



J. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

Indexed & Noted
10/8/73

1st day of June 1973.

SUBJECT

IMG Annual
General
Conference
21-23.4.73.

Reference to Papers

346/73/8

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-

2. "The International Marxist Group Annual General Conference was held on the 21, 22 and 23 April 1973. On Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April sessions were held from 10 am to 1.15 pm, 2.15 pm to 6 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm, the two evening sessions being closed sessions for members only. On Monday 23 April sessions should have been held from 10 am to 2 pm but due to the conference over-running its time the session was extended, without break, to 4.30 pm. All the sessions were held in Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, ECh, the auction rooms of London's Fur Trade, an austere setting for a revolutionary socialists' conference. Attendance at the various sessions varied from 300 to 500 persons.

3. Persons attending the conference were classified as either Delegate, Consultative Delegate, Observer or Visitor. A Delegate was a full member nominated by a local IMG branch to attend the conference as a voting representative - normally two from each branch. Such a delegate had the right to attend all sessions and vote on any document or resolution. A Consultative Delegate was a retiring member of the National Committee who had the right to vote, although his vote was counted separately and would only be used as a casting vote in the event of a tie in any voting. The third category, Observer, was any full IMG member. Observers were entitled to attend any session but had no voting rights. The last category, Visitor, was any person, not a full member of the organisation, who was sympathetic to the policies of the organisation. Such persons could attend open sessions only and had no voting rights.

4. In order to understand the prevailing atmosphere at this conference it is necessary to explain some of the pre-conference events. About four months ago John ROSS (alias A JONES) started to produce his perspectives document for the conference. The main line of this document although obscured in pages of political meandering, was that the IMG should adopt a line of working through local workers' councils and organisations instead of on a National basis through organisations such



as the Indochina Solidarity Conference (ISC) and the Anti-Internment League (AIL). This line was opposed by Peter GOWAN (alias KLEIN) and John WEAL (alias HARNEY) and they produced their own perspectives document. They proposed that the IMG continued to work through national organisations and it soon became apparent that as these documents were discussed within the organisation a split in the leadership had occurred amongst most of the rank and file members. Thus, there emerged before the conference two groups referred to as the JONES grouping and the HARNEY/KLEIN grouping. (Throughout this report they will be referred to similarly.).

5. To complicate matters further there emerged four tendencies. The first of these was simply a merger between the Big 'T' tendency and the little 't' tendency (the ideological differences between them has been explained in previous reports) who, having settled their differences, re-united and became known simply as The Tendency. The first new tendency to be formed was the Workers' Opposition Tendency (WOT) led by Pat JORDAN (alias Peter PETERSON) and Charlie VAN GELDEREN. This tendency is in complete agreement with the HARNEY/KLEIN group but feel that they should also adopt the JONES idea of workers' councils on a limited scale. The third tendency is referred to as the Labour Opposition Tendency (LOT) led by [REDACTED] Privacy and Felicity TRODD. The line they present is an acceptance of the HARNEY/KLEIN line with emphasis on making an intervention in the Trade Union movement. The last tendency known simply as JAB (a corruption of the initials of three minor IMG members) produced a document entitled "For the Defence of Marxism" which started off by quoting JONES on marxism and the poetry of Lord BYRON. Their line was nothing more than an outright attack on John ROSS and presented no alternative line.

6. In essence, from the pre-conference discussions it was evident that the four tendencies were likely to support the HARNEY/KLEIN group in voting against the JONES group and documents. This being so the conference opened with an air of expectancy.

7. The start was scheduled for 10 am on the Saturday morning but the debacle of registration which characterises all such conferences inevitably led to this conference not actually starting until noon. The first session was chaired by Bob PURDIE, who welcomed all present. He pointed out that a heavy agenda was before the conference and much work had to be completed which would affect the whole future of the organisation. He therefore wanted each member to discipline himself into obeying the chair and the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) and to refrain from disrupting the conference by unwarranted and unnecessary points of order. He then asked the conference to vote acceptance of the agenda, subject to any changes felt necessary by the SOC. This was accepted

by an overwhelming majority in a straw vote. He then announced that the retiring National Committee had decided that the SOC should consist of two members from each grouping, one from each of the four tendencies and it would be presided over jointly by two retiring National Committee members, Tariq ALI and Gery LAWLESS. This too was accepted by the conference and each group and tendency was invited to select its members to serve on the SOC. The purpose of the SOC was to make any amendments to the agenda, allot speaking time to delegates and members and generally advise the chairman on matters arising during the conference. PURDIE then asked the conference to ratify the proposed starting orders (Appendix 'B') which was done without any preamble or discussion.

8. PURDIE then informed the conference that in previous years difficulty had been experienced in obtaining volunteers for the various tasks to be done during the conference and many volunteers had failed to turn up. This year, each person registered had a numbered card and tasks would be issued by the random selection of numbers. The principal job to be done was manning the creche, which this year was thankfully located away from the conference at: Privacy

9. The formalities over, the conference then proceeded with its main business. PURDIE introduced Pierre FRANKS (ph) a Belgian representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) who was to present fraternal greeting to the conference. FRANKS was obviously aware of the trouble within the IMG and after presenting formal greetings he went on to say that a difficult and trying time was facing the organisation. He knew however, that by adopting a correct Marxist line of political analysis the organisation would surmount the obstacles in its path and emerge as a strong united body of revolutionaries which would be capable of leading the working class and the vanguard left towards the workers revolution. He said that he was aware that organisations throughout the world were in solidarity with the IMG and would always remain so. He finished by wishing the conference every success and hoping that the long struggle ahead would only succeed in welding the organisation in a true revolutionary way. He sat down to a long ovation. The conference then adjourned for lunch.

10. The conference re-convened at 2.15 pm and quickly settled down to the afternoon's discussions which were devoted to the two main documents of JONES and HARNEY/KLEIN. The first to speak was John ROSS who presented his own document. He spoke in his usual verbose style, full of standard revolutionary cliches. Emerging from his speech was the thesis (as summarised in paragraph 4). He advocated

that IMG should now stop concentrating on National organisations and start to build local councils of action. This would bring them into contact with the uncommitted working class and revolutionary workers which would be the broad base for building the revolutionary vanguard. He elaborated by saying these councils of action should be divided in two distinct areas, the working class via the Trade Unions, and the students. At the moment national organisations were merely attracting committed persons of one organisation or another. He went on to say that local councils of actions would enable an intervention to be made into other spheres of political unrest such as coloureds, tenants and claimants' unions. The working class members of the councils would then be introduced to other problems and by guiding and leading them in a true Marxist fashion the whole working class revolution would surely, step by step, be brought nearer. ROSS then dealt with Britain's entry into the Common Market. "The most important structural change which has been taking place with regard to the situation of British capitalism" He stated that previously the IMG line had been one of opposition of entry to the Common Market and the corollary of "withdrawal after entry". However, the line on this had been wrong as it was based on the purely subjective grounds of the defence of the working class such as the fight against Imperialism and the more immediate effect of rising prices. However, these conditions were going to occur in any event and the line of the IMG on this had been wrong. He summed this up by saying that the IMG would always defend the interests of the working class whether in or out of the EEC. What the IMG should fight for was a 'Red Europe' and Britain's entry into the EEC would help this but they must retain the right to reverse the decision if it became obvious that it was becoming a military alliance against Russia. ROSS then sat down to a short ovation from his supporters.

11. The next speaker was Peter GOWAN who presented the HARNEY/KLEIN document in opposition to JONES. The basis of his argument was that the organisation should orientate its work round the existing revolutionary struggles, such as Indochina and Ireland, and not on future possibilities. Developing this theme he went on to say the struggle in Indochina was still the forefront of the workers revolutionary movement in the world. It was a shining example for all to follow and the correct line for the IMG was to align itself behind the solidarity movement which was now international. A similar situation existed in Ireland and the IMG should be leading the whole revolutionary vanguard in solidarity with the IRA. Moving on to the industrial field he felt the organisation should concentrate on getting shop stewards within the Trade Union movement rather than just rank and file members. The rest of his speech continued in this vein.

12. Once GOWAN had finished speaking an hour remained for speakers and questions from the floor. The conference had ratified the decision of the SOC to allot a greater period of speaking time to these two main speakers in view of the

issues at stake. The contributions from the floor, which were surprisingly conducted in an orderly fashion, were of no particular significance.

13. The 'closed' evening session, chaired by Privacy started a little late at about 6.20 pm and was to result in the most heated arguments of the whole conference before finally degenerating into irrecoverable chaos. It started with the simple matter of Charlie VAN GELDEREN proposing a resolution that a no smoking ban be imposed in the conference room. For some reason this annoyed Privacy (not a particularly heavy smoker as he can never borrow enough from his comrades) who rose to his feet and accused the comrade of factionalism whereupon VAN GELDEREN accused Privacy of being childish. This provoked Privacy into a bout of hysteria and he had to be forcibly restrained by his own supporters. The matter was finally resolved by the SOC putting forward the proposition, which was accepted by the conference, that a no smoking ban be imposed for one hour at the start of each session and every alternate hour thereafter.

14. The blood of the conference being somewhat stirred Privacy rose and presented the first of several political manoeuvres designed to favour his group. He forwarded a formal proposition that the election of the leadership should take place immediately without any pre-discussion. This proposition prompted uproar and then chaos. The whole of the rest of the session consisted of one speaker after another rising from their seats to put forward arguments but being shouted down by other speakers. There were numerous cries for the attention of the chairman on points of order or points of information and Privacy was totally incapable of imposing any form of discipline upon the conference. Eventually the SOC resolved the situation by stating that their decision was that such a vote would be politically incorrect and not in line with the principles of democratic centralism. The conference then adjourned for the night, although many bitter arguments continued in nearby public houses.

15. Several of the tendencies held separate meetings. One of the most significant was held between WOT and the Privacy group. This resulted in the production, by comrades working throughout the night, of the joint Privacy WOT resolution which was handed out at the conference the next day. (See Appendix 'B'). These tendency meetings were to become a regular feature of the conference with little groups convening in odd corners of the conference hall between sessions. Such became the demand on meeting rooms that groups eventually spilled over onto The Embankment.

16. The conference re-commenced promptly on the Sunday morning with Tony SOUTHALL in the chair. Because of the

wasted session the previous evening the conference had a determined air of settling down to business. It was apparent that each group or tendency was imposing some form of discipline on its members. The day was to be devoted to the presentation of the tendency documents followed by individual documents and additional speakers.

17. The first to speak was HARRIS for the Tendency who presented their document "Building The Leninist Combat Party in Britain today". The main task for the IMG, as claimed by HARRIS, was to build a mass campaign of solidarity with the Irish struggle. The prime issue of this campaign should be the withdrawal of all troops from Ireland. Round this key demand the whole Irish struggle could go forward. There were also two secondary tasks which many people erroneously saw as the main task, and they were "End Internment" and "Release All Political Prisoners". Dealing with the situation in this country, he said that a Transitional Programme should be prepared so that the movement could make an intervention in the Trade Unions. The basis on which this Transitional Programme of the Tendency was prepared appeared rather weak on paper and even weaker when presented by HARRIS at the conference, being centred mainly round wage increases leading to a theoretical Anti-Capitalist Struggle. He sat down to applause only from three other tendency members.

18. The next speaker, unannounced but believed to be Privacy was to speak on the JAB document "For Defence of Marxism". Their document was divided into three parts. Part One "For Marxism and against the methodology of JONES". Part two: "The politics of the JONES" and Part three: "The essential political tasks facing the IMG." The first two parts of the document were nothing more than character and political attacks on JONES. Unfortunately Privacy never succeeded in reaching part three. Privacy finally sat down.

19. The next speaker called to the platform was Pat JORDAN for WOT who presented their document "Two Crises - Thesis On The Tasks Facing The IMG in the Coming Year". It was a turgid personal interpretation of Marxism and a further lesson on how the IMG should be run. Repeating and supporting most of what GOWAN had said the previous day, JORDAN went on to deal with the crisis within the IMG. He said that this was a national state of affairs as the organisation had developed from a local grouping to a national efficiently organised group with its own headquarters and full-time staff. With the productivity of the now Weekly Paper the organisation could take its place against any other National Organisation. This would inevitably lead to changes in the IMG. At last year's conference a perspective document had been accepted which had not been far-sighted enough to deal with the radical growth and changes which had occurred throughout the year. JONES was attempting to direct the organisation on the same lines again this year instead of using the opportunity to take the IMG forward.

20. The last speaker before lunch was Felicity TRODD who introduced LOT's document "The Mass Struggle". TRODD agreed with the HARNEY/KLEIN line and developed the theme further by laying emphasis on the Trade Union movement. She heavily criticised the Tendency for its short sightedness in basing its programme round only part of the struggle, and went on to say that the whole issue should be based round the defence of the Trade Unions and the working class against the repressive policies of the Tory Government. Developing this, her speech eventually followed the line of most of the others. By this time the conference was becoming restless and thankfully adjourned for lunch at 1.30 pm.

21. The afternoon and evening sessions were devoted mainly to delegates who wanted to speak from the floor and with the exception of one or two speakers the conference was subjected to continuous five minute speeches from one faction or another.

22. The first exception was Privacy who was to speak on 'Red Mole'. There was no political content to his speech which was uncontentiously factual. He said that from 1 May 1973 the 'Red Mole' would become 'Red Weekly' and would be printed every Thursday. He asked that every Branch or cell send as much copy as possible as providing material would be the main difficulty of the editorial board. He went on to give the usual pep talk of increasing sales to making the paper a viable proposition.

23. The conference then experienced another attempt at political manoeuvring by John ROSS in an effort to assist his group. The SOC had recommended that each speaker be limited to five minutes but the two ROSS members put forward the proposition that any of the main group speakers be allotted 15 minutes each, tendency speakers 10 minutes each and other delegates 5 minutes each, with speakers being called from the floor at the chairman's discretion. An arrangement such as this would obviously suit ROSS, enabling his group to obtain the most speaking time. Having been defeated on this issue in the SOC ROSS insisted that the matter be put before the conference, and this was eventually done, (thus negating the purpose of the SOC). With a formal motion before the conference ROSS tried to get it accepted on a straw vote. This was refused and a counted vote was ordered. After this vote was totalled there appeared to be discrepancies in numbers and surprisingly enough it was found that four ROSS supporters claimed to have lost their delegate voting cards. This resulted in a member of the credentials committee coming to the platform and recording each vote as each delegate called out his name and registration number. ROSS was defeated and the conference settled down to the speeches.

24. Of these speeches two were of particular interest, those by Bob PURDIE and Privacy. The first of these, by PURDIE, in content completely supported the HARNEY/KLEIN line, but amplified the importance of the Irish situation, which is his own particular forte. He described the problems of the leadership as a "spreading cancer" and the political differences as a "rumbling appendix" and, keeping his metaphors unmixed, recommended surgery and not just doses of medicine. Privacy, a known supporter of the ROSS group amazed the conference by a complete volte face. He said that he had studied the joint HARNEY/KLEIN and WOT resolutions and found that it was a professionally produced document which he would be prepared to take out to Trade Unions, Students and other political organisations and defend anywhere. He himself would now be voting for this document and was withdrawing any previous statements he had made in favour of any other group. This brought a stream of hissing from the conference floor. One delegate tried to raise a point of order that the SOC had tried to be fair in allotting equal speaking time to all groups as Privacy's change of views had upset the balance. The chairman refused to accept this as each speaker was entitled to his own view and the matter was dropped.

25. The only other break amongst the seemingly never ending speeches occurred after tea when Privacy put forward a proposition that the London Branch of the IMG should be re-organised into a London Area and each separate cell becoming a branch in its own right. This was merely ratifying a condition which is in existence and the motion was passed by an overwhelming majority to be referred to the new National Committee to work out the administrative details. The conference was then subjected to the last of the five minute speakers but it was painfully apparent that attendance at the conference had dwindled alarmingly and it finally adjourned at 10 pm with only about 200 stalwarts left.

26. The last day opened with summations by speakers from each group or tendency. The summing was merely a repetition, in brief, of the previous two days. The credentials committee then announced that a further discrepancy had occurred in the number of registered delegates and it was proposed that all delegates should be re-registered and issued with a new registration card. They said the card was distinctive but apologised for them in advance. Their apology soon became clear for the cards turned out to be playing cards with a Union Jack printed on the back, so the ludicrous situation occurred of Marxist Revolutionaries waving Union Jacks in the air to vote. (No-one realised that a mitigating point was that the cards, of cheap foreign manufacture, had the Union Jack printed upside down).

27. After the process of re-registration had been completed, the total number of delegates had increased by three from the previous day. The general feeling was that GOWAN had been taking lessons from ROSS. The vote on the documents then

took place. The first on the JONES document resulted in this being defeated by 79 votes for, 85 against. All the other documents presented were duly defeated. This situation arose as all the other groups and tendencies voted against the JONES group but of course lacked support when their own documents were presented. Privacy the USFI representative, then mounted the platform and proposed that representation on the new National Committee should be decided by allotting places to each group in proportion to the amount of votes their documents had received. He also proposed that the whole issue be referred back to the USFI to examine the facts and produce a document on the issue to guide the IMG. This proposition was accepted by the conference.

28. The conference then had a short adjournment whilst the nominations committee, whose job was to produce a proposed list of National Committee members, did some mathematical problems whilst vetting the proposed members put forward by each grouping. In the end they produced the list below:-

Full members for the JONES group

Privacy
John ROSS
Privacy

Privacy

Full members for the HARNEY/KLEIN Group

Peter GOWAN
Tariq ALI

Privacy
Bob PURDIE

Full members for the Tendency

Privacy

Full members for WOT

Pat JORDAN
Privacy

Full members for LO

Privacy

Felicity TRODD
Privacy

Alternative members for the JONES group

Privacy

Alternative members for the HARNEY/KLEIN group.

Privacy

John WEAL
Gery LAWLESS

Alternative members for WOT

Privacy
Tony SOUTHALI
Privacy

Alternative members for LOT

Privacy

29. The purpose of the alternative members is to make a quorum at any National Committee meeting by taking the place of any full member unable to attend. In addition a control commission was elected to generally protect the rights of the minority groups and to assist and advise the National Committee. It consisted of:-

Privacy

Charlie VAN GELDEREN

(JONES group)

(WOT)

Privacy

(LOT)

(HARNEY/KLEIN group)

(JAB)

(The Tendency)

30. The whole proposed list of names was then put before the conference and accepted unanimously. The conference then ended at 4.30 pm with/singing of the Internationale.

/the

31. Amongst those present at the conference were:-

Privacy

Tariq ALI

Privacy

Privacy

Privacy

✓ Upali COORAY
✓ Piers CORBYN

Privacy

✓ Pierre FRANKS (ph)

Privacy

✓ Peter GOWAN

Privacy

✓ Pat JORDAN
✓ Gery LAWLESS

Privacy

Privacy

✓ Bob PURDIE

Privacy

✓ John ROSS

Privacy

✓ Felicity TRODD
✓ Charle VAN GELDEREN

Privacy

32. Viewing the conference as a whole it was obvious from the outset there would be a split in the organisation but its extent was not generally appreciated at the outset. The IMG is now in the position of having no prospective document, to base its work upon. Privacy has been reported as saying to Privacy that given six months he will have a majority leadership again. However, VAN GELDEREN is reputed to have said to Privacy that the USFY is likely to come out in favour of HARNEY/KLEIN. Nevertheless the conference was unusual in that apart from the Saturday evening session it was conducted in an orderly fashion. It was also noticeable that no time was allotted to the women or their documents and surprisingly there was no criticism from them at this. It would appear that the women were united with the men in their various groupings having decided to concentrate on that issue. The two principal personalities to emerge from the conference were John ROSS and Peter GOWAN and it can be expected that GOWAN will soon be taking a more active part in the leadership of the organisation."

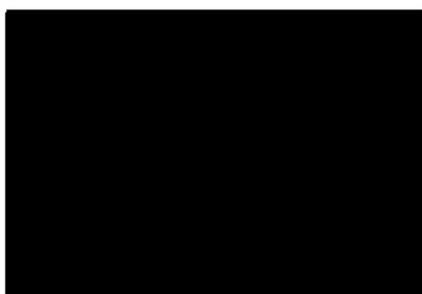
33. Special Branch references of persons mentioned in this report are given in Appendix 'A'. Conference documents are attached at Appendix 'B'.

HN338
 Detective Constable

HN294
 Chief Inspector

Submitted:

[Handwritten Signature]
 CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT





APPENDIX 'A'

Names and Special Branch references of persons mentioned in the 1973 IMG Annual Conference report.

Privacy

Tariq ALI ✓

RF 405/ Privacy

Privacy

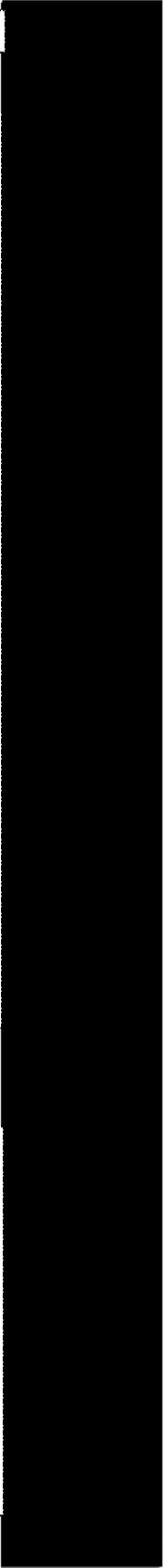
Upali COORAY

RF 402/65/566

Piers CORBYN

RF 402/ Privacy

Privacy



Privacy

Pierre FRANKS (ph)

No trace

Privacy

Peter GOWAN

RF 405 Privacy

Privacy

Privacy

Pat JORDAN

RF 402/60/182

Gery LAWLESS

RF 335/57/430

Privacy

Bob PURDIE

RF 405/67/82

Privacy

Privacy

✓ John ROSS
@ Alan JONES

RF 402/ Privacy

Privacy

Tony SOUTHALL

RF 405/ Privacy

Privacy

✓ Felicity TRODD

RF 405/ Privacy

Charle VAN GELDEREN

RF 301/MP/4935

John WEAL

RF 405/ Privacy

Privacy

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX 'B'

List of documents issued for the International Marxist Group Annual Conference held on 21.23 April 1973

- No 1 : ✓ Resolution on Perspectives for 1973
Voting on Feb 11th N.C.
- No 2 : ✓ Perspectives for 1973 by A Jones
- No 4 : ✓ The Central Line by Harney & Klein
- No 5 : ✓ A new orientation for the IMG - Organise the new mass
vanguard by Harney & Klein
- No 6 : ✓ 1) Resolution on our immediate tasks in Scotland
2) Brief notes on the question of the transitional
programme by A Jones
✓ 3) Correct an act of political irresponsibility.
The Red Mole by C Singh
4) The significance of Britain's economic crisis
by Lord Rothschild.
- No 7 : ✓ Building the Leninist Combat Party in Britain today
Submitted by The Tendency.
- No 8 : ✓ Declaration of Intention to form a Tendency
- No 9 : ✓ Workers' Control - Politics not Economics
by [REDACTED] Privacy
- No 10 : ✓ Why the General Line of the European Perspectives
Document should be rejected. Submitted by the
Tendency.
- No 11 : ✓ For the Defence of Marxism by [REDACTED] Privacy
[REDACTED] Privacy
- No 12 : ✓ Two Crises - Theses On The Tasks Facing the IMG
In The Coming Year. By the Workers Opposition
Tendency.
- No 13 : ✓ Toward a class-struggle wing in the AUEW(T&SS)
and the Trade Unions by [REDACTED] Privacy
- No 15 : ✓ Ireland on the Butchers Table by [REDACTED] Privacy
- No 16 : ✓ 1) Democracy in Schools - Some Comments.
2) On our work on the Question of Womens Oppression
3) On the undialectical stupidities of A Jones
- No 18a : [REDACTED] ns facing the 1973 Conference
. A Jones.
- No 20 : [REDACTED] ariat majority has submitted
tain and the tasks of the
for the 1973 National
ernational Marxist Group, by

- No 21 : ✓ 1. Abortion: In Defence of the Slogan
"The Right to Choose"
2. IMG Women: Our Role in the Women's
Liberation Movement and in the IMG.
- No 22 : ✓ Why it's necessary to have a strategy
for Students by Privacy
- No 23 : ✓ Why there are So Many Divisions within
the Former Majority Leadership - An Initial
Contribution by Privacy
- No 24 : ✓ 1) Solidarity Forever - Privacy
2) Concerning the United Secretariate
Resolution by Privacy
3) Against Sectarianism in the IMG -
Privacy
- No 25 : ✓ IMG on the March by Privacy
- No 26 : ✓ Statement on the USFI Theses on the
Situation in Britain by Privacy
- No 27 : ✓ Organisation of the Organisation. Supplement
to report to Conference by Privacy
- No 28 : ✓ The Mystifications and Mistakes of Peterson/
Harney-Klein by A Jones
- No 29 : ✓ The Harney-Klein and Workers' Opposition
Tendency