BRIEFING ON THE I.M.G.

The IMG is in a crisis created by the impact on it of the recent turn of the SWP (USA) towards uncritical identification with the Cuban government and towards sending members into industry.

The immediate problem is that no group can win a majority on the IMG central committee for its perspectives. A special conference has therefore been called.

There is also (apparently) a decline in the IMG's numbers and (certainly) a decline in its visible activity. Socialist Challenge has been reduced to 12 pages until Christmas.

The issues posed by the SWP's turn are to-be-or-not-to-be issues for Trotskyism. We must make contact with IMG members, seek discussions, and present a clear Trotskyist alternative. These notes give a minimal briefing. If possible we'll send more out later.

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The ideology being presented by the SWP and its co-thinkers in the IMG is well summarised by one of their opponents:

"The world, and every country within it, is splitting into two class camps: the workers and Imperialism. On one side... there is a universal proletarianisation of struggles and a tremendous revolutionary drive by the working class; on the other side, everything is subordinated to US imperialism which is immediately driving for world war.

"This split into two class camps in each country and throughout the world is blatant and obvious. You don't need Marxist theory to grasp what is happening. Thus:

"workers' Vietnam against capitalist Cambodia (US imperialism)
"Afghanistan: workers' Karmal plus Soviets versus US Imperialism
"Iran: workers' Khomeini-ism versus Imperialism,
"and so on".

The practical tasks follow: get all the members into the factories, "talking socialism on the job" (as the SWP catchphrase goes). And "socialism" means total identification with the "workers'" or "anti-imperialist" camp in this crude "two camps" theory of the world. Any criticism of "revolutionary Cuba", for example, is seen as a concession to imperialism.

This ideology has no place for a revolutionary vanguard as a conscious, thinking, critical-minded force, and no place therefore for intelligent intervention by revolutionaries in the actual political processes of the labour movement. The revolutionaries are merely the tough-guy shock-troops of the great world-wide workers'/anti-imperialist "camp". Their concern is not detailed political argument but talking "socialism", i.e. admiration of Cuba plus C-A-T spells CAT condemnations of imperialism.

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The "turn to industry" part of this ideology has been official IMG policy for 3½ years. But the results have been poor. The current crisis is caused by different reactions. The pro-SWP faction wants to push through the "turn" more completely and thoroughly. An increasingly vocal minority opposes the ideology of the "turn" across the board. The current central leadership opposes the pro-SWPers on Cuba, etc., but tries to take a middle position on tactics in Britain.

Tactics in Britain is the immediate explosive issue. The positions are:

Pro-SWP (Brian Grogan and others: 18 votes on CC) - Get everyone into the factories. Labour Party work is very secondary.

Anti-SWP (Bob Pennington, Pete Gowan, and others: 10 votes on CC) - LP work is central (they propose tactics pretty similar to ours). The "turn to the factories is actually decimating existing TU work.

Middle group (Steve Potter, Brian Heron, John Ross, and others: 18 votes on