

October 9, 1979

TO: Members of the Political Committee, Fred F., Michael B., José, and Andy R.

Dear Comrades,

The items attached will be discussed at an upcoming Political Committee meeting, world movement report.

1. September 22, 1979 letter from Gabriel [LCR, France] to Fred Feldman.

2. Amendments to the World Political Resolution, Proposed by the two reporters, Celso and Walter, September 1979.

3. "Why the Formation of a Caucus Will Not Clarify Matters, A few Initial Comments on the State of the FI," by Tariq Ali. As printed in the IMG internal discussion bulletin.

4. "Some of the Things that are Wrong with the World Political Resolution--and Their Consequences for the Fourth International and the IMG," by Alan Jones. As printed in the IMG internal discussion bulletin.

5. A new section on the OCRFI proposed for the draft European resolution [IIDB, No. 1, 1979], by Udry and Mandel.

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We will also be distributing a packet of information relating to the discussion on the Nicaraguan revolution that was presented at the last United Secretariat meeting. This packet should be available to comrades next week on Tuesday, October 16.

Natalie

[TRANSLATION]

Paris

September 22, 1979

Dear Comrade Feldman,

I have just read your article in the Militant, issue No. 37, entitled, "Havana summit deals blow to Washington's war drive." I must inform you of my great concern after reading this article, inasmuch as you must be aware that I follow African questions and your article correctly accords them prominent treatment.

I have read all the SWP internal documents, as well as the articles in IP and the Militant, on Cuba. Since the time I wrote my article for Inprecor on Cuban foreign policy [See Cuba's Role in Africa, by Claude Gabriel, IP, Vol. 17, No. 6, February 19, 1979, p. 148], I have seen nothing that indicates that our differences are diminishing. The contrary is true, and that is why I have submitted to the United Secretariat Bureau a lengthy document for publication in the IIDB on the entire matter.

It seems to me however that your article in the Militant goes even further in what I view to be the errors of the SWP majority on Cuba. I am therefore going to pose to you a few questions that are manifestly at the center of our differences on Cuban foreign policy and that stem from an assessment of the Cuban leadership.

In the first column of your article you speak of the aid of the "Nonaligned" to the "front-line states" such as Mozambique, Angola, and Zambia--aid against South African interventions. And you add that "Cuba has already committed 20,000 troops in Angola for this purpose." (My emphasis.) Are you really certain that the presence of Cubans in Angola can be reduced solely to the question of South Africa? Or, to rephrase my question, do you believe that

Gabriel.....2

in the general process of class struggles in southern Africa, this alone accounts for the presence of 20,000 Cuban civilians and troops in the Angolan army, police, administration, and work places? Do you believe, at a time when a mini-Camp David agreement on Zimbabwe is being worked out in London, that this celebrated assistance to the "front-line states" is something other than precisely a vicious means through which the African states can limit the process of permanent revolution in southern Africa and exercise control over the political line of the Patriotic Front? Is it a coincidence that among the countries you fail to mention is Tanzania, also a recipient of "aid," whose President Nyere is in the vanguard of the British proposal for resolving the Rhodesian question?

In short, was the Havana conference a victory for the masses of Zimbabwe or a gain for African diplomacy?

Still on the same page, in the third column, you cite Afghanistan as the battlefield of an anti-imperialist struggle, along with Ethiopia, the Portuguese colonies, Iran, Nicaragua, Indochina, and so forth. Do you really think that what we are witnessing in Afghanistan is a surging mass movement, of which the present petty-bourgeois nationalist regime is only a distorted expression? If that were what you thought, you would have to denounce the presence of Soviet forces--no longer pointing solely to their support to a bourgeois regime but criticizing their counterrevolutionary intervention against a revolution on the march. Is this the stage we are at in Afghanistan?

In the same column, you go a bit further than Comrade Barnes in discussing the thousands of Cuban doctors and teachers in Africa.

Gabriel.....3

Comrade Barnes was content to mention the matter and to say that for the people^s concerned they represented a revolutionary example. You however do not hesitate to add that there are "no strings attached" with regard to the neocolonial regimes. I state frankly that I am unaware of what factual material you base yourself on in putting forward such a misconception. You cannot teach in the Congo, Benin, Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Seychelles, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, etc., with no strings attached in regard to these petty-bourgeois leaderships, one-party regimes, and repressive states. At the very least, education is rigorously controlled by the government ministries and is conducted in accordance with the regimes' populist ideology. The same is true in regard to health and sanitation policy. Are you certain that statements such as yours should be made in the Trotskyist press when millions of Africans are daily taught the "Marxism-Leninism" of Neto, Machel, Mengistu, Kerekou, Ratsiraka, Cabral, René, and Sassou by Cuban professors?

You also make an innovation in the domain of characterizing the bourgeois semicolonial regimes. In effect, while never neglecting to term them semicolonial, you come close to the Third Worldist theory that makes an amalgam between political regimes and the oppression of nations. The Nonaligned conference, whether it meets in Havana or elsewhere, remains a conference of political regimes. Neither ~~the~~ Senegalese peasants, Yugoslav workers, nor Syrian youth are represented at these conferences, where there is plenty of rhetoric but few concrete decisions. All of this, however, does not prevent you from taking the Cuban's opportunistic line on this conference and even justifying it theoretically. You write: "Based on this

Gabriel.....4

common oppression, the Cuban leaders participate in the Nonaligned movement in order to advance anti-imperialist struggles. They have rejected the sectarian course of simply boycotting and denouncing bourgeois governments in the underdeveloped countries. They see participation as an aspect of their revolutionary internationalist duties."

After this, how can there be any astonishment when you characterize the extremely reactionary Kaunda, president of Zambia, as "hardly the most radical of Africa's leaders"? How can there be any astonishment that you no longer realize that ~~in~~ Castro's statement on peace mixes together countries that have already gained their formal independence and are ruled by bourgeois regimes, and countries in which a ruling white minority poses the question of the national liberation struggle in other terms. Castro mixes together the two for reasons that some comrades in the SWP leadership were still mentioning recently in articles and internal documents, namely the Castroists' "confusion" between peoples and petty-bourgeois regimes. But how can you yourself put forward such an amalgam reiterate^{ing} the old idea of the Angolan and Mozambican nationalists, who present the struggle for national liberation as continuing so as to make people forget that they are in power and that they are carrying out the repression.

How can there be any astonishment that you refer to the conflict between Castro and Tito as being a conflict between revolutionary struggle and Stalinist theories of peaceful coexistence? Castro made an apology--I repeat, an apology--for the Soviet Union's relations with the semicolonial countries. Tito, for reasons connected

Gabriel.....5

with his own regime and his relations with imperialism, ^{counterposed to} ~~opposed~~ that "theory" of nonalignment—a theory that Nkrumah and Sékou Touré called "positive neutralism" fifteen years ago.

You seem ~~to~~ to be a little embarrassed when you ^{take} ~~took~~ up the question of Castro's pro-Soviet statements. What you ^{do is} ~~did~~ declare with a straight face that this was how the Cuban leader sought to oblige Moscow to come to the aid of anti-imperialist struggles. Frankly, comrade, who could accept such an argument?

You also must have been a little uncomfortable when you said that "unfortunately" the question of Eritrea was not taken up at the summit. But you "save yourself" quickly by seizing as a lifepreserver what Castro himself used, in his 1975 speech. But you don't stop there. You further explain that "the possibility of a peaceful solution continues to be blocked by the determination of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia to subjugate the Eritrean people." What peaceful solution are you talking about? At a time when the Eritreans are under attack by an army equipped and trained by the Soviet bloc and by Cuba, what right do the Trotskyists have to speak, along with Castro, of the search for peace? Is there some new "fratricidal" war going on that we have been unaware of up to now?

The Militant has been content, up till now, to mention the Cubans' absence of a clear position on Eritrea. That is why your article seems to go further ^{by} ~~in~~ implicitly ^{adopting} ~~maintaining~~ the Castroist position on a "peaceful solution."

In a nutshell, your article seems to be highly influenced by the Third Worldist atmosphere at the Nonaligned conference. You are

Gabriel.....6

correct to mention, for the benefit of the American reader, that this conference condemned a whole series of imperialist aggressions and voted support to a whole series of anti-imperialist struggles. But it would have been more ~~interesting~~^{useful} if you had recalled that this sort of statements of intentions^e made at the Nonaligned conference, the Organization of African Unity, the Group of 77, or elsewhere remain operations of sheer demagoguery.

I hope, dear comrade, to have a reply from you on all these questions. The discussion our movement is going to have on Cuba may be able to take a different course if we do not have to conduct polemics on such tragic misconceptions.

Awaiting your response, I send Trotskyist greetings.

Fraternally,

Gabriel

Amendments to the world political resolution proposed by the two reporters, Celse and Walter

(page numbers refer to the English-language version)

p. 3, first column, reformulate point 1 as follows:

"A further shift in the international relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism as a result of the weakening of world capitalism owing to the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina, the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since 1937-38, and the revolutionary overturn of the shah's regime in Iran and Somozaism in Nicaragua, with all their consequences for the Middle East and Latin America."

p. 3, first column, reformulate point 2 as follows:

"The colonial and semicolonial sector remains highly explosive. New social revolutions will continue to break out there before socialist victories in imperialist countries--as indeed occurred in Ethiopia, Iran, and Nicaragua. But simultaneously, the weight and impact of the class struggle in the imperialist countries upon the world...(continues as in original)."

p. 3, second column, reformulate point 6 as follows:

"A crisis of world Stalinism connected with the crisis of capitalism and imperialism.

In the degenerated or deformed workers states, political opposition continues, with the dissidents becoming bolder in seeking openings to resist repressive measures. In Poland the working class is the central driving force of the anti-Stalinist opposition. In other countries, including the Soviet Union, the working class is progressively adding its weight to the opposition begun among intellectuals and oppressed nationalities.

At the same time the exacerbation of the Sino-Soviet conflict at the state level, the current trend of Peking's policy, increasingly lining up with reactionary capitalist and imperialist forces against Moscow and Cuba, and the moves of the Kremlin to further and further appease Western European imperialisms, has given that crisis an exceptionally grave character.

p. 8, second column, rewrite third paragraph as follows:

"The industrial proletariat is the most powerful social force in capitalist society. Once the scope of its mass mobilizations and the radical forms of its organization increase qualitatively--and that is a decisive characteristic of the emergence of a revolutionary crisis, together with the growing paralysis and initial disintegration of the bourgeois power organs--the attraction it exerts on all its potential allies

amendments to political resolution...2

becomes immense. Proletarian forms of organization, growing out of experiences in prerevolutionary times--union committees, elected strike committees, broad factory committees, etc.--begin to take the form of elected councils that extend beyond the plants, centralize workers organization, pit it increasingly against the badly-shaken bourgeois state apparatus, and tend to encompass larger and larger sections of the allies of the working class.

A multi-faceted struggle erupts between the class-collaborationists and the class-struggle forces represented in these councils, for the leadership of the mass struggles, unions, and the other mass organizations. A process of selection unfolds, that makes possible the swift growth of a revolutionary Marxist mass party--provided it has grown sufficiently before these events to appear as a credible alternative leadership to the masses, it has firmly rooted itself in the industrial working class, and it had started to gain increasing influence and adherents in the proletarian vanguard. The growth of such a mass party is the decisive element in winning a majority of the workers to the revolutionary perspective of expropriating the bourgeoisie, removing and replacing the bourgeois state machine, and conquering power by the councils and guaranteeing victory."

p. 14, first column:

Take out the two first paragraphs of that column and replace them with a new chapter III: Perspectives and Problems of the Iranian Revolution, to be drafted on the basis of the general line of the United Secretariat resolution on Iran adopted by the March-April meeting of the United Secretariat.

The same will be done to add Nicaragua to the Latin America section of the resolution.

p. 16, first column, rewrite the second part of point d (4th paragraph) as follows:

"...prerequisites for the building of socialism. The political revolution will, however, not be restricted to the superstructure. The introduction of proletarian democracy will radically transform planning, economic management, and the organization of the production process. It will, among other benefits, restore the friendly, mutually advantageous alliance with the peasantry. It will mark a decisive assertion of workers management of the economy and the beginning of a radical transformation of family life."

page 25, first column, 3rd paragraph, rewrite second sentence as follows:

"The working class is led in turn to organize itself by extending and tightening its international ties, not only to press forward its historic interests, but even to defend its immediate needs and conditions of day-to-day life and work against the capitalist offensive.

WHY THE FORMATION OF A CAUCUS WILL NOT CLARIFY MATTERS:

A Few Initial Comments on the State of the FI

By Howard (Tariq)

The formation of a leadership caucus by a number of comrades on the United Secretariat appears as a somewhat defensive manoeuvre given the overwhelming majority obtained on the F USFI for the main-line documents in question.

However I should make it clear that my reasons for opposing the formation of a caucus have little to do with size of votes, etc. I think that the mainline documents are utterly inadequate and that in two instances (as I will indicate below) represent a regression rather than a synthesis of the strengths of the ex-LTF and ex-IMT in the FI. To form a caucus to defend these documents against the Bolshevik Tendency/Faction or against the LTT means to determine that the latter two are going to decide the parameters of what the FI should be discussing at this stage. I think that this is wrong. Not because we should not discuss with these comrades, but because the majority USFI documents themselves need to be thoroughly discussed and debated.

Furthermore since the establishment of the caucus one of its members (Mary-Alice Waters) has published a lengthy public attack on another member (Ernest Mandel) in the pages of Intercontinental Press. This attack states that cde Mandel found himself outside the camp of the working class on the question of Indochina and quoted from some of cde Mandel's positions in the Fifties. Leaving aside the question of why cde Mandel, rather than or as well as other cdes who defend these positions, was singled out, what does become clear is that the political basis of such a caucus must be, to put it mildly, somewhat ambiguous or faulty. When it is further stated that the differences on Indochina are the most profound since the Second World War, then one could be forgiven for treating the establishment of the caucus with a combination of scepticism and cynicism and to wonder as to what its real function is going to be. For it has already become clear that political clarification could not possibly be the chief aim of the caucus. If anything the continued existence of this caucus will prevent a discussion of the existing differences and transform the next World Congress into a farce. Either there will

a decision of the rubber-stamp variety ('Vote for Us because the BF and IMT have to be decisively defeated') in which case a real debate will not take place or else the real debate will take place in special rooms where the supporters of the 'Majority Caucus' will meet. In either event it will not be a very healthy situation.

As far as the two mainline documents are concerned my views are as follows:

1. WE SHOULD REJECT THE WORLD POLITICAL RESOLUTION ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT HAS BEEN BYPASSED BY HISTORY

When the WPR was first discussed at the IMG CC the overwhelming majority of comrades (including cde Clynes who introduced the text) made extremely sharp criticisms of its weaknesses and deficiencies. It is not a question of moving amendments on this or that point. The development of the world political situation requires that a new document is ~~revised~~ drafted.

The WPR's insistence on the 'preponderance of the struggle in imperialist countries' structured its central political thrust ('the turn'). In fact the developments in Iran, Nicaragua, Southern Africa are posing a much sharper challenge to imperialism at the present time.

Concurrently the wars between the workers states (Vietnam/Cambodia, China/Vietnam) have cast a long shadow over world politics and their impact even on the workers movement in the West should not be underestimated. The public debate between the ex-IMT and the bulk of the ex-IMT in the pages of IP indicates the importance of the issues at stake. Is it serious to have a WPR which takes no position on the class character of Cambodia, the Sino-Vietnam conflict, relations between Cambodia and Laos and Vietnam, the imperialist propaganda chorus on the 'boat people', etc. Are comrades saying that this World Congress should avoid taking a position on these issues by means of a vote. We could still decide to continue the debate, but we cannot have a situation where there is no clear majority for any position.

The WPR as it stands therefore has to be rejected. Its central thrust is wrong and has been disproved by subsequent events as was foreseen by a number of comrades. It is ridiculous to ignore Indochina and any discussion of Africa would necessitate a preliminary estimate of the Cuban role.

We should vote against it on these grounds.

THE EUROPEAN DOCUMENT: TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME+ DENUNCIATIONS
OF BUREAUCRATS DOES NOT EQUAL REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY. IT
SHOULD EITHER BE SUBSTANTIALLY AMENDED OR REFERRED BACK
TO ITS AUTHORS.

The feeling one gets on reading both the WPR and the European Document (ED) is that their structure, form and political thrust were determined more by the ^{supposed} needs of the FI internally than by what the sections require in order to develop a revolutionary strategy in capitalist Europe.

On reading the document one is immediately struck by a somewhat curious absence. There is a symptomatic silence on the development of the Fourth International in the major states of Europe. There are many statements on the need to build the sections of the FI. There are also useful pieces of advice such as 'The press of the sections and the publication of special materials play an important role in launching and advancing political campaigns' and other novel tips. But what is missing is an assessment of the sections, the problems (both organisational and political) they confront and their tasks in relation to these very concrete problems of the next steps forward. Strengthening our base in the factories and trades unions in Europe is certainly an important priority, though for some sections (such as the Spanish ICR) the relationship between having 70% of your members in the unions, a large proportion of elected fulltime union officials poses new problems. For instance how should the section be structured internally? What central political campaigns should be prioritised and how best can it resist economistic and reformist pressures?

In other words the sort of document we needed for this World Congress was an honest and constructive balance-sheet of both our intervention/analysis and the political evolution of Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. Insofar that there is a political evaluation it is either far too generalised or unproven or both. There is talk of a political radicalisation of the working class in all capitalist countries albeit at an uneven level. There are statements such as 'Broad masses are beginning to see the winning of their demands as more and more connected with political change.' Questions immediately arise: How broad are the broad masses? What is the difference between these 'broad masses' and the 'mass workers vanguard' we used to talk about a few years ago? What is the concrete evidence of this broad mass radicalisation? Is it the massive electoral

(4)

victory of the Conservative Party in Britain that reflects this radicalisation? Or the defeat of the Union of the Left in France? Or the decline of the PCI vote and the electoral renewal (however partial) of Christian Democracy in Italy? Or the success of the 'creeping democratisation' in Spain and, for that matter in Portugal? And will the mass radicalisation in Germany be reflected by a defeat of the SPD? In other words when we talk about broad mass radicalisations we have to be very concrete. The fact that no major defeat has been inflicted on workers in capitalist Europe does not mean that there is automatically a mass radicalisation.

In my opinion the victory of bourgeois parties in election after election in Western Europe does signify a setback for workers. It reflects a certain political demoralisation and the lack of a credible socialist alternative. How this socialist alternative can be developed is not an unimportant question. It is simply rubbish to say that the forces inside the FI at the present time constitute a socialist alternative. Hence the need for a serious discussion on regroupment, frantions in the mass workers parties, an estimate of the evolution of these parties in the major capitalist states, etc.

The ED polemicises against the view that the strength of bourgeois democracy and its institutions/^{represent} an obstacle (I would contend a major obstacle) and a roadblock to the victory of the socialist revolution. It says the decisive factor is the betrayal of the bureaucracies of the workers movement. No one would dispute the fact that if the workers movement were led by revolutionaries or even centrists the possibilities of victory would be greatly enhanced. But to isolate one factor from the other is a bit foolish. For one important mechanism which the reformist bureaucracies utilise to sidetrack upsurges is precisely that of bourgeois democratic institutions. In their different ways Portugal, Spain and France have shown this over the last decade. Even in Portugal and Spain where there was no tradition of bourgeois democracy, the hold of its institutions was fairly tenacious. The reason for this was not simply the betrayals of the CP, SPs, centrists, ultralefts, etc. It was also the whole experience of Stalinism in the East. This point was stressed in both the theses on Socialist Democracy (printed as a pamphlet by the

first published in Critique Communiste in France, subsequently translated into English by the NLR ('Revolutionary Strategy in Europe') and to appear in book form (NLB) this autumn. The Mandel interview and the Socialist Democracy text had the makings of a proper European ^{document} on strategy for the European sections. But this option was clearly rejected.

REGROUPMENT

On regroupment, fusions and the like the ED attempts to face both ways. A close reading of the half dozen paragraphs on this question reveal the following:

(a) We avoid an abstract approach that relies simply on documents and statements of 'centrist organisations'. We also see how they are evolving. But

(b) We concretely assess the relationship of forces, the homogeneity and cohesion of these organisations, etc. In other words if they are larger than us, more homogenous we should not fuse? In other words fusion is a manoeuvre with centrists. In that case the definition of centrism and the distinction between centrists and revolutionaries becomes crucial.

(c) With groups claiming to be Trotskyist and 'reconstructing the FI' a genuine fusion is possible because of the possibilities of achieving agreement on the 'general programme', tasks and democratic centralism. This includes the OCI, but not the WRP.

(d) Fusions and regroupments can only be carried out on the basis ~~not~~ of the 'revolutionary marxist programme'. But is this the programme of the FI (i.e. the Transitional Programme) or a 'general programme' or what? For if it is the TP it excludes from the FI (or could be read in that way) those who do not agree with us on the class nature of the USSR. In which case is the fusion of the RMC and the SWP (USA) unprincipled. Or is it principled only because SWP(USA) is an overwhelming majority.

These points remain unclarified in the ED. In my opinion the work of the IMG on this question (eg Our Common Ground) should have been utilised to build the FI instead of polemicised against in a confused and ambiguous fashion.

The ED is thus abstract and general on the strategic level. Its concrete information on the size of unions, inflation, wages, anti-nuclear movement is very useful. But as a document to orient the sections it has only one thrust: make the turn!

(6)

This is clearly not sufficient.

My own view is that we should neither accept nor reject the the ED (I am totally opposed to rejecting the ~~ITP~~ or useful tips), but refer it back to the leadership of the FI and ask for it to be improved. Unless ofcourse a whole number of amendments are written and accepted.

WHY THE THESES ON SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT THEORETICAL GAIN FOR OUR MOVEMENT AND MUST BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT WORLD CONGRESS

The theses on Socialist Democracy (TSD) represent, in my opinion, a synthesis of all the strands within classical Marxism on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The theses were produced over two years ago. They have already been unanimously agreed by the Australian section. The Canadian comrades produced them as a pamphlet. Till recently there was no question about not putting these theses to a vote. If the majority of delegates reject the theses so be it. If amendments are put, fine. If there is an alternative let's discuss it and vote on it as well.

To not discuss what many comrades regard as one of the more useful theoretical statements produced by the FI since the war is not just absurd. It would leave our comrades disarmed in the face of Eurocommunists and ultralefts under the influence of Stalinist notions. ^{by Conference} IMG delegates should be mandated to raise this point when the agenda of the Congress is submitted for approval.

THE CASE OF HEDDA GARZA OR WHY THE QUESTION OF INTERNAL NORMS IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE FI AS A WHOLE

[* See my footnote at end of page 7, nlb.]

When I first read the report of the SWP(USA) Control Commission on the Hedda Garza case I was a bit shaken. Here was a comrade of the FI, a former member of a tendency in the SWP which had been expelled in 1973. She had been a leader of this tendency and before it a longstanding supporter of the SWP. For the last two years Hedda attempted to get back in the party. She was admitted as a candidate member, but the Branch executive decided that she should not be made a full member. The Control Commission was activated and supported the branch. The report of the Control Commission reveals a great deal.

(7)

about the internal functioning of the SWP(USA). Hedda's reply was not published in the SWP internal bulletin because she is no longer a member. Comrades who are members wrote in complaints and wanted to submit Hedda's reply as an Appendix. This was refused on the grounds that she was not a member (though another non-member, David Thorstad, who is hostile to the SWP had his critique of the SWP's policy on gay rights published in the Internal Bulletin.

Hedda Garza has now appealed to the FI. Her reply to the Control Commission has been received at our Centre. A study of it makes one feel that one is reading a Victor Serge novel of the Stalinist period. It is a horrendous document. What it reveals in this particular instance is that loyalty or adherence to the 'general programme' or the programme of revolutionary marxism is no guarantee that the loyal adhesionists will not make decisions which would make even a trade-union bureaucrat blush.

In order that comrades can study this document for themselves I am submitting it as an Appendix (though it might go in the next bulletin because of shortage of space).

The Hedda Garza case coupled with a number of reports we have received about expulsions in the Australian section would imply that at the very least a written discussion on inner-party democracy and norms is opened up in the International Discussion Bulletin. This is even more important since the ED suggests that fusion with organisations claiming to be Trotskyist has to achieve agreement on 'democratic centralist functioning nationally and internationally'. I agree that this is vital, but it might be worth starting by putting our own house in order.

[Footnote. Ali submitted only Garza's answer to the SWP Control Commission, not the CC report and Hedda's reply. nlb]

(X:PC)
(Return to Jack)

SOME OF THE THINGS THAT ARE WRONG WITH THE WORLD POLITICAL RESOLUTION - AND THEIR

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE IMG - A. Jones

Prefatory Note

Part Two of this document, 'Resolution for the election of delegates', is presented for vote and election of delegates to the IMG World Congress discussion and conference. It is based on the earlier 'Comments on some aspects of the World Political Resolution' by A. Jones.

Introduction

At the time of the May 1978 United Secretariat which adopted the draft World Political Resolution for the 11th World Congress a critique of that draft was produced by the present author. (See 'Comments on some aspects of the World Political Resolution' in IMG IDB May 1979).

The circumstances in which those comments were written - during three hours of a break in sessions of the United Secretariat and after receiving the draft document only one day previously, naturally meant that the criticisms made in the 'Comments' were by no means perfectly rounded out and formulated. Nor even, in the short time available, could their ideas and critiques be fully worked out even by the author - although this was done more fully in subsequent verbal presentations. However their essential line, and in particular the critique of the confusions and errors of the thesis of the draft resolution of the preponderance of the struggle in the imperialist countries in this phase of the international class struggle, has been fully confirmed and considerably strengthened by subsequent events. The second part of this present document, presented as a basis for election of delegates to the World Congress conference, is therefore a rounding out and updating of the original 'Comments' document.

Before this however, and in order to explain certain additions of substance to the original document, it is necessary to briefly examine some of the chief developments since May 1978 inside the Fourth International i.e. since the adoption of the draft World Political Resolution and production of the initial 'Comments' document.

Part 1. Developments in the International since the May 1978 United Secretariat

Three developments in the class struggle and the Fourth International since May 1978 are concretely crucial to the present discussions and positions. These are

- (i) The refutation by the class struggle of the thesis of the draft World Resolution of the preponderance of the struggle in the imperialist countries in this phase of the world revolution.
- (ii) The coming to occupy an absolutely central place in the situation of the International of the issue of the character of the revolutionary party.
- (iii) The formation of the United Secretariat Majority Caucus.

We will deal with them in that order.

(i) The interrelation of the sections of world revolution

We need not go into detail here on the point of the errors of the World Congress draft concerning the relation of the different sectors of the international class struggle. This is dealt with at length in the second part of this document. We need merely note that the analysis of the World Political Resolution has been thoroughly refuted by events. The draft World Political Resolution talks of

"The most important developments in the world political situation since the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International can be summarised as follows...

2. While the colonial and semicolonial sector remains highly explosive, the preponderant weight and impact of the class struggle in the imperialist countries continues to increase."(p3)

However while the World Political Resolution talks of 'the preponderant weight and impact of the class struggle in the imperialist countries continues to mount' the real world has seen Iran, the struggle in Africa, Nicaragua, Indochina, and what is

to come in Latin America. It is not a question of the World Political Revolution being refuted by the arguments of Jones but of being refuted by the real forces of the class struggle. This entire central thrust of the World Political Resolution is wrong and must be rejected. As however this position totally structures the document this cannot be done by altering one passage but only by a total reworking of the entire text - which to date the supporters of the thesis of preponderance have not done.

The analysis of the World Political Resolution of the Political situation should be rejected for this wrong analysis of the interrelation of the international class struggle alone.

(ii) The class character of the revolutionary party.

Since the May 1978 United Secretariat an issue even more important than the particular errors of the World Political Resolution has become centrally posed for every member and section of the Fourth International. It has now become clear that the issue of the character of the party, and therefore the very survival and future of the Fourth International, has become the single most important question confronting the World Congress and the FI. It is quite clear that a major programmatic and practical attack on the Marxist positions on the party and the integrity of our organisations is now being launched by forces within the International. If this attack is not defeated there will be no sections to carry out the turn or any other line at all.

In order to see just how important this issue is we may look at it in relation to the question of the thesis of the preponderance of the struggle in the imperialist countries in this phase of the international class struggle. This last issue is obviously very important indeed. However it is not in any sense an issue of programme. No one who believes that the struggle in the imperialist countries is preponderant today is breaking with any position of Trotskyism. They merely have a wrong analysis of a very important particular question of concrete analysis.

However the issue of the character of the party is an absolutely fundamental programmatic issue. It goes right to the heart of Marxism that revolutionaries have no interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole. This is the sole basis, and not by tricks, manoeuvres, and tactics, by which capitalism can be overthrown. Those who reject this class character of the party are breaking with fundamental positions of Marxism and Trotskyism. As we shall see, and as we repeat, without meeting and defeating these challenges to the character of the party the Fourth International will have no serious organisations capable of carrying out any line. On the contrary our organisations will be splits and wrecks.

These challenges to the Marxist position on the Party inside the Fourth International come from two sources - from the Bolshevik faction and from the so called 'Leninist Trotskyist Tendency' (which in reality is on many issues the anti-Leninist and anti-Trotskyist tendency and is in fact the 'adaptation to social democracy tendency')

Given their overlapping common positions on the character of the party it is no accident that the Bolshevik Faction and the so called LTT bloc together inside the International on the key questions of the organisation and of sections and work.

The most crude of these attacks launched on the Marxist position on the party is that by the Bolshevik Faction. This current, largely inspired by cde Moreno, has theorised the position that membership of the Marxist party demands not only agreement on revolutionary programme but also agreement on at least the chief tasks, or perspectives, of the period. Where there is not agreement on these perspectives, or tasks, no basis exists for party loyalty.

The Bolshevik Faction puts this position into effect with all its consequences. Its loyalty to particular organisations is therefore purely of a tactical character wherever it has differences on tasks. Where it considers it advantageous (for example in most of Latin America), the Bolshevik faction splits organisations, expells 'dissidents', wrecks sections etc. Where it consider it more tactically advantageous because of the relation of forces (for example in Europe or Mexico), it remains within other sections on a pragmatic basis. Because membership of the sections and loyalty to it, must, according to the Bolshevik Faction, be conditional on agreement with tasks of the period and perspectives, it disloyally manoeuvres behind the backs of organisations of the Fourth International it has disagreement with on these matters - as

it did with the IMG in respect to the WSL in Britain. The practical character of the Bolshevik Faction is therefore that of a marauding gang which goes through the International destroying organisations wherever it can. The very survival of a whole series of sections and cadres of the International depends on the defeat of these positions and methods of the Bolshevik Faction. It is precisely for this reason that it is quite meaningless to talk of making the turn or any other line without defending the character of the Fourth International and its sections against this attack.

Not so blatant but almost equally dangerous are the revisions of the so called Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. This holds the position that organisations can only be united in functioning and politics on the basis of agreement on history. Their continual demand is for the production and voting on 'balance sheets'. They condemn the ex-LTF and ex-INT for (correctly) uniting to discuss and adopt documents on current tasks and politics and not drawing up a balance sheet of the International - on which there would naturally be no agreement. The so called LTT have even invented a so called 'Bolshevik principle' whereby discussions must start with balance sheets and history - although, fairly naturally since this position is rubbish, they are totally unable to point out where in the history of the Bolshevik Party this so called 'principle' was actually applied. Presumably also this 'principle' is intended as a condemnation of the Congresses and Conferences of the Fourth International when Trotsky was alive when no such procedure was followed.

The consequences of this ^{idiot} nonsense of the so called LTT is clear - and equally as disastrous for the International as the Bolshevik Faction. Serious working class revolutionary parties, precisely because they represent the interests of the working class as a whole and not sectoral groups within it, will never have agreement on history - particularly living history. This flows from the very nature of the fact that there are differences within the working class as well as between that class and alien social forces. For that reason serious revolutionaries, as opposed to bureaucrats and sectarian chatters, never attempt to impose a uniform view of history on the Party as this would merely ensure its permanent division into competing tendencies, factions, and groups instead of uniting the Party for the important tasks of the class struggle. The starting point is current tasks and not the past.

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Indeed in many circumstances it is correct not even individually to raise issues of history - although of course people have a formal right to do this. Lenin never, neither in 1917 or after, attempted to draw up any balance sheet of the pre-1917 policy of the Bolsheviks of the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' as against Trotsky's 'permanent revolution'. Trotsky never made any position on these pre-1917 differences on the character of the Russian Revolution a basis for membership of the Left Opposition etc. Hard as it may be for sectarian factionalists and cliquists to understand, the basis of the positions of the Party is agreement on now and not on past positions. In a functioning healthy internal regime, of the type we need to create, there will in fact be continual changing alignments with comrades at one moment allied with some comrades on particular questions and at the next point in agreement with a quite different set of comrades and quite possibly in disagreement with comrades they were previously aligned with. This is the real Leninist method of party functioning as opposed to the abomination of permanent factionalism and cliquism.

Such a correct method, which is the only one which corresponds to the interests of the working class, is absolutely opposed to the whole method of dividing the party on history of the so called LTT. As we have seen the party will never be agreed on history. To make such questions the basis for currents and party decisions is to ensure the permanent division of the organisation into tendencies, factions, and cliques. Instead of leading the working class forward, in the real tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, the party will be turned to interminable internal wrangles and fights over history. Doubtless the 'LTT' will claim it is 'improving' on Lenin and Trotsky. What a pity the LTT was not around to correct the Bolsheviks!

In reality of course the 'LTT' do not improve but destroy Bolshevik methods. The organisational methods of the so called LTT are not those of proletarian revolutionaries but of petty-bourgeois dilettantes. They would paralyse and destroy

the sections of the Fourth International just as much as the Bolshevik Faction.

It is not the so called LTT but the ex LTF and IMT who acted in the real Bolshevik principles when they precisely put forward documents for positive lines by the Fourth International and did not divide the membership on the basis of history. No matter what disagreements with the particular documents presented the method of acting by the ex-LTF and ex-IMT should be 100% defended and held up as a model of correct functioning. All contributions to the debate should follow the same method.

To safeguard the revolutionary character of the Fourth International, to safeguard the unity, integrity, and existence of its sections against the revisionist challenges from the Bolshevik faction and the 'LTT' is today the most vital task confronting the Fourth International. As a fundamental defence of an issue of programme it is the precondition for any line to be adopted by the International.

(iii) The Formation of the United Secretariat Majority Caucus

It was evident from the moment of its formation that the establishment of the United Secretariat Majority Caucus would have profound implications for many sections of the Fourth International - including the IMG. There are today many differences inside the Fourth International on central questions of world politics - Kampuchea, Cuba, Socialist Democracy, Nicaragua. There is also agreement on a number of very important questions - including the necessity of a major organisational turn of the forces of the Fourth International into the industrial working class.

Faced with this alignment there were appropriate organisational ways to deal with this situation. There is nothing whatever, for example, to stop currents with different political views on key questions of world politics expressing their agreement on the turn to industry via clear resolutions and points while at the same time continuing political debate, and if necessary struggle, on the other issues. Such a procedure would have been entirely principled.

Instead however a totally different procedure was adopted by sections of the international leadership. They in reality put together a bloc on one issue only - the 'turn to industry' as a line. This is the reality of the U.Sec Majority caucus. Its members totally disagree with each other on fundamental issues of world politics. Indeed one component, the leadership of the SWP in the United States, goes so far as to accuse another component, that of the supporters of the U.Sec majority position on Kampuchea, of crossing class lines under conditions of war. It is hard to think of a more serious charge! Yet this caucus maintains, and justifies, its existence by one issue essentially - the turn to industry.

As we have seen there was no need for such a caucus to be formed if this were really what was at stake. A short simple resolution could have been drawn up motivating the turn and put to the World Congress. This would actually have got far greater agreement, and therefore been more effective as a way of getting through the turn, than the present procedure as many more people would have supported such a resolution than will support the caucus.

In reality therefore the formation of this caucus cannot be justified or explained, by the need to fight for a turn to the industrial working class. It only makes sense to form such a caucus if something more is performed by this formation.

What this something else is in fact quite clear. In the first place the formation of the caucus blocks discussion and prevents people expressing disagreement with other aspects of the documents than the turn. 'The documents, the whole documents, and nothing but the documents' becomes the banner of such a formation. Obscure other political questions for 'the turn' is the reality of such a caucus. This in fact has already begun to be put into operation inside the International. Those issues which would cause sharp differences inside the caucus - Socialist Democracy, Kampuchea, Cuba - are shunted for vote off the agenda of the World Congress. In reality the objective needs of the Fourth International and the international class struggle begin to be distorted by the internal needs of this caucus. In sections, for example the German, attempts are made, backed by the international leadership, to construct leaderships based on 'the turn'. The result is inevitably that such 'unity', not based on clear politics on vital questions, will come apart at the first serious test. The U.Sec Majority caucus is an example of combinationism.

Such formations however have a deadly logic. By agreeing not to seriously raise for

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vote a whole series of issues, those with more correct positions in such combinations in fact surrender their politics and go over to wrong positions either by omission or commission. This is in fact what is happening inside the supporters of the U. Sec majority caucus. Those comrades who have more correct positions on key questions began to adapt to the wrong positions. This is done in the best cases simply by refusing to fight and in the worst cases by actually adopting false positions.

To put clear names on it we consider that the essential dictating politics of the U. Sec majority caucus are those of the leadership of the SWP of the United States. Naturally we do not blame these comrades for fighting for their positions as strongly as they can. If they can put their essential policies through in documents, and block a serious struggle on other issues via the mechanisms involved with the caucus, that is not a political concession on their part - indeed from their viewpoint it is a very correct action as they want to prevent the International adopting positions which they very genuinely consider would be deeply incorrect. The cdes of the leadership of the SWP are very honestly fighting for their political positions and we have no complaints in this regard on that score. Where the incorrect political concessions are coming from is not from the cdes of the SWP leadership but from those in the caucus with them.

So there is no misunderstanding on this, in the light of previous debates in the International, it should be clearly stated that this fight is not about some 'original sin' of the SWP whereby it must always be fought. One of the longest fights the present author was involved in, and one he considers one of the best things he supported vigorously, was a long fight inside the International against any split with the SWP and for the restoration of something approaching correct organisational relations with it. The SWP is one of the greatest individual assets and strengths of the Fourth International and only a fool would not realise that there is a tremendous amount to be learnt from it by every section of the International.

But no matter what the strengths of the SWP, the Fourth International as a whole is stronger and better politically than any of its single national organisations. The SWP can be, and is, wrong on particular questions just as every section of the International, and even the International as a whole, can be. Why we should oppose adopting some key positions of the SWP leadership today is not because of a great red bogey of 'SWPism' but because concretely at present on certain major questions it has wrong positions which must be rejected. It is vital to get this in the correct perspective if both hysterical and unprincipled factionalism, of the type which was seen from the IMT, or wrong political adaptation, of the type we have seen in the last period, are to be fought against. It is as necessary today as ever to fight inside the Fourth International for correct organisational principles and norms - including with the SWP. This must not be confused with political concessions. If this confusion is made then very serious consequences will result and forces will be paralysed from fighting for serious and vital issues.

This can be shown very clearly by looking at a key issue we have already outlined facing the Fourth International - the defence of the existence of a key number of its sections, and of the integrity of the International as a whole, against the attacks represented by the Bolshevik Faction and the 'LTT'. Although the SWP, despite our sharp criticism of certain actions on this issue, has in practice a regime which is qualitatively different to that of the Bolshevik Faction, or the so called LTT, it on a theoretical level makes concessions to these currents which disarm the International in front of them. Indeed at the level of theory, as opposed to practice, the SWP in a number of its documents actually adopts identical positions to those of the Bolshevik Faction.

This is shown most clearly where the SWP spells out the criteria for the basis of party membership. It states it is necessary for membership of the party to not merely agree with its revolutionary programme but also to agree with its perspectives. It is declared that it is impossible to have loyalty to an organisation on the basis of its programme if there is disagreement with its perspective.

"Without agreement on the perspectives of the party, it is impossible to expect loyal functioning." (Proposal for Fusion with the Revolutionary Marxist Committee by Larry Seigle - adopted by the 1977 Convention of the SWP)

This position of course necessarily determines also the criteria for fusion with another organisation. For fusion to take place there must be agreement, not only from a tactical but from a principled point of view, not only on a revolutionary programme but also on perspectives. The SWP justifies even splits among supporters of the Fourth International on that basis.

"Agreement on general principles, even a agreement on the current programme of the Fourth International, doesn't necessarily mean that the principled basis exists for fusion into a single organisation. That can only be accomplished on the basis of substantial agreement on the specific and concrete tasks and line in a particular country... Without agreement on the perspectives of the party, it is impossible to expect loyal functioning." (Ibid)

This position is in the first place a revision of Marxism on the position of the party. It concretely undermines the entire framework of the Marxist analysis that the party 'has no interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole', and therefore that differences can exist not merely between the proletariat and other classes - which does justify different organisations, but also within the working class itself - where the revolutionary task is to wage a tendency or faction fight but also to struggle to retain the unity of the organisation.

Concretely also this entire position is false and disproved. On a modest scale we may note that the ex-tendency/LTF for nine years in the IMG expressed strong disagreement with the IMGs perspectives - indeed vigorously fought against them and put totally different positions on perspectives. Are we therefore to conclude that from those cdes it was 'impossible to expect loyal functioning'? On the contrary the principled character of the comrades position was shown by the fact that they retained loyalty to the organisation precisely because they correctly placed programmatic positions, including membership of the Fourth International, as more important than disagreements on perspectives and they based their loyalty on this.

It is another example the situation if there is a fusion between the forces of the OCRFI and those of the Fourth International. As far as we know there is not one single person in the IMG who agrees with the perspectives of the supporters of the Bulletin group in Britain, or one single supporter of the Bulletin group who agrees with the perspectives of the IMG. However it might well be the case that members of the Bulletin group would, correctly, see the step involved in, as they would term it, the reconstruction of the Fourth International as being far more important than the differences in Britain and they would very loyally be in favour of unification of their forces with those of the IMG in the framework of unity of the OCRFI and the Fourth International. Would we consider such unification ruled out because the cdes could not be loyal to the organisation because of differences on perspectives? On the contrary we should take it as a sign of very considerable political maturity, making for very loyal operation, that the cdes correctly placed the historic tasks of building the revolutionary International above perspectives in Britain.

Of course it is necessary to test out in practice that loyal functioning is possible. This is why fusions involve joint work as preparation. It is also why from a tactical, but not a programmatic, point of view a fusion is not a 'split in reverse'. If someone is already in an organisation you know that loyal functioning is possible whereas in a fusion this must be established. However this is a question of tactics, an issue of practical steps in making fusions and maintaining the unity of organisations, and it is not a programmatic position.

Indeed in general it is one of the highest displays of loyalty to a programme and an organisation, and an expression of real political maturity, when a minority precisely does understand that the basis of the organisation is programme and it retains its loyalty despite disagreements with perspectives. Seigle's position is not merely incorrect theoretically but, because of that, a direct threat against internal democracy as it denies the possibility of loyal minorities who disagree with the perspectives of the organisation but agree with its programme. Any minority which disagrees with perspectives is by this position must be automatically considered disloyal - with all this implies for its position and practical attitude to it.

Furthermore, to see how false this whole position of the SWP is, we may note that

It actually vindicates Stalin's attitude to factions in the party - and concretely to excluding the Left Opposition from the Comintern. Stalin's argument was precisely that Trotsky, because he disagreed with the perspectives of the Third International after 1923, was disloyal. Do we conclude that Trotsky, because for ten years he disagreed with the perspectives of the Third International before the split of 1933, was in fact disloyal to it and his entire fight as a faction for readmission on the basis of internal democracy was a fraud and unprincipled because "without agreement on the perspectives of the party it is impossible to expect loyal functioning"? This would indeed be a radical innovation into the Trotskyist analysis but it is the only one that flows from Seigle's position - although of course he doesn't intend it.

Finally of course who is the embodiment of, and charged with carrying out, the perspectives of the party? The leadership of course. Disagreement with perspectives will therefore necessarily mean disagreement with the leadership. But if disagreement with perspectives means disloyalty, and disagreement with the leadership flows from disagreement with perspectives, then opposition to the leadership also begins to be disloyal. This is the only conclusion that one could draw from a serious application of the SWP's position. Fortunately on this the SWP does not draw out all the implications - although it must be said that in the Hedda Garza case a beginning is being made on this.

While in practice the SWP, unlike the Bolshevik Faction, does not draw out all the implications of its position nevertheless to reject this position on the party, to reaffirm that membership of the organisation is conditional on agreement with revolutionary programme and not on agreement with perspectives (no matter whether these are disguised as 'tasks of the period', 'fundamental tactics' etc) is a life and death question for the Fourth International if it is to become an authentic mass workers revolutionary party.

This is crucially posed also in Britain. In the IMG, under the pressure of the logic of the U.S. Sec Majority Caucus, comrades are in fact beginning to adopt these false positions on the party. Particularly in a country with the sectarian traditions of Britain it would be correct, if it were necessary, to divide the organisation from top to bottom in a fight on this question of the character of the party. Indeed the implications of taking a false position on the character of the party would be so serious that it would take precedence over every other issue. It is a question of programme and by its very nature supercedes all questions of tactics. Indeed virtually no other question more fundamental than the character of the party itself can be imagined.

This furthermore applies not just to the struggle against the concepts and actions of the Bolshevik Faction but also to those of the 'LTT'. If we may say that the Bolshevik Faction is the putting into practice of some of the ideas of the SWP on organisation, then we may say that, unfortunately, the so called LTT is the putting into a theorised form of some of the organisational practice and concepts of the French section - although of course this theorisation makes the situation qualitatively worse than merely having a wrong practice. One of the chief reasons for the prolonged factionalisation and cliquisation of the ICR, the inability to overcome differences, is precisely the whole rubbish of 'self-criticisms', positions on history, demands for 'balance sheets' as a principle etc. as a method of organisation. The result of this approach, utilised in the ICR, is that the cadre can never be united around a line for the class struggle as they are instead concentrated on fights and divisions on history and the past, and currents have the utmost difficulty in changing their positions because they are continually forced either to justify their past positions or faced with implicit or explicit demands for 'self criticisms in the form of 'balance sheets as a principle' etc. Without breaking from this entire method the ICR will be permanently inflicted with permanent factionalism and cliquisation.

Just how vital this issue is for the IMG we may consider by looking at our own experience. One of the very real achievements of the IMG, something that really does positively distinguish it from many sections of the International, is the way in which it fought itself out from a prolonged faction fight in the years 1970-76. To see just how successful, and vital, that was let us assume for the moment that differences will exist for the 1979/80 conference of the IMG. In these no one will

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even remember, let alone care, whether the people involved in the different currents were in 'New Course', 'tendency B', or whatever. Furthermore the line up will be totally different to these old differences. This was not achieved through 'homogenisation' by expulsions either.

This is a tremendous step forward for the IMG in a country with the sectarian traditions of Britain. Put bluntly we consider we have precisely nothing to learn on these questions from an organisation with the internal situation of the ICR - of those who have other inimitable methods of removing 'unhomogeneous' elements.

Imagine however we had engaged in the whole rubbish of demanding balance sheets as a principle, people making 'self-criticisms' and the like. We would still be divided over issues such as the (wrong) position taken by the present author on the General Strike slogan prior to 1973, the issue of the 'non-bourgeois character of labourism' advocated by some comrades, 'breaking Labour's monopoly of representation' and the like. On none of these to date has anyone ever written a balance sheet - and quite right because if they had we would still be divided into a series of squabbling cliques and factions as with the internal situation of the ICR over a long period. Later doubtless historians will sort all this out - and arrive at the correct conclusion that no current was 'right' and the others 'wrong' but that the final position of the organisation was better than any of its component parts. But that is not our task. Our task, that of a political organisation and leadership, was to unite the cadre if this was possible on tasks, to allow new divisions (if necessary) to take place along totally different lines etc. This approach was thoroughly justified and correct. Without that putting of politics first the IMG would be split up by innumerable de facto factions and cliques. For the IMG, the FI, or anyone else, to adopt organisational 'principles' as outlined theoretically by the LTT, or in practice by the French section, would be a disaster of the first magnitude.

On the contrary, for those who insist on voting on history, balance sheets on principles, self-criticism etc our clearly confirmed view is that on the issue of internal norms and functioning, unlike most other questions, the IMG has actually got something to teach some other sections of the International.

In short not merely at the level of political analysis of the world situation but also in the struggle to defend the organisational character of the FI and the IMG, and our gains in cadre, a key fight will be against the situation in the International created by the formation of the U.Sec Majority caucus.

We will now turn to the positive resolution for voting.

Part Two - Resolution for the election of delegates

The July 1979 United Secretariat took a decision which will clarify the debate in the International by deciding to take two reports on the World Political Resolution. The first will be on the analysis of the world political situation. The second on tasks.

The present document, which is based on 'Comments on some aspects of the World Political Resolution' by A. Jones, and updated in light of the points in the first part of this document, refers to the first of these reports - i.e. on the analysis of the world political situation and the related programmatic positions outlined above. It calls for the alteration of the World Political Resolution, or the drafting of a new document, including the following points.

1. On the relative weight of the struggle in the imperialist countries and the colonial and semi-colonial states.

The World Political Resolution stresses throughout that the weight of the class struggle in the imperialist countries is 'preponderant'. However nowhere in the text are two different points concerning this sorted out. Although apparently pedantic the distinction involved is in fact, as we shall see, of considerable practical importance.

The first point is the historic statement concerning the significance of the struggle in the imperialist countries. This is that finally, in the historic

perspective of the development of the class struggle, the struggle in the imperialist centres will be decisive. The world revolution will not be successful, and in the final analysis every gain could be overturned, until power has been conquered in the advanced imperialist countries - above all in the United States itself. This sense of 'preponderant' is of course true at all times even when the colonial revolution, or the political revolution, is making the greatest strides forward and the class struggle in the imperialist centres is most stagnant - for example in the mid 1950s and early 1960s.

There is however a second more conjunctural sense of 'preponderant'. This concerns the relation and weight of the struggle in the imperialist centres at a particular point in time.

This distinction is not merely semantic quibbling but important from the practical point of view of constructing the International. While the historically decisive role of the imperialist countries will not alter we must be far more cautious and concrete as regards any conjunctural assessments.

Concretely the draft World Political Resolution puts forward an incorrect position regarding the interrelation between the different sectors of the world revolution in the current phase of the international class struggle. It asserts not merely as an historical statement but as a conjunctural feature of the situation the 'preponderance' of the class struggle in the imperialist countries,

" The most important developments in the world political situation since the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International can be summarised as follows...2. While the colonial and semicolonial sector remains highly explosive, the preponderant weight and impact of the class struggle in the imperialist countries upon the world revolution continues to increase - a process which began in 1968." (p3)

Not merely did the Fourth International not analyse the situation in this fashion after 1968 - the World Resolution adopted almost unanimously in 1969 spoke of 'revolutionary struggles in the imperialist countries themselves occupying a more important place in this worldwide process today than in the last twenty years' and not of 'preponderant weight' of the struggle in the imperialist countries - but this conjunctural analysis is both confused theoretically and concretely false - as the most important advanced struggles in the world since 1975 (Angola, Southern Africa, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Nicaragua) convincingly demonstrate.

From the point of view both of its objective importance and the possibilities of the construction of the Fourth International we should see the importance not only of the colonial countries in general but in particular of the situation in Latin America. The combined crises of the 'Cuban' currents, the Maoist influenced forces, and the bourgeois nationalists creates major openings for building Trotskyist organisations. We have already seen spectacular growth of organisations of the Fourth International in Mexico and Columbia which are, in proportion to the population of these countries, quite as significant, indeed probably more so, than any growth in Europe and other imperialist countries. While there are great difficulties in consolidating the gains the election results in Peru also shows quite spectacular openings. An important development of our organisations has also taken place in Central America.

This growth of organisations occurs in a context where, as the World Political Resolution correctly analyses, an increased instability of the Latin American dictatorships is occurring and the class struggle is beginning to recover from its defeats - a process which will be accelerated by Iran and Nicaragua. The combination of the basic underlying economic, social and political instability of Latin America, a new rise of class struggle, major crises of alternative poles in the workers' movement, and growth of our sections, poses the possibilities of gains for the Fourth International in Latin America which will be at least as great, and in fact probably far greater, than those in the imperialist countries.

Furthermore the bourgeoisies in that continent, as in Africa, are far weaker than in the imperialist countries and the possibilities of the class struggle assuming more advanced forms than in Europe today exists. The General Strike in Peru in May 1978 for example, not to speak of the insurrection in Nicaragua (or Iran to take another colonial example), are more advanced than those seen anywhere in

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Europe - with the partial exception of Portugal. The World Political Resolution by not clearly distinguishing between the historically true statements concerning the imperialist countries and the conjunctural situation can disarm the International in the face of absolutely major events. This applies also to the other colonial countries where the objective possibility for major gains exists - for example Iran.

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This point concerning the relation of the struggle in the imperialist countries and the colonial and semi-colonial states is particularly important precisely as the tasks outlined by the World Political Resolution in gaining a base in the working class are achieved. As yet, and of course not as an historic trend, consciousness on the colonial revolution is not as high among trade union cadres and workers in the reformist organisations in most countries as in student layers and among young workers who are not as yet really playing a key role in the mass organisations. Without clarity on our part we could come seriously under the pressure of trends accomodating to imperialism and finding rationalisations for this in quoting historical truths concerning the predominance of the revolution in the imperialist countries. There have in the past of the International been trends which showed such symptoms in a profound form - the Healyites and the Lambertists. We should state clearly that penetration into the working class, and in particular the reformist organisations, demands heightening our propoganda and education on international and anti-imperialist struggles. Confusions in the World Political Resolution do not help on this.

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This wrong position becomes all the more serious when it is coupled with second key weaknesses in the document. The draft World Political Resolution proposes a decisive turn of the forces of the Fourth International into the industrial working class. It links this with continued and repeated assertions that this turn should be aimed at constructing organisations capable not merely of taking up economic issues but of campaigning also on the most important national and international questions of social oppression and politics.

Unfortunately, in addition to weaknesses in the concrete tasks it proposes, nowhere in this document is there any clear explanation of what the relationship of these two requirements is. Concrete campaigns are proposed on questions in addition to wages, jobs, and cuts in social service and securities. But the their significance in relation to any basic strategy, and to the requirements for establishing working class power, are not clearly explained.

In politics however, as always, 'necessities' that are not explained and justified carry no long term weight. If it is not seen as a practical necessity then taking up the central political issues, the interests of the oppressed, and the colonial struggle, will rapidly be downplayed no matter how many times documents finish with ringing pronouncements, and practical proposals, to the contrary. The absences in the draft World Political Resolution therefore, regardless of the intentions of its authors, opens it up, particularly in the imperialist countries, to economic interpretations and orientations. No matter how its proponents intend it that is actually the distortions that will occur.

In the context of important advances of colonial revolution which will undoubtedly occur in the coming period, a failure to seriously organise to take openings in the colonial and semi-colonial states and a wrong consciousness in the imperialist countries would be a very dangerous combination for the International - particularly one in which a very large number of members are in the imperialist countries and therefore subject to inevitable pressures of them. It is not a matter that the sections, and the FI as a whole, may empirically act correctly when faced with these developments. It is the fact that the World Political Resolution does not help prepare them for what is going to take place and therefore does not aid them - and could even disorient some forces.

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Even before such struggles in the colonial countries however the lack of clarity on these issues in the text could have dangerous consequences. It is already obvious that not merely issues of distance but of the distribution of the weight of forces of the International make many problems for relations between the sections in the imperialist countries and the centre, and the comrades in colonial countries. Even where we have major forces, in Latin America, problems of lack of communication are evident. With comrades in Africa, South and East Asia, and the Arab East, where our forces are smaller and problems of distance and resources even greater, these problems are still more acute. This combination poses great objective difficulties

even if we had an absolutely correct line but they will be immensely multiplied by any lack of clarity politically. The 'imperialist-centric' character of the document and its failure to separate out historic and more conjunctural questions will make this situation worse if it is not corrected. Sorting out this issue is therefore not a semantic purely conceptual question but a very important one to orient the International most correctly to take hold of the openings in the colonial countries, for vital tasks of solidarity in the imperialist states, and for relations between the International centre, sections in the imperialist countries and sections in the colonial states.

2. The ruling classes in the imperialist and the colonial countries

The reasons for these weaknesses in the draft World Political Resolution are in fact the same in their root. The document violates the elementary Leninist, and Marxist, principle that the class struggle is not waged by only one class but by at least two, and that a political line, and assessment of the situation, cannot be derived solely from an analysis of the situation of the working class and oppressed alone but only from the interrelation of all classes. Nowhere in the document is there any serious analysis of the situation of the ruling class and of its reserves and weapons. The chief instrument of the ruling class, the labour bureaucracy, appears suspended in mid air with no real base in the realities of capitalist society.

This issue is not a small one but on the contrary, in particular in relation to the imperialist countries, involves questions of analysis which go right back to the Russian Revolution and the founding of the Communist International - and which were strongly reaffirmed by the Fourth International at its reunification in 1963. As Trotsky put it,

" the conquest of power by the proletariat in countries which have entered the path of capitalist development very late in the day, like our country (Russia), is easier than in countries with an extensive bourgeois history and a higher level of culture." (Trotsky - Through What Stage Are We Passing ?)

Or in the words of the 1963 reunification document of the Fourth International Dynamics of World Revolution Today,

" The crisis of leadership exists, of course, in the colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as in the advanced countries. Many defeated or aborted revolutions bear witness to this crisis - from the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 to the more recent defeats in Guatemala and Iraq. But in the possible outcome of the struggle, a big difference is evident between inadequate leadership in a backward country and similar leadership in an imperialist country: the enemy facing the working population is immeasurably stronger in the latter." (Emphasis in the original)

Therefore

" the opposition which they (the working class in the advanced imperialist states) have to be overcome in these countries is immeasurably stronger than in the colonial and semicolonial world. The weakness of the enemy in the backward countries has opened the possibility of coming to power even with a blunted instrument. The strength of the enemy in the imperialist countries demands a tool of much greater perfection." (Dynamics of World Revolution Today p29)

It is this failure to integrate a basic Marxist analysis of the differential strengths and capacity for resistance of the ruling classes in the imperialist and colonial countries that accounts for both the major weaknesses and errors already outlined in the draft World Political Resolution

- the much greater weakness of the ruling classes in the colonial than in the imperialist countries is the reason why developments of crises such as Iran and Nicaragua develop to the point they do. No ruling classes in imperialist countries are as rotted and as politically inflexible as those which were linked to the Shah

or Samozza or of other colonial ruling classes. The difference between the struggle in the imperialist countries and the colonial countries, in the coming period, is not that there will be no major working class struggles in the former, on the contrary there will be, but that the ruling class has much less capacity for resistance in the colonial countries. The class struggle in these states will therefore assume more advanced forms and go closer to the seizure of power - i.e. Iran and Nicaragua are not freaks but indicate the pattern of what is to come.

- the much greater strength of the ruling classes in the imperialist countries demands a 'tool of much greater perfection' to overthrow it than has been displayed in the colonial revolution or even, by Lenin and Trotsky's own analysis, in the Russian Revolution itself. Dynamics of World Revolution Today asserted in 1963 among the tasks of confronting "the powerful and experienced bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries" that the working class could only achieve victory under a genuine revolutionary Marxist leadership which was able to establish unity of action inside the ranks of the proletariat; to mobilise to the fullest extent the revolutionary potentialities of the working class; to out manoeuvre a very astute and supple capitalist class leadership; to defeat the labour bureaucracy; and to win over a part and neutralise another part of the petty-bourgeoisie without surrendering its own class objectives.

Although particular formulas of Dynamics could be criticised - it fails to integrate sufficiently Trotsky's analysis of the role of the labour bureaucracy as the decisive defence of bourgeois power - nevertheless this analysis correctly outlines some of the chief tasks which have to be accomplished by the working class in the seizure of power in an imperialist country. Although the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries are today weakened, particularly economically and socially, compared to the situation of 1963, let alone 1917, they are still qualitatively stronger than the ruling classes of any colonial country. Furthermore, thanks to the role of labour bureaucracies, the political decline of the strength of the ruling classes of the imperialist countries progresses more slowly than their economic and social decline.

~~This reality of struggle in the imperialist countries determines that the classical Leninist formulas of the necessity of constructing organisations capable of taking up all aspects of social and political oppression, both nationally and internationally, is not a moral issue. It is one determined by the very nature of the revolutionary struggle itself and applies even more in the advanced imperialist countries than it did in the Russian revolution itself.~~

The spontaneist and 'movementist' critique of Leninism, and the differences between Russia and the advanced imperialist countries, gets it precisely the wrong way round. The differences between Russia and the advanced imperialist countries ensure that the revolution in the latter will have to be far more organisationally centralised, developed in taking up all aspects of social and political oppression, far more developed politically and theoretically, far more proletarian led, and in a word more Leninist and not less, than was the revolution in Russia itself.

3. A World-wide tactic of the construction of the Class Struggle Left Wing?

The World Political Resolution stresses among tasks the question of the construction of the class struggle left wing. This is certainly a key strategic task in the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and most imperialist countries. It is also applicable in many key colonial countries.

However this is a world political resolution. In very many cases it does not apply. Does someone seriously propose that it is the correct tactic in the workers states where one third of the worlds population lives? (and in what mass organisations incidentally in these countries - the state controlled unions, the ruling CPs - should we be building it?) Is it the correct tactic in Zimbabwe or Lebanon - which are not unimportant struggles to say the least? Was it the correct tactic in the Vietnam war?

A world-wide tactic of the construction of the class struggle left wings would be a quite ridiculous generalisation and it is to be hoped that no one in the International would seriously defend it. However unfortunately the introduction to the document, and sections elsewhere, do pose such a formula. In analysing

all forces
yes -
workers
is a key

the appearance of a vanguard of radicalised workers (p1 pt 4) which is indeed a universal characteristic of the present period, developing not only in the imperialist countries but in the colonial ones and even in the workers states, the first accusation levelled at them is "this heterogeneous layer of the working class has not yet been able to organise a class struggle left wing in the labour movement."

Unions cover another

So apparently this entire layer of workers, in all countries, should have been constructing class struggle left wings. This is stupid. The point concerning the fact that such vanguard workers cannot spontaneously find a correct way forward for the masses, which requires a vanguard party, is the point which needs to be made and not an accusation concerning a specific tactic.

workers 1907 party

For example our criticisms in Zimbabwe are about illusions in the role of Muzorewa, Nkomo, Mugabe and relations with the bourgeoisie, and acceptance of the limitations they place on the struggle, and not at all primarily on their failure 'to organise class struggle left wings'. Similarly in Lebanon was the real problem of the fighters of the PLO their failure to organise a class struggle left wing? Is this the correct tactic for the workers in Poland radicalised out of the struggles of 1970 and 1976?

Any suggestion of advocacy of a general world wide tactic of the class struggle left wing is not merely wrong but would make the Fourth International look ridiculous - rather like those sects who are the more definite concerning the line in a country the less they know about it. To put such a universal tactic in such a confused way in a world resolution is an unwarranted generalisation. Furthermore even in the imperialist countries we must note that crucial as this tactic is as follows future developments in the class struggle can change it at least as regards its forms.

To make the errors in this whole argument of the World Political Resolution clear we may merely remember, as already mentioned, that one third of the worlds population lives in workers states.

4. 'Regroupment'

The Political Resolution correctly outlines the chief openings here at this particular moment in time. " (1) The unification of groupings that accept the programme of Trotskyism in general but maintain differences as to its application on certain key points. (2) Establishing fraternal relations with groupings that do not claim to be Trotskyist but that are evolving along lines that may eventually make fusion possible on a principled basis." (p28) It then outlines appropriate tactics which, provided allowance is made for national variations, are suitable for dealing with these groupings.

the new

Unfortunately however nowhere in the text is there any indication that anything other than these two categories exist. To judge from the text one would assume that the world to the left of the reformists was composed only of Trotskyists and centrists. While this may be true conjuncturally it is not at all an historically or theoretically correct position. Trotsky was clear that there could be an authentically revolutionary forces which were not Trotskyist. This general position was of considerable importance for the Fourth International at the time of the Cuban Revolution, and with the evolution of Malcolm X, and comrade Cannon correctly drew the attention of the International to reaffirming this position in the process leading to reunification in 1963. In this future this position can again be of considerable significance - particularly with the evolution of currents coming out of the mass parties. While the World Resolution should of course concentrate on the immediate openings it should however also briefly reassert our general position. This is important both theoretically and to arm our cadres for future developments.

Currents in the masses

5. The currents inside the mass parties

The document correctly lays great stress on the possibility of opposition currents emerging in the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. However the somewhat unilateral statements in the document, and its too great theoretical generalisation of particular and conjunctural developments, obscures the character of such currents, the issues producing them, and therefore necessary methods of approach, problems, and tactics towards them - something rendered more difficult to grasp by

the imperialo-centric characteristics of the document remarked on earlier. One rather gets the impression that these oppositions are likely to develop out of the class collaborationist policy of the reformist parties in relation to austerity programmes and economic questions.

In fact none of the most developed oppositions which have emerged in the mass parties have been propelled in a way which is simply a direct product of the rise of struggles against austerity programmes. This is particularly the case with oppositions in the CPs, for example in Spain, where a crucial element is of course relations with the Soviet bureaucracy and developments in Eastern Europe. In the French CP a current such as that associated with Althusser, and all the others whether right or left, emerged out of a crisis of general political line of the CP associated with its tactics for the Union of the Left and the elections and not simply out of a rise of workers struggles - even although of course the latter provided the conditions for its existence. In the case of left social democratic currents that in the British Labour Party, with its figure head of Benn and its chief theorists people such as Stuart Holland and ex-Trotskyist Ken Coates, was influenced in its base and theorists by international developments (French and Italian SPs, Allende, left liberal wings in the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe) over and above direct upsurges of economic workers struggles.

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class
struggle*
This question is very crucial in the way we deal with such currents. It is impossible to deal with ~~say the Althusser current in the French CP, or the Benn-Holland-Coates elements in Britain without going far beyond any simply economic and social agitation and the tactic of building a class struggle left wing.~~ Any opposition currents will increasingly include worker cadres with much greater weight in the mass organisations than our average members. They will want above all answers to the general political impasse and roadblocks of the reformists. Implanting ourselves in industry, building a class struggle left wing in those countries where appropriate, are vital steps to reach these cadres and currents but they are not at all sufficient as a means of winning first individuals, and then hopefully whole currents, to our organisations and to the Fourth International. The unilateral, overgeneralised, and wrong, elements of the resolution do not aid in or properly prepare us for this task.

6. The Basis of the Party

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practice
R.M.P.*
In the light both of general developments and of the situation in the Fourth International it is necessary to state the programmatic basis of membership of the revolutionary party. This is conditional on agreement with revolutionary programme and not necessarily on agreement with perspectives, tactics, tasks of the period etc of the party. Clarity on this question is crucial for the FI and also for the IMG

Conclusion

The World Political Resolution as a statement of immediate tasks, particularly in the imperialist countries, can be supported. However to be a proper preparation for our sections it must be developed and altered in a number of points. A whole series of purely exhortatory affirmations could well do with eliminating and replacing with serious arguments drawn from important resolutions of the International passed on Socialist Democracy, Women's Oppression, and Eurocommunism, as well as materials which have appeared on the colonial revolution. Most seriously however the document contains unwarranted generalisations and confusions which could do serious damage in disorienting sections in the long, and in the case of some colonial countries, short term. The resolution must therefore be altered to eliminate these errors.

It is to be hoped that the recent revolutionary events in Iran and Nicaragua, and the way some of the sections responded to these strongly, will lead to a more serious examination of the errors of the draft World Political Resolution.

[TRANSLATION]

"Draft revision to the Thesis 49.2 of the resolution 'The Crisis in Capitalist Europe and the Present Tasks of the Fourth International,'"
by Udry and Mandel.

The world situation, and in particular the joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism, objectively open new perspectives for pursuing the policy adopted by the 1963 Reunification Congress to unify the world Trotskyist movement within the Fourth International, that is, those organizations that claim to be Trotskyist and that envisage building the international in collaboration with the existing Fourth International, in particular the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and the current led by Lutte Ouvrière (LO).

This unification, which would not exclude fusion with other forces, is a concrete task that can strengthen the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution and lead to a significant growth of its sections in some countries. Such a fusion can begin to change the relationship of forces between revolutionary Marxists and the reformist leaderships and sharpen the process of differentiation under way within the reformist and centrist organizations. This process can lead in a revolutionary direction on the political and organizational level only to the extent that there are Trotskyist organizations quantitatively larger than the existing ones, qualitatively better rooted within the proletariat, and capable of regroupment not only with oppositional individuals and nuclei, but also with numerically large currents.

Unification within the Fourth International with those organizations that claim to be Trotskyist can only be based on a political battle that helps to clarify possible agreements and disagreements on program, political convergence, relations in regard to intervention in the class struggle, and the concept of building a democratic-centralist revolutionary organization at both the national and international levels.

This battle is important in and of itself for the programmatic reaffirmation of our movement and the political education of our cadres, at a time when the crisis of strategy of the left tendencies within the Social Democracy, the centrists, and the various "left Eurocommunist" opposition currents is deepening. Today, this battle has to be part of any effort to build a revolutionary party. Although fusion is not an absolute requirement for building our sections, the struggle for its realization will in any case be valuable in testing our ability to correctly undertake unification and regroupment efforts.

The aim of this political battle is to assemble the conditions for fusion--something that has not yet been accomplished--with the organizations of the Trotskyist movement. To that end, the discussion must deal with those questions that make it possible to measure the extent of programmatic agreements and disagreements, and their consequences for the basic steps that must be taken to build the party and the international in the present period, so as to reach sufficient agreement to achieve unification. The discussion should take up the following questions in particular: the class nature of China, Cuba, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and the "people's democracies"; Stalinism and Social Democracy; the workers united front; the anti-imperialist united front; the strategic orientation of the women's liberation movement; the assessment of certain trade-union organizations (the French CFDT, the Belgian CSC, the Spanish Workers Commissions, the Argentine CGT, the Brazilian "militant" unions, etc.) and our intervention into the mass organizations of the working class; democratic centralism at the national and international levels (the election of leaderships, tendency and faction rights, discipline in action, etc.); and democracy within the mass movement.

We should proceed in accordance with the method employed at the time of the reunification in 1963. That is, on the basis of agreement on the central strategic tasks, we should verify the real content of agreement on the program of the Fourth International. By this we mean determining whether there is common understanding of events and of the tasks that flow from the experience and great events of the class struggle on a world scale.

Verification of a programmatic agreement of this type will facilitate establishing joint political interventions as well as discussion on the concrete methods of party building. These are areas in which agreement--something that will materialize only in the course of joint work--is necessary to render any fusion viable.

The policy of reunifying the world Trotskyist movement, of fusing Trotskyist organizations within the Fourth International, has as its aim the formation of a single fused section of the International in each country. It is in this framework that the discussions already under way internationally must be seen--both in regard to the OCRFI and Lutte Ouvrière. That is why the leadership of the International will take care not to substitute itself for the national organizations and their congresses to try to speed up or slow down an agreement.

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