

Box 471 Cooper Station  
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January 28, 1969

To All NC Members

Dear Conrades,

Attached is a report by Susan Carson on the radical youth movement in England.

This report is for the information of NC members only.

Conradely,

*Charlie Bolduc*  
Charlie Bolduc  
National Chairman

Box 471 Cooper Station  
New York, New York 10003

January 27, 1969

Report on the Radical Youth Movement in England, January 20, 1969,

by Susan Carson

This will be a short report on the work of the youth of the International Marxist Group in England, from what we were able to observe at their national convention Jan. 11, 12.

The conference was very young in composition; out of the 90 in attendance there were only about 10 people over 35 years, I would say. The IMG has recruited quite a number of young workers and young black and brown immigrants.

A student fraction meeting was held during the conference, attended by about 15 students. Just ten months or so ago the IMG had only a couple student members, so the fraction meeting showed significant growth of their student fraction. The IMG does not have a large number of student members at any one school, but it has one or two members at almost every major university.

The students explained to us that the student movement was just getting started in Britain, and student consciousness was behind the level in France, Germany, Japan or the U.S. There have been two major struggles in the past couple months, one at Birmingham University and one at Bristol University. At Birmingham, IMG comrade Peter G. was on the sit-in committee and one of the main leaders. At Bristol also, a woman comrade was in the leadership of the struggle over control of the student union building. Students from Queens University in Belfast played a leading role in the recent struggle in Northern Ireland, but as yet we have no members there.

High school struggles are also just beginning. In December several hundred high school students had a conference in London to begin a new Secondary School Students Union, with a program of more voice by students in running the schools, and political rights for the students. A high school member of the IMG is involved in this new organization.

In a number of cities, high school students have been joining the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, and are the most enthusiastic members. Prospects for recruiting high school youth to the IMG are very good.

The International Socialist Group is quite strong among student youth (close to 1,000 members). Their proposal for students is to "go to the working class," leafletting factories, etc. Recently, however, they have also realized the potential of campus struggles and have participated in these struggles.

I attended a local VSC meeting and talked with two IS members there. They were very interested in the Independent Socialist Club in the U.S., which apparently has a connection with the British IS. They wanted to know if the ISC had supported the SWP campaign! They were very surprised when I told how the ISC doesn't support the Cuban revolution or victory for the NLF; their theory is that a victory by the NLF would at least be better than capitalism. They were eager to discuss the theory of state capitalism.

The Young Communist League is also quite strong; it claims 5,000 members, but our comrades think only a few hundred are consistently active. The YCL is now working very closely with us in the Vietnam work, and helped us initiate the ad hoc committee to build the proposed March 16 demonstration at the London airport welcoming the NLF into Britain. The YCL is much more open than the CP youth in the U.S. to discussing and debating Trotskyist ideas rationally with our comrades. They published a whole pamphlet dealing with Trotsky's roles in the Russian revolution and his ideas, directed against Healy's Young Socialists.

The youth group of the Labour Party, the Labour Party Young Socialists, has lost much support. Its 1968 national conference was the smallest ever, with only 150 delegates. Generally, youth feel a disgust with the Labour Party, and have turned to building Vietnam demonstrations and anti-racist demonstrations against the Labour Party and through other organizations than the LPYS. The future of the LPYS is unclear.

Recently there has grown up a new organization called the Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation, which is less than a year old. It is an umbrella organization, and all political tendencies work in it -- IS, Maoists, IMG, YCL. The RSSF, our comrades say, is useful as a network of radical students and as a way of working together with the other tendencies, but it is organizationally very weak, has no clear perspective, and cannot even act as a coordinator of the student movement.

At the student fraction meeting our comrades decided to begin putting out a mimeographed bulletin, "Student International," which would carry material on experiences in the student movement. They also want to make use of the fact that the IMG is part of an international movement to carry articles on student struggles in other countries. They think that such a bulletin would fill a vacuum on the student left because no other organization has an internationalist orientation or a program for the student movement on campus. And it would be a pole of attraction for our tendency in the student movement.

The "Student International" will be put out in Glasgow, where we are in the leadership of the RSSF and it can be circulated to key RSSF contacts on every campus. The bulletin will begin as an organ within the RSSF, but our comrades want it to be independent enough from the RSSF so that if the RSSF has a downturn, we can continue to put it out.