

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Statement of Majority Caucus of the United Secretariat and Bureau

The undersigned form a majority caucus of the United Secretariat based on support for the general line of the following four resolutions: "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation," "Resolution on Latin America," and "The Crisis in Capitalist Europe and the Present Tasks of the Fourth International." The United Secretariat has decided to propose that there be no decisive vote at this world congress on "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

The majority caucus of the United Secretariat and Bureau proposes that those in the leaderships of the sections and sympathizing organizations who agree with the general line of these four resolutions submit a motion to the pre-world-congress conventions of their organizations to vote *for* the general line of these four resolutions as a whole and *against* any counterposed resolutions. This vote will then be the basis for electing delegates to the world congress in support of the position of the majority of the United Secretariat.

Those comrades in the leaderships of the sections and sympathizing organizations who support this position should act appropriately in light of the concrete situation in their sections in order to clarify the counterposed positions before the world congress.

The key responsibility of this world congress is to approve the following two aspects of the political line contained in these four resolutions: (a) the overall political orientation contained in them, and (b) the central political-organizational conclusion of this orientation, the proletarianization of our sections as outlined in the resolutions; the implementation of the general political line of these resolutions can be carried through only in combination with the turn to lead our sections to deeply root themselves in industry, with all the organizational consequences flowing from that.

Initial list of signers: Adair, Alfonso, Allio, Bourgueil, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Marcel, Maria, Riel, Stateman, Susan, Walter

* * *

To Leaderships of Sections and Sympathizing Organizations of the Fourth International

July 11, 1979

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a statement signed by a majority of the members of the United Secretariat and Bureau forming a caucus.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify what the "majority caucus of the United Secretariat and Bureau" is, in light of the somewhat different traditions and language usage among the organizations of the Fourth International.

The caucus is composed of members of both the United

Secretariat and Bureau because there are Bureau members who are not members of the United Secretariat, yet who participate fully in the daily functioning of the Bureau and in the meetings of the United Secretariat. This situation has arisen because of the fact that there has not been a meeting of the IEC in over three years—therefore there has been no re-election of the United Secretariat to bring its formal membership into accord with the realities of the actual comrades the sections have been able to make available for full-time Bureau work.

The *political basis* of this caucus is support for the general line of the four resolutions indicated in the statement. These four draft resolutions have been adopted by a majority of the United Secretariat and have been placed before the membership for decisive vote at the upcoming world congress. The *purpose* of forming this caucus is a limited one: to give a lead to those comrades in the sections who agree with the general line of these four resolutions on *how to elect delegates* to the world congress on the basis of this general line. The caucus itself is limited to members of the United Secretariat and Bureau.

As the caucus statement points out, the members of the caucus are convinced that the world congress has one overriding task, to adopt the general line of these four resolutions. That line includes both the overall programmatic and *political* orientation contained in them and the central *organizational* conclusion of this orientation: to proletarianize our sections and sympathizing organizations. This includes winning the majority of our cadres recruited in the previous period to the perspective of going into industry, as well as all the organizational consequences flowing from that concerning leadership functioning, the need for a strong press, etc., as outlined in the resolutions.

Accomplishing this job at this world congress is important in and of itself. Without making this turn, we risk being marginalized from the big class confrontations shaping up and therefore from the central arena of politics. At the same time, by clearly adopting this orientation at this world congress, we will help lay the basis for the ongoing discussion on those points on which the United Secretariat has recommended that the IEC organize a continuation of discussion following the world congress: "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," Indochina, and Cuba (including Cuba's foreign policy, its role in Africa, etc.). These questions will then be more clearly placed in the framework of the struggle to build revolutionary proletarian parties in the actual political situation as analyzed in the four resolutions.

At the pre-world-congress conventions of the sections and sympathizing organizations, supporters of the general line of these four resolutions should put forward the motion outlined in the statement of the caucus, to vote *for* the general line of the four resolutions as a whole, and *against* any counterposed resolutions. (This is the motion the caucus proposes be the basis of election of delegates in support of the line of these four resolutions. It should be made even though there may be motions made to support each of the four resolutions separately.)

Some comrades who agree with this general line may have amendments on certain secondary points. If they are willing to vote for the general line of the four resolutions and against any counterposed resolutions *whether or not* their amendments are accepted, such comrades would be included among the supporters of this general line. The delegates elected (on the basis of support to this general line) to the world congress would be elected proportionally to the vote received for this motion relative to the vote received for any motions supporting counterresolutions.

In the discussions leading up to the pre-world-congress conventions of the sections, those in the leadership who support the general line of the four resolutions should seek to clarify the issues involved and to win the membership to support of this line. This will include explaining the overall job of the world congress as we see it.

Whether or not a tendency should be formed in any

section to defend the line of these four resolutions should be decided by those in the leaderships supporting this line, in light of the concrete situation in their sections. In any case, the formation of conflicting tendencies by supporters of the *general* line of these four resolutions on the basis of amendments concerning secondary issues or issues not up for decisive vote at the world congress, would only confuse the central issues facing this world congress, and should be discouraged.

Comradely greetings,

Duret and Stateman,
For the Majority Caucus of the
United Secretariat and Bureau

Encl: Statement of Majority Caucus of the United Secretariat and Bureau

On the Women's Liberation Resolution

By Harlow,

Introduction by Harlow and Clynes

IMG-Britain July 7, 1979

Introduction

That the Fourth International will be discussing women's liberation as a major point on the agenda of the forthcoming World Congress demonstrates the huge impact of the development of the autonomous women's movement on the work and political discussion of our sections. This resolution, a positive statement of our attitude to the struggle for women's liberation, and a detailed analysis of the development of this struggle in the last ten years, should be welcomed by all members of the FI.

However the resolution contains weaknesses that we hope will be clarified in the course of discussion and strengthened in the resolution finally adopted at the World Congress. The resolution also raises many areas of debate. We have not been able to take these up in this contribution although we feel that the debate on the origins of women's oppression is not reflected adequately in the text.

Neither have we taken up the debate on the question of women's caucuses. The IMG has submitted the position adopted by its last national conference on this question to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin. We feel it is a pity that this question has been included in this text. The major discussion we want to have is the strategic importance of women's liberation in the struggle for socialism. To also insert into the text a position on a question on which there are deep differences within the International runs the risk of creating a situation where the debate will focus on a minor point of how sections should organise their internal affairs and creating divisions on a document that should be adopted by a large majority of the International.

If the International is going to take a position on this question it should be the subject of a properly organised debate. As it stands, not only do we disagree with the

conclusion, but also feel that the position of those who support women's caucuses is seriously misrepresented. For this reason we support the procedure moved by some members of the United Secretariat that this section should be removed. We would like to see this procedure adopted at the World Congress.

However this present contribution concentrates on reflecting the discussion within the IMG Women's Commission over the four years the resolution has been in preparation.

In our opinion the resolution inadequately discusses what we mean by a women's *liberation* movement and what is meant by autonomy.

* * *

1. The resolution, in analyzing the development of the new radicalization of women, correctly points to the fact that:

"It was generally the young, college educated women, those who enjoyed a relatively greater freedom of choice, and those most affected by the youth radicalization of the 1960s, who first articulated the grievances of women in an organised and outspoken way."

What the resolution does not consider is how far this standpoint of 'relatively greater freedom of choice' affected the concerns taken up by these women, and the form this gave to their activity.

Not only did the educational advantages of these women in general mean they entered the vastly expanding semi-professional, though increasingly proletarianised, white collar jobs but the influence of the youth radicalization influenced them to react against all repression in all spheres of their lives, including sexual relationships. The concerns they took up therefore were not restricted to those

of pay or even job opportunity.

As the resolution states, they challenged all previous notions of women's abilities, 'femininity,' women's passivity particularly sexually, maternal fulfillment as women's highest achievement, and women's role as the homemaker.

This standpoint led to a differentiation in consciousness of these women and those women workers who at the same time began to take up struggles in their workplaces. In Britain the most notable of these was the strike of women workers at Fords in 1968, the impact of this was to force the Labour Government to introduce the Equal Pay Act which was passed in 1970. While these women were prepared to struggle against certain aspects of women's inequality, or like the London nightcleaners prepared to struggle against the refusal to recognise their unionisation and to force the union bureaucracy to support them, this process of struggle was not a product of an overall understanding of women's oppression as women, nor did this consciousness necessarily develop through the course of these struggles.

These women were, as still are the majority of women organised in the trade unions, hegemonised by social-democratic conceptions of women's liberation. That is, that the goal is to achieve certain facilities to make women's dual role as worker and homemaker easier and pleasanter, rather than challenge the division of labour institutionalised within the family.

Alan Fisher of the National Union of Public Employees put this position very clearly when he spoke at a conference of trade-unionists organised by the National Abortion Campaign 'As long as women have the responsibility for producing and rearing children they have the right to decide whether or not to have a child.' This is also expressed in the notion of 'equal rights,' thus the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain which outlaws discrimination against women (except in the areas where it really mattered like taxation, social security benefits, etc.) would also outlaw discrimination in favour of women like the affirmative-action programmes of the USA. Broad layers of women have been mobilised in struggle without necessarily identifying with the conscious struggle for women's liberation.

The layers of women, therefore, who have been identified with the 'women's movement' have been those young, usually middle-class women that the resolution has identified.

2. However of all social movements in the last decade the women's movement has been the most influential. It has had an impact throughout society and forced every major political current to react to the debates raised by the activities against women's oppression. There has been a widespread change in attitudes at every level in society which at the level of legislation has been reflected in Britain by the Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, acts giving women the right to maternity leave and benefits, protecting women against violence from their husbands, giving women who have left violent husbands the right to council-provided housing etc.

Revolutionary Marxists particularly have responded to the development of an autonomous women's movement which is a phenomenon for which the basic writings of the Marxist movement on the 'woman question' does not have a developed attitude. As the resolution points out the composition of the women's movement has led considera-

ble sections of so-called Marxists to dismiss it as petit bourgeois and a diversion.

We reject this method of characterisation which rests on sociological composition. The political importance of any movement rests on the demands and actions encapsulated in its programme and its objective effect on the class struggle as a whole.

3. However the resolution itself falls into this trap of politically characterising the sort of movement we want to build by sociological composition rather than political direction. On page 21 para e., the resolution states that the movement we strive to build must be 'basically working class in composition and leadership.'

While we can agree that if we are to build a mass women's movement it must be firmly implanted in the working class we defend absolutely the importance of the women's movement at the present time when it is not 'basically working class.'

The present women's movement, and the gay movement, have laid the basis for building a movement that organises women against their oppression in such a way that challenges the fundamental notions of the family and of the sexual division of labour and thus strikes at the heart of capitalism and class rule itself.

4. The present women's movement has developed this challenge to the existence of the sexual division of labour partly as a result of the relatively privileged position of its participants. For those women who did have access to higher education, better jobs, newly developed contraceptives and were influenced by the ideas of the youth radicalization their struggle became much more directly focused on their situation as women. Their relative privilege exposed and exacerbated the contradiction between their abilities and expectations and the role they were forced into because of the attitudes of society. This was present not only at the level of their teachers and employers but also their male colleagues with whom they worked even in the anti-war or other radical movements. This stands in contrast to the large numbers of women workers who were prepared to enter into struggle in the late sixties or early seventies but for the most part did not automatically move through the experience of struggle to a consciousness of the oppression of women as women and the necessity to organise against it as women.

This has also been taken up by the gay movement who have explored the construction of the sexual identity of individuals in some depth.

Thus a central element taken up by the women's movement, as well as the struggle around material aspects of women's oppression such as pay, opportunity, nurseries, has been around the question of sexuality. This reflects the essential contribution of the women's movement in challenging the ideological aspects of women's oppression, which is not adequately recognised in the world congress text.

5. The repression of women's sexuality affects all women, and is an element of many manifestations of women's oppression. In the last century abuse of women who wished to go out to work was couched in terms of their sexual immorality; it is one element of the alienation of women from their bodies which the women's movement has tried to overcome through, for example, the activities of the 'Women and Health' self help groups. Any woman who does not repress her sexuality deserves what she

gets—including rape and sexual assault—in bourgeois morality.

The most obvious form of this repression is that women who only express their sexuality with other women are, under British law, nonexistent. Lesbianism has never been specifically outlawed as was homosexuality between men in the nineteenth century.

The women's movement has begun to take up both support of lesbians who are discriminated against in many other ways, such as often being denied the right to custody of children, and also the right for every woman to define her own sexuality and trying in many ways to overcome the alienation most women feel from their own bodies and sexuality.

6. Lesbians were often in the forefront of the development of the groups of the women's liberation movement. While the development of the self organisation of gays was concurrent with the growth of the women's movement many gay women found these groups male dominated and they preferred to work within the feminist movement. And for many of them combatting the notion of women's dependence on men, financially, legally, socially or sexually was more immediately crucial and obvious. As was the strength and necessity of women organising together.

This is not to say that all lesbians are separatists, on the contrary in Britain many of the active socialist feminists are lesbians and one socialist lesbian group, Lesbian Left, has done some of the most important theoretical work in the development of socialist feminism. The resolution appears to imply that all lesbians are separatists through the use of the term 'Lesbian separatist' as a political characterisation, in our experience this is quite wrong, not all separatists are lesbians, and we should use the term separatists when we are talking about that political current.

The understanding of the involvement of lesbians within the movement, and an appreciation of how far struggle on the question of sexuality was integral to the struggle against women's oppression, was very uneven within the movement. In some countries this led to lesbian baiting and an attempt to drive them out of the movement so it could appear as 'respectable,' as in the USA in NOW. However in Britain by 1974 there had been the first national lesbian conference which asked for one afternoon of the national women's liberation conference to be given over to a discussion of lesbianism and sexuality. This resulted in the sixth demand being added to the already existing 5; 'against the discrimination against lesbians and for the right of every woman to define her own sexuality.'

Therefore it would again seem wrong for the resolution to state that the lesbian movement is 'part of the gay rights movement' (page 10 6d.) In Britain it is far more part of the feminist movement that has aided us in developing an overall understanding of women's oppression. We support the right of lesbians to meet separately within the women's movement, as we support their right to meet as women within the gay movement. Now that the women's movement has accepted much more the existence of lesbians within the movement, and taken up much more the issues of sexuality, the initial impetus that led to the national conference being organised to force recognition of the issue on the women's movement has disappeared. In this period therefore there is not seen to be a need for

national lesbian organisation in Britain, though local groups exist. In a situation of increased attacks on lesbians as lesbians this situation may well change.

7. The understanding of these many different manifestations of women's oppression has been developed through the women's movement precisely because it has drawn together many different women from different experiences and different political standpoints on the basis of their recognition of women's oppression.

Understanding the need for women to organise together as women against their own oppression represents a developed consciousness of the overall oppression of women that cannot be fought through the notion of equal rights. The most obvious aspects of women's oppression are pinpointed in the seven demands of the women's liberation movement in Britain. In toto these represent a challenge to the sexual division of labour, women's position as homemaker and childrearer and notions of natural femininity.

This aspect of the broad women's movement is more defined in Britain, because of the existence of a structured 'women's liberation movement' that from 1970 until 1978 met together at national conferences, adopted a series of demands, produces an internal newsletter and identifies with a magazine produced by a collective of women which represents the interests of the women's movement and presents them in a way accessible to a mass audience of women in the same way as the popular women's magazines do. While this development may be specific to Britain, reflecting the way in which the mass organisations of the working class have developed as unitary organisations uniting within them many different political currents, the differentiation of consciousness which has led to this development is not unique to Britain.

8. This consciousness of the oppression of women as a sex has been developed through the process of discussion in women-only groups. The resolution asserts the importance of these 'consciousness raising' discussions but implies only as a first stage from which women then move on. While we agree it is unhealthy for the movement to only have internal discussions continual feeding back of experience into these discussions strengthens the movement, and its participants, by continuously developing the understanding of women's oppression, and thus developing the forms of struggle.

The strength of the movement in being able to draw on such a wide range of women's experience is a positive reason why we support and build the movement autonomous from men and from political organisations. A women's movement built on the political programme of any particular party would not be able to draw in this experience directly in its own ranks.

Thus for revolutionaries to participate in the movement is not only important for the political strategy we can offer to the movement but also for the extent to which we can learn, and therefore develop our programme for women's liberation. The resolution does not recognise the extent of the theoretical debates amongst feminists, on many questions including strategy, the origins of women's oppression, etc., from which we can learn. It is only from the actual experience of the development of an autonomous women's movement we have learnt the important role this movement can play in the struggle for socialism.

9. The document poses the need for an autonomous organisation of women to fight against the bureaucracy of

the workers movement. What is not explained, and is in fact glossed over with statements about the objective interests of the working class being in the fight against women's oppression, is how far the working class as a whole has internalised sexist attitudes towards women. For example on page 9, 3b, the document lists the discrimination that still exists against women in the workforce. It mentions 'sexual aggression of foremen or supervisory personnel.' It does not mention the fact that many male workers not only do not fully support women's struggles but do in fact scab on them. In Britain in 1974 women workers in an engineering factory in Lancashire occupied the factory in the course of a struggle for equal pay. The male workers assisted the management in breaking in although the strike was supported by the union.

The bureaucracy of the labour movement has no long-term interest in fighting for women's liberation, their interest lies in maintaining capitalism, they will support women's struggles only in so far as it is necessary to retain their position or as it helps them to recruit women to their union. But many rank-and-file members of the working class do not perceive that it is in their interests to fight for women's liberation. Male workers especially do have a certain material advantage, for the time being, in discrimination against women. For example laws which discriminate against women in preventing them from doing night shifts, or working in coal mines, could be supported by male workers, as they were fought for by them, to keep women out of better paid jobs. Many class conscious militants expect their wives to play the traditional role at home, so that they can get on with their trade-union work. Arthur Scargill, one of the best known and most political trade-union leaders in Britain, not only explicitly supports the National Union of Miners paper having a pin-up but his wife is quoted as saying he hardly knows how to make a cup of tea.

Women organising autonomously can therefore be crucial to force the working class as a whole to take up the struggle. This could be crucial when men could at worst hold back the struggle and at best only be motivated to act when they are forced to by the pressure of the struggle. In this way the activity of the women's movement will begin to overcome the divisions within the working class fostered by the bourgeoisie. However, so deeprooted are these divisions we can say that the women's movement will not have completed its task simply at the point of the overthrow of bourgeois state power, but the need for the autonomous women's movement will continue during the period of transitional society.

10. The resolution, in the sections on the roots of the new radicalisation of women, illustrates how the development of this radicalisation was part of the development of the world wide revolutionary process, affected by the national liberation struggles, the anti-war movement, struggles against cuts in social expenditure etc. In Britain this process is very marked. The first form of national organisation of women was sparked off by working women's struggles which led to the forming of the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights (NJACCWER) in 1968. The relationship of the women's liberation movement, which began to organise on a national scale in 1970, to struggles of women workers continued to be very marked into the mid-seventies.

This has led to the development of the women's libera-

tion movement in Britain as a movement which adopts a generally class-conscious stance, identifies its struggle with that of national minorities, immigrants, colonial peoples and workers. The number of women who seek liberation within a bourgeois framework (as opposed to a reformist framework) is tiny, especially compared with the USA where NOW seems more and more identified with the Democratic Party.

However this has not been matched by the way in which the labour movement has taken up women's needs and interests. The National Abortion Campaign, which has always been a mixed campaign, has had a certain measure of success in taking up the fight for abortion rights within the labour movement. Other specific campaigns and initiatives have also won support. The ideas of the women's liberation movement have begun to penetrate the labour movement to a certain extent but it has only been under the pressure of the wlm that there has been any activity. Too often, as for example in the setting up of women's committees in many unions, the bureaucracy have moved to head off any activity.

Revolutionary Marxists have also been slow to respond to the debates and activities initiated by feminists.

Thus we should recognise the responsibility that the labour movement itself bears for the development of those currents within the women's movement that begin to oppose a strategy for fighting for women's liberation that requires an orientation to the labour movement. These currents are not, as yet, polarised against socialism but the experience of the failures of the labour movement, the practice of many Marxist groups and the example of the workers states is a powerful argument against any socialist strategy we have to combat.

11. The relationship of the struggle against women's oppression to the process of the class struggle is not clearly spelt out in the discussion of the autonomy of the women's movement. On page 24, 2nd column, penultimate paragraph, the meaning of autonomy is spelt out. This could be adopted wholesale by any separatist or radical feminist. It is insufficient to say that we 'do not mean independent of the needs of the working class.' We have to patiently explain how the struggle for women's liberation has an anti-capitalist dynamic, given the correct leadership, because of the role the family plays in maintaining capitalism. Our understanding of political autonomy cannot be expressed in a classless context. We do not subordinate women's needs to any political or social group but we fight to make them recognised as the interests of the working class as a whole. While we fight with whatever forces prove necessary, as in Britain we have worked with Liberals and Tories in the abortion campaign, the forces we attempt to drag into our fight are those of the labour movement.

12. In order to achieve this we have to build a tendency within the women's liberation movement capable of taking the ideas of that movement into the labour movement and fighting for a class-struggle strategy in the wlm. Building the mass women's movement for us does not mean winning women to the already existing structures necessarily, but spreading the ideas and the self organisation of women into increasingly broader layers.

The resolution does not give clear guidance on this point. It states the need to 'build the strongest possible wing . . . which shares our class-struggle perspectives,' and that in struggles by women workers 'The correct presentation of

clear concrete demands and objectives by the feminist movement' is indispensable.

But it does not define what is the feminist movement. Page 24, section 2, defines the women's movement as many types of organisations of women regardless of the level of consciousness that exist within them. Earlier it states (page 13, section 6), that women's commissions within the unions stand at the intersection of the women's and labour movements and 'if properly led, can show the way forward for both.' The British experience is that these commissions are often set up by the trade-union bureaucracy to head off the development of any feminist activity and thus do not reflect any understanding for the need of the self organisation of women. Women's groups in trade unions which are a genuine reflection of women's self organisation do exist but have been initiated by feminists.

In Britain we have noted that the women's liberation movement can be programmatically defined through its demands and organizationally identified with certain journals, national conference, etc. Our task within this is to work within the socialist feminist current which, both theoretically and in practice, orients towards the left and the labour movement. We must aid in the process of theoretical clarification and win it towards an action perspective that will involve all sections of the wlm and broader layers of women in unity in action, and equip it to fight for a class-struggle perspective within the wlm.

The National Abortion Campaign is a concrete example of how the feminist women's liberation movement can draw broader forces into action. The campaign has always had a conscious policy, for which the IMG has fought, that the campaign should be led by women. It is based on the

demands of the wlm for 'Free abortion on demand' and has drawn its most consistent activists from the feminist movement. But as a mixed campaign, in which we have consistently fought for and won an orientation to the labour movement, it has had a vast influence on the labour movement, extending to the fact that the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party have in the years since NAC was formed adopted policy in favour of a woman's right to choose.

As revolutionaries our duty is to participate in both the feminist movement and that broader layers of women, to build a mass movement that is both implanted in the working class but also represents the gains in the understanding of women's oppression that have been made by the feminist movement up to now.

Appendix

The 7 Demands of the women's liberation movement in Britain.

For the right of every woman to define her own sexuality.

1. Equal pay for equal work.
2. Equal education and job opportunities
3. Free contraception and abortion on demand
4. Free 24 hour nurseries
5. Legal and financial independence
6. An end to discrimination against lesbians
7. Freedom from intimidation by the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status. An end to the laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.

Why We Do Not Support the Draft World Political Resolution

Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

The development of Trotskyist forces in different countries of the world, and the political tasks that face them, make it indispensable that a document be drafted that analyzes the evolution of the relationship of forces between classes worldwide, and presents the tasks for the Fourth International that flow from it.

While the world congresses of the Fourth International do not have to take a position on every minor tactical question posed by the particular situation of the class struggle in each country, for Leninist activists a "resolution" should at least express some general orienting perspectives for the main centers of the class struggle.

It is necessary to say that the document, which is eclectic in its analysis of the course of the world revolution, is also characterized by its great degree of abstraction and generality concerning the political axes for building the International.

For this reason, by showing both the errors of analysis and the serious omissions contained in it, the signers of this document hope to explain their decision to *vote against* the current draft "World Political Resolution." ["The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International", International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB), Vol. XV, No. 5, July 1978.]

I. The Absence of an Analysis of the International Framework of Revolution and Counterrevolution

1. One fundamental programmatic acquisition of the Trotskyist movement is its ability to analyze the profound unity of the revolutionary struggle of the masses against imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy and for the socialist revolution. This analysis proceeds from an understanding of the nature of the bureaucratized workers states, the role of the caste that keeps the proletariat under its boot in those countries, and the function of the agreements (Yalta, Potsdam, Helsinki, Belgrade) that imperialism and Stalinism try to maintain against the ongoing world revolution in order to preserve the status quo.

Such an analysis is missing from the resolution. Far from explaining the combined character of the crisis of imperialism and Stalinism, the resolution presents them as "parallel" phenomena. Likewise it does not proceed to any assessment of the real status of the relationship of forces between the rise of revolution on a world scale and the counterrevolutionary policy of imperialism and the bureaucracy, sometimes substituting instead assertions that subordinate relationships between classes to relationships between "camps" (Soviet and American): "The

deterioration of the relationship of forces at the expense of imperialism is especially striking in Africa where the Soviet Union has been able to extend its influence." [p. 9.]

The document of the United Secretariat majority speaks of an "Increasing interaction between the three sectors of the world revolution." [p. 3.] But the *profound objective* basis for the proletarian mobilization in all the "sectors"—the worldwide status of the confrontation between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the proletariat, a confrontation that extends into the bureaucratic workers states, is not precisely analyzed. The result is that separate elements for assessment of each of the "three sectors" are substituted for an analysis of the present stage of the world revolution as a whole: "In the main areas of the semicolonial world some general features of the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution should be noted." [p. 11.] At another point the resolution says: "The turning point in capitalist Europe was the May-June 1968 events in France and subsequent developments in Italy and elsewhere." [p. 7.]

A resolution ought to begin with a clear characterization of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat on a world scale. This is the only way to explain the common basis for the dominant characteristics of the present stage:

- the combined offensive of the *proletariat* in all sectors, marking a decisive advance that began with the outbreak of the Portuguese revolution and, especially, the imperialist defeat in Vietnam. This offensive is growing today in the working-class mobilizations in all the imperialist countries, including the United States, as well as in the eruption of the Peruvian and Iranian proletariats and the major progress made along the road to political revolution, including in the USSR.

- the worldwide deepening of the crisis of *imperialism* and of the bourgeoisie's forms of political domination in the various countries, leading to a tendency for imperialism to rely more and more directly on the counterrevolutionary collaboration of the bureaucracy on all continents.

The counterrevolutionary terms of the Helsinki accords, the various "negotiations" between imperialism and the bureaucracy, the Camp David accords, the popular-front policy in Europe and Latin America, the Soviet and Cuban intervention in Africa, the Chinese intervention in Vietnam, etc., must all be placed in this worldwide framework of "peaceful coexistence."

- the deepening of international tendencies toward the break up of *Stalinism*, tendencies that cannot be explained independently of increased demands and pressures from imperialism.

Through the bureaucracy, which is subjected to these pressures in the framework of peaceful coexistence, these pressures weigh against the working-class gains of the masses and powerfully reinforce all the restorationist tendencies. Moreover, the growing rivalries among factions of the bureaucracy—from the so-called "Eurocommunism" to the crisis in Southeast Asia—are really based on the counterrevolutionary competition among these factions in their own relations with imperialism.

2. The objective unity of the proletarian revolution in the different "sectors" is illustrated most strongly on the European continent. But, in the draft resolution, the "interaction" between the social revolution and the political revolution is conceived mainly in terms of *ideological contagiousness*. What is given the most attention is the

growth of the "flow of ideas" between the capitalist countries and the bureaucratic states or the increase in "contacts" through tourism or "scientific collaboration."

The European resolution—which is furthermore limited to capitalist Europe—analyzes neither the *objective* basis for the unity of the European revolution nor the form taken by the active counterrevolutionary collaboration of imperialism and the bureaucracy on this continent. Aside from one correct, but purely allusive reference to the "historical objectives" shared by the working class in the East and the West, the resolution in effect reduces the "dialectical ties" between the political revolution and the social revolution to the mutual ideological "echoes" which are observed from one to the other.

Elsewhere, the draft world political resolution states:

"The exact interplay—impossible to foresee at this stage—of socialist revolution in the West and political revolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe will determine the speed with which the Soviet and East European proletarian vanguard succeeds in constructing a revolutionary Marxist party capable of taking the lead in reviving the internationalist aspects of class consciousness and class politics. Any further improvement in the world relationship of forces to the detriment of imperialism would obviously give powerful assistance to that process. On the other hand, grave defeats of the proletariat in the imperialist countries or semicolonies would place new obstacles in the way of the political revolution in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China" [p. 20.]

Besides the fact that the "interplay of socialist revolution in the West and political revolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe" is presented here as *in the future* ("impossible to foresee at this stage") rather than as a *current* expression of an objective process, it is worth noting that it is viewed exclusively from the standpoint of the positive or negative influence that the development of the revolution in the capitalist and dependent countries will have on the course of the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states. This is in fact a repetition, in less crude form, of the International Majority Tendency's traditional theory of stages, according to which the development of the political revolution in Eastern Europe is subordinate to the prior development of class struggles in the West, as expressed in particular in the general political resolution of the Tenth World Congress:

"... the development of a new mass vanguard breaking with Stalinism in the capitalist countries will stimulate massive movements in support of any important development of an antibureaucratic opposition in the bureaucratized workers states, helping to considerably diminish the bureaucracy's margin of maneuver in carrying out police operations" [*Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974, p. 1741.]

3. At the Tenth World Congress, the IMT made a risky, and above all totally objectivist, prediction—objectivist because it took no account of the active counterrevolutionary role of the apparatuses, such as the popular-front policy, as the "political last resort against revolution." This prediction was summed up in this simplistic alternative: victorious revolution or fascism in Europe within four or five years.

While breaking with this method of superficial predictions, the world political resolution falls into a symmetrical and, at bottom, equally serious error: eclecticism and

confusion in the analysis of the present conjuncture of the revolution.

Of course, “. . . not a single decisive or even large-scale defeat has been inflicted on the working class” by the rulers. Of course, “. . . the proletariat has retained its inherent fighting capacities everywhere” [p. 5.] But all this is not the kind of analysis we have a right to expect from a world political resolution. What is important to know is whether the outbreak of the Portuguese revolution did or did not put the proletarian revolution on the agenda in Europe. That is, will the present developments in the class struggle and the increasing instability of the existing regimes, such as in France, Spain, Britain and Italy, reach the point of a major political confrontation between social classes?

The resolution hesitates on how to answer this question. While the resolution stresses the “ups and downs of the class struggle,” and asserts that, “in fact, if no perspective is opened for a socialist solution to the crisis, prolonged instability can itself create demoralization among the workers” [*Idem.*], the draft resolution leaves open the possibility that the imperialist bourgeoisies could exhaust their respective proletariats in a “cold” way, i.e., without a central confrontation with them and without having to resort to governmental combinations bringing in working-class parties and placing them in the first line of defense of the capitalist order (in the form of governments dominated by the social democracy, popular fronts, or governments of national unity).

This eclecticism is to be seen again in the draft “European resolution,” which uses the same vague formulations and speaks of a “period of sharp turns.” But while refusing to postulate “a qualitative change in the relationship of forces,” this document strongly implies that the policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses has already succeeded in forcing back the activity of the masses enough to “make a general counterattack by the workers more difficult.”

The European resolution concludes, from the relative *ebb* in the activity of the masses: “This upturn in working-class activity reached a very high level in 1975-76. But control by the reformist apparatuses, and the consequences of their policies, had an impact on the tempo and breadth of direct action by the masses.” [IIDB, Vol XVI, No. 1, March 1979, p. 10.] This indicates a failure to understand that far from winning political stabilization for the bourgeoisie, the redoubled economic attacks against the workers, the support of the workers’ apparatuses for the pseudo-“democratization” in Spain, and the parliamentary return of the Giscard-Gaullist coalition made possible by the divisive policy of the French CP, sharpen the mobilization of the masses in a forceful way, despite the whole policy of the apparatuses. The sharp aggravation of the social and political crisis in France in recent months is evidence of this.

It would be equally false to interpret the result of the latest elections in Spain as even a temporary victory for the bourgeoisie. The resolution states that the “crisis . . . splintering the institutions of the bourgeois state” affects, “to varying degrees, the army—soldiers and even noncommissioned officers—police, and courts . . . not to mention the schools, mass media, and the church,” and is exacerbated by the “fiscal crunch plaguing most regimes, with the budget-tightening it leads to” [*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.] This substitutes a quite superficial and confusing description of

the crisis “of institutions” for a precise characterization of the form and the stage reached by the crisis of the existing *regime*, that is, by the open crisis of the bourgeoisie’s political domination. Thus, concerning concrete situations, we find the following type of characterization, which is both contrary to the most elementary Marxist concepts and in error regarding the simple description of facts:

“In Spain, the PSOE and CP leaderships allowed Juan Carlos and Suárez to make the transition from the Franco regime to *one of bourgeois parliamentary democracy centered around the army . . .*” [*Ibid.*, p. 16, emphasis added.] This is the same error, expressed more cautiously, as was made by Comrades Mandel, Maitan and Frank, who explained in 1975 that Portugal was the freest country in Europe, while the LTF, faithful to Marxism, denounced the policy of the MFA as an attempt directed *against* the democratic gains of the *masses*, to adapt to military-police and corporatist institutions in order to prolong their existence.

II. The Mass Movement and the Policy of the Apparatuses

1. This inability to clearly emphasize the dominant characteristic of the present phase of the class struggle—in Europe and, as the outbreak of the Iranian revolution confirms, on a world scale—is combined with an inability to center the analysis and orientation for party-building around the increasing contradiction between the mobilization and aspirations of the masses, on one hand, and the counter-revolutionary policy of the apparatuses of the working-class organizations on the other. Instead of this contradiction, the resolution substitutes the following characterization, presented as one of the “most important developments in the world political situation since the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International”:

“A vanguard of radicalized workers is emerging that on certain key issues opposes the capitulationist line of the bureaucrats.” [IIDB, No. 5 in 1978, p. 3.]

There is nothing substantially new here in comparison with 1974, a year in which the same phenomenon was presented as new . . . in comparison with 1968. The 1974 resolution stated:

“The appearance on a world scale of a new vanguard of a mass character for the first time since the creation of the Communist International constitutes one of the principal features of the new rise of the world revolution since 1968.” [“Ninth World Congress General Political Resolution,” *IP*, December 23, 1974, p. 1743.]

Renamed a “class-struggle left wing” for the occasion, this is the “new vanguard” which is making its reappearance. Thus, the document continues:

“The degree of success of working-class resistance to the bourgeois offensive and the capacity of the workers to go over to a clearly anticapitalist counteroffensive that could place the overturn of capitalism on the agenda hinges on the following broad lines of development:

“a. The appearance of a growing layer of radicalized workers.

“b. Their organization into a class-struggle left wing opposed to the class collaborationist policies of the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions and the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties.

“c. The mobilization of this proletarian left wing in a

struggle to replace the class-collaborationist leaderships.

"d. The drawing of these militants at each stage as they gain in political understanding, into building a revolutionary party." [IIDB, No. 5 in 1978, pp. 5-6.]

This passage calls for several comments.

First of all, making the success of "working-class resistance," and especially the working-class's ability to carry out a "counteroffensive" dependent on the appearance, organization, and mobilization of the "class-struggle left wing" (new vanguard) boils down to a misunderstanding of the objective factors in the working-class radicalization and the role played by the traditional leaderships against that radicalization. This leads the United Secretariat to this astonishing conclusion:

"The combination of these indispensable elements has not yet appeared in any imperialist country. It is this subjective factor and not the greater objective strength or resilience of capitalism that explains why the bourgeoisie succeeded in extricating itself for the time being from the extremely dangerous situation it confronted in Southwest Europe in 1974-77 (Portuguese revolution, upsurge of working-class struggles in Spain and Italy, new rise of radicalization in France)." [Ibid., p. 6.]

The shaky regimes in Western Europe thus would seem to owe their survival only to the immaturity of the "class-struggle left wings," which would in effect assure them an indefinite future. In this way, the tasks of the Fourth International itself are abandoned in favor of instrumentalization of the new vanguard, designated as:

"a militant layer of workers capable of combating the class-collaborationist orientation of the Social Democratic, CP, and trade-union bureaucracies, and of moving in a revolutionary direction." [p. 6.]

Why do we need the vanguard organization once a layer of workers exists that is capable of "combating the class-collaborationist orientation of the Social Democrats and CPs," and "moving in a revolutionary direction"? The United Secretariat resolution sets for the members of the Fourth International the sole task of helping to "speed the formation of an organized class-struggle left wing" and to "raise the political level of such class-struggle left wings as they arise . . ." [p. 22.]

The whole fight to achieve the workers' united front to mobilize the working masses and bring them into confrontation with the policies of the sell-out leaderships is replaced here with initiatives that, at the last world congress, were more prosaically called "winning hegemony over the new vanguard."

At that time, as today, the debate is not over the existence of differentiated levels of consciousness in the working class, or the more or less "advanced" character of certain layers of workers, but on the IMT's idea that it was necessary to "win hegemony," to organize this layer of workers "breaking empirically but definitively with the reformists," entrusting it with tasks that in principle belong to the vanguard organization. As Mary-Alice Waters explained at the time, for the LTF:

"The document rejects the possibility of building mass revolutionary parties before the projected showdown and mistakenly counterposes an orientation to winning hegemony within the 'new mass vanguard' or of 'transforming the vanguard' into an 'adequate instrument.' In pursuit of this illusory goal, it takes 'the concerns of the vanguard' as the starting point for our political initiatives, rather

than the objective needs of the working masses nationally and internationally." ("A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973, p. 5.]

Between this assessment by Mary-Alice Waters and that of the IMT adopted at the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses, there are, to use Joseph Hansen's formulation, *deep methodological differences*. But the present draft resolution explicitly repeats the same method. In the draft resolution on Europe, the United Secretariat goes even further, identifying the development of the new vanguard with the "progress" of the "far left," at least electorally:

"A growing layer of advanced workers has emerged. These workers have served their apprenticeship in numerous struggles, and have acquired trade-union, and often political, experience. On several occasions they have challenged the orders of the bureaucratic leaderships. They represent a *decisive factor for the construction of the revolutionary party in the working class*. On the electoral plane, this phenomenon has been partly expressed in the votes won in various countries by the *centrist or Trotskyist organizations*. . . ." [IIDB, Vol. XVI, No. 1, March, 1979, emphasis added.]

In reality, the only difference between the majority theses at the Tenth World Congress and the 1978 draft world resolution on this point is this: in 1973, the new vanguard was presented as a phenomenon developing essentially "outside" the mass working-class organizations. In 1978, as a result of both the strengthening of the working-class parties in several countries, especially in Europe, and the decline of the ultraleft and centrist groups, it seems the "class-struggle left wings" must appear first inside the old organizations.

The method remains unchanged, however. Priority "targets" are still chosen as a substitute both for work directed at the broad masses and for party building. Hence, in the world political resolution, the completely unfounded praise for "energetic opposition tendencies inside the French Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail," [p. 25.] or the erroneous characterization of pseudo-oppositional factions of the Stalinist bureaucracy in certain CPs, as in Spain, and of the CERES in France or the Young Socialists in Germany, as "centrist currents."

2. This erroneous method has been concretely applied, among other ways, through the "policy of unity of revolutionaries," in its many permutations since the Tenth World Congress. On this subject, the draft [political resolution] says only:

"As for leftward-moving tendencies not claiming to be Trotskyist, it has been possible in several countries to engage in common actions that have advanced the struggle of the masses and have proved of mutual benefit. In each case where common actions and joint political initiatives appear possible with other organizations, the leadership of sections should open up fraternal relations. Again, the key will be the position these organizations take on the decisive political issues in the class struggle." [IIDB, No. 5 in 1978, p. 28.]

But these generalities are not what is under discussion. How do we recognize "leftward-moving" organizations? What are "common actions that have advanced the

struggle of the masses"? Does this characteristic apply to electoral blocs with the Stalinists, whether consummated (as in Mexico) or rejected by the CP (as in Belgium)? Does it apply to electoral combinations with centrist or ultraleft groups, such as the Portuguese FUR, Socialist Unity in Britain, the FUT in Spain, the "For Socialism-For Workers Power" slates in France, Democrazia Proletaria in Italy, or the slates presented for the municipal elections by the LCR-LKI?

Yes or no: were these slates formed on the basis of a common appreciation of the "decisive political issues in the class struggle"? There is no response to this question; and this ambiguity is not limited to the world political resolution.

Thus, the European draft resolution contents itself with a formulation that is correct in the abstract, but that in the absence of specific balance sheets, actually gives political cover to all the recent errors which were each time politically justified as conforming to the principle that "Such a tactical decision must not lead to throwing out the key elements of our overall political solutions from a common electoral program." [IIDB, No. 1 in 1979, p. 40.]

In the same way, the United Secretariat draft resolution on Latin America states:

"Sometimes it will be possible to participate in electoral alliances with other working class and socialist forces provided that they are clearly independent of the capitalist class, present a clear line of class struggle as opposed to class collaboration . . ." [IIDB, Vol. XV, No. 6, December 1978, p. 27.]

But does this mean supporting the correct struggle of the Peruvian comrades, in collaboration with other forces, to create a united front, a struggle whose first organized expression was the formation of FOCEP? Or, on the other hand, does it mean endorsing the periodically renewed electoral agreements between the Mexican PRT and CP? The LTF clearly showed that these agreements were formed within the political and programmatic bounds of the Stalinists' program (see "Key Issues in the Portuguese, Italian, and Mexican Elections," by Barry Sheppard, IIDB, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 1977).

3. Furthermore, to make the evolution of the political situation depend on the ability of the "class-struggle left wing" to mature does not result only in underestimating the political crisis and the level of working-class combativity in most European countries. By asserting that the subjective immaturity of these "class-struggle left wings" is what "explains why the bourgeoisie succeeded in extricating itself for the time being from the extremely dangerous situation it confronted in Southwest Europe in 1974-77 (Portuguese revolution, upsurge of working-class struggles in Spain and Italy, new rise of radicalization in France)," [p. 6.] the United Secretariat resolution simply obliterates the crucial role played by the apparatuses of the workers organizations, particularly through popular-front policies, in the survival of the present regimes.

In one of its rare comments on popular fronts, the resolution asserts that "It will require a powerful prerevolutionary or even revolutionary upsurge of the mass movement, and immediate threats to the survival of capitalism, for the bourgeoisie to abandon their resistance and treat popular fronts with a strong Communist component as a last defense line before turning toward an extreme right-wing and fascist mobilization." [p. 24.] That

is, the question of popular fronts is relegated to the more or less distant future when the mass movement will force the bourgeoisie to give up its hostility to popular fronts.

Here the resolution makes a double error. On the one hand, by deliberately confusing the active popular-front policy and the effective access of the popular front to government, the resolution seems to conclude that since popular fronts are not on the verge of becoming governments, therefore popular fronts are not a current concern. Although they are absent from all government coalitions in Europe (except Finland), popular fronts today occupy a central place in Europe as a direct and front-line support for regimes in crisis.

In addition, the responsibility for rejection of popular-front governments does not rest solely with the bourgeoisie. That would deny the particularly active role played by the Stalinists in helping the bourgeoisie prolong the current forms of its political domination as long as possible by delaying the entry of popular-front coalitions into the government.

This lack of understanding has now resulted in the European resolution repeating the IMT's worst past errors on Europe. Thus, despite the LTF's struggle on this question, it repeats the idea that in Portugal, "Soares aimed to smash the movement toward self-organization that was developing among the workers and even in the army. He openly championed bourgeois democracy and private ownership. The SP campaign widened the split that the CP's sectarian maneuvers had produced among the toiling masses." [p. 16.] This reduces the split of the workers' ranks by the Stalinists—a split which is a component part of their popular-front policy of supporting the MFA—to mere "sectarian maneuvers," attributing the main counterrevolutionary responsibility to the SP.

Indifferent to the course concretely followed by the French CP (which deliberately prevented the Union of the Left from becoming the government), the Spanish and Italian CPs (which continue to support existing bourgeois governments), the world resolution states: "The Eurocommunists, like the Social Democrats, seek to gain government posts and build up party strongholds inside the bourgeois government and state apparatus while strengthening their position in the organized working-class movement." [p. 24.]

This analysis is based on the old theory of "social-democratization" of the CPs, which identifies the Stalinist parties with national bureaucracies similar to the social-democratic parties. This theory is in effect repeated by the European resolution, which states: "Thus a threat hangs over these leaderships that is made still clearer by the fundamental similarity between their class-collaborationist orientation and that of the SPs." [p. 23.] The conclusion is: "In order to extricate themselves from this uncomfortable political position and preserve their specific bureaucratic interests, the CPs are adopting a more and more sectarian attitude" and "the bureaucracies of the CPs are being driven to resort to every possible means to preserve the electoral base they have." [p. 23.]

As applied to the French situation of the last two years, this method leads the European resolution to state that the French CP "openly took the risk of bringing about a defeat of the Union of the Left in the elections in order to protect its interests as a bureaucratic apparatus. These interests could have suffered as a result of the CP being involved in

running a government during a period of deep economic crisis." [p. 17.]

The intervention of the French section was based on this same analysis. It led to our section's failure to understand that the *objective* of the Stalinists—not simply a "risk" taken for other reasons such as "reestablishing the electoral balance"—was to break up the Union of the Left, preventing the formation of a parliamentary majority by the CP and SP. This led the section to turn its back on the tasks that the situation imposed, which were to struggle unconditionally against disunity, for stepping down in the second round, for a CP-SP majority and a CP-SP government. Instead the section oriented toward a so-called "programmatic debate" with the Stalinists.

Far from drawing the appropriate lessons from this incorrect orientation, the European resolution repeats it, including the "equal rejection" of the CP and SP, holding that in this particular situation these two apparatuses shared equal responsibility in dividing the workers.

This failure to understand the significance of the popular-front coalitions today as an obstacle to the rising mass movement is not limited to the boundaries of Europe. On Latin America, for example, the resolution notes: "The contradiction between the mounting strength of the proletariat and its lag in political class consciousness and independence owing to the influence of Stalinism, the social democracy, and petty-bourgeois nationalism, plus the failure of the leadership of the Cuban revolution to project a revolutionary Marxist strategy, opens the possibility for reactionary dictatorships to win and to temporarily consolidate their rule." [p. 12.]

Apart from the (apparently mainly ideological) "influence" of Stalinism, petty-bourgeois nationalism, and the social democracy, the essential factor in an ebb of the mass movement would seem to be the "lag in political class consciousness" of the proletariat. The overwhelming responsibility of the apparatuses—particularly through their popular-front policy—is completely omitted. What played the most direct role in preparing the defeat of the Chilean proletariat if not the "popular unity" policy of the CP and SP?

The resolution on Latin America limits itself to characterizing the Chilean Popular Unity and the Uruguayan Broad Front as "class-collaborationist" fronts, not as popular fronts in the Trotskyist sense of the term. This lack of clarity is all the more harmful inasmuch as the Peruvian revolution today is directly threatened by the Stalinists'—and the Cubans'—attempt to set up a popular-front combination while refusing to oppose the military government.

Finally, this same lack of understanding gives rise to the theory of movement toward the strong state or fascism, as repeated in the European resolution. That's why it can state "for the time being, in no European country has the bourgeoisie been able to sufficiently weaken the working class, or to assemble the social and political forces from among the petty-bourgeois layers, the so-called new middle classes, or the unemployed, to enable it to drive toward a confrontation aimed at establishing a strong regime, or indeed, a dictatorship." [IIDB, No. 1, 1979, p. 8.]

For Trotskyists, no serious analysis of the danger of fascism can be made by considering only the relationships between the "bourgeoisie" and the "working class," without specifically taking into consideration the role of popular fronts as a means to drain off the activity of the

masses and often to thus "pave the way for fascism." By failing to include this factor, the resolution limits itself to an irresponsible and politically disarming "prediction."

Confusion and eclecticism in the analysis of the political situation, repetition of the theory of the "new vanguard," and a misunderstanding of the real meaning of the policy of the apparatuses inevitably lead to errors in determining slogans and focuses of intervention.

III. The Tasks of the Fourth International in the Imperialist Countries

1. The resolution discusses at some length the struggle to defend democratic rights and correctly states: "... the main lessons were demonstrated in France in May 1968, Portugal 1974-75 . . ." But strangely, after stressing the need to draw these lessons, the draft forgets it.

So the question remains: what lessons can be drawn from the debate that divided the International over the question of defense of democratic rights in Portugal in 1975-76? The resolution's answer to this question is all the more important because in the time since then the underlying differences have not gone away.

Eight months before adopting the draft, and thus after the dissolution of the LTF, the IMT members of the United Secretariat stated: "The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction fell apart under the hammer blows of the Portuguese revolution." They went so far as to speak of "the LTF's shameful support" to the bourgeois offensive against the Gonçalves government, the LTF's balance-sheet "of striking failure," and its being "aligned with the majority of bourgeois generals."

In the same document, the comrades repeat the arguments of Mandel/Maitan/Frank from 1975: There was only a "gradual erosion of democratic rights," in the face of which "democratic demands can only be of episodic and secondary importance." From this flows the following "alternative," a source of impotence and opportunism, as the LTF showed in 1975: "How can one simultaneously demand or defend bourgeois democracy and struggle for soviets, when the two are manifestly mutually exclusive?"

On the other hand, just before the unilateral dissolution of the LTF, Barry Sheppard detailed the disagreements that had arisen two years earlier regarding the Portuguese revolution. "These include differences over the *República* case and defense of the democratic rights of the SP when these were under attack from the Gonçalves government; differences over the importance of the fight for democratic rights, in Leninist revolutionary strategy in general and in the Portuguese revolution in particular; differences over the nature of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA); whether we should call for a CP-SP government; whether we should have defended the Constituent Assembly against attempts by the capitalist government to disband it in the summer of 1975 . . ." ["A Reply to the 'Declaration of the International Majority Tendency,'" by Barry Sheppard. IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 7, September 1977, p. 13.]

How is it that a question that occupies such a place in the class struggle and in the discussions in the international then disappears from the world political resolution? "Drawing the lessons of the Portuguese revolution" does not mean throwing a modest veil over persisting differences for purely tactical reasons. This is, however, what both the "world resolution" and the "European resolution" do.

The European resolution, endorsing the slogan of a Constituent Assembly "in Portugal in 1974" in no way clarifies the decisive political debate: the attitude to take on this key question during the 1975 crisis.

The LTF's contributions on this question today remain an acquisition for the Fourth International. By refusing to draw a balance sheet on this point, the world political resolution creates the risk of prolonging the disorientation of the national sections on the decisive question of defense of democratic rights from a proletarian standpoint.

The sectarian errors made in Portugal can, furthermore, be followed by extremely opportunist errors on the basis of the same mistaken method. This is shown by the recent course of the unified LCR in Spain: *de facto* rejection of a consistent struggle for the republic and for an authentic sovereign constituent assembly; adaptation to the so-called "democratization" and the existing institutional framework through the "tactic" of amendments to the monarchist constitution, abandonment of the slogan for "dissolution of the repressive bodies," and illusions in the "Cortes."

2. Among all these democratic demands, one tends to occupy an increasingly central place in the class struggle in several imperialist countries: the right of peoples and national minorities to decide their own future. On this subject, the United Secretariat resolution notes that "of special importance are the Irish struggle against British imperialism, and the liberation movements of oppressed nationalities like the Québécois in Canada, the Basques and Catalans in Spain, and the Blacks and Chicanos in the United States." [IIDB, No. 5 in 1978, p. 7.]

The "European resolution" emphasizes the current significance of the fight for the right of national self-determination for oppressed nationalities and for the independence of Ireland; but these positions, while correct in principle, shed very little light on the questions of concrete orientation raised by a consistent fight for the right of self-determination.

In the Spanish state, can it be imagined that this is compatible with the vacillating tactic of "amending" the centralist constitution practiced by the LCR? With the *de facto* shelving of the call for immediate convocation of constituent assemblies by nationality, in favor of a call for "autonomy" within the bounds of the "reform" of the Francoist state? Moreover, can the Fourth International consider the political support given by the British section to the referendum on devolution of powers in Scotland and Wales, presented as "a first small step toward workers' control," and the repeated position of the French LCR in favor of the bourgeois-reformist plan for "democratic regional assemblies," as reconcilable with its struggle for self-determination? In actuality, the resolution fosters an ambiguity that is conducive to these seriously disorienting elements.

3. The fight for the right of national minorities to determine their own future can really succeed only through the struggle for the formation of a workers government and, beyond that, for a federation of the United Socialist States of Europe. On this question it is useful to recall the resolution's statement that "the Stalinist bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe remain tied to the perspective of 'peaceful coexistence,' i.e., the international status quo—the permanent division of the working masses of Europe between East and West—the Fourth International struggles for the historical perspective of a real

unification of the continent in a United Socialist States of Europe." [IIDB, No. 5 in 1978, p. 16.]

The way in which the slogan of the "United Socialist States of Europe" is presented here, as the expression of the unity of the political revolution and the social revolution in Europe, represents major progress in comparison to earlier formulations inherited from the IMT and still repeated in the first draft "Manifesto" for the European elections: "Against the Common Market, the Europe of the Trusts and Big Business; For the United Socialist States of Europe and the World!" This counterposed the United Socialist States of Europe only to "the Europe of the Trusts and Big Business." This important correction—which is applied by removal of the most crudely erroneous formulations on this subject in the second "manifesto"—represents a gain of the struggle waged by the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency since the beginning of this discussion. (See "The European Elections: Against Participation, For An Internationalist Campaign," by Nemo, in French Internal Bulletin No. 30, November 1978. This document, in amended form, is a reference document of the LTT.) Logically it ought to be rounded out by a clear characterization of the arrangements made by imperialism and the bureaucracy to perpetuate the reactionary status quo in Europe, especially through the Helsinki and Belgrade accords. This is not done in either the "world resolution" or the "European resolution."

Moreover, the elements of adaptation to the reactionary structure of the Common Market in the policy of "participation" in the "European elections" come into contradiction in real life with the correct programmatic proclamations.

Finally, it should be mentioned as a positive gain of the discussion that the "European resolution" stresses the importance of the struggle for the socialist reunification of Germany. All the implications of this position regarding the activities of the European sections, the GIM in particular, remain to be drawn out.

4. The draft "world resolution" is quite deficient in defining the most central political tasks in the struggle for the unity and independence of the proletariat, as posed concretely in the different situations.

In capitalist Europe, in a situation where in most countries the struggles of the working class and its allies run up against the political obstacle of the existing regimes and the working-class leaderships' refusal to find an independent political way out, the central axis of the Trotskyists' fight must be to formulate in concrete, mobilizing, agitational terms a governmental response that expresses the need for the workers and their organizations to enter without further delay on the path of a break with the bourgeoisie to demand all power. This axis is concretized in different ways according to the national situations. It ought to be considered a gain of the discussion that the "European resolution," contrary to mistaken positions that long paralyzed the national sections, stresses that the governmental question "stands in the forefront in the fight for the political independence of the proletariat" and states that "the sections of the Fourth International do not make the adoption of their program a prerequisite or a prior condition for fighting for a government of one or more of the big workers parties." [p. 35.]

It is also positive that the "European resolution" indicates the need in West Germany to call for formation of a government of the SPD alone, which ought to definitively

wipe away confusions in the GIM on the class nature of the SPD and the electoral attitude to take toward it. In Belgium, on the other hand, the LRT, giving a special place to unity with the tiny Belgian CP, in the name of a so-called "anticapitalist left," incapacitates itself from correctly intervening in the prolonged political crisis and opening the way to the workers' united front.

The advance represented by the position taken in favor of the unconditional character of electoral and governmental slogans for a vote for working-class parties will remain formal, however, as long as the *balance sheet* of the protracted errors and confusions is not drawn. This is particularly necessary for the French section concerning the Union of the Left as well as the disunity policy in 1977-78, the question of a class vote as well as the governmental slogan. In addition, the resolution does not take a clear position on the current significance and forms of application of this slogan in the various countries—first of all Spain, Italy, and France:

"In order to achieve such unity in action, the SP and CP must break politically from the bourgeoisie, from its parties, its institutions, and from any defense of its interests. . . . *In accordance with the circumstances*, the main function of putting forward a governmental slogan in our propaganda can be to prepare working-class cadres to confront the central political problems the masses are going to run up against as their struggle develops. In such conditions, this question has a place in our *propaganda*. But what has to be placed *in the forefront* are demands and slogans corresponding to the tasks of the workers in mounting their initial counterattack against the capitalist offensive.

"On the other hand, at certain times propaganda and agitation around a governmental slogan and set of transitional demands may be given the main stress in our work. In the event of a governmental crisis, an election, or a nationwide struggle, it is even possible that agitation around the governmental slogan may temporarily assume the central role." [IIDB, No. 1 in 1979, p. 36 Emphasis added.]

These abstract hypotheses, referring to no specific situation to illustrate them, in reality leave entirely open the possibility of going back to the previous errors: relegating the fight for a CP-SP government to the category of "propaganda," and allowing this fight to be subordinated, due to "circumstances," to "programmatic" requirements of every kind, as was again the case in the 1978 legislative elections in France.

The struggle for the workers' united front gives top importance to the fight for *trade union independence* in all its aspects. While the resolution correctly emphasizes the necessity for a struggle against all attempts to involve the unions in co-management of the economic crisis and the anti-working-class measures, it does not indicate in any way the need to combat the direct threats in many countries to the elementary organizational independence of the unions in relation to the state apparatus.

Thus, the European resolution says: "In Spain, the factory committees and councils, which were legitimized by union elections, are facing attempts to impose restrictive regulations." [IIDB, Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1979, p. 8.] This ambiguous formulation is unable to draw the class line that exists between bodies that were freely formed by the working class, and state legislation that, far from "legitimizing" them—even in a "restrictive" way—was in fact a

direct attack on the independence of both the real workers' committees and the union organizations themselves.

From this standpoint, the resolution in no way corrects the serious error committed by the LCR. The LCR presented such legislation as a "conquest" of the working class, whose "limits" would have to be fought against.

This error directly repeats the one committed in Portugal, where the majority supported the "trade-union unity law" as a "step forward" for the workers' united front, although limited by its "bureaucratic" character. Instead it should have denounced the law as an impermissible intervention by the bourgeois state in the free functioning of the workers' organizations. The same error led the French LCR to critically support the corporatist draft of legislation setting up the so-called "shop committees" that the bureaucrats put forward in 1977-78.

Finally, in the imperialist countries where the working class has no mass party, the struggle for independence from the bourgeoisie takes the form of the struggle for formation of a *workers party* based on the unions. For example, this perspective is the fundamental axis of the activity of the American SWP, and has helped it to do remarkable work in the unions. It is hard to understand why the world political resolution approaches this only in a purely "objectivist" way, speaking of the "growing layer of radical unionists, who must fight to build a revitalized and democratized labor movement and for an independent labor party as the key political component of a class-struggle alternative to the current bureaucracy." [p. 6.]

Contrary to this, a world political resolution ought to positively indicate the ways in which the conscious activity of Trotskyists is determined around the axis of the fight for a workers' party based on the unions, not only in the USA but also in Québec. Through this it should contribute to definitively removing the confusions that exist on this questions, as in the ultimistic slogan of a "revolutionary" workers party, and make a critical reevaluation of the error, from the standpoint of fighting for the workers party, represented by the departure of the comrades of the Québec Revolutionary Workers League from the Rassemblement des Militants Syndicaux.

IV. The Dependent Countries and the Present Importance of the Permanent Revolution

The draft resolution tries to base itself on the present importance of "the formula of the permanent revolution," and affirms the importance in the dependent countries of the struggle for tasks such as "agrarian reform, democratic rights, Constituent Assembly, separation of church and state, national liberation, and unification of the country." It also points out the urgency of the fight for the "organizational and political independence . . . of the proletariat." [Ibid., p. 15.]

The document is a long way, however, from translating these positions of principle into a *political orientation* for building the Fourth International and its sections. By its abstract character, the document in no way defines the precise ways to *apply* the "formula of permanent revolution" in the main current centers of the class struggle.

Moreover, it is weakened by the confused theorizations that are repeatedly expressed regarding the validity of the permanent revolution under present conditions.

1. Thus, the document states that a "series of semicolonial countries have now reached an *intermediate position*

between the highly industrialized and the most backward countries." [P. 11, emphasis added.] It says this "position" is characterized by "the appearance of native banking groups capable of participating in finance-capital operations . . ."

This assertion seems to repeat the mistaken hypothesis that was advanced several years ago concerning Iran or Arab countries of "the emergence of a new finance capital."

Its significance is limited, however, by the following qualifications: "One should not conclude from this trend that these countries have become independent imperialist, 'sub-imperialist,' or semi-imperialist powers. Quite the contrary. Their social structure remains that of semicolonies, not that of imperialist powers." [*Ibid.*]

All in all, it is hard to tell if the document maintains its initial hypothesis of a category of "intermediate" countries. But this major confusion is extended on to the level of political tasks. The document reaffirms that there is no change in "any of the fundamental strategic tasks of permanent revolution." But it also suggests, that "the emergence of more powerful ruling classes in some of these countries . . . does create new facets of political struggle involving tactical questions." [p. 11.]

This entirely elliptical formulation is partly clarified elsewhere: "Because of the degree of industrialization and proletarianization reached in several of these countries, however, the revolutionary mass struggles do not always start around such issues." (Agrarian reform, democratic rights, the national question, etc.). "They can be touched off by issues typically advanced by the proletariat in the class struggle." [p. 15.]

Certainly no one would question that a revolutionary wave could "begin" with a strike for workers demands, for example. But beyond this circumstantial aspect, the "degree of proletarianization" or the relative "power" of the ruling classes does not diminish or mitigate the objective basis of the permanent revolution for *any* dependent country. As Iran has just demonstrated, *none* of the bourgeoisies of these countries, whatever their conflicts of interest with imperialism, can free itself enough to constitute an "autonomous finance capital" or a true national bourgeoisie capable of carrying to completion the old tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Only a revolution with a proletarian leadership can accomplish them.

But it follows that, in *all* the dependent countries, the fighting unity of all the exploited and subjected social layers will be forged on the basis of the struggle to the bitter end for democratic rights and against imperialism. From this standpoint, whatever the practical connection between struggles for workers demands and other mass struggles, the fight around national and democratic tasks remains *everywhere* the most powerful and broadest point of "departure" of the mobilization of the masses under the leadership of the proletariat and represents in and of itself one of the fundamental tasks of the "proletarian" class struggle as such."

From this standpoint, the attempt to distinguish "certain" dependent countries from others would appear to be specious. Moreover, it runs the risk of encouraging a tendency, which the International has suffered from in the recent past, to underestimate the revolutionary significance of the democratic tasks and their crucial role in mobilizing the masses and building the party in *all* the dependent countries, including those the document chooses

to put in an "intermediate position" (Argentina, Iran, etc.). In regard to this danger, it is an insufficient precaution to simply call for "never abandoning" the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle—whose forms and issues in the present period the document is not even able to define concretely.

2. The particularly abstract character of the document—when we go beyond simple "analyses"—is enough in fact to invalidate it as an *orientation* document for the International. The recent rise in the class struggle is bringing several regions dominated by imperialism to the edge of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crises. Under such circumstances, building national parties is a task requiring the political contribution of the whole International. The International's role is to outline precise political perspectives expressing the requirements of the permanent revolution in each of these situations. This is one of the first tasks of the world congress, a task that is all the more imperative inasmuch as important debates have *already* opened up in the International, in its sections, and in the whole Trotskyist movement on the questions of *orientation* that are posed.

In such a situation, it is particularly deplorable that a document which is supposed to outline an orientation for the International over several years does not in any way define the slogans, political perspectives, and specific axes of struggle which are on the agenda today in regions where Trotskyists are directly confronted with major developments of the class struggle.

3. Thus, the slogan of a *Constituent Assembly*, the highest bourgeois-democratic slogan, acquires all its revolutionary and transitional significance in the dependent countries. It makes it possible to centralize the mobilizations around all the national and democratic tasks, to regroup broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie behind the proletariat and place them in confrontation with the existing regimes and with all the dictatorial, Bonapartist, bureaucratic, or plebiscitary forms of the neocolonial state. Far from being counterposed to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the course of the class struggle itself the fight for a Constituent Assembly combines with the fight for a workers and peasants government, and for the formation, strengthening, and centralization of the mass bodies of the united front (committees, popular assemblies, soviets, etc.)

In the recent period, in Peru the validity of this slogan for a "sovereign constituent assembly" was evident in counterposition to the Constituent Assembly that the military granted and to the demagogy of APRA, which capitulated to the generals. It made it possible to centralize the fight for democratic rights for the working class and the oppressed native populations and to give an immediate political aim to the movement. This movement, through FOCEP and the nascent popular assemblies, is taking the road of independent organization of the masses and the working class. The importance of this struggle for the sovereign constituent assembly in Peru, which the International leadership underestimated for some time, is recognized today in the Latin America resolution.

After a phase of acute political and social crisis in Algeria, the death of Boumedienne opens up a new period of deepening crisis for the Bonapartist dictatorship. The mass mobilization and the internal struggles within the ruling clique pose the need to call for a *sovereign constituent assembly* in an increasingly immediate way. In con-

trast to all attempts at "institutionalization" of a plebiscitary and police character, this struggle for a constituent assembly, linked with the demand for the right of the working class to organize independently of the state and the FLN, gives concrete content to the fight for a workers and peasants government at the present stage.

The Algerian group's recent adoption of this slogan—which ought to have been at the center of our intervention for years—should be supported by the whole international and should be put in practice through a sustained political battle.

In Iran, the proletarian revolution underway requires the definitive overturn of the monarchy and all its institutions. In the present turmoil they are experiencing, the bourgeois leaders, the religious and military hierarchies, and imperialism, are trying to promote a so-called Islamic republic as a tool for defending the bourgeois state. This only gives more immediacy to the slogans, "Down with the monarchy! For a republic!" The reactionary proposals made by Khomeini and the attempts at counterrevolutionary stabilization are opposed head-on by these slogans and the social content they acquire from the revolutionary mobilizations of the working class and the masses.

In this situation, the fight for a "sovereign constituent assembly" is directly tied to the struggle against the military-police apparatus of the monarchy and for secularization of the state. At each stage of the maturing of the mass movement, it should be combined with the slogans corresponding to the development reached by the proletarian bodies (strike committees, general assemblies).

On the other hand, the use of the confused slogan of "a workers and peasants republic" in the Iranian revolution weakens the political intervention in the present crisis. (On this point, see the document, "Brief Contribution on the Iranian Revolution," contributed to the discussion in the United Secretariat in March 1979.)

4. In the course of the permanent revolution, democratic slogans are inseparable from the fight for the *independent organization of the masses of workers*.

a. The absence of mass workers parties in most semicolonial countries poses the struggle for the formation of independent *workers parties* as a central question. This should not be counterposed in a formalistic way to the building of the revolutionary party. The Fourth International rejects ultraleft and sectarian deviations which aim at substituting the slogan of a "revolutionary workers party" for that of a "workers party." In countries where the elementary task remains the emancipation of the mass of workers from the political and organizational tutelage of the bourgeoisie, or from the reactionary utopia of "workers and peasants parties," and where we generally constitute only a small nucleus of activists, "the need for a political party is implied in the objective conditions, but our party is too small and has too little authority to organize the workers into its ranks. Therefore we should say to the workers, to the masses: Create your own party. But we cannot address ourselves directly to the masses, calling on them to join our party."

Following this approach, in many dependent countries—for instance, Argentina, Senegal, Algeria, and Iran—this question of a workers party should be posed, basing ourselves on the concrete forms of the fight for the independence of the trade-union movement in each country. This is the overall perspective in which the present activity of the Trotskyist nuclei should be carried on.

The general development of this question of a "workers party" in the Latin America resolution has the advantage of posing a problem which the world resolution does not discuss, even though it is on the agenda in other dependent countries. It is to be noted, however, that the forms of application proposed for Argentina in the Latin America document remain rather confused. It states *simultaneously* that there must be "the fight . . . for the trade unions to take the initiative in creating mass workers parties" [p. 23] and that the unions are "tightly controlled by the Peronist bureaucrats." [IIDB, No. 6 in 1978, p. 20.] But these bureaucrats are themselves *organically* tied to the Peronist party, a bourgeois party. An independent workers party, based on the unions implies as a *precondition* that the unions themselves should make a "complete and permanent break with the bourgeoisie," which presupposes the *expulsion* of this bourgeois-nationalist apparatus from their ranks.

b. As Trotsky emphasized concerning Mexico, the tendency toward integration of the unions into the state apparatus and the bourgeois parties, which is inherent in the period of imperialist decay, is expressed particularly vigorously in the dictatorial or Bonapartist regimes that prevail in many dependent countries. The debate on orientation of the International should proceed to the concrete analysis of each particular situation and outline an orientation quite precisely, taking into account the qualitative *degree* reached by this tendency toward integration of the unions and toward their destruction as independent workers organizations. Thus, to take some examples:

In Iran, where the dictatorial monarchy destroyed the elementary organizations of the working class, one of the first tasks of the proletarian revolution is to rebuild an independent union movement from top to bottom.

In Pinochet's Chile, the Trotskyists should counterpose the necessary reconstruction of the CUT to the verticalist elections of the dictatorship.

In Mexico and Argentina, the trade-union "bureaucracies" are direct appendages of bourgeois parties. The Latin America resolution correctly indicates that the unions are thus subjected to "subordination to bourgeois-nationalist parties: the Peronist organizations and the PRI." [*Ibid.*, p. 22.] But it does not note what makes the *difference* between such a situation and the classical case of "class-collaborationist leaderships" of a Stalinist or social-democratic type. It should be clearly stated that, in the case of bureaucracies organically tied to bourgeois parties, the defense of the elementary independence of the unions as workers organizations calls for the *expulsion* of this bourgeois appendage, not simply a fight against the influence of the bureaucrats, and substitution of a class-struggle leadership for them.

In Senegal, in different conditions, the Trotskyists struggle in the front lines against the decree dissolving the UNTS, against the governmental bureaucracy placed in the leadership of the CNTS, and for full reconquest of the union organizations by the working class.

In Algeria, neither the process of bureaucratization nor the attempts at corporatist integration through "socialist management of enterprises" have, at least up to the present, succeeded in destroying the UGTA, the only mass workers organization, as the elementary framework for the mobilization and organization of the workers. Evidence is the use the workers made of the union locals in the 1977

and 1978 strike wave and the government's setback at the last UGTA convention, in face of working-class resistance. In such conditions, the whole axis of the struggle of the Trotskyists should be clearly indicated: independence of the UGTA from the state, the FLN, and the "GSE"; the defense of union locals; and a democratic UGTA convention.

Likewise, in Tunisia, the UGTT, despite its bureaucratization, remains a working-class organizational structure, whose existence and independence should be defended against the state and its repressive policy.

5. The national struggle becomes extremely acute in the dependent countries, both because of the incomplete way that independence has been won under the continued domination by imperialism, and because of the attacks of the neocolonial regimes themselves against the legitimate rights of the peoples and nationalities to determine their own future.

After Angola, the present situation in Iran and Ethiopia show the decisive importance of this question in most dependent countries. The draft resolution gives this only limited attention, however, and does not draw the lessons of the very rich debate in the International on this question.

In addition, the document proposes no clear class characterization of the different leaderships claiming to be nationalist or anti-imperialist and does not draw the overall conclusions from the IMT's self-criticism on the guerrillaist errors of the Ninth World Congress. The Latin American experience has shown not only that the guerrilla strategy was different from the proletarian strategy of the development of mass struggles, but that it was accompanied, in the cases of the ERP, the Tupamaros, and the Sandinist Front, by support to openly class-collaborationist political formulas. We must draw the lessons of this experience and the tail-endist errors regarding the MPLA in order to be able to define an attitude toward the Polisario Front, the ELF [Eritrean Liberation Front], and the guerrillas in Thailand, Burma, and Malaysia, that is consistent with the principle of class independence.

The document proposes particularly equivocal formulations concerning the Ethiopian Dergue. Of course, it correctly points out the bourgeois character of all the African states and governments and rejects the idea of an "African" road to socialism distinct from that based on the activity of a proletarian revolution party. (This passage from the English text, is missing from the French version of the document.) It also states that the elementary rights of the masses and the oppressed nationalities, especially in Eritrea, must be defended, "including against the Dergue." The refusal to characterize Cuba's political support for the Dergue and the neocolonial Ethiopian state as counterrevolutionary can only foster illusions, however, in the progressive virtues of what the resolution calls ". . . the rule of the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie . . . [in] Ethiopia since the fall of Selassie . . ." [p. 13]

Moreover, in describing the "gains made by the Ethiopian revolution up to now" as "substantial" the draft does not indicate with sufficient clarity that these are due fundamentally to the activity of the masses and not to the policies of the Dergue. Worse, the antagonism between the mass mobilizations and the Dergue, the anti-proletarian character of its program, and its procapitalist and repressive policy, are partly concealed by a formula that goes

only so far as to say that "the Dergue regime is not willing to break completely with either international capitalism or private property." [Note: the word "completely" is not in the English original.] Not "completely"? Does this mean that the Dergue's program is to "break" *partially* with capitalism? Or that despite its program, it could be forced to enter "the path of a break with capitalism"? In any case, this is an unjustified flattering description of its policies.

6. Last, the draft resolution has no concrete political perspective on the mobilization of the Palestinian masses.

This follows from a defeatist assessment of the relationship of forces between imperialism and the mobilization of the masses in this region. The resolution speaks of the "political blind alley" (p. 13) of the Palestinian resistance. Of course, the joint policies of the Arab regimes, the PLO leadership, and the Soviet bureaucracy tend to force the Palestinian masses to accept the existence of the state of Israel and the status quo negotiated between the bureaucracy and imperialism. Thus, the PLO leadership is increasingly submitting to the "Pax Americana" in the Near East.

We should not, however, confuse the effects of the betrayal of the leaderships with the potential for the mobilization of the masses in the whole region. The intervention of Syria and of the imperialist troops in Lebanon has not been sufficient to destroy the Palestinian masses. The mass struggles in the Arab countries, especially in Egypt, are signs of a mobilization that remains strong. Finally, the opening up of a revolutionary crisis in Iran has the potential to overturn all the arrangements for peaceful coexistence, and destabilizing the whole region.

To speak of a "political blind alley" under these conditions would appear to be a particularly hasty prediction.

Furthermore, the document does not lay out the axis of the struggle for the *destruction* of the Zionist state. It limits itself to saying that the "antiwar sentiment" that is spreading in Israel itself "can expand swiftly into political opposition, and shake the stability of the Israeli government." [P. 13] This is far from being the final goal that Trotskyists must point out to both the Palestinian and Israeli masses. Concerning the Zionist state—a creation and a tool of imperialism—to want merely to "shake the stability of the Israeli government" would be to accept the framework of this state itself and to accept it as an established fact.

But the state of Israel is not a state like other states. There is no struggle for an Israeli workers and peasants government *inside* it. On the contrary, Trotskyists fight for the breaking up of Zionism, for the destruction of the Israeli state, for a *free, secular, and democratic Palestine*.

This slogan takes on its social and revolutionary content in the development of the class struggle. Starting from the elementary demand for the right to live in one's own country, it opposes any religious or racial state and the very existence of Israel as a pivot of the counterrevolutionary array of forces in this part of the world.

Finally, the draft resolution is also deficient concerning the Lebanese crisis. The International ought to orient its activity around a campaign for immediate withdrawal of Syrian, Israeli, and U.N. troops. Moreover, it would seem erroneous to demand, as the United Secretariat has done, that the Lebanese section publicly condemn the armed operations of the Palestinian resistance.

Whatever the political capitulations by its leadership,

which Trotskyists must denounce, however politically false and ineffective certain armed actions have been, the armed struggle in its present forms cannot be likened to the petty-bourgeois terrorism of the ERP or the "Baader-Meinhof gang". It is deeply linked to the mobilization of the Palestinian masses against Zionism, a fight with which Trotskyists are in unconditional solidarity.

The French Trotskyists, without in any way politically adapting to the Algerian FLN, did not have to "denounce" its military actions as "terrorist." The question posed in the Middle East today is identical.

V. The Political Revolution and the Defense of the Workers States

According to the draft world political resolution, "The fact that a Stalinist bureaucracy has ruled the Soviet Union for at least fifty years, and that similar bureaucracies have ruled Eastern Europe and China for decades, raises theoretical and political questions to which revolutionary Marxists must give clear answers." [P. 16.]

Unfortunately, one would search in vain to find these "clear answers" to several questions that have been at the center of the debates in the Fourth International and are still decisively important in the class struggle.

1. First, while the text correctly reaffirms that the bureaucracy is "a parasitic caste" and that it cannot be "reformed" but must be "eliminated by political revolution," it does not take a clear stance on the *social characterization* of the bureaucracy, and its nature in relation to the two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

This omission maintains all the confusions introduced into the ranks of the International by the supporters of the mistaken thesis of the "dual social nature" of the bureaucracy. (On this point, see the criticism of the United Secretariat document on Stalinism.)

2. In addition, the document states that "the latest phase in the crisis of world Stalinism, marked by the appearance of so-called Eurocommunism, brings in fresh stimulation from abroad conducive to deepening the political challenge to bureaucratic rule." [P. 17.]

This direct association of Eurocommunism with "stimulation from abroad" could only suggest that the Western *Stalinist* parties (not characterized as such by the resolution) make a positive contribution to the development of the political revolution. It suggests that, at least objectively, they side with the proletarian masses in this struggle, that is, against the bureaucracy and, to that degree, against the proimperialist status quo. Likewise, the document goes so far as to speak of "a more direct linkage between the rising political opposition [in Eastern Europe] . . . the phenomenon of 'Eurocommunism' in Western Europe, and the radicalization of the workers in the imperialist countries." [P. 3.]

This superficial and false analysis leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of the role played by the so-called Eurocommunist factions of Stalinism in the worldwide confrontation of social classes. These parties not only defend the existing order in their own countries. They are also active participants in the defense of the social status quo throughout the world and are thus in fundamental solidarity with bureaucratic parasitism *against* the mass movement aiming toward political revolution.

Neither the "criticisms" of the Kremlin nor the "illu-

sions" they might encourage among the workers change this fundamental fact. As is embodied in the Eurocommunists' active support for the counterrevolutionary, pro-imperialist, and pro-bureaucratic system of the Helsinki and Belgrade accords, there is an *antagonism* between the reactionary interests served by the Eurocommunist factions and the social forces really working toward the political revolution. (On this point as well, see the criticism of the United Secretariat document on Stalinism.)

3. The draft resolution correctly states that: "Any attempt to restore capitalism in the countries where it has been abolished would constitute a giant step backward for humanity." [P. 16.] But the resolution does not clearly analyze, and in fact minimizes, the bureaucracy's responsibilities regarding restorationist tendencies.

According to the resolution, the bureaucracies "*prevent* any decisive advance of world revolution," applies class-collaborationist policies that actually "*weaken* the defense of the economic base that is the source of their special privileges," and "are forced to maneuver even more desperately between the demands of the working class at home and the pressures of the imperialist bourgeoisies." [Emphasis added, pp. 15-16.]

All this is well within the bounds of reality. The "dual function" of the bureaucracy (which should be distinguished from a so-called dual social nature) implies that while "defending in its own way" the basis of its parasitic privileges, the bureaucracy does so by methods that prepare the collapse of the working-class basis of the state and actively transmit the imperialist pressures of every kind into the workers state.

The document acknowledges by allusion that inside the bureaucracy itself there are "the most reactionary ideologies" and "restorationist forces." It provides no indications to help measure the extent reached by this tendency and gives no characterization of the processes, either internal ("economic reforms," etc.) or international (the Helsinki and Belgrade accords, financial and commercial "cooperation" with imperialism, etc.) by which the bureaucracy *actively* contributes to reinforcing all the factors working for the destruction of the conquests of October.

Furthermore, to speak in this way of "apparently irrational behavior" and seeing it as based only on "fear of the world revolution" is to fail to locate the *objective* basis of the restorationist tendencies. This basis is "socialism in one country," the necessary framework of the social parasitism of the bureaucracy, whose consequence is increasing subjection to the demands of the imperialist market and the strengthening of all the tendencies toward return to private ownership.

This is why the rule of the bureaucracy represents a permanent threat to the social character of the workers states.

4. It is also why it is not enough to reaffirm in principle the "need to defend the USSR against imperialist attack." [P. 16.]

First, it is not *only* "against imperialist attack," but also *against the policy of the bureaucracy itself* that the conquests of October and the working-class character of the workers states must be defended. The struggle against attacks on the economic gains of the proletariat, against bureaucratic "reforms," against concessions to imperialism and the increasing penetration of capital within the workers states are tasks that are immediately on the agenda. They indissolubly link the defense of the workers

states against all the forces threatening them—from inside and outside—to the fight of the definitive expulsion of the bureaucracy.

From this standpoint, there is no contradiction, but on the contrary a powerful interdependence, between the fight for democratic rights and the defense of the workers states. In this connection, the document is correct to stress that “the motive forces for such a restoration are not to be found among antisocialist ideologues inside the civil-rights movement,” but rather in imperialism and the bureaucracy. [p. 18.]

However, in the struggle for democratic rights, Trotskyists defend proletarian methods of struggle and reject any abdication of the political independence of the working class.

The draft resolution correctly notes that: “Revolutionary Marxists reject the notion that the masses in Eastern Europe and the USSR can turn to the imperialist governments of the West for help in winning democratic freedoms.” [P. 19.] However, the practical consequences of this principle are far from being drawn clearly in the International and its sections.

It ought to be clearly stated that Trotskyists fight the illusions held by certain currents of the antibureaucratic opposition who try to place their activities in the context of the “application of the Helsinki accords.” No “tactical” concession can be accepted on this point.

It would likewise be incorrect for Trotskyists to give support to initiatives calling for a “boycott of the Moscow Olympics,” which aside from their favorable references to the Helsinki agreements, openly seek to get the imperialist government to put pressure on the USSR.

In addition, in the framework of the struggle for democratic rights and the political revolution, the resolution should give much greater weight to the fight for *independent organization of the masses of workers* for “the establishment of independence for the trade unions and of genuine proletarian democracy . . . diversity of parties or factions. . .” [P. 19.]

Thus it would be useful for the International to concretely analyze the present opportunities in each workers state and to define a line of intervention in each one. At present, to state, for example, that “the first forms of independent working-class protest have indeed appeared in the USSR, be it on a very modest scale,” [p. 17] is to minimize the extent of the movement *already* underway, a movement that explicitly calls for a struggle for an independent trade-union organization. This process has reached an even higher level in Czechoslovakia, where tendencies are appearing within Charter 77 that are moving in the direction of forming an independent “socialist” party. The programmatic criticisms regarding the confusion of its initiators should not prevent us from giving unconditional support to every step forward toward the reconstruction of a mass workers party in the workers states subjected to bureaucratic control.

5. The draft resolution states its support for political revolution “in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China.” But it *does not take a position on any* of the fundamental debates which have occurred and are still occurring in the International concerning the workers states and the bureaucracies in power.

Thus, the United Secretariat sees no problem in a “world resolution” that proposes *no* orientation toward such important questions as: the Stalinist or non-Stalinist

character of the Chinese and Vietnamese CPs; the immediacy or non-immediacy of the political revolution in Vietnam; the class character of the Cambodian state; the deformed or non-deformed character of the Cuban workers state; the nature of the Cuban leadership, etc.

These questions are decisive, however, both from the standpoint of the tasks of building the Fourth International in those countries, as well as on a world scale, relating to the new Indochina crisis or the Cuban intervention in Africa. In addition, these recent events pose anew the theoretical and political problems that the International faced with the establishment of the “people’s democracies,” with the Chinese revolution, and with the Cuban revolution—problems that touch the very basis of the Marxist theory of the state.

The resolution passed by the majority of the United Secretariat in March 1979 speaks of “the establishment of new workers states in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in 1975.” Thus, the victory of a “liberation front” led by a Stalinist party is a sufficient criterion in the eyes of the international leadership to conclude that capitalism has been overthrown in these countries and that workers states have been created.

In doing this the comrades commit a serious error of analysis, the beginning of a revision of the Marxist theory of the state, a de facto abandonment of the theory of the workers and peasants government, and an overly favorable assessment of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Contrary to the simplistic view of the comrades in the leadership of the International, what is decisive is not the nature of the political force that controls the armed forces, but the property relations that these “bands of armed men” defend. Of course, in the case of an authentic proletarian revolution (the Paris Commune, 1917 in Russia), the creation of a dictatorship of the proletariat, gives the state a working-class character even before the decisive social transformations have taken place. This is quite different from the seizure of political power by a petty-bourgeois force, “including the Stalinists.” In this case, since the proletarian masses are in fact excluded from political power, the working-class character of the state cannot be assured except through the effective transformation of the relations of production.

Thus, in Eastern Europe, although German imperialism had collapsed and the old bourgeois armed forces had been crushed, the capitalist mode of production was kept for several years. Only when the means of production were expropriated and other measures were taken did the Fourth International characterize these states as workers states.

Second, Marxism makes a radical distinction between the class nature of the workers state and that of the bureaucracy that parasitically feeds on it. From this point of view, the beginning of a revision on what determines the nature of the state directly complements the false theory attributing a “dual social nature” to the bureaucracy.

To maintain that a state is a workers state as soon as a Stalinist party takes political-military control means to decide the working-class character of the state not on the basis of the social relations prevailing in it but on the basis of a proletarian quality flowing from the bureaucracy itself.

This is contrary to the Trotskyist theory that there is a social antagonism between the gains that gave the Soviet

state its working-class character and the bureaucracy as a petty-bourgeois entity. (See *In Defense of Marxism*.)

The workers states that the Stalinist bureaucracy has been led to establish in exceptional circumstances, suffer from the beginning from all the bureaucratic deformations particular to the bureaucracy's parasitism.

In China and Vietnam, the transformation of the relations of production came after a revolutionary upsurge led by bureaucratized parties. In each case, it was not the proletariat, led by a revolutionary party, that established the workers state, as in the USSR, but a movement controlled by a Stalinist leadership, which politically expropriated the working class. Contrary to the assertions of the ex-IMT, the articles by Rousset, and the new United Secretariat resolution, it is necessary to clearly characterize the Vietnamese workers state as *deformed* and to call for a political revolution.

Moreover, the historical process leading petty-bourgeois parties to overturn capitalism and create workers states cannot be understood without taking into account the political and social transformations. To the extent that these transformations do not necessarily coincide, the concept of a "workers and peasants government" is a theoretical pivot of Marxist understanding.

For Trotsky, a "workers and peasants government" led by a petty-bourgeois party is a *transitional* formation. The bourgeois state based on capitalist relations of production has not yet been destroyed. But it is a weakened bourgeois state, in crisis, in which governmental power has been lost by the bourgeois political forces. In such an unstable situation, the "workers and peasants government" must use its power in a relatively short time to expropriate the private means of production and break the domination of the bourgeoisie; otherwise this government will be overturned.

The positions adopted by the IMT for several years, however, have tended toward its liquidation pure and simple. This abandonment goes back to 1973. Breaking at that time with the previous analyses of the Fourth International, the IMT determined that the Chinese workers state dated from 1949—meaning from the time the Chinese CP took power—and not from the decisive social transformations of 1952-53.

Furthermore, a severe judgment must be made of the orientation followed by the United Secretariat majority in the new Indochina crisis. In an earlier period, the positions taken in *Rouge* and *Inprecor*, before the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, represented political support to the Vietnamese CP as such, based on a completely ideological analysis of the parties involved ("nationalism" of the Cambodian CP, "internationalism" of the Vietnamese CP). With the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, the United Secretariat majority had to adapt its position, without however renouncing its method of seeking the roots of the conflict in the "ideology" of the parties.

Thus, the whole Indochina crisis was analyzed as being related to an "inter-bureaucratic conflict," explained fundamentally by "expansionist" rivalries of the bureaucracies, which were themselves products of ideological errors, with their "nationalism" stemming from the "theory of socialism in one country."

As a result, the International itself had a mainly ideological attitude, calling for "internationalism," rejecting "equally" all the bureaucracies, opposing the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia and the Chinese interven-

tion in Vietnam in identical terms. This neutralist position logically leads to support for a "negotiated solution" to the conflict.

This approach is mistaken both on the theoretical level and the political level. First of all, it is false to analyze "the inter-bureaucratic conflicts" *by themselves*, when their true *social* foundation must be sought not in the bureaucracy itself but in its relations with the fundamental social classes, the world proletariat and imperialism.

Marxists know that the bureaucracy, while it has its own interests as a parasitic caste, has no historic destiny independent of imperialism, for which it is in the first analysis, the "transmission belt" inside the workers state. Only the false theory of a "dual social nature" leads to considering it a "working-class bureaucracy" whose various factions are liable to confront each other according to an autonomous logic, an "infernal bureaucratic logic."

In reality, the tendencies toward the national dislocation of the bureaucracy are not explained fundamentally by either nationalist *ideas* or by mere caste rivalries. Rather they are explained by the *counterrevolutionary competition of the different national bureaucracies in their relations with imperialism*, at the service of the politics of peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, just as the conflict cannot be explained just by referring to the bureaucracy, the stakes of the conflict between the bureaucracies are not limited to caste rivalries. They must be assessed in relation to the antagonistic interests of the two fundamental classes of society.

In basing itself solely on an ideological denunciation of "bureaucratic logic," the United Secretariat majority was unable to grasp the decisive stakes in the conflict, that is, the threats against the working-class gains in Vietnam, against the Vietnamese workers state as such.

From this standpoint, the Fourth International should not have drawn an equal-sign between the Chinese and Vietnamese interventions. To reinforce its position in the counterrevolutionary holy alliance, the Peking bureaucracy had to actively participate in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. This policy was at first expressed in the Peking bureaucracy's support to Pol Pot against Vietnam, then in its policy in liaison with the ASEAN countries to isolate the Vietnamese workers state. It then began to fight even more actively against the social overturns in the South and the effect that the reunification of Vietnam—on the basis of the abolition of private property—would have on the equilibrium of forces. China did this by suspending economic aid and using the Chinese colony in South Vietnam against the Vietnamese masses. The Chinese bureaucracy took its policy a step further by intervening militarily in Vietnam. The purpose was to pressure Vietnam and to pursue a policy of strangulation of that state and the social gains it embodies.

By not posing *the defense of the workers state* as the central axis of its intervention, the United Secretariat majority has in reality placed itself within the bounds of a pacifist and democratic ideology. This is equally shown by its refusal to pose the question of political revolution against the Vietnamese CP; the only way to link the fight for democracy and defense of the workers state. This serious error thus illustrates in practice the erroneous orientation of the document "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Lastly, it should be noted that the apparent "neutral-

ism" of the United Secretariat majority and its inability to defend the Vietnamese workers state is not incompatible—just the opposite—with the pursuit of political opportunism toward the Hanoi bureaucracy. This opportunism is reflected in the support given to "a negotiated solution" and the perspective of "the Indochinese socialist federation." (It is striking to note that in quite different circumstances, the French crisis of 1978-79, a similar analysis that reduced the Stalinist policy to an "interbureaucratic rivalry" with the SP had led to the same incomprehension of the fundamental aim of this policy in relation to peaceful coexistence, the same formal "equal" rejection of both bureaucracies involved, and in reality, a partial political adaptation to the Stalinist policy.)

Unlike the United Secretariat majority, the SWP comrades have a more correct analysis of the evolution of the situation in Southeast Asia and the threats there against the Vietnamese workers state. They have maintained the traditional positions and the methodological acquisitions of the Fourth International on the creation of workers states and the theory of the "workers and peasants government." These acquisitions enabled the SWP and the LTF to combat the errors of the United Secretariat majority (ex-IMT).

The present attitude of the SWP, however, is not exempt from political and theoretical slippage, which, if prolonged, could affect the integrity of the acquisitions the comrades are trying to defend. In the first place, they were correct to place their analysis of the conflict in the overall framework of the different bureaucracies' relations with imperialism. In doing so, they combat the implicit error on the "dual social nature" of the bureaucracy which is the basis of the majority's propositions.

But in their analysis of the Chinese policy, they go so far as to present it as a pure and simple agency of imperialism. There is at present a *convergence* of the aims of Chinese and American policy, and this convergence is indeed *organized* in the framework of peaceful coexistence. While the Chinese bureaucracy takes the side of imperialism against the Vietnamese state, it nevertheless still has its *particular interests as a parasitic caste*, which are the basis for its reactionary policy. To simply identify Peking and Washington obscures this characteristic of the bureaucracy and leads to liquidating the Trotskyist theory of the "dual function of the bureaucracy" in favor of an instrumentalistic and simplistic view of the bureaucracy. Only the theory of the "dual function of the bureaucracy" allows us to account for the material basis of its counterrevolutionary policy.

In addition, this analysis leads the SWP comrades, on the contrary, to minimize the counterrevolutionary responsibilities of the Hanoi and Soviet bureaucracies. While Peking did have a policy of supporting U.S. imperialism, and its military intervention is actively supported and utilized by imperialism, that does not mean that Moscow can be exonerated from its counterrevolutionary responsibility, including in this region, as its attitude toward the Paris accords and the recent statements by Brezhnev show.

Moreover, while it is false to put the Chinese and Vietnamese interventions on the same level, there is no justification for the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. The Vietnamese intervention, far from really defending the workers state and extending its conquests, only served the interests of the *bureaucracy* in Hanoi in its pursuit of a

"negotiated solution" on the basis of peaceful coexistence.

The simplifications in the analysis made by the SWP comrades have led them in fact to replace the struggle between the oppressed masses and imperialism—on whose side we find the bureaucracies—with a struggle between "camps," with imperialism and China on one side and Vietnam and the USSR on the other. This is shown in the political support given to Hanoi's intervention, identifying the defense of the workers state with the defense of a bureaucratic initiative that had neither a defensive character nor any progressive results. This slippage toward "camp-ist" positions, confusing in fact defense of the state and support for the bureaucracy, unfortunately seems to be related to a growing idealization of the Cuban bureaucracy. It increasingly leads to down-playing an orientation in favor of political revolution in Vietnam.

These errors, like those of the majority, should be corrected in the course of the debate on the "world resolution."

6. Finally, the completely ambiguous formulations to which the document resorts allow it to avoid a clear characterization of the role of the Cuban intervention in Africa, while leaving the door open to the interpretation that the aim of the intervention was "to extend and defend the socialist revolution," a position currently put forward by the SWP leadership, in a break with the correct analyses made by the LTF during the Angolan situation.

As was stressed then, Marxism cannot allow an empirical analysis in terms of "camps" to replace an analysis in terms of the class interests at work. While it was necessary to support the Angolan resistance to the invasion by South Africa and to unconditionally defend the Cuban workers state against all imperialist threats, it was also necessary to recognize that Cuba was giving political support to the MPLA against UNITA and the FNLA, who did not represent different class forces, and that later Cuba directly contributed to the reconstruction of a neocolonialist state for the benefit of the MPLA. From this standpoint, Cuba did not base its activity on the perspective of proletarian revolution and its role was not qualitatively distinguishable from the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy in Africa.

The role of the Cuban troops in Ethiopia only confirms this orientation. The unconditional defense of the Cuban workers state against imperialism cannot justify any accommodation toward the Cuban leadership or stand as an obstacle to a clear denunciation of a policy which, by the admission of the Cuban leaders and diplomats themselves, falls within the framework of peaceful coexistence in Africa. The support of Mengistu's Dergue contributes directly to the consolidation of a neocolonial state that has been brought to the edge of breaking up by the revolutionary process, and contributes to the repression of the masses and the denial of elementary national rights. One cannot at the same time claim to defend these rights, as the document does, and fail to clearly characterize the Cuban policy in Ethiopia and in Africa as counterrevolutionary.

From this standpoint, many remarks made by Comrade Gabriel, and particularly the general line of Comrade D. Keil's contributions on this subject, and of the draft amendment presented by Comrade Amador, should be supported.