EC report at its meetings, and should discuss fully the items in all areas of work. It should be the aim of the leadership to develop the groups in such a way that all-round discussion of the work of the organisation takes place in each group. This is not a task which can be accomplished by waving a magic wand: it will come about when the leadership has succeeded in developing an adequate concept of the *priorities* for the branch, such that the work of the organisation is *co-ordinated around a central focus*.

From the remarks at the end of (6), it is obvious that a concept of *priorities for the organisation* needs to be very carefully developed. What we should do is to take *one central activity* around which the work of the groups can be co-ordinated in any given period, and organise political work to fit that activity. I would suggest that the branch adopt *as its central priority* the building of a public action on the Irish question: this should begin with the Irish fraction producing careful plans for the activity, and producing documented proposals. Each group should then undertake to work out proposals for its participation in the action (contact work, publicity if safe, etc.). It will take a while before the branch is developed enough to carry out this type of organisation successfully, but the only way we are going to develop our abilities is to try. A second possibility is to adopt *two main priorities*: Irish work and the proposed Scottish industrial school.

*Educationals* should cover all aspects of our work and not be confined to a specific area of activity: we should make a practice of seeing that everyone in each group gives an educational, prepared if necessary from the publications of the organisation.

*Mole sales* should be held regularly in Strathclyde, Glasgow, and in the town centre on Saturday morning. This should not be organised on a group basis, but by assignment of comrades *responsible* for the organisation. In Strathclyde, Comrade Ball should take responsibility; in Glasgow, Comrade McPherson; for weekend sales, Comrade Blair. *All* comrades should take part in weekend sales or give apologies to the EC.

*Literature* should be divided as follows: a selection of literature should be in the hands of one comrade from the central group, Comrade Ball for Strathclyde and the Red Circle, and Comrade Ossowski for Glasgow University. Comrade Reuther should be in overall charge of

literature until his departure, and should keep a stock for replenishment of stocks held by other comrades. The east group should keep a stock of literature relating to their work, and should appoint someone to handle *Intercontinental Press* and *International*.

*Finance:* at present, the total amount of dues coming in each month, even if collected, only just exceeds the amount due to the Centre. This means we have *no* surplus for our own usage. Therefore, the treasurer should immediately re-assess dues so as to bring the total up to the specified amount: viz, 3 pounds per worker, £1.50 per student, 1 pound per unemployed or housewife. However, the treasure should attempt to assess dues so as to take higher dues from the more well-healed members: a suggestion is 8% of income after rent and rates: but this will have to be worked out in conjunction with the comrades concerned. However, a *minimum* of the rate allotted by the Centre should be established.

Finally, I apologise for submitting an extremely long and at times rambling document: I didn't have time to write a short one.

J. Ball, 10/1/72

M-27

#### EXTRACTS FROM OPEN LETTER TO CERTAIN GLASGOW TENDENCY MEMBERS

Comrades,

We ask you all to take most seriously the implications of the course you are taking. At the branch meeting Tuesday 23rd November you raised criticisms concerning the conduct of certain members of the majority at the abortion demonstration which took place the previous Saturday. The main factual points around which these criticisms revolved were that Comrades Allan, Ball, and others had, at the outset of the demonstration:

(1) argued that a vote should be taken as to whether demonstrators should make their way singly to a meeting at Strathclyde University or march as a body;

(2) voted against marching as a body.

The branch meeting decided because of pressure of time to ask you to document your criticisms instead of discussing them at length in the branch. This decision in no way represented a denial of your right to voice criticism; rather an extension of it since a prepared document can argue the case much more cogently than a time-limited intervention at a meeting.

The following Thursday a Red Circle meeting was held to discuss the potential for revolution in Russia, the speaker was Alan Freeman. After the meeting had been in progress for about half an hour Comrades Joe, Myers, Ricardo and Gylda entered together with two contacts from the women's movement. At the end of the meeting, one of the women raised the question of the behaviour of Comrade Freeman at the demonstration and accused him of sabotaging it. A lengthy discussion then followed

in which a considerable effort was made by Comrade Freeman and Comrade Reuther and his wife to argue with the women comrades concerned and to point out what they felt to be the grosser factual errors in the assertions being made and to explain their own personal positions. Comrade Freeman also made the suggestion which was received favourably by one of the woman contacts that a discussion between Women in Action and the Red Circle would be fruitful. During this entire discussion Comrades Joe, Myers and Ricardo made lengthy interventions in which they repeatedly attacked Comrade Freeman and the "male comrades at the demonstration for male chauvinism, attempting to sabotage the demonstration, failing to understand the nature of the oppression of women and using their influence as males over women to dissuade women from demonstrating." The attack was clearly focused on Comrade Freeman personally. The most serious aspect of this was the intensely disruptive and disloyal nature of the actions of Tendency members and Comrade Ricardo, who is supposed to be acting under the direction of the branch, in publicly attacking a fellow member of the organisation in an organised and systematic fashion at a meeting designed for discussion on a topic totally unrelated to the subject of the attack. Five contacts were present of whom 3 have been making enquiries about the Fourth International in Germany (where they come from); one of these has been assisting us with our work in Clydebank. The remaining two were completely mystified since they had come for the first time to a red circle to what was billed as a discussion on Russia.

J. Ball (NC alternate)  
(25/11/71)

#### Notes

(1) I attended the demonstration because of an EC instruction that male comrades should attend. The instruction was moved by Comrade Gylda. I attended with full intention of supporting (I completely support the cause).

(2) There was an extremely small turn out—estimates vary between 30 and 70. The weather was extremely bad—raining and snowing simultaneously. Comrade Campbell from the Tendency argued at the outset of the demonstration that a poster parade should be held instead of a full demonstration and all should attend a meeting in Strathclyde University where a room had been booked. I argued that it would be extremely bad to split the demonstration and whatever action was taken should be united. Noone opposed this, including Comrade Campbell and those present at the Red Circle (who engaged in the attack). I personally voted against although I did not try to persuade anyone else to because I thought the effect of such a demonstration would be minimal and because the meeting had been planned in Strathclyde University.

Edinburgh EH3 6HS.  
24/7/'71

Dear Comrade,

A motion proposing your expulsion from the International Marxist Group at the IMG Scottish aggregate on August 21st/22nd has been passed to me by certain comrades in my capacity as a member of the steering committee for that aggregate. I am therefore forwarding the motion immediately in order that you receive it two weeks prior to its introduction as stipulated by the constitution.

Fraternal greetings,  
s/ Alan Morrison

This Scottish aggregate of the International Marxist Group hereby expels Comrade Gylda of the Glasgow branch. Comrade Gylda's statements, proposals and actions concerning solidarity with the IndoChinese revolution made within the Glasgow branch, at meetings of the 24th April Vietnam Demonstration Committee and at the demonstration constituted a flagrant and intolerable breach of democratic centralism.

Comrade Gylda thereafter slandered those International Marxist Group and Spartacus League members who took a correct and principled position on the demonstration by alleging that they had broken with his personal federalist concept of group discipline. His behaviour also made public the rift in the Glasgow branch.

Comrade Gylda's political line on the IndoChinese revolution is consistent with his opportunist and reformist views and are indicative of a degeneracy absolutely incompatible with membership of the World Party of Socialist Revolution and its British Section, the International Marxist Group.

explained the nature of the occasion to them and without hostility asked them to leave. Upon hearing this request the grouping departed with the exception of Cameron who remained only to throw a bottle through the glass-panelled door.

A number of immediate considerations should be made in relation to what seems a purely individual and personally vindictive act of unnecessary violence. Firstly, as Comrade Cameron was aware of, our residence is directly adjacent to that of our landlord. Secondly, members of a revolutionary organisation—namely ourselves—were unnecessarily involved with the police who were called by the landlord. Finally, present at the social were a number of young people who are sympathetic to the politics of the FI and who were astonished to recognise that the offender was a member of the IMG and the FI.

These then are the most immediate considerations. However, as supplementary evidence shows, this was neither an "individual" nor a "personal" act of violence. In fact when considering that every comrade in the IMG who was involved in the incident was aware of the accumulated frictions in the IMG and their effects on relations between majority and minority members, it further proves that certain majority members conspired to provoke and intimidate Tendency members. It is particularly alarming to note that so many NC members were involved.

This action requires us to pose the following question: What guarantee do we have that majority members will not resort to similar, or still, even more severe acts of violence in the future? Although the NC has asked Cameron to pay for the physical damage—we have received no payment as yet—it seems, judging from reports that its attitude was rather flippant. We therefore ask that a full investigation take place which will consider not only the evidence of the offender but also that of the plaintives and independent witnesses. Please find enclosed statement of Catherine Carr.

Yours fraternally,  
Cdes Stevens, Owen and Ricardo.

Statement by Catherine Carr

January 1972.

On the 31st December 1971 I witnessed a conversation which took place in the 'Doublet,' a Glasgow pub, between two members of the International Marxist Group, Neil Williamson and Alan Freeman. A party was being held at Charlie Gordon's, to which neither of these comrades had been invited.

Williamson suggested going up to the party and Freeman agreed, at the same time making a rude gesture. Subsequent events which took place afterwards in the form of a disturbance at Charlie Gordon's, where a bottle was thrown through the door of his house, and in which Williamson, Freeman and Murray Smith and some other people participated lead me to conclude that the incident was not accidental.

The impression that these people made on non-party members present at the time speaks for itself and I can only hope that it is not a reflection of the political behaviour within the International Marxist Group.

s/ Catherine Carr

19/1/72

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to inform you of the circumstances relating to a recent incident which occurred over the New Year period and which was discussed at the last NC meeting.

On the evening of the 31st of December a social was held in our home at the above address for which specific invitations were made to personal friends. At approximately 11.30 pm that evening, there arrived at the social a number of comrades from the IMG and some non-members who we did not know. Those identified were: Cameron (NC), Windsor (NC), RT (NC), McPherson (NC) and Blane (Sheffield). Comrades Owen and Ricardo



*Extracts of Minutes of the Glasgow branch, May 18, 1971*

PETERSEN LETTER.

Resolution lost:

"The branch thanks Comrade Petersen for his letter, accepts the general line of it, and agrees to rescind the resolution on Vietnam work of 4/5/71. It accepts the NC resolution of 2/5/71 as a correction of the branch's line and a reiteration of national policy, and reminds comrades who disagree with this policy of their responsibility to document their ideas in the pre-conference discussion."

FOR 2 AGST 4 ABST 2

Resolution passed:

"The branch asks Comrade Petersen to reconsider his letter to the branch particularly in view of the contents of the last section which seems in conflict with the views expressed in his "Open Letter to the Williams Tendency."

FOR 4 AGST 2 ABST 2

*Further on my letter to the Glasgow branch*

(i) I have had some reports of the reaction to my request that the Glasgow resolution be withdrawn. I think it necessary to make some clarifications.

(ii) To clear up one thing: if comrades consider it slur that I put in a remark about "openly join the Tendency" I will readily re-phrase that. Actually my original letter was hurriedly written and had I checked it over I would probably have changed that. I would suggest that this be changed to "perhaps form a tendency." Seeing that the Glasgow practice is to minute nearly everything including it would seem grunts and groans, please minute this.

(iii) Some comrades have, I am told, raised the question of me pre-judging the investigation by my letter. It is necessary to be very clear about such a question. Marxists are never impartial when it comes to political questions. While I would not want to pre-judge any organisational questions (indeed I do not wish (sic) unless it is absolutely necessary to give an opinion on such matters) on political questions it is absolutely vital to be forthright and not obscure matters.

(iv) Politically I see matters as thus:

(a) It was completely incorrect for the Glasgow branch to instruct members of the IMG and by implication those of the SL, not to carry "Victory to the NLF" on the April 24th demonstration.

(b) It was completely in order for the NC—in fact a duty—to point this out so that the mistake would not be repeated.

(c) The decision of the Glasgow branch challenging this position of the NC could only muddy matters and start a secondary argument.

(v) Arguments about the branch being the basic unit etc. must not be allowed to obscure politics. The latter applies in two senses only: branches have control over membership questions (subject to the authority of higher bodies) and discussions are conducted through branches. In no sense does this reduce us to a federation of branches. Tendency rights exist within branches and each

member has the right [to] contact other members (I cannot understand the discussion in Glasgow about NEC members on the investigation team being accompanied).

S-112

copies to: Cdes McLellan  
Jordan

17/12/71

To: Jim Murphy

Dear Comrade,

I have read the letter which you handed to me earlier today. I had intended to write a substantial document explaining my position, and, indeed, this is already in preparation. Your letter, however, has forced my hand in as much as it demands my attendance at the working group meeting of 20/12/71, and I shall therefore give here a synopsis of the reasons why I shall not be present.

I consider that both the NC's of 1970-71 and 1971-72 have failed in the duty to the revolutionary international and to the working class in *not* taking action against those comrades whose breaches of discipline were outlined in the letter, signed by 6 members of the Glasgow branch (GB) on April 29th, 1971. In particular, I object to the fact that the NC has failed to discipline Comrade Gylda for publicly going against solidarity slogans at mobilisation committee meetings prior to the April 26th, 1971 Vietnam demonstration in Glasgow, in leaflets and in his speech of April 24th. The NC refused to support such disciplinary measures at the Scottish aggregate of August 26 and 27, 1971 and October 10, 1971, and at the PC of October 2/3, 1971.

I object to the fact that the NC has overturned the correct and legitimate decision of the Forth Valley branch (FVB) of September 12, 1971, to terminate Comrade Lymond's membership of the IMG. Comrade Lymond was found clearly guilty of severe breaches of democratic centralism on the question of women's work, yet she remains within the organisation at the behest of the NC, despite the fact that the Scottish aggregate of Oct. 10th upheld the FVB decision.

I object to the fact that the sentence of suspension [laid] upon Comrade Anderson at the Scottish aggregate of Oct. 10th, 1971 was 1) agreed in favour of, in preference to a sentence of termination of membership, by the NC member present, ii) subsequently reduced to a period of time which renders the suspension ludicrous.

I object to the fact that NC members used their influence at the Scottish aggregate of Oct. 10th, 1971, to bring about the dropping of charges against other Tendency members (Comrades Campbell, Stevens, Owen, Malcolm, Ricardo, Joe), who had supported Comrade Anderson in his betrayal of the Scottish working class—namely, refusing to speak at IMG public meetings and to advance



the political line of the IMG on the question of UCS, and refusing to raise the issue of a Claimants Union at Clydebank TC.

I object to the fact that the PC had decided to adopt this course of action after, in some cases, asking the Scottish committee (SC) to hear charges laid by themselves, and in others, encouraging the SC to lay charges. I object to the back-tracking of the PC which took place at its meeting of 2/10/71, and that the minutes of this meeting did not arrive in Edinburgh until 23/10/71, so making any consultation with NC members impossible, prior to the aggregate and also rendering impossible effective counter-action to the betrayal.

I object to the decision of the NC to reverse the vote of censure on those comrades who had reneged on the armed struggle of our comrades in Argentina, by refusing to support the solidarity motion proposed at the National Conference.

I consider that this situation has arisen because the NC of 1 and 2 May, 1971, refused to take a principled stand against those Glasgow comrades who were using their numerical predominance in the branch in order to break discipline, and who, while putting forward Tendency politics, denied that they, themselves, constituted a tendency or were connected with the national Tendency. I feel that the Fact-Finding Commission (FFC), appointed at that NC, produced a report (later accepted by the NC), which, while finding the bulk of the allegations made in the letter of the six members to be justified, betrayed the comrades who were loyal to the national line, by refusing to recommend disciplinary action. This was done even though the FCC itself admitted that grave breaches of democratic centralism had taken place. The excuse that disciplinary action would exacerbate the divisions in the International, provoke the SWP and its hangers-on, and might give the international Tendency an opportunity of splitting, is an argument based *not on principle*, but on *pragmatism*. If the international Tendency are willing to condone breaches of discipline such as have recently occurred in Scotland, then they have no place in the FI, and their departure should be hastened, not discouraged. Breaches of democratic centralism, particularly on this magnitude, cannot and should not be tolerated. Our organisation claims to be a Leninist organisation. One of the distinctive features of a Leninist organisation is its democratic centralist structure, operated in order to give clear, undivided leadership to the working class in order to effectively counter the solidarity of the capitalist class, and its professionally trained forces. Breaches in democratic centralism are ruthlessly exploited by the capitalist class and by other left groupings who take up *incorrect* political positions which can lead to conduct objectively detrimental to the working class struggle. Those who refuse to advance the democratically decided national line, must be expelled—in the interests of the working class and that class's need for clarity and decisiveness in leadership. Those, whether in the Tendency or the majority, who condone the continuing membership of those who have broken discipline are acting counter to the interests of the revolution and the working class. Democratic centralism cannot be turned on and off at will, and those who threaten to create difficulties for the FI if democratic centralist principles are operated, should not be capitulated to. The NC has capitulated—its approach to comrades who have broken discipline has reeked of

pragmatism and prevarication. Since other left groupings can see (N. B. 'Struggle', Journal of the CFB (M-L) June issue) that the IMG takes no punitive action against disloyal members, it is impossible for IMG members to claim that the IMG is a democratic centralist body, and to recruit on that basis.

The NC has consistently refused to understand the extent of its pragmatism and prevarication. At the majority caucus of October 10th, comrades wishing to speak against the NC actions were given only 20 minutes to state their case—exactly half the time taken up by the NC representatives Petersen and Clarissa. At that same meeting, comrades were, through the voting and leadership of the NC comrades, refused the democratic right to hear the long-standing charges against Comrade Gylde.

As usual, revisionist political practice has its theoretical counterpart. The leading revisionist in this case was Comrade T. W. adequately supported by Comrades McGovern and Ball. Comrade T. W. at the 'kangaroo' majority meeting of 6&7/11/71 told the meeting explicitly that democratic centralism was not a *necessary principle* of Leninist organisation, and that the IMG was only "sometimes democratic centralist," and this was quite sufficient. Leaving aside for the moment *who* decides *when* and *where* the IMG will be democratic centralist, the "theory" of the sometimes democratic centralist organisation is in direct opposition to the Leninist principle of organisation, is a total revision of it, and is a completely useless weapon for the working class in its revolutionary challenge to the capitalist system. However, it is only on such a shaky theoretical argument that the political practice of the NC can stand up to the charge of hypocrisy. In fact, the NC, as its actions prove, *does* hold to the "theory" of the "sometimes democratic centralist organisation."

Mention must finally be made of the roles of Comrades McGovern and Ball—allegedly sent to Scotland to fight the Tendency. Comrade McGovern was sent to Scotland as a result of the FFC recommendations in order to lead the process of political clarification which the FFC proposed as a substitute for principled disciplinary action. In view of later events it is probably for the best that he did not, in fact, arrive permanently in Scotland until September. Furthermore his credibility has never been very high since he was responsible for opposing the Nomination Commission decision at the National Conference to exclude Comrade Blair (who had refused to support the majority document in the branch, and who had been a fellow traveller to the disruptive tendency) from the NC. Since coming to Scotland, he has been a bitter opponent of principled disciplinary measures. His activities in Scotland have been far more dedicated to attacking the comrades insisting on disciplinary action, than the Tendency.

Comrade Ball has gone a step further, and some of *his* actions such as the organisation of the "majority meeting" of 6 and 7/11/71 smack of Stalinism. His vigorous attempts to prevent the discussion of the betrayal of the NC, his attempt to prevent a vote being taken on a motion condemning the NC, and the setting up of what amounts to a "provisional" Scottish committee to rival, if not usurp, the powers of the democratically elected SC all testify to the lengths to which the NC will go to attempt to cover up their prevarication, and cut off principled criticisms.

The extent to which these two comrades have failed was revealed at a recent Glasgow Red Circle where the Tendency were able to launch an attack, in public, on

IMG politics, with impunity, they did on February 25th of this year. Their strength stems on the NC cowardice.

In summary, the IMG has become a caricature of a principled revolutionary organisation. It has degenerated from prevarication to pragmatism to revisionism. I consider that it is no longer a viable vehicle for the advancement of revolutionary (? not legible) and will not again become so until the current leadership admits its mistakes and rides the IMG of those who have broken the discipline of the organisation.

I am therefore resigning my membership of the IMG. Long live the anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-bureaucratic struggles!

Long live the Leninist principles of party organisation!

Jim MacK  
Edinburgh  
17/12/71

Yours fraternally,  
F. Matthews  
pp The Secretariat

Tendency members required to sign the above undertakings:

Comrade Anderson;  
Comrade Malcolm;  
Comrade Ricardo;  
Comrade Stevens;  
Comrade Myers;  
Comrade Joe.

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182 Pentonville Road,  
London N. 1.  
24/8/71

Dear Comrade,

We understand that at the meeting of the Glasgow branch, held on Tuesday, 17th August, 1971, Comrade Ricardo read a statement which declared that the members of the Tendency were not prepared to accept what they described as "dictates of the PC representatives". When Comrade King asked Comrade Ricardo did this mean that they were not prepared to accept the instructions of the Political Committee, Comrade Ricardo replied that was so.

As you will be aware the PC has placed the direction of the work in the UCS campaign in Glasgow under the control of Comrades King and MacGovern, and in their absence, Comrades Beckett and McPherson. The Tendency statement is therefore an outright rejection of the authority of the PC and NC and constitutes a deliberate flouting of the Conference decisions and the leadership elected by Conference. Such action is not permissible in a revolutionary organisation and rejects the entire principle of democratic centralism.

As Comrade Ricardo did not name which individual members of the Tendency supported this declaration of UDI, it is important that *you* clarify whether or not you personally support this breach of revolutionary discipline. You are therefore asked to let us have in writing, by not later than *Wednesday September 1st 1971*, a signed statement saying whether or not you give your support to the statement read at the branch by Comrade Ricardo. If no reply has been received by Sept. 1st, it will be assumed that you do support the statement.

*Addendum:* since the above report was received we have seen a statement from the Tendency in Glasgow branch minutes of 17th August 1971 which states that it will

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#### FOR ATTENTION OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The fact-finding commission of Singh, McGovern and King was appointed by the National Committee at its meeting of 1/2 May to visit the Glasgow branches of the IMG and SL and did so on 12/13 May.

The FFC met and discussed with 22 comrades. Seven of these were members of the IMG, seven were members of the SL and eight comrades were members of both organisations. We were therefore able to get the opinions of 15 of the 16 active members of the IMG branch—two other comrades are on leave of absence. We met 60 per cent of the SL branch.

A division exists in the Glasgow branch on political and organisational matters. A group of comrades most of whom are in the IMG complain that there is an ultra-left tendency in the branch. The comrades in this tendency are in the leadership of the SL. They are accused of encouraging the SL to engage in ultraleft activities; failing to carry out IMG policies in the SL branch and using the SL as a means of carrying out their own policies. They are likewise charged with doing insufficient work in the Indochina campaign and failing to carry out a systematic educational programme in the SL. Their critics complain that they precipately set up a Socialist Womans' Group and thereby damaged the work done in Women in Action. Finally the comrades in this alleged ultraleft tendency are charged with being inefficient and are characterised as a clique. For the sake of convenience we will refer to these comrades as Group B.

Group B claim that the other comrades, which we will refer to as Group A, are not in agreement with the national policies of the IMG and SL, and that they do not fight for these policies in the broad movement. They cite as examples of this, Group A's policies on the 24 April mobilisation. The majority of the Glasgow branch decided not to raise the slogan: "Victory to the NLF" in the Glasgow VSC. They complain that the industrial work is not being developed in Glasgow giving the postal strike, the seven week strike of bread-delivery drivers and the high level of the city's unemployment as examples of where no consistent work has been done. They also say that the comrades in Group A have resisted national policy to set up SWGs in favour of retaining the more amorphous W in AG.

There is a small group of comrades who deny that they support one group or the other. They say Group B is influenced by ultra-left ideas. Two of this "neutral" group claim that Group B is opposed to the branch majority on personal rather than political grounds. They admit to having certain political criticisms of the ideas advanced by Group A comrades but say that these are really tactical disputes.

Inevitably in such a situation both groups accuse the other of personal attacks and uncomradely behaviour. Terms such as "impressionists," "liberals," "conservative" and "petty bourgeois" have made their never-failing appearance. Regarding this, the FFC is of the opinion that both groups have indulged in personal attacks. The FFC, whilst both *regretting* and *deploring* this, believes that these attacks arise out of frustration because of the failure to conduct a thorough-going political discussion. The lack of consistent outgoing activity—apart from Indo-China work, an inability on the part of IMG to develop industrial work as a major part of Glasgow activity are other contributory factors to this situation.

The main political differences are focused around Indo-China work, SWG and industrial work. Over the last years the IMG has fought a consistent campaign for the slogan "Victory to the NLF." This slogan eventually was adopted by the VSC. On every demonstration the IMG has carried that slogan. It has been national policy to fight for its acceptance in every committee. The issue of the *Red Mole* advertising the 24 April demonstration included that slogan. The comrades of Group A did not however raise that slogan in the Glasgow IndoChina Committee. They also instructed the IMG comrades in the SL not to raise the slogan.

A comrade from Group A claimed at the NC meeting of 1/2 May that this was for local tactical reasons. When discussing with the FFC, four comrades from Group A stated quite categorically that they do not agree with the slogan and said that we should ". . . never raise this slogan at any time." A political discussion is therefore needed in the branch that centres around our work on IndoChina. This discussion must cut across the so-called tactical differences. To characterise the differences as tactical leads to a situation whereby comrades who say that they accept the slogan but do not think it important now, find themselves making a bloc with comrades who *entirely reject* the slogan. Furthermore this bloc is against comrades who accept the slogan.

An important difference exists concerning the IMG. The SL February Conference went on record for the setting up of local SWGs. This is also policy of the IMG National

Committee. The comrades in Group B have formed an SWG in Glasgow. The comrades in Group A say that this was precipitate. There are however three different positions in Group A on this issue. Firstly there are the comrades who claim that W in AG was in effect, if not in name, an SWG. Then there is the position of one comrade who told the FFC: "what was needed was a broad mass movement and that it is wrong to set up an SWG in any area." Other comrades in Group A say that they generally agreed with the need to build SWGs, but how and when is a tactical question. They claim it would have been better not to have immediately launched an SWG but worked for a longer period in the W in AG. This they say would have enabled us to win over more comrades in the latter organisation to support for a Glasgow SWG. Again we find this amalgam of three basically contradictory positions.

Differences exist on working class activity, particularly our demands. One comrade in Group A is opposed to the demand for a general strike and does not even believe that we should demand that the TUC organise such a strike. He argues that "the working class has no leaders and would therefore be defeated." Other comrades in Group A are skeptical about building action committees and consider that the main emphasis should be inside the official trade union movement.

In the opinion of the FFC these three issues show most clearly the divisions between Groups A and B and also reveal the existence of very important differences between comrades in Group A.

The FFC urges the Glasgow branch of the IMG and also the SL branch to begin a series of discussions on these matters. The IMG should begin *without delay* the pre-conference discussion as it is of the opinion that this will bring into the open further political differences. The positions taken by the two groups on these questions do not arise from personal quirks or comrades' idiosyncracies, but derive from differing political analysis and method. Documents submitted by comrades listing the various organisational crimes committed by other comrades and documents in the process of being written, listing similar horrors, should be buried in the deepest and darkest cupboard available. Such documents are time-consuming, only worsen the already bad personal relations and obscure the political issues. The maximum time should and must be given to these political discussions. They must be conducted in such a way that personal antagonisms are subordinated to the need for political clarification. It would probably help if comrades for or against certain political documents were allotted equal time to speak and speakers in the discussion were taken in strict rotation. It is essential that all personal differences and disputes are kept out of the branch meetings. Complaints should be referred to the EC which must deal with them on a completely objective basis and aim to keep the discussion on a political level. Leading comrades from both groups must see it as their main responsibility to maintain an atmosphere where differences can be discussed. If they consider that any of their supporters are behaving in such a way as to prevent this, it is their responsibility to stop this.

The FFC is of the opinion that the political differences that exist are of a very profound nature. It considers that the past failure to bring these differences into the branch for open discussion has consequently led to a

most serious deterioration of personal relations, between leading comrades. Allegations and denunciations have taken the place of politics. Two sharply divided groups now exist in Glasgow. It would be naive and unduly optimistic to expect to resolve that problem simply by a plea for greater tolerance and a number of organisational solutions, suitable as they may be. We therefore recommend that a leading comrade be sent to Glasgow. This comrade should go there on a long term commitment as the problems can not be solved by a 'flying visit.' His job would be to ensure that the necessary political discussion takes place; ensure that the local work is carried forward and act as intermediary between the two groups.

The Glasgow branch has a good record of past activity. Its finances are invariably in good standing and its literature sales, particularly the *Red Mole*, are good. The FFC was most impressed by the potential of both the IMG and the SL—the latter organisation has recruited some excellent young comrades. Glasgow is one of the key proletarian centres and therefore is a priority for the IMG and SL. To neglect the problem in Glasgow, to wishfully hope that somehow things will get better would be a criminal act on the part of the PC. Again we therefore stress the absolute necessity for a leading comrade to go and live in Glasgow now.

We would like to end with some comments concerning the actions of both groups. Group B despite their differences with the comrades of Group A should have done far more work for the 24 April mobilisation. They must make sure that a more systematic programme of education is carried out in the SL branch, although we would say that on the evidence given to us that there has been more educationals in the SL over the past period than in the IMG. The leading comrades in Group B must ensure that their comrades attend the joint caucus meetings on a more regular basis than hitherto. They must also ensure that they follow correct procedures regarding the raising of matters relevant to the IMG branch in the branch, e.g. documents and contacts.

The leading comrades in Group A must do more than criticise the SL for its lack of educationals but begin a series of branch educationals in the IMG, preferably in relation to major fields of political work. They must end their rather paternalistic attitude to the new younger comrades. The complaint that the SL members are "politically backward" does not seem to be borne out by our discussions with the SL members we met. The comrades in Group A must, despite any differences they may have, carry out publicly the national line of the organisation and not place any obstacles in the way of comrades from Group B doing so. It is incumbent on the comrades in Group A to also sort out their own political differences.

Those comrades who say that they support neither one group nor the other, must make a political decision. The FFC agrees with them that many organisational sins have been committed but before they can obtain the credibility amongst comrades to correct them, they must firstly show where they stand in the political disputes.

S-161

*The Glasgow Situation—report to the National Committee  
4/5 Sept 1971*

The UCS found the majority—i.e. supporters of the Tendency—of Glasgow branch singularly unprepared and very disinclined to try and make any intervention. This attitude applied not only to UCS itself but also to those sections of the labour movement that were affected by the UCS "work-in." Our prognosis that the UCS struggle would have repercussions in the local labour movement was proved invalid as far as the Glasgow majority were concerned. The situation appeared to have left them unmoved.

In the period of time between the announcement of the redundancies and the beginning of the "work-in" no attempt had been made to get contact with UCS militants; no attempt had been made to do any work in the vital area of Clydebanks; no public meetings had been held on UCS—an attempt to do this was in fact blocked by the majority, and nothing had been done to politically or organisationally prepare the membership for any work around the issue. An air of undisturbed peace and tranquillity reigned over Glasgow.

When the PC representatives and a group of out-of-Glasgow comrades arrived to help with the work they found that they had to begin from scratch. It was therefore decided to concentrate on the following activities:

1. General propaganda—sales of the broadsheet, public meetings, etc.
2. Setting up a Clydebanks CU, setting up a CU in Cumbernauld and working with the Parkhead CU.
3. Individual contact work.

Not only did this work have to be organised by the PC representatives but the selling of the broadsheet, the CU work, the arranging of public meetings and the contact work had to be done by out-of-Glasgow people. The small group of NC majority supporters of course helped with this work as did a number of SL comrades. The Tendency comrades for a variety of reasons which ranged from "personal" and a mysterious thing known as "other political commitments" were notable by their absence. Any serious work that they have done has been performed with such stealth and secrecy that it has escaped the notice of the organisation in particular and the working class in general. Comrade Lyons however was more candid that some of his comrades and simply refused to do CU work, just as Comrade Waterson refused to speak at any IMG public meeting putting the group's position on UCS. Nor would the latter comrade move a resolution at the Clydebanks Trades Council—this was a majority decision of the branch. He thinks that the CU is a sectarian deviation. When such a resolution was put to the Trades Council it was carried by 20 votes to 2 which illustrates that the rank-and-file members have a different interpretation of sectarianism than Comrade Waterson.

The work done over the last few weeks in Glasgow has produced the following results—*Clydebanks*: A CU has been set up in Clydebanks. This has attracted the support of a number of local militants including two members of the CP. It has an observer on the local trades council and its representatives will be speaking at local union branches in the next week or so. It will also be collaborating with the Trades Council on a local unem-

ployment meeting. Clydebank has already got unemployment figures of 10 per cent. This means that we have a base for the first time in the area and a number of good working class contacts.

*Parkhead* Good relations have been established with this CU and our work in setting up other CU branches has helped in this respect.

*Cumbernauld.* This is an important new town on the outskirts of Glasgow with a population that is almost 100 per cent proletarian. We had one SL comrade in this town. A comrade from out of Glasgow was assigned to help PM (the local comrade) and another out-of-Glasgow comrade was eventually put on to this work. Work was done around the big local strike and as a result of this a factory paper has been started. PM has joined the IMG, another two people from the town have been recruited to IMG and one person has asked to join the SL. A local CU has also been started which in view of the 9.4 per cent unemployment in the town was a most vital organisation. It should be added that nothing had really been done in this area before. The strike was in its thirteenth week before the IMG did anything about it. The Glasgow majority were obviously of the opinion that one required a passport to enter Cumbernauld and therefore decided to leave this work to one of the foreign sections.

*East Kilbride.* As a result of contacts made on the big UCS demonstration a group of six YLC members have applied to join the SL, and two or three other members of this organisation will probably join in the near future.

Certain gains have been made in Glasgow and district, the important thing is to keep them and use the bases that have been created to extend the size of the IMG in Glasgow and also help to give the IMG a real implantation in the working class. Certain facts must therefore be recognised. The Tendency, with one or two exceptions, did comprise the leadership of the Glasgow branch, in view of their length of time in the IMG and political experience this was inevitable. Their opposition to the line of the organisation and their complete indifference to working class activity ensures that they will not provide the leadership that such an important area requires. To expect otherwise would be naive at the best and irresponsible at the worst. A new leadership has to be built in Glasgow and the organisation of the work both in the political and geographical sense has to be changed. I therefore make the following propositions:

1. A working group of the IMG be set up in Cumbernauld. Besides the people recruited, two former SL members who have joined the IMG are going to live in Cumbernauld. The main priorities of this WG will be: Work in the local unemployed action committee, the CU and work around the factory, the focus of this to be the new bulletin. We also aim to set up a local SL.

2. We ask the SL to start a East Kilbride SL. A Red Circle is started in the area. Work is done with the local action committee and that we also do work amongst the unemployed youth in the area.

3. Priority is given to work in Clydebank where we continue work in the local CU, try and set up a Red Circle and have a policy of recruitment to the organisation of a number of contacts so that we can build a working group in the area.

4. Regular activity in Glasgow is built up around the

Irish campaign. This means meetings every week, systematic sales of the *Irish Citizen*. Where possible joint work with Irish organisations.

5. We do work in the two universities. This should be in the form of an Irish campaign and the closest contacts amongst the best of the students should be involved in CU work. Regular meetings should be held in the Universities, but these should be mainly of a theoretical nature and aimed at winning individual students rather than trying to build a mass base. This is particularly true of Glasgow University.

6. Work around the other industrial paper must be continued and we should attempt to recruit one or two of the closer contacts to the IMG and try to start a WG in that district sometime in the next six months.

7. Women's work be linked with our activity with the CUs, the university and around activities of women cleaners, etc.

What is suggested is the division of Glasgow into a number of working groups, this means that they concentrate on local activities and establish a local base. Concerning personnel the following suggestions are made. McGovern go to Glasgow immediately. His main work there be Irish work and trade union activity in the central Glasgow branch. Neil W. concentrate his activities in Clydebank and Cumbernauld, but that we aim to assign another person to Cumbernauld as soon as possible. Tony S. besides his duties as the Glasgow central organiser be responsible for doing the editorial work on the two industrial papers. Beckett also goes to Glasgow immediately and that he be responsible for the work in East Kilbride and works with MC in the university. Mick C and Ian R to both do university work and CU work at Parkhead. McGovern also should act as *Red Mole* correspondent for Glasgow and contribute regular articles on Scottish affairs. Beckett and TS should act as the organisers of the educational activity, divided roughly as follows: TS internal and preparing the programmes for the Glasgow Red Circle. Beckett for the SL and again with the help of Mick C, in the university.

These plans of course have to be worked out in much more detail but unless a plan is adopted now there is a great danger that Glasgow can slip back into its old complacency. They are also dependent on the creation of a real collective leadership, something that Glasgow has not had for a long period—this applies equally to the SL as much as the IMG. Such a leadership requires a minimum number of people, particularly if the opportunities are to be seized. Hence it is imperative that both Beckett and McGovern go *immediately*. The Fact-Finding Commission recommended that a comrade went to Glasgow before the Conference. This was never acted on and the rot was allowed to continue as no one was prepared to act and disturb the happy slumberings of the Tendency. We have paid a big price for that. We cannot afford to hope that things will work out; we either act now or abdicate our responsibilities as a leadership.

King

*Statement by Colin McPherson, Aug. 31, 1971*

At the Glasgow branch meeting of 24/8/71 Comrade Anderson was instructed to carry out the following resolution:

As representatives of Clydebank Claimants Union will be speaking at the Clydebank Trades Council on Wed., 25 Aug., Comrade Anderson is instructed to move the resolution sent to him by the organizer and drafted by Comrade King during the discussion.

This resolution referred to called for Trades Council support for the Claimants Union and asked the Trades Council to accept a delegate from the Claimants Unions at their meetings.

On Wed. 25/8/71 Anderson was informed verbally of the branch instruction and was given a copy of the branch minutes. He then intimated his refusal to put such a resolution before the Trades Council.

Comrade McPherson on behalf of the Clydebank CU later spoke to the Trades Council and during the discussion a motion was put by two members calling for TC support for the Claimants Union and for a CU delegate to be invited to the Trades Council. This was carried overwhelmingly by approximately 20 votes for and 2 against.

I therefore ask the National Committee to take note of Comrade Anderson's clear breach of discipline and to take the appropriate disciplinary action.

31/8/71

s/ Colin McPherson

S-208(L)

*Charges against Comrade Lymond*

1. That when approached by a member of the Edinburgh Womens Lib Group (in which Comrade Lymond had played a leading role since its inception), over the question of setting up a Socialist Womens Group in Edinburgh, as the Womens Lib Group had proved to be overwhelmed by lethargy, Comrade Lymond deliberately dissuaded this person from acting along these lines, saying, among other things, that it would alienate some of the members of the Womens Lib Group who did not favour socialist oriented groups. Throughout this period (beginning in the middle of March 1971) Comrade Lymond had full knowledge of the position of the IMG on this question. This action on its own constitutes a breach of the discipline of the IMG, but was magnified by the fact that Comrade Lymond at no time during the discussions of the branch mentioned the person as a contact, or indeed mentioned her at all.

2. That the Womens Lib Group petition which circulated in the end of March/beginning of April was met with some apprehension by some of the reactionaries involved to varying degrees in the Edinburgh Womens Lib Group (the rejection of the petition by these elements was due to the demand concerning 24 hour nurseries). Because of

this a motion was put at a Womens Lib meeting to remove the "offending" clause. Comrade Lymond abstained on this vote and the motion was carried.

3. This is a more general section concerning the general unprincipled behaviour of this the only IMG member of the Womens Lib Group.

A) As already illustrated above, Comrade Lymond was loathe to refer to potential contacts who could be of help in building at least a socialist women group in nature if not in name. This type of behaviour happened at least once more to the knowledge of the IMG members in Edinburgh, over a contact brought to a Red Circle by the comrades involved in Irish work. This Red Circle was given by Comrade Lymond on the topic of women's liberation, but the contact was not followed up by Comrade Lymond despite the fact that the address of the contact was known to her.

B) It would also seem that Comrade Lymond was loathe to put forward the basic literature, and therefore opinions of the IMG, on the womens question; this is substantiated by the fact that when Comrade Lymond was told that a member of the Womens Lib Group in Edinburgh was very impressed by Comrade Coulson's article in *International* and wished there to be copies of *International* on sale at the Womens Lib Group meetings, none appeared.



## D. Miscellaneous

M-11

*An Introduction to Documents Concerning the Tendency in the IMG*

by P. Petersen

(1) The IMG has appointed a comrade to make a completely documented dossier on the question of the Tendency. Unfortunately this comrade has been unable to complete the job in time for this United Secretariat. I have, therefore, taken the steps of supplying 15 sets of relevant documents and statements and of making this short introduction. This in no way implies that full documentation and an explanatory dossier are not necessary. These will be ready early December.

(2) The main thing which comes out of this documentation is the complexity of the problems covered and the deep-rooted nature of the bad feeling between majority and minority. This clearly can only originate in deep political differences. However, as the Tendency will agree, the comrades of the Tendency have been given full democratic rights to present their views in both the 1970 and 1971 pre-conference discussions. Very many documents were produced and distributed. In no case and in no way did the Tendency threaten to defeat the majority on any issue. We can, therefore, say very emphatically that *the majority has no need to take organisational reprisals against the minority.*

(3) The minority counter this argument by saying that it has been subject to factionalism and that a bad atmosphere exists in which a free discussion cannot take place. Comrades of the United Secretariat will be familiar with this type of argument—nearly every minority makes this claim. The documents show that far from witch-hunting the Tendency, the majority has continually delayed taking disciplinary steps to avoid prejudicing the discussion. Even when comrades brought out a rival woman's paper (which contained an attack on the IMG) we delayed action. Even when Comrade Alan Harris established a rival bookshop to that of the group (lying to us and the United Secretariat in the process by claiming that he was merely engaged in an export/import business) and defied every resolution we passed on the question, no action was taken. Far from being trigger-happy the majority has erred on the side of indecision because it hoped vainly that the Tendency would cease its indiscipline.

(4) The indecision of the majority was met with more and more provocations:

- Glasgow Tendency members passed resolutions saying, in effect, that they did not recognise the authority of leading committees;
- some Glasgow members of the Tendency engaged in extreme provocations: refusing to carry out decisions point blank and accusing the organisation of such things

as "betraying the Vietnamese revolution";

● two members of the Nottingham Tendency left the area in July and to this day have not communicated with the Centre as to their whereabouts (we would be quite entitled to lapse them under the constitution—as most sections would—but have not taken action so far to avoid sharpening the atmosphere);

● other members of the Nottingham Tendency have refused point blank to carry out the decisions of the National Committee and National Conference (to this day we have not had a list of subscribers nor any accounting of the monies, etc.);

● London members of the Tendency refused point blank to carry out decisions of the National Committee appertaining to security at the Centre;

● London members of the Tendency are virtually inactive apart from half-hearted attempts to sell ICP.

On top of this Comrades Connie and Alan continually misrepresent the situation in the IMG to the United Secretariat. Statements of a most serious nature are made without substantiation: for instance, at the September meeting of the United Secretariat, Comrade Connie claimed that the "IMG membership had been promised that the Tendency would be got rid of after Conference." I challenged that statement and asked for verification—none has been forthcoming.

(5) The bad feeling in the organisation arises from the behaviour of the Tendency: the rank and file is sick of undisciplined actions which continue. In Glasgow, Tendency members have taken to publicly attacking members of the majority. A comrade from Nottingham who had been withdrawn from women's work by the branch re-engaged in it without any references to the branch. Confronted with continuous de facto sabotage of their work, some members of the majority who are inexperienced have tried to "cut corners." In every case where the letter and spirit of the constitution has been broken the national leadership has intervened to put matters right. Far from encouraging these comrades the leadership has come into violent conflict with them.

(6) A very disturbing feature is that the Tendency has developed arguments justifying indiscipline by saying decisions weren't valid or that really the Tendency was carrying out the policies of the organisation. This attitude, held by the leaders of the Tendency, amounts to saying that each member of the organisation has the right to decide on every issue whether or not to carry out majority decisions. This is a complete negation of democratic centralism.

(7) Majority supporters when in a minority in a unit have behaved differently. In the Glasgow branch the Tendency supporters instructed the majority supporters and the Spartacus League not to carry the nationally agreed slogans on a demonstration. The majority supporters carried out this decision but when they appealed to the national leadership a howl about democratic rights went up from the Tendency. Apparently democratic rights only exist for the Tendency—the majority has none in its view.

(8) Because of these circumstances there is a widely held view in the rank and file of the IMG along the following lines:

(a) the Tendency has given up hope of winning any more support for its right-wing revisionist policies in the organisation;

(b) it has, therefore, decided to struggle on an organisa-



tional basis;

(c) it seeks to create divisions in the majority by a course of provocations — knowing full well that the majority is bound to differ about how to deal with these provocations;

(d) in the case of no disciplinary action being taken it knows full well that some members of the majority (especially those most affected and who are least experienced) will become extremely frustrated and come into conflict with the national leadership on the grounds of the latter's softness or organisational centrism;

(e) in the case of the national leadership taking disciplinary action the Tendency will claim that there has been a "Healyite" degeneration of the IMG and that it should cease to be recognised as the British section.

The rank and file has come to this feeling on the basis of its own experience not because of the "atmosphere" nor "factioneering by the majority" as can easily be demonstrated should rank-and-file members be asked. Only the actions of the Tendency can erase these fears.

(8) After the discussions at the last United Secretariat it was hoped in the majority that things could change. We have carried out the decisions of the meeting. The Political Committee went as far as in practice not carrying out the decision of a higher body — the National Committee — on a disciplinary charge. The upshot has been that the Scottish members of the majority have been outraged and are trying to organise a call for an emergency National Committee to overturn the PC's decision. Instead of assistance in meeting this difficult situation the Tendency members confront us with yet another provocation in Scotland.

(9) The majority comrades are determined to behave in a responsible manner. Very serious damage has been done to the British section, especially in Scotland, by the actions of the Tendency members. Despite this, the IMG is making considerable progress as the continuing process of the creation of new branches, etc., witnesses. Our two main rivals are faced with severe internal difficulties. The prospects are extremely good in view of the impact we have made through our Irish work. The United Secretariat can best help by: (a) making it clear that it does not sanction nor acquiesce to the breaking of discipline by supporters of international minorities; and (b) setting into motion an international control commission which should concentrate on taking evidence from rank-and-file members (especially from Scotland).

M-23

*For the Attention of All Members, circular by the National Office of the IMG, circa Oct. 28, 1971*

At the NC meeting over the weekend of October 23/24 a number of disciplinary cases were considered. All of these concerned members of the Tendency. In the event,

the following decisions were taken:

- to reinstate Comrade Lymond to membership (which had been terminated by the Forth branch);
- to declare out of order the censure motion passed against several comrades for abstaining on the message of solidarity to the ERP at annual conference;
- to uphold the decision of the Scottish aggregate suspending Comrade Ricardo from membership (the period of suspension was reduced to 3 months and it was, furthermore, made clear that we would hope to reinstate him to membership after this period subject to his agreeing to abide by the constitution);
- to uphold the decision of the Scottish aggregate to suspend the membership of Comrade Anderson for six months. However, the operation of this disciplinary measure was postponed until the next meeting of the PC (November 6th). Comrade Anderson has been invited to that meeting to appeal against the finding and disciplinary proposals. It should also be noted that the same provisions re re-instatement apply.

After the decisions about Comrades Ricardo and Anderson were made, Comrade Adair, on behalf of the Tendency, made a statement in which he intimated that it was extremely probable that the Tendency would not recognise the validity of the suspensions. Asked if this meant that internal documents would be provided to Ricardo, despite his suspension, Adair replied in the affirmative. It was also made clear that in the event of the Tendency taking this position, it would invite Comrade Ricardo to its meetings. All of this must be considered in light of the fact that Comrade Ricardo refused to answer the question as to whether he would observe statute 10b of the constitution.

This statement by the Tendency amounts to a refusal to recognise democratic centralism and the right of the National Committee to take decisions regarding the organisation.

The Secretariat has discussed this matter and wishes to make the following points:

(1) The National Committee has requested the International Executive Committee of the FI to establish a commission to investigate the activities of the Tendency within the British section. This latest matter will be the first item to be referred to the commission.

(2) In many circumstances this action of the Tendency would be considered a provocation. The membership should discuss this question and make up its mind on this matter.

(3) It points out that the statement by the Tendency is a clear breach of statute 10b of the IMG constitution and clause 44 of statutes of the Fourth International.

(4) In the opinion of the Secretariat this action is probably designed to divert attention away from the political issues involved. There is a grave danger that this may indeed take place. The Secretariat appeals to all members to keep the discussion at a political level.

(5) The Secretariat will supervise the carrying out of all disciplinary measures decided upon by the NC.

(6) The leadership of the organisation will take all measures to ensure that the security of the IMG and Fourth International is not threatened by the actions

of the leadership of the Tendency.

(7) All comrades are expected to carry out the instructions of the organisation, this includes full attendance on the October 31st demonstration.

(8) All comrades are requested to note, together with signed statements by witnesses, all breaches of discipline by all members of the organisation (including the Tendency).

(9) The Secretariat will send to the United Secretariat and the commission established by the IEC a complete file of any breaches of discipline, including refusal to recognise the decisions of the NC committed by members of the organisation.

(10) The PC will deal with the cases of Comrades Anderson and the comrades of the old editorial board of *Socialist Woman*.

(11) All existing disciplinary measures will be enforced. Any refusal to accept the decisions of the NC will be dealt with under statute 9b of the constitution of the IMG.

(12) The secretariat will recommend to the PC to refuse to recognise the decisions of any branch, caucus or other meetings at which persons who have been suspended from the organisation are present. It recommends IMG members to refuse to participate in all such meetings.

It must be recognised that this situation is a bad one. The organisation has shown by its handling of the Leader Books and *Socialist Woman* questions that it seeks to avoid taking action against members of the Tendency in order not to divert the differences in the International on to an organisational plane. The Secretariat recognises the problems that this attitude creates for members. However, it wishes to point out that the traditions of the protection of the rights of minorities in the International are very strong. This is an extremely healthy feature of internal life of the International which arises from the whole experience of the labour movement, especially that of Stalinism. This means that decisions concerning disciplinary measures in the sections of the International are looked at in a very critical manner.

This, of course, creates opportunities for unscrupulous minorities to break discipline and create difficulties for the sections. This is especially the case where differences between the majority and minority in a section parallel International differences. Such unscrupulous minorities can claim that they are being victimised for their political ideas rather than breaches of discipline. It is imperative in such cases that majorities supporters refuse to be provoked and keep the discussion at a political level. It is however quite impossible to ignore flagrant acts of indiscipline which are clear-cut. Experience would indicate that such a minority would be encouraged to go in for more acts of indiscipline if it feels that it can act with impunity. Whilst difficulties are created by such behaviour it is vitally necessary for majority comrades under these circumstances to avoid infringing the rights of the minority. Dealing with such difficult situations is part of the training a revolutionary organisation needs.

M-28

### *Where Are the Tendency Going?*

by A. Jenkins, June, 1971

It has always been difficult to pin down the essential positions of the Tendency. The "big criticism" of today can be forgotten tomorrow. For example: where is the SLL-bashing of yesteryear? This day by day harrying of the SLL was, we were informed, a precondition for our growth. And then a great silence fell over the Tendency on this issue. The Tendency was not organically born from the political arena in which the IMG works in Britain. It was, therefore, forced into an opportunist eclecticism that would float ideas to see if they could gain support in the struggle against the ultra-left and sectarian "IMG."\* If they did, those ideas became enshrined within the received canon of "Trotskyism," and if not, those ideas fluttered away down the memoryhole never to be seen again. But it now looks as if the Tendency have found a programme and an identity. It is not too surprising that it has done this by evolving to a consistently right-wing and revisionist position.

The first section of the Tendency's perspectives document is mood-setting rather than anything else. The Tendency bends the stick back on the "pessimistic, panic-stricken view expressed by the majority" with a vigour not seen since Pollyanna recognised the power of positive thinking. The most complex political situation in Britain since the war (at least) is trivialised beyond belief. The methodology used is simple: the credit side of the balance sheet is read out and the debits ignored. No attempt is made to grapple with the specifics of the crisis of British capitalism, the erosion of profits, etc. Not a hint is given that it is essential for the bourgeoisie to attempt to inflict a massive defeat on the working class. The complexities and ambiguities of the trades-union movement are moronically encapsulated in totally uncritical applause for the February 21st demo. The working class are moving, the Irish are fighting for their rights, the youth are radicalising, and the women are on the march. It's all happening! The document has the depth of analysis of a Pepsi-Cola advert. We are told, baldly and with no qualifications, that the election of Digby Jacks shows that the students are moving to the left! But the references to Ireland are the most amazing. Firstly we are informed that the Provisionals are declining — which is just not true and could not be written by anybody who had the most superficial grasp of present-day politics. More peculiar than this is the support for the struggle of "Ireland's national minority." The formulation is used again when explaining that some people radicalise "by identification with the struggles of national minorities (Ireland). . . ." This may mean that the Tendency regard the Catholics and Protestants as two nations and support the Protestant (minority) nation's struggle, but

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\* The quotation marks are necessary because some of the polemic is against the IMG only in an Albanian sense.

this is scarcely likely. It may mean that the Tendency think that Ireland is the Six Counties and support the struggle of the Catholic (minority) nation, which is possible. It may mean that the Tendency sees every process in the world today as being a democratic struggle by an oppressed minority and therefore lumps the Irish struggle into this universally applicable category, which is probable. But the most intellectually rigorous explanation is that the formulation is gibberish and flows from their general political level.

The Tendency inhabit a Manichean universe: the objective situation is totally favourable and therefore any defeats or even only partial successes can only be adequately explained by the totally obnoxious politics of the ultra-left and sectarian IMG. Why has there been a down-turn in the world-wide anti-Vietnam War movement that has been reflected in every country not directly involved in the war with the partial exceptions of Japan and France? The Tendency are clear: it is the fault of the ultra-left and sectarian IMG. When our comrades in the USA some time back ran into ultra-left pressure on the SMC from the Seattle Liberation Front, International Socialism, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, we did not take refuge in demonology and demand "Why does the SMC attract the ultra-left?" We accepted that downturns can occur and that problems can afflict anybody. We also thanked our lucky stars that British CPers and Social Democrats have been spared from the taint of ultra-leftism.

The Tendency argue that the IMG is revisionist on the question of the Labour Party. This is rich. We hold and have held the analysis that the Labour Party is a bourgeois party with a working-class base. Because of its links with the TU movement it has, in the past, operated as an arena where many workers have advanced their political demands. Furthermore, until this relationship with the TUs is broken there exists a possibility of left currents emerging within the LP in which we would have to intervene. Admittedly, there seems no likelihood of this occurring in the immediate future. The Tendency, on the other hand, have been extremely ambiguous about the LP and at times comes near to claiming it as a workers' party. It was a member of the Tendency, at last year's conference, who proposed that we should defend the LP like the Soviet Union as an historic gain of the working class! Another comrade of the Tendency wrote that the revolutionaries work within the LP "in order to forge the organ of proletarian democracy—ripping it loose from its bourgeois-democratic trappings—and turn it into an organ for the assumption of class power and the smashing of capitalist power. This is the way revolutionary socialists must regard the question of support of the LP." Unfortunately for the Tendency, it is all too clear who are the revisionists.

The Jeremiad is continued when we come to publications. *Red Mole* "has not helped to build the IMG." *International* "hardly exists." The way forward to expand the influence of the IMG is to sell *International Socialist Review*. At this point the dismal caricature that the Tendency paints of the IMG becomes too grotesque. It is precisely in the realm of publications that the IMG has improved beyond recognition. *Red Mole*, in spite of many deficiencies, has become the best paper on the

British Left. And it gets better. *International*, and once again there are shortcomings, is a 100% improvement over our previous journal. We have published a series of pamphlets that, in production and content, are forcing people to recognise that the IMG can make a real intellectual contribution to the British Left. It is difficult not to over-react and to launch into a panegyric, but this totally negative attitude to our publications by the Tendency reveals them not as constructive critics but as embittered professional knockers.

The Tendency is evolving a consistent political theory. This is clear in its revisionist formulations on the LP. The same right-wing trend appears when the Tendency opposes Committees of Action as diversions which lead militants away from their trades-unions into the marsh of syndicalism and ultra-leftism. This caricature has nothing to do with the actual position of the IMG but is very revealing with regard to the Tendency. One is tempted to conjecture, if this right-wing evolution is extrapolated, what might be their attitude to "unofficial" strikes in a year or two's time. The real default of the Tendency is that it has failed to analyse the current situation. The reason why revolutionaries drift to the right is very seldom by conscious evolution or "sell-out." Rather, their ideas fossilise and atrophy. A failure to advance theoretically means a regression. Most of the theoretical stances of the Tendency are firmly embedded in the reality of the 50s and early 60s. May '68 signalled a new situation in Europe. This event highlighted certain extremely important changes in the profile of the European left. A new vanguard was coming into existence on the European scale; a vanguard that existed not merely amongst the students or even the youth but included sectors of the working-class militants. The orthodox parties are decomposing and the embryo of a new left can be seen. The primary task of the Trotskyist movement is no longer to propagandise within the traditional parties but to hegemonise the new vanguard. We are moving from the era of commentary politics into a period where we either achieve a revolutionary practise or are by-passed. None of this the Tendency recognises. This failure is nowhere so obvious as when they attempt to deal with the governmental slogans and put forward the formulation of a "labour government committed to socialist policies." There are two types of allegiance that the working class can have to a party. One is on the basis of a lesser-evil electoral allegiance, e.g., "the Tories were even worse sods." The other is based upon an allegiance in struggle. In periods of struggle it is a regression to pose governmental demands upon a party supported only in the former sense. The Tendency have not understood who we are trying to influence, nor the impact of Wilsonism, nor, one suspects, that today the working class in Britain is engaged in a vital struggle.

If the Tendency fail to grasp the essentials of the contemporary scene, then it is obvious that they cannot understand either the present development of the IMG or the next steps we must take. The IMG was born in a climate where it appeared that there was unlimited time. We slowly emerged as a national force by concentrating our forces on one or two issues where we could maximize our effect. Initially we progressed by our work in the LP and the workers' control movement, and then by our work in the VSC. Theoretically we could achieve competence

merely by analysing the future developments within the labour left or of the Vietnam movement. This is no longer sufficient. We are now at the stage where we have to develop and inter-relate several sectors of intervention and to gain a toe-hold within the working class. We still are obviously in a period of primitive accumulation of cadre, we still need to concentrate our forces, but we are operating in a vastly more complex political situation and our theoretical and practical needs are consequently extended. Above all, it is true that "we haven't got all the time in the world." There is a massive confrontation coming between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

However fast we grow, we are unlikely to sufficiently change the relationship of forces between ourselves and the working class in the next period. But we do have the opportunity of changing the relationship of forces between ourselves and the other vanguard groups. This is vital regardless of how the class confrontation works out. If there is a partial victory by the workers that opens up a perspective of further struggle, then the ability of the IMG to intervene in this very favourable situation would be absolutely determined by our effectiveness and size relative to the other revolutionary groups. If a defeat is inflicted upon the working class, then our relationship to other groups is of even more importance. In such a period, the left would be only very gradually recruiting and building up. There would be little chance of us overtaking the SLL and IS. If we are able to overtake the other groups then it is not mere piety to see a perspective of hegemonising the new vanguard as a whole. In this context the merger with the SL makes vital political sense and it is not a concession to "workerism" as the Tendency believe. Such a gross misunderstanding can only occur because for the Tendency business is as usual and there is no urgency.

The Tendency pose as their central strategy the building of mass single-issue campaigns. The IMG certainly does not reject the concept of a mass, single-issue campaigns. Neither do we reject a total strategy built on single-issue campaigns and democratic demands. One analysis of the evolution of the IMG is to see the IMG itself as a single-issue campaign (not mass admittedly) that went from workers' control to Vietnam and then onto youth. This view is not at total variance with the facts. It was a methodology that brought us from being a minute group in Nottingham to a small but nationally based group. It will still remain an important part of our methodology for further building. But, on its own, it is not sufficient. The new strategy that we desperately need is one that can sustain several sectors of intervention, that can launch mass campaigns, that can sustain long-term work that balances out band-waggoning tendencies, that begins an implantation within the working class and, above all, links up our work in all sectors so that our various interventions are consciously made to complement one another and give us a coherent strategic thrust. We have to seriously discuss how such a strategy can take us from the periphery to the centre, i.e., a real implantation in the organised working class. The Tendency make no concessions to any theory of sectors of intervention. There is no attempt made to grapple with the problems inherent in the IMG exclusively running a series of single-issue campaigns. The question of how feasible such mass campaigns are at present does not arise. Where there is a will there is a way, and the failure of the IMG to get 100,000 out on the streets on Ireland, Vietnam or the Middle-East is merely yet more

proof of the bankruptcy of the ultra-left and sectarian IMG. The Tendency even claims ". . . it is more conducive to build a single-issue campaign when sectors of the class are in motion than when they are passive." This view fundamentally misunderstands some of the basic laws of motion within a capitalist society. We have found that the single-issue campaigns have been very effective in mobilising peripheral sectors such as youth, women, Blacks and Irish. Naturally these radicalised elements have helped us in some of our most successful TU work, e.g., Vietnam and the night-cleaners campaign. These sectors because they are alienated from or were never under the control of Social Democracy, are particularly open to our politics. But when the working class move, all these sectoral groups are sucked in behind the major confrontation—just as the IMG/SL and Gay Liberation bobbed along in the wake of the February 21st demo. From a Marxist point of view it would be very disturbing otherwise, since we have confidently predicted that the proletarian revolution will solve the major problems of other oppressed groups.

The peripheral sectors will still remain the most open to our intervention but it is doubtful whether such sectors can have an independent political existence on the large scale when the working class is involved in major struggles. Similarly, it is difficult to envisage mass single-issue campaigns in such a period that are not overtly and directly against the capitalist offensive. Most of our recruits will still come from the peripheral sectors, but one of the criteria by which we will be judged in this work will be how we relate to the workers' struggle. And it is never workerism to argue that in Britain it is the working class that will be the grave-digger of capitalism.

The inadequacies of the Tendency's position do not merely lie in relation to questions of feasibility or theory of sector of interventions but raise a whole series of fundamental differences. The stressing of democratic demands and their isolation from a transitional programme merely reopens the old minimum/maximum programme dichotomy. The obvious end point of consistently raising merely democratic and defensive demands is to achieve the dogmatic rhetoric of Sunday Trotskyism and a week-day reformist practise. The Tendency also smuggle into their schema the concept that various struggles are inherently anti-capitalist. This is particularly applied to the women's struggle. No Leninist can accept this, even for the working class. It is a surrender to spontaneism. The error is compounded ten-fold when a supra-class entity such as women is being considered. The Tendency is in a headlong retreat from class analysis and prefers to talk of "people."\* The inherently anti-capitalist argument is merely a fig-leaf to cover over a retreat to reformist demands. Once you use this formulation then the transitional approach goes out of the window and any demand as long as it is broad or democratic enough can be used since the struggle itself is anti-capitalist. The Tendency have found an identity and a consistent theory. They are tramping along the old familiar road to reformism.

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\* In passing it is necessary to note how the Tendency do not attempt to give the women's movement an orientation to the LP. Is this a concession to ultra-leftism?

## 1971 IMG Annual Conference Resolutions

**BUILDING THE IMG**

Conference recognises that if we are to implement the decision of last year's conference and change the IMG from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action it is vital that we establish strong IMG branches in certain industrial areas. Taking into account both the size of our membership and their geographical location conference decides to give priority to *London, W. Midlands, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland.*

Conference therefore sets a target of 150 new members from those areas by the next annual conference; an increase in subscriptions of 100%; an increase in the circulation of the *Red Mole* by 100% and a 50% increase in the circulation of the *International*.

The following steps should be taken in order to achieve these targets.

1. A meeting be held not less than two weeks after the Annual Conference of the area committee for each of the above districts. If an area committee is not yet in existence in any area then one be formed immediately.

2. The Area Committee is charged with a) setting district targets for membership, subscriptions, *Mole* circulation and *International* circulation; b) organising at least one school for all the area members and one cadre school on group building for specially selected comrades; c) organising in consultation with the Centre at least one public meeting—it will be the responsibility of the Centre to provide a speaker or speakers able to attract a good sized audience; d) organising one or two articles of local interest for publication in the *Red Mole*. This activity to cover a period of three months after which an area aggregate be held to review the work. Such aggregates be held at three monthly intervals to check progress and ensure that those comrades in charge of the activity are carrying out those tasks designated by the committee.

3. Comrades leaving their present districts give priority to moving to one of the above areas and consult the Political Committee in which area their services can best be used.

4. The IMG National Committee approach the National Committee of the Spartacus League with a view to their collaborating in this activity.

**POLITICAL PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSITION TO A LEAGUE FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTION.**

1. Conference recognises that it is completely erroneous to see the transition to a league for revolutionary action as a purely quantitative process. Whilst the need for a greatly increased membership is integral to this transition the main process involved is a political, qualitative transformation.

2. Conference recognises that this means the working out of a fundamental analysis of British capitalism in its economic, social and political aspects. Such an analysis of necessity would include a detailed assessment of the various political formations in Britain, including the van-

guard. This analysis should be developed to the point of elaborating a transitional programme for the British revolution.

3. Conference recognises that fundamental organisational steps along the road of launching the league for revolutionary action could not be undertaken without such theoretical and analytical work being a corollary.

4. Conference therefore instructs the new leadership to ensure that this work begins and is an integral part of the preparation for the transition.

**ON FINANCE**

1. Conference is of the opinion that the huge tasks that face us in the transition from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action cannot be achieved unless many more resources are at the disposal of the IMG.

2. Consequently conference instructs the new leadership to examine the level of subscriptions and methods of raising finance with a view to increasing the amount of money available for IMG activities and full-timers (e.g., industrial organiser).

3. If necessary the constitution should be amended in the light of this discussion.

**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

1. Conference recognises that the change in our general mode of operation in the transition from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action (i.e., from a group which in general can only comment to a group which takes revolutionary initiatives and influences the course of political events) necessitates changes in organisational structure.

2. Accordingly, conference instructs the new leadership to prepare a discussion on the problem of the transition to cell-type structure for the IMG. This discussion must take into account the fact that the road to becoming a league for revolutionary action traverses the path of becoming a much more effective and efficient propaganda group.

3. This discussion should draw on the experience of other sections and the discussion which took place in the Third International on this question.

4. As a preliminary step the new leadership should set into motion the organising of a well-prepared national school on this topic to be followed by local schools in all important areas.

**JOURNALS**

1. Conference accepts the main lines of the PC document on publications, in particular the perspective before next conference of establishing the weekly mass-sale political weekly, and proposing to the United Secretariat further developing *International* as a theoretical journal of the Fourth International.

2. Conference instructs the new leadership to take steps to ensure, in line with these developments greater integration between our press and our political work. The editorials of the weekly (and prior to that, the fortnightly) should be clear political directives to our membership and sympathisers. Likewise, the major articles in *International* should serve the function of completely underpinning theoretically all our major fields of work.

3. Conference instructs the new leadership to work towards a method whereby, in general, the main editorials in the political newspaper are the product of organised discussions in the PC, and where the major position articles in *International* flow from well-prepared discussions around papers in the NC. The converse should also apply: whenever we decide a new campaign or turn is necessary the theoretical and political underpinning of this in our press should be set in motion.

4. Conference is of the opinion that working along these lines will result in the press being much more effective as an expression of the general political line of our organisation.

5. Conference charges the new leadership with mobilising the whole organisation in a campaign to establish our press along the above lines during the course of next year — organisationally, politically and financially.

6. Conference instructs branches to take writing for *Red Mole* very seriously (e.g., as does Manchester). Fully discussed articles should be sent in from each area on all important developments in the locality.

### YOUTH WORK

1. In line with the main perspectives document and the NC resolution on youth, conference resolves that IMG should continue to assist the development of the Spartacus League.

2. The main axis of this work should be to rapidly build the organisation through vigorous public activity on the campaigns decided upon by the recent SL delegate conference.

3. Each unit of the IMG should, therefore, allocate some comrades to make this their main activity. In addition the public activity of the IMG units should be geared to assist the SL in developing its membership and campaigns.

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

1. Conference recognises the importance of the youth unemployment campaign of the SL for our implantation in and orientation towards the working class. Precisely because of its importance, the IMG nationally and locally must take an active supporting and in some cases co-ordinating role in this campaign.

2. Specifically, conference calls on the IMG to assist in the preparation and co-ordination of the following:

- a) Broadsheet on unemployment, schools, etc.;
- b) National speaking tours
- c) National co-ordination of all local work, whether in schools work, Claimants Union work, socialist women groups, etc.

### TRADE UNION WORK

1. Conference recognises that an industrial orientation is both absolutely essential and possible.

2. In line with the main perspective document and the document on industrial work, conference instructs the new leadership to:

- a) ensure the functioning of a trade-union commission and the regular publication of a trade union bulletin;
- b) give precise direction to all units on how those

units should set about the process of becoming implanted in industry;

c) carry out an intense educational campaign at all levels to assist this orientation — cadre schools, general classes, on all aspects should be organised;

d) ensure that national campaigns are launched which will give the whole organisation a focus for relating to industrial work.

3. Conference is of the opinion that because of the disparity between the resources of IMG and the tasks on this front that our forces should be concentrated into a number of given areas (industries or units of the labour movement). A major task of the new leadership will be to rapidly draw up a plan of action, based upon both a long-term analysis of the developments in British industry and an assessment of our possibilities, to facilitate such concentration of forces.

4. Parallel with this the press of the IMG must continue and improve its servicing of our industrial orientation.

5. Conference endorses the action of the old PC in deciding upon serious work in the Claimants Union.

6. Recognises the successful development of Committees of Action and hope to promote the development of further committees.

### WOMEN'S WORK

1. This conference re-affirms the IMG's full support for the 4 demands put forward by the WNCC.

2. Conference re-affirms that the main axis of our intervention should be to bring demands concerning women's liberation into the labour movement and to fight for a proletarian orientation within the women's liberation movement, and to this end suggests that the women's caucus co-ordinate with the industrial caucus.

3. Conference accepts the main lines of the NC document on women as theoretically underpinned in the Margaret Coulson article in *International*.

4. Conference charges the new NC to ensure vigorous intervention in this field along the lines of the proposals in the last two sections of the NC document on women, with a special emphasis on mobilising for the SWG conference.

5. Because of the complicated questions involved, a discussion on the matter should continue.

[N. B. See appendix.]

### BLACK WORK

(1) Conference, recognising the lack of political analysis and concrete action on black work during the past year, emphasises the importance of this area of work at the present time and that it should be made a priority for the IMG.

(2) The main axis of our intervention should be a combination of an unremitting struggle against the Immigration Bill (and other forms of repression against black workers) and work towards developing a Marxist cadre within the black population.

(3) Because of the extremely difficult tactical and strategic problems involved in this work conference resolves:

- (a) to continue the discussion on black work after conference;



- (b) that the new NC at its first meeting should elaborate a precise set of tasks for our immediate work in this field;
- (c) that this strategic plan should distinguish precisely between black work and anti-racist work;
- (d) that the same NC should give instructions to IMG units on how to relate to this work;
- (e) that an aggregate be organised before the end of the year to arrive at a definitive position on these questions; and
- (f) that special attention be paid to recruiting black cadres.

### IRISH WORK

This conference resolves:

- (1) to continue the discussion on Irish work until the autumn conference;
- (2) in the interim period to continue the work along the general lines set out in the McGovern/Reed document, i.e., that we:
  - (a) maintain the ISC as a propaganda campaign, aiming to demystify Irish exiles, the British left, students and the labour movement about the real situation in Ireland;
  - (b) that in this work we seek to cooperate at every level with Clann na hEireann, and also those individuals and other tendencies with whom we can work on a basis of broad political agreement;
  - (c) that we maintain *Irish Citizen*, and that the organisation as a whole supports the paper by selling it, even where there is no ISC; and
  - (d) that our work combines propaganda by the ISC, IMG and SL.
- (3) we support the activities outlined in the McGovern/Reed document, i.e., the July 11th and October 31st demonstrations and the international demonstrations.

### INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT REVOLUTION

- (1) Conference recognises that the view expressed by the Fourth International as long ago as 1965 that the Indian sub-continent is likely to become the main focus of the anti-imperialist revolution during the 1970s has been dramatically confirmed by the recent events in Bangla Desh and Ceylon (and elsewhere).
- (2) Conference is of the opinion that this means work to assist the development of a Trotskyist cadre force on the Indian sub-continent is a major responsibility for IMG.
- (3) Conference instructs the new leadership to rapidly draw up a plan of work for this in consultation with the United Secretariat and give IMG units precise direction on their carrying out this policy.

### CLYDESIDE

Conference recognises the seriousness of the situation in the Clydeside shipyards and to prove its seriousness towards the perspective which it has just adopted, instructs the incoming NC to give the Scottish comrades all assistance in this question, including sending one or two comrades experienced in this work to help the Scottish comrades in this work.

### EDUCATION

Given the necessity of ensuring:

- (1) the systematic planning of educational activity as a function of political strategy;
- (2) that educational activity be aimed at developing the political skills of the membership.

And hence the need, as the best way to secure this:

- (1) to organise educational activity around national and regional cadre school on a systematic basis;
- (2) to integrate the activities of these schools with self-education and local education through national and local planning, and the careful preparation of supplementary material;
- (3) to ensure that the leadership allocate adequate resources to educational activities.

As a first priority:

- (1) the educational commission should meet after the national conference and produce a proposed schedule of educational activities for the coming year for discussion by the NC;
- (2) the educational commission should establish a series of regional locales suitable for holding regional schools, in connection with local branches;
- (3) the educational commission should produce a series of draft educational documents to supplement the schedule, containing a minimum bibliographical information, plus factual information, agitational information (i.e., dirt), and if possible an introduction to the theoretical discussion of the issues involved.

Also:

- (1) the Centre should be prepared to service the educational programme by ensuring that the above material is circulated and discussed by providing speakers and/or facilities for national/regional cadre schools;
- (2) local branches and working groups should appoint an education officer with the responsibility of:
  - (a) ensuring that cadre schools are attended by the relevant people;
  - (b) producing a programme of branch educationals which relate to the national programme; and
  - (c) distributing educational material produced by the Centre and ensuring that it is attended to.

### 1972 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- (1) Conference is of the opinion that the failure to have a three-day conference this year is highly regrettable.
- (2) Conference instructs the leadership to make absolutely certain that there is no repetition of this grave error. Accordingly, it should:
  - (a) immediately book a suitable hall for a conference for Easter 1972;
  - (b) draw up a precise time-table which will take cognisance of the constitutional requirements for the production of documents; and
  - (c) fix a time-table for leadership meetings which will facilitate that time-table for the production of documents.



## APPENDIX

[Editorial note: this is an edited version of the two last sections of the Political Committee document on women's work passed by national conference. It is produced in this form because it contains the precise tasks set by that document and confirmed by the short position resolution (in this bulletin) on the same topic.]

### *Perspectives for Socialist Woman Groups*

We should envisage the groups growing in size and number; this will only be possible if they are engaged in activity in a very serious and continuous way, and if they take the question of political education equally seriously. We should make as a target for the group building an autumn conference to which all SWC members would be invited, with other groups having representatives as observers. A full programme of discussion through documents should be initiated immediately on whatever subjects the comrades desire, and on the basis of these documents a future women's work caucus would then draw up an agenda. One session would be concerned with internal organisation and our activities within the women's liberation movement as a whole.

Until the conference is held, groups should decide for themselves a basis of membership. As a guide, London has these four rules:

- (1) 25p per annum membership subscription;
- (2) acceptance of the manifesto (written by the membership);
- (3) members should sell *Socialist Woman*; and
- (4) although our meetings are open to other groups' members, membership of the LSWC is open only to those who do not belong to other women's liberation groups.

The latter point is so that there is no confusion over representation, etc. We should at conference try to come to some common definition of membership and the conference documents that are accepted should form a manifesto.

In order to draw women comrades closer to us, activists should be invited to our caucuses. The IMG and SL women comrades should decide who is to be invited but as many as possible should be able to take part in the discussions. Nothing is more likely to bring these comrades close to us than to see democratic centralism in action.

*Socialist Woman* is obviously a very important sector for activity and as many as possible of the SWC members should be involved with it. Generally, non-IMG members should be elected as correspondents in each branch. Their main job should be to represent the branch at editorial meetings, ensure regular reports get sent to the paper, chase up articles, news features, etc. We must build up a body of comrades able to take pictures, conduct interviews, draw cartoons, etc. Similarly a comrade should be assigned the job of organising sales. All SWCs should try to produce a *SW* "special"—a pamphlet—once or twice a year. This would serve three purposes:

- (1) it would help to satisfy the enormous demand for British-produced work on women's liberation;

- (2) it would help to structure discussions on activities; and

- (3) it would produce finances for the group concerned, enabling them to engage in political activities.

SWCs should never be allowed to become top-heavy with IMG comrades—once they get off the ground. As more women are recruited they should be drawn into other areas of work—otherwise we could get dangerously close to the position where most of our women comrades are engaged in this field of political activity. No one should be recruited who has come into contact with our organisation through women's work only.

### *Conclusion*

- (1) The women's movement is important to our organisation. Because we can bring to it a revolutionary theory, in which an explanation of the causes of women's oppression is an inherent part, we can gain the best comrades from this movement.

- (2) As the movement grows, its middle class base will lead to the consolidation of the feminist trend. We should counteract this by constantly posing alternatives.

- (3) The SWCs must be encouraged and strengthened. *SW* is a key part of our work.

- (4) The women comrades must continue to fight male chauvinism within our movement. This will be done by constant education and by comrades not being afraid to point out cases of sexism. We should have an assumption that as revolutionaries, male comrades will be only too grateful to have the opportunity to correct their attitudes.

- (5) The SWCs and the IMG must continue to develop theory in a conscious way and not expect it to arise spontaneously through discussion of personal problems. We must recognise the fact that owing to the traditional backwardness of the revolutionary movement on this subject much work has to be done in developing theory.

### M-32

*Statement by J. Peters, delivered to P. Petersen and Tariq Ali by Alan Harris, Dec. 14, 1971*

On Monday, 6th December, Comrades Nigel (IMG), Mike (IMG) and Pete (SL) called at my flat to speak to me. They were redirected to where I was working that evening, and arrived about 8.30 p.m.

After an initial period of general discussion regarding the work currently being undertaken by the local IMG Branch, Comrade Nigel was asked to come to the point of the visit. He replied by asking me whether we intended to sell "our rag"—*Intercontinental Press*—at "their" meeting. The meeting in point was the local Anti-Internment

League meeting involving Provisionals, Officials, International Socialists, IMG, SL and independents.

I replied to the three comrades by pointing out that *Intercontinental Press* carried the official public statements of the Fourth International and published articles on current affairs which reflected the thinking within the Fourth International. However, Comrade Nigel informed me that if we "insisted" on selling *Intercontinental Press* at Anti-Internment League meetings we would be "reported" to the area committee and the Secretariat, in an effort to get us stopped.

I pointed out to the comrades that, in the circumstances, I considered this to be a form of intimidation. Comrade Pete intervened to deny that any such attempt was taking place, but refrained from stating why three comrades had taken such trouble to visit me just prior to an Anti-Internment League meeting, and why Comrade Nigel—at the very least—threatened to drag IMG sellers of *Intercontinental Press* before the area committee and the Secretariat if no attempt at intimidation was involved. I concluded that as I considered it a point of principle for journals reflecting the opinions of the Fourth International to be freely sold in public, I would make a point of selling *Intercontinental Press* at every Anti-Internment League meeting which it was possible for me to attend. And that the nature of the visit would be raised with the Tendency comrades.

As he was leaving Comrade Nigel remarked that only written evidence is admissible—verbal reports not being acceptable.

s/ J. Peters,  
December 14th, 1971

M-33

*Letter from J. Watts to IMG National Committee Members, Feb. 9, 1972*

*FOR NC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES—To be discussed at Political Committee 12th Feb. 1972*

#### Notes for Discussion on Industrial Situation

1. The miners' strike will not now find any more allies (as far as striking is concerned) inside the working class. Chapell's casting vote saw to that. The only hope is the print workers' claim (NATSOPA put in a full page ad. in support of the miners in the *Morning Star*).

2. Machinery is still being destroyed downstairs. Several pits probably will be closed. The miners don't care.

3. The flying pickets are biting—hence the State of Emergency.

4. On the whole, the organised working class has respected the picket lines, but some sectors have gone further than that (ASLEF gives miners oil train time-tables); AEWU Foundry workers have cut off supplies of coke to the car component industry.

5. The miners strike, even if it is not supported officially by strike action, is having and will have a permanent effect on the consciousness of the great masses of the working class as follows:

a) It is a mass participatory strike, i.e., the miners do not go home to become atomised. They are, in the *majority*, involved in the prosecution of the strike. That is, this is not a mere withdrawal of labour but an active use of it in the furtherance of their claim. This itself is new and has far-reaching consequences.

b) By picketing power stations and forcing the rest of the organised working class to respect their pickets (in Scotland, Clell says there has been no instance of TU workers crossing picket lines), they show themselves not only the *socialised* nature of production but also other workers as well; e.g., the oil lorry drivers who are blacking power stations have gone beyond ASLEF and have overcome a potential division of those workers in the fuel sector.

c) There have been half-day stoppages in some power stations in Scotland at protest at the settlement, which are the first signs of a large internal struggle in that sector. With the T&G and the AEWU on one side of the voting and the ETU and the G&M on the other, there is scope for large convulsions in the backward unions.

d) Most importantly the Feather proposals have a dynamic of their own. Why should the miners be a special case? Their past acceptance of redundancy, etc., is not enough. The real reason is that if they are not an exception, if they are not *made* an exception, the British coal industry will be run down not as and when it suits British capital to do so, but simply by the refusal of miners to go back to work even after a settlement. More importantly, Feather expects them because simply they are more united, more aggressive, insistent, energetic, imaginative, *illegal* than any other sector of the working class. Neither the government nor the TU leadership can afford to allow a large section of workers to fight the police daily all over the country with, let's face it, comparatively few arrests and with very little slackening in public support.

6. The Chrysler settlement is quite rightly regarded as class treachery by *The Economist*. After all, the public-sector wage-norms are meant to be only the first stage in preparing to combat the private sector as well. Chrysler has made pretty sure that the print workers and others will laugh their heads off at the idea of them accepting a 7% increase.

7. What comes out of all this?

a) We should not, like last year in the PO strike, succumb to catastrophism—even if we say the retreat will only be for 18 months. The truth will be more complex. It is possible that the Tories will literally crush the miners and terrorise Gormley into a settlement of around £3. They could try to use the Emergency Powers and the "National Interest" hocus pocus to separate the miners from the rest of the working class. They will find this very difficult to do. The links already established at the local level are very strong. Gormley at the moment is not calling the tune in the NUM and on the contrary is being pushed into saying things he never dreamt he would even think. To use troops against the miners is a very big risk indeed and altogether the Emergency Powers will

be imposed with a totally different correlation of forces and of political consciousness than existed either in '66 (Labour Govt) or in '70 (troops not used but Power workers putting up only a sham fight anyway). Most of all it runs the risk that to go as far as using troops could lead to a breakdown in the political hegemony of the ruling class over an important section of the working class; I am considering the possibility of some miners beginning to see just what the troops are and understand their role in Ireland. The 24 hours which separated the two marches last weekend represents an enormous gulf in the consciousness of the working class, even the miners; but at this time it is not an impossible gulf to bridge, especially if the Tories make any tactical mistakes.

b) We should all be very clear that if this strike achieves what the miners and the working class take to be a victory, then the class struggle will unfold at a much higher level and tempo. In particular:

- The miners strike itself is a landmark in working class struggles in Britain. This is not to say that local struggles have not been at an even more militant level but enough said — see earlier part of the paper.

- New methods of struggle learnt during the past year or so will be used in a different context, namely an offensive one instead of in a defensive situation.

- A purely wage militancy is highly unlikely, because millions of workers went through all that in 1970 and have seen where their wages stand now. ("Heath Out" on the miners demo; but though for the majority this meant "Labour In," it is important to note that this slogan was not shouted; General Strike got more applause than General Election.) Now more than ever the leadership need to be clarifying a crystal clear line on its governmental slogans, when to raise it, etc. Virtually every strike will be faced with the question of the nature of the government (not to be confused with the State).

- The propaganda of the revolutionary groups has, as a result of the major struggles which have taken place over the last year or so, begun to filter through into sections of the working class. This should not be under-estimated.

- The role of students in the miners strike must be carefully assessed; but the barriers are not so high as they used to be.

In Scotland, according to Clell, the miners are pledging all the other unions that after the strike they will refuse to touch anything handled or made by non-unionised labour. This poses the question "Full Unionisation of the Working Class" just at a time when the IR Act will be trying to do just the opposite. We must discuss this idea and see if it is a diversion (or could be used as one by the bureaucracy) or on the contrary a major unifying focus for the working class.

Our intervention in the miners demo was sloppy mainly due to the dislocation of the organisation due to the Irish demo. I think we were correct not to march behind the IMG banner (the fro [sic] trying to be a cow mistake). The leaflet was virtually our only contact with miners because they had no money to buy anything else we had. On the other hand it was a very uncompromising leaflet as it was half about the Irish situation and naturally offended many miners. (Nottingham miners almost beat

me up.) Elsewhere we can say that our use of the Claimants Unions has actually helped the struggle in a small way and given us useful openings. The use of students has been good, particularly in Canterbury, Essex, York and Hull. But we must make an assessment of just how possible it is to mobilise students (British students in the top half of the binary system I mean) on a workers' issue. The size of meeting and interest shown seems to indicate it is very hard work outside the immediate periphery (that is, they may march on the coal board but day to day picketing is another matter). Also I suspect that comrades have not tried to use students in conjunction with miners' contacts for meetings in the towns or outside other factories.

Lastly there is a disturbing tendency for substitutionism by some of our comrades — as shown by the number being arrested. Miners and students et al are not impressed by us leading ourselves to the slaughter. They are interested if we can not only popularise the miners' case and put it into an overall context, but also lead first our base and then other sectors into action on this question. This must be got straight very fast especially on the Irish question or as in the words of our young comrade from Cambridge: "There was once an organisation called the IMG. Then they all got arrested and it disappeared!"

I have not talked about anything else but will just mention a few things here:

- We have usually talked as if it were impossible for British capitalism to reflate and go for a high growth rate until it had bashed a section of the working class and achieved some sort of demoralisation, etc. But at the same time it is very clear that they have already taken reflationary measures and will definitely take more. We must either look at our premises or evaluate better the state of the working class. Or, more likely, come to the conclusion that because these reflationary measures take a long time to work themselves out in Britain, the Tories are taking a gamble, which could misfire most awfully for them if the miners light any kind of fuse at all.

- If there is time we should try to make (or perhaps agree to prepare) an assessment of our industrial work and its strategy (Steel and BOC). BOC was a flop from the start: the state of London organisation and the weakness of our ties with our contact saw to that. Steel is not at all a total failure but our main pivotal member in Steel has left the group. The leadership has not really busied itself with industrial work as such, as understood in the classical sense of day-to-day work around a few contacts in a factory, etc. Quite right too. It has been necessary to try to sort out major political questions which we are not clear on. We must begin to draw the threads together and try to apply our ideas to the industrial field. Especially go through the miners' strike and see what can be learnt from it: e.g., whether the organisation thought in the same manner; whether this manner was correct; what is the role of a revolutionary in a strike like this; did IMG act as revolutionaries or tailists, splitters, ultralefts, etc? In other words, I would like the comrades to re-examine the concept "industrial work."

- Lastly, and this should be mentioned in every paper, we need to look at the way the leadership has organised itself or failed to do so in the light of the miners' strike and the Irish situation. There is a dangerously dismissive

spontaneist attitude developing about the existing leadership which I believe already has had very serious consequences for our intervention. The lack of meetings of the leadership is merely the most obvious. The taking of individual decisions becomes inevitable and it is not this which is the worst thing: it is the failure to realise that such a way of operating can, and in one instance, very nearly did, land us in the shits.

All this may sound very peculiar coming at the end of a paper on industrial work. It is not. Quite simply, the sheer demagoguery surrounding the turn towards the working class adopted at the last conference can be gauged very exactly by the subsequent appointment of me, who had never had any industrial experience, to be the convenor of the industrial commission and the subsequent total neglect of the commission by the rest of the leadership. That on the one hand, and on the other the total lack of collective decision-making at the beginning of our intervention during this strike (Petersen did consult Watts on the paper he had written for the membership).

So, unlike some people, I do believe there is a leadership, even if it has internal differences, even if there is a certain crisis. But I take this opportunity of saying that to discuss our industrial work, or anything else for that matter, will be meaningless unless we set to work to organise ourselves first.

J. Watts  
9/2/72

M-37

*Letter to the Members of the International Commission*  
by Granger, Feb. 21, 1972

To the members of the International Commission

Dear Comrades,

Circumstances render it impossible for me to testify personally during your all too brief—and somewhat belated—appearance amongst us. This places me at a considerable disadvantage when it comes to refuting the venomous calumnies and distortions of fact which experience has led me to anticipate from adherents of the Tendency position and their familiars. I am content to rely on the good offices of another comrade in this respect.

Even a perfunctory visit should suffice to acquaint you with the main facts of the case. I will not trouble you with another recital of them (except insofar as items of fact may be necessary for the purposes of illustration). All I can do at such short notice is to put forward and invite you to adopt an interpretation of the situation which may lead to certain conclusions and recommendations.

At the commencement of the present difficulties, the following main trends of opinion were discernible among

the Scottish membership; reading, as it were, from right to left:

1. The Tendency. Your attention will, doubtless, have been drawn to the size and importance of this grouping in Scotland. Certainly its position was much stronger than in England and Wales; it exerted a virtual stranglehold on our major branch, Glasgow. I would assert, too, that its viewpoint was more extreme than that of its associates elsewhere. There is a very real sense in which the Scottish Tendency, having plunged much deeper into Menshevism than the English variety was becoming the heart and centre of the Tendency at national level. Confined to various political ghettos elsewhere in Britain, the Tendency exhibited within Scotland a virulence, a strength and a contempt for the most elementary requirements of discipline and comradeship as to pose a serious threat to our continued existence as an organisation in these parts.

2. The Temporisers or "centre." This grouping too, was based largely (though not exclusively) on Glasgow. It consisted of comrades who, for one reason or another, favoured some kind of accommodation with the Tendency. It is not for me to diagnose the motivation of this group—uscle but, broadly, two categories were visible—those who had made a more or less correct political analysis, but were unable or unwilling to draw even the most obvious organisational conclusions, and those whose nostalgia for the days of unity expressed itself in a sentimental attachment for the "good old Bolsheviks," the "excellent comrades" who had somehow mysteriously gravitated into the wrong—or the half wrong—camp. Although, of course, hard evidence is lacking, I suspect one or two comrades in this particular congeries of outright opportunism: "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike" might very well serve as their motto. At all events, these comrades coalesced under the slogan "we must fight the Tendency *politically*." This slogan is the most palpable rubbish. In practical terms it amounts to failing to "fight" the Tendency at all. It ignores the tactics of the opponent (which consist, in large measure, of the adroit manipulation of legalisms, which is to say, fighting organisationally). Moreover, the proponents of this policy were extremely careful never to define it too precisely. Perhaps it means converting the Tendency—a utopian dream, given the numerical strength and cohesion of the forces involved. Perhaps it meant simply out-voting them (which has been accomplished on numerous occasions without the least effect and is anyhow at least as much a matter of "organisation" as of "politics.") Finally, the slogan may mean, or have meant, the demonstration of the correctness and success of the majority line. Since the argument with the Tendency is ostensibly over perspectives and strategy—the resolution of the conflict would thus be delayed until the fairly remote future, when the argument would doubtless centre on the degree of "correctness" or "success" attained or would shift onto some altogether new plane. In the meantime, of course, we should demonstrate our masochistic love for the people who are destroying our movement by allowing them to continue their parasitic growth.

3. As for the "left" (or ultra-left, depending on your viewpoint) they, too, are not beyond criticism—criticism, mark you, and not the vile torrents of abuse, misrepresentation, patronage, public discourtesy and private intrigue to which they have been subjected throughout this affair. This category comprises the most diverse elements, among them the most aware and the most dynamic which our movement possesses in this part of the world. I invite you to find that their conduct, in this matter at least, deserves support, not denigration. Since this missive is constructed from and represents a "left" position, any further characterisation on my part would be presumptuous.

4. Finally, of course, we come to the floaters, the trimmers and the generally undecided. This is (or at any rate was) a painfully small and rapidly shrinking collection. Insofar as it existed at all, it consisted of: a) those who had a simplistic [word illegible] approach to the whole problem—the "plague on both your houses" brigade; b) new members striving to make up their minds; and c) people genuinely torn between the two sides or temperamentally repelled by both.

This schema of course leaves out: 1) the national leadership (of whom more anon) and 2) visiting English comrades.

Your inquiries should by now have made you aware of the major events in this dispute and the climate in which they took place. I want to concentrate on a single aspect—the role of the national leadership.

At the outset, the left within Scotland carried all before it, capturing democratically a majority of seats on the Scottish (Area) Committee. It went on to institute political discussions on major themes and to commence long overdue proceedings in respect of the Tendency's sabotage. The new committee constituted, in my view (and I'm not alone in this) the most hopeful indigenous leadership yet produced by IMG in Scotland. I have heard that various National Committee members were aghast when the membership of the committee became known, and instead of welcoming these essentially healthy developments determined from then on to undermine them. However, that may be, some of the NC members present whilst doing everything possible to prevent immediate disciplinary proceedings, actually instigated fresh ones to be held at later stages. The Scottish Committee thus became the prosecuting agent of the National Committee. (A role in which it was eventually betrayed.)

I will not dwell on the subsequent debacle in which the Scottish Committee and majority comrades generally were deliberately sacrificed in the interests of appeasement and compromise. The memories of that particular Aggregate are too vivid and painful. You will know the details, though for the full flavour of arrogant, patronising cynicism I refer you to Comrade Tariq. As for the subsequent occasion in which the Political Committee usurped the functions of the NC and purported to overturn an NC decision—that surely represented the nadir of democratic centralist practice. It is not possible to describe these actions and attitudes of the leadership as mere mistakes. (Several times I was assured by leading comrades that they were—only to find the mistakes compounded during later stages. No! There is design here. Since the sacrifice (or castration, if you prefer) of the Scottish leadership was carried out, so to speak, on the altar of the

International, it is a design that the Commission should analyse.

Fortunately, several members of the NC and their supporters amongst the temporising bloc have now advanced quite sophisticated justifications for their strategy. Essentially these justifications consist of invoking one or other consideration (or sometimes several in combination) of the internal politics of the International and its constituent sections. It is better, so the argument runs, to sacrifice one area organisation than to: a) imperil the unity of the International and/or b) "put ourselves in the wrong" juridically speaking vis-a-vis the situation in other sections where the balance of forces is apparently the reverse of the British experience. (We were at one stage, believe it or not, advised to drop or curtail disciplinary proceedings on the grounds that one member of the Commission, on the basis of English gossip, was likely to be mortally offended!) The only additional element in this thesis that springs to mind was the profound and subtle thought that "our job was to evolve a leadership"—having evolved it, apparently, we should beware of criticising too fiercely lest it die of embarrassment.

Now, I do not find these arguments ignoble—it is not ignoble to want to preserve the unity of the International. But I do assert that such arguments reek of pragmatism and anyway beg the whole question of the value of a unity bought at the price of the self-respect and self-confidence which the leadership of a national section ought to possess.

Once, in the course of a fairly frank admission of the pragmatism of this policy, one comrade alleged that the argument between us boiled down to rival methods of obtaining the goal of democratic centralism. He thought my approach impossibly utopian and went so far as to remind me that we inhabit the real world.

Whilst not conceding that the position held by those of us on the left is in any way purist or fanatical, this thought does indeed seem to express the kernel of the argument. To use a Leninist metaphor: one does not climb the mountain by wading into the swamp. To reach the mountain top it is advisable to wear climbing gear, not Wellington boots. Means *are* related to ends; an organisation which fails to grasp this central point is doomed either to perish, or worse, transform itself into something quite other than it originally intended.

Our Scottish branches have quite important tasks to perform in the coming period—tasks which rival bodies like IS, who use the International of their title as a synonym for British, and British as a synonym for London-centered, are quite unfitted to perform. To begin with we are and ought to be in the very front line of support for the Irish solidarity struggle—more so than comrades elsewhere. Then, too, because the problems facing capitalism in Scotland are especially acute, the prospects for us becoming intimately involved with the mainstream of class struggle in the present period, are as the miners' strike showed, quite good. There is also the question of Scottish nationality and the concept of the Workers' Republic. Although our analysis of this issue is far from complete, it *has* (though the Tendency and others may deny this) commenced and is progressing. The creation of a separate Scottish section could well become a necessity in the not too far distant future. We can perform none of these tasks satisfactorily whilst in our present condi-

tion. That condition is, in the first instance, due to the presence within our ranks of a band of wreckers, who if they possessed a shred of political honesty would long since have quit the IMG. These people have had fair treatment from us. As a former law student I confidently assert that the procedures adopted were considerably fairer than those in many a bourgeois court.

The very life of the Scottish organisation is at stake. Already we have lost good comrades. In the process of attempting a "decisive turn" we have shed a section of the former leadership (just as forecast by Trotsky). Self preservation demands that we purge ourselves of those who have shown *by their actions* that reconciliation is presently impossible.

In conclusion, may I ask you please, not to compound our difficulties by producing a fuzzy compromise? The Tendency is a fundamentally *disloyal* opposition. Things cannot go on as they are. The Scottish organisation has real potential—potential which it would be a crime against our movement to waste. What is required above all is a sharp, clear verdict.

Long Live the Fourth International!

(Grainger)

21st February, 1972

5 a. m.

M-34

### *Democratic Centralism and the Tendency*

by Matthews, June 3, 1971

Within a Bolshevik organisation the question of *centralism* is paramount. There can be no doubt that the majority rules at all times and that all members carry out the decisions of that majority. Even during periods of discussion—such as the pre-conference discussion period—the membership must follow the line laid down by the leading bodies if the work of the organisation is not to suffer.

All this is very obvious. But the question of democracy with a democratic centralist group is not. First let us be clear that democracy is not a moral issue. We do not allow democratic discussions within our ranks because we think it is "nice." Democracy inside our organisation exists for one reason and one reason only: because *at certain stages* in building the revolutionary party it is the most efficient means to the end. We believe that we can obtain the clearest and most correct orientation and strategy after the fullest discussion both within the membership and within the leading bodies. (This is not always the case—otherwise we'd never make any mistakes!—nor is it also possible at all times, e. g., when it is necessary to work underground; when on certain occasions we have to respond very quickly to events, etc.) Of course, it is also an important function of democracy and the right of tendency to counter bureaucratic measures which exist in any organisation. But this is a political question and not

an abstract moral one. In the last analysis only a correct programme can counter bureaucratic tendencies. Some of the organisations which claim to be most democratic are, in practice, extremely bureaucratic and clique-ridden.

It is for this reason that we allow the rights of minorities. Within the International movement tendencies have sometimes been allocated more than their strength represents on leading bodies. This is not because we think that we have to bend over backwards to be "fair" to minorities but because we believe that the positions they represent are important and will help develop the movement. At all times what "guides" us is not what is the most just arrangement for individuals but what is best for the organisation *in relation to the class struggle*. Only for that reason do we make provision for tendencies.

But as soon as tendencies appear we seem to forget all this and start making concessions to ensure that tendencies have "their rights"—often at the expense of the rights of the majority. We should remember that tendencies do not have rights period—they have the same rights as the rest of us, *and no more*.

With our present Tendency in the IMG, we have again been true to our movement and been "soft" with them. We have allowed them to break discipline on occasions and to mess up our political work on leading bodies and caucuses with petty organisational wrangling. All this has meant a denial of some of the rights of the IMG majority. And what do we receive in return—an implicit accusation both from the Tendency and the SWP that there is no internal democracy within the organisation.

But all this is trivial when it comes down to the actual politics of the Tendency. The Tendency re-formed six weeks after the last Conference because it was unhappy about the development of the Group. What did this mean in practice? It meant that the leading bodies were carrying out the decisions of Conference—instead of the "politics" of the Tendency. So much for democracy! After a Conference, the majority must have time to show that its positions are correct! (or incorrect as the case may be). It cannot do that if its time is spent in going over arguments of pre-conference discussions which have been sorted out at Conference. Otherwise our Conference is meaningless.

This year the Tendency have come out with the same old rubbish as last year—with a few twists and turns. (I do not intend to deal with their positions here—that has and will be done elsewhere.) Is it in the interests of "democracy" as the Tendency would have it, that we go through the same sterile debates as last year?

The present stage of the IMG is a crucial one. We are in the process of "making a turn" to industrial work and from being a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action. This is not a simple matter. It involves a lot of difficult and complex work and demands a thorough-going discussion throughout the organisation. It is essential that at this year's conference we have that discussion and arrive at the best possible positions we are capable of. This will not be done if we have to spend all our time arguing with the Tendency on questions that were dealt with last year or at straw men that they raise a la the SLL that have to be knocked down.

I am not denying the right of the Tendency to put forward documents or to speak at Conference but I am denying them the "right" to prevent the majority from having this much needed discussion. If the Tendency had more



politics to offer and less shit that has in any case been dealt with last year it could be a different situation. But as I said at the beginning we do not have any moral position on the rights of tendencies. If we recognise that the present Tendency have nothing new to contribute to discussion then we should concentrate on our own documents and ensure that we leave the Conference knowing that we have, to the best of our ability, positions that will take us forward and not lead us into some sterile back-water.

I urge all comrades to concentrate on the documents of the majority, to constructively criticise, amend them, etc., and to let the Tendency dig its own watery grave. They don't need help from us to do so.

Matthews  
3/6/71

M-38

*On the "Theory" of Democratic and Transitional Demands and Other Stupidities*

by A. Jones, June 1971

*Introduction:* This document has been very hurriedly written so as to give all London comrades the opportunity of reading it before the pre-conference discussion on June 6th. Its arguments are taken up in a subsequent document which will appear before the Conference.

To attempt to catalogue all the errors of the Tendency's Political and Trade Union documents would be a task boring beyond belief. In particular, the lack of any strategy for trade-union work is so obvious as to need no commenting on. This perhaps is not surprising as the last section of the document on trade union says in effect that we should not really be concerned with trade union work at this point in time anyway. In a year which has, at the time of writing, seen 11 million working days "lost" through strikes, has seen the largest working-class demonstration this century, has seen the largest overtly political strikes ever, this conclusion of the Tendency's should in itself be enough to condemn their politics. However, when confronted with a profoundly wrong political practice it is not sufficient to criticise the manifestations of that practice, it is necessary to analyse the theory which underlies the practice. The key to the Tendency's particular theory is to be found in the little phrase "democratic and transitional demands" which the Tendency is so fond of using. It is this concept which underlies all the other ideas about "mass movements," "ultra-leftism" and so on. This can clearly be seen when we apply the Tendency's ideas to one mass movement which they usually forget—the working class. In so doing we will see clearly that the differences which exist between the majority and the Tendency are in no way tactical in nature but on the con-

trary of a thoroughgoing political nature. The Tendency have in theory abandoned the class interests of the working class in favour of petit-bourgeois concepts of democracy and in practice turn their backs away from the proletariat in favour of work in petty-bourgeois milieus. They however attempt to hide this by resurrecting the old Kautskyst theories of pure democracy.

#### THE TENDENCY'S THEORIES

##### *Democracy for whom?*

It is very odd, and immediately suspicious, to find in a supposedly Marxist document that the word democracy consistently is used without any qualification as to which class is referred to by the term (as, for example, in the phrase "democratic and transitional"). As Lenin said, "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: 'For what class?'" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*). In fact the use of the term "democracy" without a specification as to its class content is, as Lenin points out, the typical device of liberals trying to hide their abandonment of Marxism.

An example of the type of confusion created by a failure to specify the class content of "democracy" is to be found in Novack's recent book *Democracy and Revolution*. Here we read that "the principal objective of the socialist movement in its struggle for democracy is the expropriation of the capitalist owners." Even [in] its present form, this sentence read somewhat oddly, but its mistakes are marginally concealed by using the term "democracy" with no class qualification. Written with the correct class content (and replacing the "capitalist owners" with the pseudonym of "bourgeoisie") this sentence becomes "the principle objective of the socialist movement in its struggle for bourgeois democracy is the expropriation of the bourgeoisie." We think that even the Tendency will realise that this is not exactly a sensible "thought." Far from this "thought" being correct, on the contrary the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is a call for the *destruction* of bourgeois democracy and its replacement with proletarian democracy and is not part of the struggle for bourgeois democracy. In short, proletarian democracy is not an extension of bourgeois democracy but is something to be *counterposed* to it.

If we now turn to the Tendency's phrase of "democratic and transitional," what class content are we to assume that "democracy" refers to? Are we to assume that "democracy" refers to *proletarian* democracy (not in the sense of what few freedoms the proletariat can squeeze out of the bourgeoisie—for that is part of *bourgeois* democracy) in the sense of the destruction of the bourgeois state (and with it of bourgeois democracy) and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat? If, however, the Tendency intends this, which of course they do not, then they must realise that they are actually calling for the *suppression* of the bourgeoisie and not calling for an extension of democracy, for proletarian democracy is a dictatorship *over* the bourgeoisie. In other words as Lenin puts it:

The essence of Marx's doctrine of the state is assimilated only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but for the entire his-



torical period between capitalism and 'classless society,' communism (*State and Revolution*, Chapter 2, section 3).

The question as to the extent to which the bourgeoisie will be suppressed is of course a purely tactical one. If they do not in any way challenge the proletarian state, then the proletariat may allow them some freedom of expression and possibly even the vote in some elections. If the bourgeoisie threatens the proletarian state then more violent measures such as the shooting of hostages from the bourgeoisie, the deprivation of the bourgeoisie of all rights of expression, the introduction of prison camps and forced labour, may be necessary. All these measures are of course a question of tactics and not of principle and in no way can they be considered as an infringement of democracy of the proletariat. As Lenin puts it:

Dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes; but it does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised (*Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*)

This last point of Lenin's is of particular importance, for in exactly the same way that in the field of what the bourgeoisie likes to refer to as "politics" the proletariat will have a privileged position, so also there will be no abstract "equality" or "democracy" in any other field either. The bourgeoisie will of course be denied all previous rights concerning property, and it will be actively discriminated against in fields such as housing, education, pay, conditions of work, positions within any armed force, technical training, positions of supervision within the factory and a hundred and one other areas. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a realm of equal right. It is on the contrary a regime of *privilege* for the proletariat and active discrimination against and removal of rights for the bourgeoisie. Anyone who raises the banner of abstract democracy and right under a proletarian regime *aids* the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie hides its position of privilege and domination under a slogan of "pure" democracy, the proletariat on the other hand declares that its regime is *based* (so as to achieve the abolition of classes) on a position of privilege for the proletariat and of a systematic war waged against the bourgeoisie. Anyone who does not understand this cannot be counted a Marxist for as Lenin points out: "It is often said and written that the core of Marx's theory is the class struggle; but that is not true. And from this error, very often, springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. The theory of the class struggle was *not* created by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx and generally speaking it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; those may be found to have gone no further than the boundaries of bourgeois reasoning and bourgeois politics. To limit Marxism to the theory of class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is where the profound difference lies between a Marxist

and an ordinary petty (and even big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and acceptance of Marxism should be tested" (*State and Revolution*, Chapter 2, section 3).

#### *Democratic Demands in the Era of Imperialism*

As is well known, Trotsky, Lenin and all other Marxists believed that the era of imperialism was one in which the bourgeoisie was no longer interested or capable of maintaining bourgeois democracy. It is an era of fascism and dictatorship. On the basis of this, two theories can be advanced—one corresponding to the interests of the bourgeoisie and one to the interests of the proletariat. The bourgeois one is that the working class must now campaign under the slogan of bourgeois democracy—this was the theory of Bernstein. The other, the proletarian theory, is that therefore the working class must now break resolutely with ideas of democracy and launch a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was the policy formulated by Trotsky in his theory of permanent revolution. The differences in line involved can be most clearly seen in the struggle against imperialism.

If we take as an example the struggle in China and in Vietnam we can see how the tasks of the bourgeois revolution and of the proletarian revolution are intertwined. In both, you have a struggle for the solution of the agrarian and national questions simultaneously with a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the case in both states that the bourgeoisie would not fight for bourgeois demands and the task therefore falls to the proletariat of completing the bourgeois revolution.

An exactly analogous situation can be seen in the struggle against fascism in the imperialist states themselves. Here it is the case that the bourgeoisie will side with the fascists against bourgeois democracy.

The conclusion which Stalinists, social democrats, etc., draw from these facts is that the proletariat must therefore pose as the defenders of bourgeois democracy and if possible form alliances with bourgeois groups. This applies even when these Stalinist parties are acting against the bourgeoisie. Thus for example the paper programme of the NLF is full of confusions about democracy, national independence, etc. These formulations are of extreme danger as regards the carrying on of the struggle and while we give *unconditional* support to the NLF we nevertheless need to be extremely critical of such formulations. What we must say, and what the whole essence of the theory of permanent revolution is about, is that *precisely because the bourgeoisie will not even fight for the demands of the bourgeois revolution, therefore it is even more vital that the proletariat denounces the sham of democracy and fights under the banner of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is precisely because the bourgeoisie will not fight for bourgeois democracy that the programme of democracy—the programme of the popular front—must be so rigorously fought against.* The disastrous results of the programme of bourgeois democracy as well catalogued everywhere from France and Spain to Indonesia and Jordan. Now, however, the Tendency invites us to put our heads in the noose, and putting everything backwards, claims that because the bourgeoisie will not fight for bourgeois democracy therefore we must! To paraphrase Marx, "The history of Stalinism and Social Democracy always repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time

with the Tendency as farce." In fact of course it is precisely because the bourgeoisie will not fight for bourgeois democracy that it is absolutely necessary to break with the slogans of bourgeois democracy. As Trotsky puts it: "The preparation for revolution demands a simultaneous break not only with the bourgeois radicals but . . . also with the democratic reformists in the working class itself (*Writings* 1935-36).

## THE TENDENCY'S PRACTICE

### *Why mass campaign politics?*

Ever since the earliest days of the Comintern it has always been accepted that Marxists intervene politically not merely at the level of the everyday struggle of the working class, but also in running campaigns amongst all sections of the population on all issues which can help to lead to the formation of a socialist consciousness. All this is set out very clearly in the various theses on organisation and tactics of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Comintern. It has been part of the ABC of revolutionary politics that the revolutionary organisation intervenes in all political spheres. Until now virtually no one has sought to *counterpose* campaigns to agitation around the everyday struggles of the working class. Of course in many periods the revolutionary vanguard has in fact been cut off from the working class and unable to engage in systematic work around the struggles of the workers, but no one has ever done anything but deplore this situation and tried to escape from it as fast as possible. Now however we have a Tendency which actually *counterposes* campaigns to this work.

If comrades were adopting a one-sided attitude to everyday agitation amongst the workers and were raising it up as a principle that *only* agitation around the day-to-day issues of the working class should be undertaken, then of course it would be correct to attack this economist deviation and show that a more rounded political approach was necessary. However, apart from the fact that this state of affairs is very far from prevailing in the IMG, this is now what the Tendency is arguing. They are not arguing for a more rounded approach, they are, as we said, *counterposing* campaign politics to agitation on everyday issues facing the working class. Why should this strange position develop we may ask?

When we come on to consider what the Tendency have to say about actual campaigns we find that another strange feature emerges. We are told incessantly that the need is to build *mass* campaigns. Again this appears a rather strange thing to emphasize in a supposedly Marxist document. Surely it is only too obvious that anyone would prefer to work in a mass campaign that involves say thousands of people than one involving a mere handful, surely everyone would prefer to influence thousands than to influence half a dozen? Why this strange emphasis of the Tendency on the apparently obvious?

Taken by themselves all these peculiarities might simply be taken as examples of confused thinking. What however gives these aberrations their internal consistency, and shows that they are not just mistakes but profoundly incorrect views, is the "theory" of "democratic and transitional" demands.

### *What is a transitional demand?*

In the first instance a transitional demand can be compared to a minimum demand and a maximum demand.

The old programme of the social democrats and the present programme of the Stalinists consist of two parts—a minimum programme and a maximum programme. The maximum programme consisted of nothing other than a blueprint for socialism. The minimum programme consisted of demands that were *realisable within capitalist democracy*. However it would be completely incorrect to see the difference between minimum and maximum demands in the fact that some are realisable within capitalism and some are not. Many demands are not realisable within capitalism—for example 52 weeks holiday a year—but that does not in any way make them transitional. What makes a demand transitional is that it leads to the question of state power being posed, and it does so in such a way that leads the working class to the destruction of bourgeois state power. Let us now consider what a "democratic and transitional" demand might be.

First of all we can rule out the possibility that a "democratic and transitional" demand is the *same* as a transitional demand. If that were the case we could speak simply of *transitional* demands and forget about "democratic and . . ." Obviously then a "democratic and transitional" demand must be something other than a transitional demand. It is quite clearly not a maximum demand as even the Tendency have not degenerated to the point of believing that "democracy" and socialism are identical. No, it is quite obvious that the "democratic" part of "democratic and transitional" refers to a *minimum* programme. The juxtaposition of "democratic" to "transitional" means the counterposing of minimum to transitional demands. No matter how much the Tendency may bleat and whine on about this not being the case, it is written into the very phrase which in fact constitutes the core of their position. Once we see that this theoretical idea is in fact the basis of their position then all else becomes clear. Stalinism resurrected the division between minimum and maximum programme, the Tendency now recreate the division in the guise of a split between "democratic" and "transitional."

### *Women and Vietnam*

The positions of the Tendency on the questions of women and Vietnam might just be simple mistakes. Everyone in the revolutionary movement makes mistakes. When mistakes cease to be mistakes and begin to become something more is when they have an internal logical structure. This is precisely what all the Tendency's "mistakes" have.

As we have noted, a transitional demand is one which poses the question of state power. But a mass movement of the working class on a demand which poses the question of state power is precisely a *revolutionary situation*. In other words a mass movement of the working class on a transitional slogan is not possible outside a revolutionary situation.

A partial mobilisation of the working class on transitional demands is of course possible outside a revolutionary situation. In particular a section of the working class involved in a fierce struggle may fight for extremely advanced demands, e.g., the situation in Liverpool at the time of the proposed factory occupations. In this situation what the introduction of such a demand does is to inestimably raise the consciousness of those involved in the struggle.

The fact that most mass movements of the working class do not occur on transitional demands but on democratic ones is merely to state that the working class does not find itself in a continually revolutionary situation. In such movements revolutionaries of course intervene and advance transitional slogans. No one is counselling for abstention from such movements.

The Tendency however talks all the time about *building* such movements. What might be meant by that? The key to this is to understand that by building they mean taking the lead in the campaign with the aim of involving as many people as possible. In fact *size* becomes the key variable (hence the continual emphasis on *mass*). It is at this point that the logic of "democratic and transitional" demands begins to come in. We have already noted that it is not possible to carry out mass mobilisations on transitional demands outside a revolutionary situation. This is very inconvenient for the Tendency as they believe that size is the key. How are we to reconcile the need to put forward transitional demands with the continual emphasis on "mass"? The answer is simple for the Tendency—you forget about the "transitional" and instead try to mobilise a "mass" on democratic demands. But mobilising mass movements on democratic demands is the programme of popular frontism. Carried to its logical conclusion you now arrive at the complete banality of T. Epstein's document to the SL conference at which we are informed that capitalism is most threatened when the maximum number of people are mobilised. Unfortunately for them, when Trotsky saw the huge demonstrations of the popular front in France he didn't say that capitalism was "most threatened"—on the contrary he said that it was a ploy by the Stalinists to *save* capitalism.

#### *Propagandism and the Popular Front*

We have already noted that a mass mobilization of the working class cannot occur on a transitional demand outside a revolutionary situation. Mobilisations of the working class for struggle, sometimes on an enormous scale, do of course occur outside such situations because they occur on demands which are not transitional. Revolutionaries do not stand aside from such movements, on the contrary they support every mass mobilisation of the working class on any demand which even in the reformist sense is in the interests of the working class. The classic example of this is of course the unconditional support which revolutionaries give to the working class struggle for higher wages.

However, whenever they work within a mass movement of the working class which is fighting for reformist demands, revolutionaries do not just accept the demands of the movement but on the contrary put forward transitional demands. They do not "build" the movement in the simple sense that the Tendency mean but on the contrary, while supporting every sign of mass struggle, try to *change* the politics of that movement. In other words the slogans they advance are intended to become the slogans of struggle for the movement and not just propaganda demands. The precise nature of the demands advanced will of course depend on the nature of the struggle or campaign. For example in the field of the everyday struggle of the working class, the most important demands are those relating to the slogan of workers' control.

Popular fronts, i.e., movements on democratic demands

which frequently include co-operation with bourgeois groups, or even as the Tendency wants with religious groups, are of course capable of mobilising enormous numbers of people. However, Marxists have always objected to popular frontism because it leads the movement up against a brick wall. After a period of mass mobilisation the working class begins to realise that even if the demands of the working class were achieved there would not have been a solution to the problems of the working class. The period of mass struggle is followed by apathy, demoralization, and counter-revolution.

Apart from its effect for the working class, the politics of popular frontism is disastrous for the revolutionary organisation itself. It is faced with two alternatives when it comes to recruitment and both of these reduce it to the level of a propaganda society. On the one hand if it advances democratic demands in the campaign but of course refuses to recruit on that basis then it has to recruit on the basis of demands which it is not actually fight[ing] for within the campaign. This produces a "commentary" attitude towards politics. On the other hand the organisation runs a great risk of actually recruiting people who accept only democratic demands. This leads to a liquidation of the organisation and the production of a centrist mish-mash instead of a revolutionary organisation. (It may be noted in passing that the Fourth International during the 1950s in particular suffered from both these faults and the discussion of theory proceeded in a total vacuum as a result. The resulting political practice probably greatly lengthened the hold of the Pablo clique over the organisation.) The Tendency's theories represent precisely the propagandist, empirical, Pabloite theories which the FI has been trying to escape from in recent years.

Faced with a Tendency which wishes to turn the IMG away from the working class, which has revised the theory of Marxism so as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie, and whose policies would land us in a morass of popular frontism and reformism, I believe that we can do no better than recall the words of James Cannon: "The convention will meet and conduct its work under the sign of the *proletarian orientation*. . . . It means turning the face of the party to the workers, penetrating deeper into the trade unions. It means taking drastic measures to proletarianise the composition of the party membership. And in the light of the experience of the faction struggle, the proletarian orientation means above all—and in order to make all possible—a firm decision to continue on all fronts the implacable war against all opposition to the doctrine and programme of proletarian revolution—Marxism, i.e., Trotskyism." In other words we should base all our work on what the leadership of the SWP has forgotten.

*Constitution of the International Marxist Group, adopted at the 1971 IMG Conference*

*Aim:*

The International Marxist Group (IMG) is dedicated to the struggles for the overthrow of the capitalist system of production, the abolition of wage slavery and with it the oppression of man by man, and the establishment of a socialist world community.

In pursuit of this aim the Group recognises that the only consistent political principles by which its actions can be guided are those of revolutionary Marxism. These principles find their most rounded and developed contemporary expression in the programme and perspectives of the Fourth International. Therefore the Group is based on the first four congresses of the Communist International and the World Congresses of the Fourth International.

In this light the Group sees its basic task as that of grouping the socially and politically conscious of the workers and their spokesmen under the banner of the International, with the object of co-ordinating in the most insightful manner the struggle for socialism, and at the same time developing and sharpening the equipment of the International—both theoretical and practical.

The International Marxist Group has no interests of its own which are separate from or opposed to the interests of the working class as a whole. Its activity is concerned solely with the attempt to consciously realise these interests. By elucidating in the struggle, a programme which can be seen by the working class to contribute to this end, the Group works to create a leadership of the working class, able to catalyse its reaction against the rule of private property, into the overthrow of that rule. This requires the establishment of a workers' government, inaugurating the democratic dictatorship of the working class over the former property-holding class, which regime will endure until all organs of political control and authority become superfluous.

The constitution of the IMG is accordingly based on the principles of democratic centralism, involving all freedom in internal discussion and complete unity in action. Such principles cannot be achieved simply by writing a constitution, but have to be pursued in an arduous and difficult struggle in which insight of scientific socialism is dialectically married to the strength of the working class. This constitution then is interpreted in this light.

### IMG CONSTITUTION 1971

- 1) Name: International Marxist Group
- 2) International Affiliation:

The International Marxist Group is the British section of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist revolution, whose congresses provide the highest authority for the group.

- 3) Membership:

a) Everyone who is prepared to work to implement the programme, the statutes and the decisions of the IMG and the International and is active and in good standing is a member of the organisation.

b) Normally every member must be a member of a branch, but in exceptional cases where no branch

exists within reasonable distance or for special reasons, a member may become a national member and work under the control of the NC.

c) Application for membership must be made through a branch where one exists and if accepted must be ratified by the NC.

d) Applications for membership shall be on probation for six months, at the end of which period the applicant will either be admitted to full membership or reduced to the rank of sympathiser, both being subject to confirmation by the NC which may by consultation with the branch, where one exists, extend the period of probation.

e) The distinction between members (a category determined on the combined basis of dues payment and disciplined activity) and sympathisers who cannot maintain these minimum requirements must be rigidly maintained.

- 4) Branch:

a) The basic organisational unit of the IMG is the branch, which consists of not less than five members. Where the branch is of sufficient size it may be divided by the NC with the agreement of the members or on request by them.

b) Each branch shall meet at least monthly.

c) Specially convened meetings must be called by the branch organiser at the request of not less than one third of the branch membership.

d) Each branch shall hold a conference at least once a year at which the appropriate officers for the branch shall be elected.

e) The above provisions are binding on all branches except by express decision of the NC.

f) Working groups—Where a group of members exists in a given geographical area, which is not sufficient in number or for any other reason is not deemed by the NC as capable of forming a branch, they shall be constituted into a working group. Such a group is considered as forming the embryo of and working towards the creation of a branch. They shall strive to perform as many as possible of the functions of a branch and to build up the elements of a branch organisation. They may work either directly under the control of the PC or may be assigned by the NC to a neighbouring branch.

- 5) Area Structure:

a) Where two or more branches exist in close geographical proximity, an area structure may be set up along the lines detailed below. This shall be set up by, and at the initiative of the branches concerned, or the IC, but shall be subject to ratification by the NC.

b) There shall be regular aggregate meetings, at which the members in each area will meet, to discuss the work of the members, and branches, in the area, and to have political discussion on their activity. These shall take place at least every two months, and will be the highest authority of the IMG on an area basis.

c) There shall be an area conference at least every twelve months, at which political and organisational perspectives for the coming year will be discussed, and area officers, and an area committee, elected.

d) There shall be an area committee, which will operate with the authority of the aggregate, i. e., it shall have the power to take decisions about the work in the area, which will be binding on the branches. However, the

area committee (AC) will be subordinate to the aggregate. The full AC will be elected by the area conference, but vacancies which arise from resignations, etc., can be filled by the aggregate.

e) The area committee shall become responsible for the collection of finance in the area, and its transmission to the National Treasurer.

6) National Conference:

a) A National Conference of the membership shall be called each year by the NC. This shall consist of delegates from each branch and shall constitute the highest national authority of the IMG.

b) The proportion of delegates to members shall be determined by the NC. Tendencies shall be entitled to delegates in proportion to their strength in the branch.

c) Members of the National Committee should have voice but only consultative vote as fraternal delegates unless they are regularly elected delegates. In order to maintain rank-and-file control National Committee members should not make it a norm to run as delegates to the National Conference.

d) Draft resolutions and reports of the NC must be submitted at least two months prior to National Conference. Branches have the right to submit resolutions or amendments to the draft submitted by the NC. Final amendments can be submitted by the delegates in the course of the conference.

e) The mandating of delegates is prohibited, in other words no matter what the position of the elective body is, its delegates must be free to vote according to their conscience and convictions as shaped by the discussion at conference.

f) All decisions at conference shall be made by a simple majority including amendments to the Constitution.

g) National Conference shall elect a Standing Orders Committee for the Conference.

7) National Committee (NC):

a) The National Conference shall decide upon a number and elect a National Committee and alternates and shall invest the NC with full authority between National Conference.

b) National Conference shall elect such national officers as it deems fit who shall be members of the NC with full rights.

c) The NC shall meet at least every three months.

d) The NC shall elect from its own members a political committee which shall meet as often as it deems necessary. Members of the PC shall as a normal practice have responsibility for an appointed area of group activity and shall report on this to each meeting of the NC.

e) The NC shall appoint a secretariat to assist in the day-to-day organisational work of the group. This is to be resident in the vicinity of the national HQ.

f) NC members are not subject to the discipline of the PC inside the group. The PC is only a sub-committee of the NC. Therefore it cannot be considered a higher body: its authority is drawn from the NC.

g) The NC can at its wish set up subcommittees and may co-opt non-NC members on to them.

h) No one on a leading body has the right to threaten to resign or to utilize any other form of or-

ganisation ultimatum in seeking to sway a decision. A member of such a body can propose his resignation but it is up to the elective body to accept or refuse it.

8) Control Commission:

a) The group shall have a Control Commission which shall be formed and function as follows:

b) The Control Commission shall consist of three members directly elected by the National Conference. In addition there shall be an alternate directly elected by the National Conference who will participate in the proceedings of the CC only in the event of the inability of one of the regular members to attend. All CC members and alternates must have six months membership at the time of their election.

c) the function of the Control Commission shall be, on instructions from the PC or NC to investigate any allegations of breach of discipline or security or actions harmful to the interests of the group or the working class involving any committee, branch or member. The CC shall have the right to discuss its terms of reference. The CC shall report on its conclusions to the NC and make some recommendations based on its findings.

d) All committees, branches and members must cooperate fully with the CC, answer its questions candidly and provide it with any information which it may request.

e) The retiring CC shall give a report of its work to the National Conference.

f) Any member should have the right to appeal to the Control Commission.

9) Membership Contribution:

a) Scales of contributions may be determined by the NC in consultation with the branches. One sixth of the group's income from dues shall be regarded as dues to the Fourth International.

b) Members two months in arrears shall be considered in bad standing and not permitted to vote; members three months in arrears shall normally be considered lapsed after due notice by the branch or national treasurer.

c) Branches have the right to modify individual's dues in consultation with the national treasurer.

d) Branches two months in arrears shall be considered suspended after due notice has been given.

e) All units of the IMG shall issue annual balance sheets of all finances.

f) All contributions referred to in this article are national dues and as such are wholly at the disposal of the national organisation.

10) Democratic Rights and Discipline:

a) All leading bodies must be elected by the rank and file\* at regular meetings provided by the constitution. All leading bodies must report back regularly to the elective bodies to whom they are responsible.

b) All decisions of the governing bodies— National Conference, NC, PC and the branch— are binding on all members and subordinate units. These decisions must be carried out loyally and immediately. In event of appeal no delay is thereby justified in carrying out direct-

c) The NC shall provide an internal bulletin. All material submitted for it by group members shall be pub-

\* or delegates elected by the rank and file.

lished within 21 days of receipt, there being no right of censorship by the NC other than that required to keep within legal limits. The right to have material circulated within the internal bulletin is as axiomatic as the right of any comrade to speak at any meeting of the group.

d) Decisions are reached by majority vote. Minorities are duty bound to carry out majority decisions. Minorities, however, have the incontestable right to constitute themselves into tendencies on the basis of a stated platform and to enjoy democratic rights such as:

- To present their views to the membership during the preparatory discussion period before National Conference.

- To present their views to the membership of the International through the international internal bulletin during the pre-congress discussion period.

- To be represented in the leading bodies with due consideration to their political and numerical importance. This does not mean that every minority, however small is entitled to representation upon a leading body. The IMG abides by majority rule and this means the right of the majority to ensure itself a working majority when sharp differences are involved. But it is also the duty of the majority to safeguard the rights of the minority and this means that a minority is not penalized for holding a minority position.

e) Disciplinary action including the suspension of membership and expulsion may be taken by the body having jurisdiction over any member committing a breach of discipline or acting in a manner detrimental to the interests of the IMG and the working class. Charges against any member must be made in writing. After at least 2 weeks notice they shall be considered at a meeting where the accused can and is able to attend, and if a member of that body, vote. In case of expulsion the NC must confirm this. Any member subjected to disciplinary action is entitled to appeal to the National Conference. The disciplinary action is in the meantime upheld.

f) All officials of the IMG and members of its committees shall be subject to recall by the membership that appointed them.

end of February.

Clearly the IS are relying on their organisational strength to by-pass areas where we are too strong.

The possibilities of them succeeding in the production of this newspaper are increased by the relatively weaker position which we now have on the Committee in Rotherham—Fenwick has opted out and this is being used nationally by IS; Davies is now working at AEI; the Stocksbridge comrade is inexperienced and unable to attend meetings frequently. (But despite this we remain so far dominant in the committee—Davies is editor.)

But the principal reason why IS are able to out-manoeuvre us lies with the policies pursued by the IMG:

(a) In the initial months in which the committee was set up IMG comrades locally were left to work out IMG's national strategy (this to a great extent accounts for Fennick's withdrawal);

(b) No help was provided at the technical level—car, production costs, etc.;

(c) The steel pamphlet promised months ago is still not out;

(d) In two crucial areas where we have possibilities of extending our influence, eliminating IS's attempted stranglehold, and even gaining overall dominance in steel, no serious attempt at coordinating our work or at directing the comrades in the area has been made. In Scunthorpe a very important contact has successfully organised the nucleus of a "steel" committee, and they have produced the first issue of their newspaper. A comrade, working in steel, has recently moved to Scunthorpe but it is clear that he has been given no clear directives about the urgency of linking up with this committee, nor on what basis he should attempt to intervene in it. At Corby there is also a very important contact attempting to set up a committee to parallel the Rotherham Steel-workers Committee. Recently also a comrade has been moved to this area but instead of working with the contact in steel we have been informed that he has begun to set up an ISC (even to the extent of arranging a meeting with Eamon McCann!).

If establishing a base in steel is still one of the IMG's priorities industrially, overall direction of this work must be undertaken nationally; clear strategic lines must be worked out, comrades who have the possibilities of doing work in steel must be clearly instructed to do so, and the allocation of suitable comrades to areas where we have steel contacts must be a priority. There is very little time.

If on the other hand work in steel is to remain at the present anarchic level this should be made clear to the comrades involved, together with the reasons for such a situation. Rather than maintaining a token presence to preserve a myth we must either seriously try to establish a base or pull out.

Comrades should have read a letter from the Sheffield branch of the IMG which makes certain criticisms of "the policies pursued by the IMG."

Before answering these criticisms we would suggest that comrades also read the industrial paper of J. Watts. For there the point is made that our organisational decision to

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#### *Resolution from Sheffield Branch - 24/1/72*

It is becoming increasingly clear that the work of the IMG comrades in steel in the Rotherham/Sheffield area (and therefore nationally) is in danger of being wasted.

The IS are going ahead with a national steel newspaper. This apparently has been prepared for since before Christmas, but was finalised at a meeting last week in Middlesbrough without the Rotherham Steel-workers Committee being contacted. An editor has been decided on and publication is scheduled for the



aim to get an implantation inside the working class, steel and BOC being the chief areas for achieving this was not at all matched by any significant effort to reorganise our own cadre resources to make this more likely (namely appoint J. Watts with no industrial experience to a Commission which no one attended).

We will take up some individual points before coming back to what is the single most important charge—point a).

1. Fenwick did not leave because the IMG had not worked out a strategy. He had a whole history of maintaining only very tenuous links with the group. We had already made special exceptions for him on questions such as suls because of his importance potentially in the steel industry. This situation held true long before the steel committee was established when he was the only member in Sheffield. I think the comrades will not be able to hold militant workers unless they are serious revolutionaries.

2. To supply a car was impossible; it should never have been promised. To supply costs was both possible and necessary and should have been done. We accept the comrades' criticism.

3. Yes the steel pamphlet is not yet out. I think the comrades should have paused just a little to ask who would write such a pamphlet. Such knowledge does not grow on trees, which they at least had ample experience in steel. They must understand the fantastic shortage of cadre in our organisation; all the people who for instance have failed to show up at the TU commissions were, I know, not being idle. Now as it happens we will be bringing out a steel pamphlet whether duplicated or printed will have to be decided. This was only accomplished by one comrade taking a week off work following Xmas as well as working over Xmas itself. It is nearly finished. Do we want a good steel pamphlet or a steel pamphlet?

4. In relation to the Scunthorpe comrades it is a bit rich that the Centre should be criticised for not "urgently" directing the comrade. The Centre tried for some weeks to get his address once he had moved (the fact he did not automatically supply us with his address does admittedly show a lamentable level of organisation criteria instilled into comrades by our overall education which should be noted). As soon as we did get his address we sent him the address of contact concerned and a report of the Scunthorpe committee. We trust the comrades will remember that the contact himself was first met at TU education series attended by a London comrade, and that we sent *his* address to the comrades very quickly.

5. Corby. In fact the comrade went of his own accord, he was not sent. He went for personal reasons and was immediately sent a letter telling him to make work with the contact mentioned a top priority. This contact is very important. We have engaged in correspondance with him, arranged for him to come to the Centre and as soon as we had discussions with him, arranged for him to contact the Sheffield comrades.

One thing further on the Corby comrade. The Sheffield comrades are certainly misinformed about his activities. Our information is that it was the local IS which set up the AIL and our comrade is of course participating in it. To accuse the comrade himself of arranging a meeting for Eaman McCann would therefore be an over-hasty statement.

Now to the question that the Sheffield comrades were left to themselves to work out a strategy for steel. On the whole, with the exception of one meeting, that is true. In one sense this is not so lamentable. That the steel comrades should be doing more thinking on steel than anyone else seems to be self-evident. The fact that they might not have had the tools to come to any important conclusions is of course related to the way the group educates its members.

Here though it is necessary to recap on what the conference decided. It took a decision to turn to the working class to increase our implantation. Later, in working out priorities for the group, the NC took a decision that Ireland first and unemployment should be our main priorities. At the time all this was so badly worked out even by those proposing it, that the Sheffield comrades can be excused from thinking that their branch was pivotal to the whole group's industrial practice and national orientation. I don't in any way excuse the leadership, me naturally most, for not helping to work out an industrial strategy. But I think it would help to put things slightly more in perspective if we strip away the glamour from Conference and NC decisions and say the following. The two political questions which the IMG will develop and priorities are Ireland and Unemployment. But the IMG must endeavour in all its branches to establish a much more regular industrial practice not least so that our main campaigns will find an echo in certain small parts of the working class. The *best chance* we have of gaining a real implantation would seem to be steel and BOC. When planning our industrial work we should take every opportunity to expand our contacts, membership and implantation in areas where work can be done in these two fields.

The reasons for why no strategy for steel has been worked out nationally are to be found in the lack of experienced cadre to do that work, and the fact that when it came to the crunch, our cadre resources had to be deployed in a whole series of other problems—build up the SL, political debate on Ireland, the need to solidarise the branches, especially new ones—tours, schools, etc. Internal debate (the gap between now and the last conference has been really very small in time terms).

One other thing which we should take note of. While not in any way wanting to suggest we should not constantly criticise our activities or that we cannot change things, we should realise that the growth of IS is not simply or even principally a result of the weakness of IMG or of its wrong politics. With the growth of the working class struggles in Europe there is now a radicalisation which goes far beyond the highly politicised student movements of yesteryear but is obviously not at such a high level. This re-politicisation of sections of the working class has produced a growth in centrist formations all over Europe. IS is one of the most important of these. It's no use thrashing about and getting excited about this; it is happening; it will probably get worse before we are able to make a serious impact on important sections of the working class. It may even be that IS *will* win control of the steel committee just as they have taken over numerical control of LCDSU, AIL etc. It is not necessarily a disaster unless one thinks IS is actually a revolutionary marxist organisation.

J. Watts.