

S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

4 day of February 19 76

SUBJECT

International  
Marxist  
Group.

Reference to Papers

400/75/167

1. This report deals with the internal structure of the International Marxist Group, British section of the IVth International, and the recent differences of opinion that have beset the organisation, rendering its agitational work of small importance in comparison with other left-wing groupings.

2. The IMG is divided into tendencies and factions. A tendency is an ideological grouping formed to fight on one or more points of political difference within the organisation. Hence 'Tendency A', which until its disbandment in late 1975 enjoyed the majority of support within the IMG and was thus also known as the 'Majority Tendency', was formed around a conception of the Labour Party (formulated especially by John ROSS) which believed that a leftward turn was taking place among many 'social democrats', i.e. Labour Party supporters; these, it was felt, were slowly becoming disillusioned with the Labour Party over its ability to bring about socialism through Parliament but had not yet despaired of the Labour Party achieving that goal. (A social democrat must be distinguished from someone with centrist currents; the latter has shed any illusion of the Labour Party achieving socialism and is, therefore, more susceptible to revolutionary socialist politics. From this can be appreciated the concern given by the IMG leadership to the Labour Party and the policy of penetration of a significant proportion, about 25%, of IMG membership into that organisation, together with the significance of the keen interest shown in such MPs as Tony BENE and Jo RICHARDSON.

3. A tendency is constituted on open political differences with the majority leadership which it seeks to influence through winning support of the membership. A tendency does not, however, have a tight internal structure or rigid organisation. There can be no such thing as tendency 'discipline' beyond an agreement to campaign for those specific questions which constitute the tendency. This is in contrast to a faction, which is a grouping based on a generalised disagreement with the line of the organisation. This seeks a complete reorientation of the organisation's perspective not just a change in one or two particular aspects. A faction, by definition, has agreement on all important aspects of the organisation's line and must, therefore, discuss all new questions and problems facing the IMG as they arise. In contrast to a tendency, a faction can have strict internal discipline and even a full-time organiser.

4. Until late 1975, there existed four tendencies within the IMG: Tendency B (also known as the 'Majority Tendency'), of which leading figures included John ROSS, Brian GROGAN and Jonathan SILBERMAN; (ii) 'Tendency A', the second largest grouping inside

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the organisation and often seen as preferring to struggle for control of the IRE rather than the pursuit of revolutionary socialism. It discounts the 'Majority Tendency's' faith in a leftward turn by Labour Party members and, indeed, characterises the IRE's orientation in this direction as being a swing to the right, away from revolutionary politics. Leading figures include Pat JORDAN, Tariq ALI and John WEAL; (iii) 'Tendency C', which is always referred to as 'The Tendency'; a power within the organisation from 1969 to 1972 but now with little support numerically. Its best known members are [redacted] Privacy; (iv) 'Tendency D', set up about two months before the IRE 1975 Conference and comprising some twelve comrades, amongst whom the most notable is [redacted] Privacy. This tendency has received much criticism over its formation, especially from the leadership of the organisation which claims that it is an unprincipled grouping set up merely on the basis of opposition to that leadership and not on a clearly defined political standpoint.

5. Within the IRE there has of late been much debate between the 'Majority Tendency' and 'Tendency A' which, in documents prepared on both sides, has recently been expressed in acrimonious terms. One major point of contention is the concept of 'democratic centralism'. For 'Tendency A' this is seen as "the instrument for waging the struggle against bourgeois ideology asserting itself within the organisation". It is thus conceived of as an internal mechanism for generating revolutionary consciousness - "the democratic side of democratic centralism has the function of ensuring that there is a collective discussion of the experience of the organisation in order to draw collective understanding from it. The centralist aspect of democratic centralism has the function of ensuring that there is common practice, without which it is impossible to scientifically examine the collective experience of the organisation". These quotations are from a document prepared by JORDAN for the 1975 Conference.

6. This view of democratic centralism is totally repudiated by the 'Majority Tendency', which sees it in GREGGIAN's words as "expressing the totality of relations between the Party, vanguard and class in the context of preparing the working class, through its vanguard, for the seizure of state power". Democratic centralism was developed as a theory out of recognition of the fact that the working class cannot spontaneously develop a political class consciousness. The 'Majority Tendency', therefore, considers that the function of democratic centralism is to allow a class-conscious vanguard (i.e. here, the IRE) to act as the memory of the historical experience of the class and on the basis of that experience develop a scientific understanding of the social and economic relations in the capitalist society. From this understanding the vanguard develops the programmes necessary for mobilising and centralising working class struggles against the bourgeois state and, by means of a transitional approach, introduces politics into the working class so that on the basis of its own experience the working class may develop its consciousness to a logical conclusion - destruction

[REDACTED]

of capitalism and seizure of state power. The net result of this differing approach to democratic centralism is that much organisational wrangling takes place within the IMC and that inside 'Tendency A' a disciplined and structured organisation has been developed.

7. A second bone of contention between 'Tendency A' and the 'Majority Tendency' is over the role of tendencies within a democratic centralist organisation. Their function in theory is to better aid the intervention in the class struggle of the organisation as a whole, ensure an orderly resolution of political differences and prepare discussion for the whole membership to debate. The initiation of secret discussions within a grouping or the opening of discussion on questions other than those that form the basis of that group are anathema to the concept of a tendency. However, it is just the abuse of this procedure that is repeatedly being alleged by the IMC leadership against 'Tendency A'. For example, in September 1975 'Tendency A', after internal discussions but without opening up their debate to the whole of the organisation, developed a line on the situation in Portugal which was in opposition to that of the leadership.

8. It is this form of procedure by 'Tendency A' that has led to the third and last of the major issues threatening the majority of the IMC, that is the implementation of the organisation's programme. The fundamental basis of a party is its programme, and what binds the party together is the relationship of the programme to the decisive developments in the class struggle both nationally and internationally. Open commitment to the programme of the party, on a political basis, is fundamental to the building of that party. (Also it can be said that separation from an organisation on the basis of anything other than strictly principled political differences gives rise to the creation of sects). Brian GREGAN, of the 'Majority Tendency', asserts that the only way of testing the overall policy of the party and its tactical orientation is to struggle and intervene around the programme adopted at the national annual conferences. He writes, "It is incumbent on minority groups to understand and implement the majority line to the best of their ability. Under no circumstances does this mean that they should agree with the line - but they must accept the line". The charge made against 'Tendency A' is that it has frequently refused to support the policy of the IMC as emanated by its 'Majority Tendency' leadership. In Manchester and Coventry, for example, members of 'Tendency A' proposed their own tendency's perspectives for political work, and in Birmingham, where 'Tendency A' controls the area leadership, the line of the organisation has frequently been assented. On their part, the leading figures in 'Tendency A' claim that many decisions of the leadership important to the orientation of the IMC, have been made without full discussion amongst the whole of the organisation. The decision actually to infiltrate one quarter of the membership into the Labour Party may be quoted as one example. Confusion still reigns over the basis of this penetration, the mechanics of it and the ultimate achievement in practical terms, with the result that this decision has been little implemented. In Autumn, 1975, therefore, 'Tendency A' called for an emergency national conference of the IMC but this request was refused by the National Committee.



9. The remaining two tendencies have had little effect on the running of the IRI.

10. Because of the parlous state of the IRI, a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) visited this country for several weeks in October/November 1975, to examine the functioning of the organisation and take evidence from its leadership - the 'Majority Tendency' having disbanded until the start of the 1976 pre-conference discussions in February - and from 'Tendency A'. A report on the IRI, British Section of the Fourth International, has been prepared by the USFI and is attached to this report. (Appendix 'B').

11. Special British references of persons named in the above document or otherwise mentioned in this report are contained at Appendix 'A'.

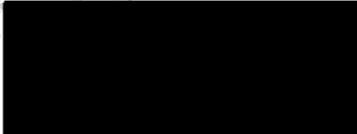
G.T.M. Craft



Chief Inspector

CHIEF SUPERVISOR

[Faint, mostly illegible typed text, likely a cover letter or report body.]



Appendix

Appendix 'A' to Special Branch report dated 4 February, concerning the internal structure of the IPR. List of persons mentioned:

PARTY NAME

Privacy

Hardie

Privacy

Peterson

Privacy  
Delegate from Glasgow Unable to identify  
Delegate from Bristol Unable to identify  
Delegate from Cambridge Unable to identify

Privacy

Upali COORAY

402/65/566

Privacy

Delegate from Sheffield Unable to identify

Privacy

Unable to identify

Delegate from Oxford Unable to identify

Privacy

John ROSS

402/

Privacy

Pat JORDAN

402/60/182

PARTY NAME



Unable to identify -

Privacy

Jonathan SILBERMAN

402

Privacy

Privacy

Brian GROGAN

402

Privacy

Peter GOWAN

405/69/765

Delegate from Manchester

Unable to ident

Unable to ident

Klein

Privacy

Privacy

Delegate from Edinburgh

Unable to ident

Unable to ident

Privacy

Delegate from Manchester

Unable to ident

Unable to ident

Unable to ident

Privacy

Tariq ALI

402/65/440A

Privacy

John WEAL

405

Privacy

