

DRAFT OF ANSWER TO IMG POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Political Committee

International Marxist Group

Dear Comrades,

We would like to thank you for sending greetings to the recently held national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. These greetings were received in time to be read to the convention.

Along with the greetings, you sent us a resolution passed by the Political Committee of the IMG on July 31, 1971. This letter is in response to that resolution.

Your resolution states: "Comrades Adair and Williams will, we understand, be present at the [SWP] convention. The PC must explain, however, that these comrades are not official representatives of the IMG nor do they support the political line of the IMG. These comrades are not authorized to speak at your convention and their visit is purely a personal one as far as the IMG is concerned."

Reactionary legislation prevents the SWP from membership in the Fourth International, but, as a fraternal courtesy, members of the Political Committees or Bureaus of sections or sympathizing groups of the Fourth International, members of the International Executive Committee and members of the International Control Commission who were able to attend the convention were seated as fraternal delegates with voice and no vote. This procedure parallels our procedure for seating as fraternal delegates members of the SWP's outgoing National Committee and Control Commission. Comrade Adair was seated as a fraternal delegate as a member of the IEC; Comrade

Williams was seated as a fraternal delegate as a member of the International Control Commission.

Your resolution further states: "We have also heard that Comrade Williams is speaking at an SWP Cadre School after the Convention. While we have no objection on principle to leaders or members of minorities of national sections speaking to other sections, we are perturbed that the IMG leadership was not informed of this and a majority member was not invited to attend to present the views of the British section. We would therefore like a tape of Comrade Williams' speech to be made available to us."

This paragraph is unclear to us. You state that you have no objection "on principle" to "leaders or members of minorities of national sections speaking to other sections." Do you have some objection other than one based on principle to the fact that Comrade Williams gave two classes to the education conference the SWP and YSA held after the convention? It appears that you object to, or are "perturbed" by, two things. One is that the IMG leadership was not informed that Comrade Williams was asked to give this class; the other is that a "majority member of the IMG was not invited to attend to present the views of the British section."

When we learned that Comrade Williams planned to attend the SWP convention, the comrades in charge of planning the educational conference following the convention thought that this would be an excellent opportunity to help educate our members and sympathizers on the history of British Trotskyism. Comrade Williams, due to her long personal experience and intimate knowledge of the somewhat complicated evolution of British Trotskyism, was a good choice to give such a class, in the opinion of those responsible for organizing the education conference.

Generally, when comrades from Trotskyist groups from around the world are able to visit the United States, we make maximum use of their presence to help educate our comrades about the world movement. Our geographical position and the reactionary policies of our government make such direct contacts difficult and, unfortunately, all too infrequent. So we are glad to take advantage of any such opportunity that does arise. When a comrade as qualified as Comrade Williams is able to spend some time here, especially at a national gathering, we are especially pleased at the possibility this provides of widening the knowledge of our members on the problems of constructing a Trotskyist party in other countries. We cannot see what possible objection you could have to Comrade Williams, a loyal, leading member of the IMG, recently reelected by your national convention to the IMG national committee, giving classes on the history of British Trotskyism.

You imply that the decision to ask Comrade Williams to give such classes was something the SWP wanted to keep hidden from the majority leadership of the IMG. But the class syllabus, listing Comrade Williams as lecturing on the topic of the history of British Trotskyism, was sent to the international center, where it was available to members of the IMG Political Committee. We can agree that it would have been useful if you were sent information about the educational conference directly; we can see to it that you receive such material in the future. However, we can see no reason for getting your prior approval before we asked Comrade Williams to give a class on the history of British Trotskyism.

If a leading majority member of the IMG were able to attend our convention and educational conference, we would have been only too

happy to schedule classes to be taught by him or her. Comrade Peter Petersen, for example, could have covered ground in the history of British Trotskyism outside of Comrade Williams' experience. However, none of the classes given during this educational conference had as their purpose the presentation of views of minorities or majorities on disputed issues with the international or within any section. Besides Comrade Williams' class, there was one given by a leading French comrade on the Communist League, and one on the situation in Quebec by a leading Canadian comrade.

Comrade Williams' class gave a sketch of the history of British Trotskyism, and covered the period from the founding of the British Communist Party up to the founding of the IMG. Her talks did not go into any current disputes within the IMG. We can agree that the British comrades will find these talks useful. We will send you either a copy of the tapes or a transcript of them, although this will take some time as we are presently short-staffed because of the vacation period.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard  
for the Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party