

Bruxelles  
June 23, 1971

Dear Joe and Barry

Arrived back here last night from spending the week in England and attending the IMG congress on the 19th and 20th.

No doubt the most important congress I attended. My comments are more speculative than those I wrote on the Ligue Communiste congress as we witnessed at the IMG congress only a small part of what is a process which I think ~~will~~ <sup>may</sup> well have grave implications in the unfolding dispute in the movement and may be the opening of a whole new chapter in the struggle to build the Fourth. How to begin?

Bob Pennington in a boastful mood to one of the tendency in a pub dispute said that he was out to take over 40% of the ~~seats~~ <sup>seats</sup> on the incoming NC. He achieved that. The 40% figure Pennington gave ~~was not~~ <sup>didn't</sup> flow from <sup>any</sup> concept of representation but control. Pennington now has control of the leading body of the IMG.

Of the old 18 member ~~body~~ <sup>NC</sup> plus alternates --8 have been dropped, 2 have been demoted from member to alternate. Only 11 of the old NC remain on the new NC which totals now 22 members. My name spellings may be wrong here--I think it is worth giving them as some of us know the Br leadership better than the leadership of the other sections. Dropped from the last NC --Reaney, Phil Hirst, Leonora Lloyd, Tony Southall, Atcheson, Uphali (leaving the country), Pat Frid as she joined the tendency, and Tony Gorton as they cut down tendency representation. Pennington tried also to dump Jessa Vangelder and Dave Kendal. Kendal made it but not because of Tariq's impassioned speech (it appears that he is actually editor of the Mole in T's absence and actually worked out the grand strategy against the Black Dwarf which they consider a masterly maneuver) but because in a huff Marie-Therese Weal who was on the Nominating committee slate as an alternate resigned in his favor.

There are 30 members all told--22 full and 8 alternates

The top four posts were given to Pat J, Tariq, Julian A, Peter Gowan but from then on down Pennington moved in. Of the 22 full members Pennington has 7 solid voters plus three alternates and another probable five supporters. The tendency has two full members and one alternate. The old leadership ~~was~~ <sup>composed</sup> of Pat J, Tariq, Julian Atkinson, Peter Gowan, Bob Purdy and the Weals and Dave Kendall (8) are not exactly a homogeneous group and the others are notable for playing ~~no~~ <sup>sole</sup> roles but subject to Pennington's pressure.

The Pennington forces are definitely a tendency even though they never declared themselves as such. In fact they had everything so whipped up against the TENDENCY that they were able to claim and <sup>win</sup> acceptance that everyone else, all the rest of the delegates <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ a tendency at the very outset of the congress on the basis that ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> against the TENDENCY. The Jordan-Ali current showed a bit of awareness of what was happening on the second day when they paraded up to the nominating committee but they were steamrollered--they repeated and added to every hysteria against the TENDENCY, went completely along with depriving the TENDENCY of any voice in the elections of the NC members and alternates when it obviously could have been very useful to them to turn back Pennington. The TENDENCY ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> small as it is holds the balance of power.

Perhaps in that situation the TENDENCY could be said to have missed the ball--however it seems obvious to me that the Pat-Tariq group would have viciously repulsed any TENDENCY approach or at least ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> if it really knew what was going on would have been afraid to touch the TENDENCY.

The TENDENCY played an excellent role. The vote on the main resolution was 11 for the TENDENCY 51 against. The tendency now has 25 members in the 200 member IMG. The situation has improved qualitatively. Not only has the old guard matured but it is not nearly so dependent on Connie. All of them proved to be very articulate, very developed. Tony Roberts expressed the TENDENCY's views extremely ably and if reason could prevail ~~it~~ would have carried the day with his contributions. Anne Black of Nottingham was really phenomenal--it seemed to me that Alan H has developed further as a leader. The performance of Connie and all of them was all the more remarkable as they were continually harassed, their contribution cut down drastically time wise, etc etc. The other aspect to the qualitatively favorable development of the TENDENCY was the adherence of 8 comrades from Glasgow. They struck me as very able comrades. Several of them made excellent contributions

How to define the Pennington tendency? While the whole leadership is continuously poisoning the atmosphere against the SWP and the TENDENCY, Pennington and Co add ~~considerable~~ considerable venom against cooling things, from their ~~point of view~~ view of the International. While Livio, Pierre, Ernest and the LC to some considerable degree determine the line and conduct of the Pat J -Tariq group they are apparently looked upon with contempt by the Pennington group. While Tariq and Pat J's group flounder around here and there Pennington has ~~his~~ a machine in operation--while the former talk about their stupid line Pennington refines it and acts and attracts those who want to act. Some of the comrades define Pennington as ouvrierist. But I do not think this is a suitable definition. Yes, he is oriented to the workers but his attitude to the student youth around the IMG is not that they should be standing outside of the factory gates distributing leaflets and papers telling the horny-handed sons of toil what to do. He would shame them and harass them as petty bourgeois and drive them to actually go into the shops. He would orient the IMG to a considerable body of English workers in the shops who are generally ultra left-sectarians. ~~In fact he is entirely of the Healy school.~~

He is a machine politician of a vicious type, a factionalist of the Healy school. Contentious of ideas, impatient with discussion armed with a couple of essentially crude ideas, cutting out slashing here and there. There was strong comedy in many of their stances--tragic-comedy of course. From Pennington a couple of simple ideas delivered with a pseudo comradely style that never misses an opportunity to slash at the TENDENCY. From his leading spokesmen particularly one John Ross who demonstrates positively sadistic pleasure in debate more erudite attacks, more irrelevant, and more vicious

The Pennington tendency tended to define the Tariq-Jordan current as petty bourgeois and itself as proletarian, the Tariq-Jordan current as talkers and itself as militant, aggressive activists. It questioned Marie-Therese' qualifications, challenged harshly Dave Kendal's, attacked Tessa Vangelder as ineffectual, dumped Southall to replace him with Williamson who apparently is transparently a Pennington stooge, established despite protests a fellow named Turner on the NC, ~~with the~~ one of his Oxford clique who ~~was~~ only a short while before ~~he~~ had been dropped *from the IMG* for irresponsibility and inactivity.

The IMG's abstentionist position on the labor party has probably been ignored by the Pennington group with its ~~an~~ industrial orientation, but his congress saw them completely reverse the IMG position to an essentially correct one. The latest issue of the Mole runs a lengthy article by John Ross. ~~which~~ Pat told the congress during his report on the political resolution that this article on the LP is embedded in the resolution. Everything was heading towards the fusion of the IMG and Spartacus League--this is Tariq and Pat's line. Pennington was going along with it. ..but this congress saw him reverse his position--the matter has been tabled.

This we have a ~~similar~~ situation where Pennington has a majority and has established his line

what is his line----????--- It is the same as the SLL's

*more to come*

## TENDENCY

In the course of a contribution to the discussion on youth John Roberts claimed that the IMG does not do solid work in any of the areas that it talks a great deal about--for instance the big action in solidarity with the Irish, in Birmingham involved only 20 comrades. He scored all to talk about factory implantation as there are no concrete proposals and as for the much talked of action committees--they don't even exist. He attacked the way that IMG fusion with the SL has been posed--how can you build it--this is doing irreparable harm to our work in this key area we should be moving in the opposite direction with the youth--getting their own paper, their own center and taking on some full time staff. Linda Smith of Glasgow disagreed with Connie for not making the industrial working class central--not for rejection of student-women etc but distinctly peripheral, must take decisive orientation to the industrial proletariat. Stressed need for a functioning industrial caucus and sending some work to Glasgow. We all agree on the youth radicalization she said but we can't carry mass youth work as we do not have the forces to do so.

Bob Braxton warned against the danger of the congress concentrating on the tendency--he doesn't consider the tendency as a political opposition but as an organizational disaster. Nonetheless he stated that the perspective document presented by Pat J is absolutely unclear--and that it is largely youth orientated when ~~we~~ if we don't concentrate on the industrial proletariat, making this our center, we won't make any gains from the periphery. He thought that fusion of the S