

Note. These comments are on the text  
 World Political Revolution as it stood at  
 the time of voting by the United  
 Secretariat. It is possible that  
 subsequent editing dealt with one  
 or two of the detailed points outlined  
 below. ~~It is also possible that some of the~~  
~~points may have been made~~ ~~adjustment~~ However the points drawn  
 attention to are sufficiently clearly  
 ingrained in the text that they are  
 necessary to discuss anyway. Therefore the  
 following comments



The document stresses throughout that the weight of the class

struggle in the imperialist countries is 'preponderant'. However  
nowhere in the text are two different <sup>points concerning</sup> ~~statements~~ of this sorted out.

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

There is however a second more conjunctural sense of <sup>(preponderant)</sup> ~~preponderant~~. This concerns the relation <sup>and</sup> weight of the struggle in the imperialist centres at a particular point in time. It is evidently in this <sup>more conjunctural</sup> ~~this~~ sense that the situation changed in 1968 with the ~~French, Italian~~ working class in the advanced imperialist countries launching major class battles <sup>after 20 years of relative quiescence.</sup>

Since 1968 this 'preponderance' of the struggle in the advanced imperialist countries has been true in both an historic and a conjunctural sense. Not merely are the imperialist centres <sup>historically</sup> ~~primary~~ the most decisive but the struggles in Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy were among the most advanced developments of the class struggle with a key role in the <sup>international</sup> class relation of forces.

→ However from the point of view of ~~conceptual~~ clarity the two senses of 'preponderant' are distinct.

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

assessments. Apart from the fact that it would be a very rash person who, despite the major struggles and even pre-revolutionary crises which are evidently coming, actually held that the next victorious revolution will be in an imperialist country, we should also learn a little sobriety and caution from the experience of the last years. After all it was not long ago that the International was writing about how it was really only in Africa that the class struggle remained somewhat static whereas today it is evident that the struggles in Angola, Zimbabwe, <sup>South Africa</sup> and the development of the Ethiopian revolution, not to mention the international impact and implications of the intervention of the Cubans, ~~represents~~ <sup>high</sup> represents one of the <sup>highest</sup> point of the international class struggle. Similarly, particularly from the point of view of the construction of the International, we should watch the situation in Latin America with considerable importance. The combined crisis of the 'Cuban' currents, the Maoist influenced forces, and the bourgeois nationalists creates major openings for building <sup>Trotskyist organisations</sup> ~~the Party~~. We have already had spectacular growth of organisations of the Fourth International in Mexico and Columbia <sup>which are in proportion to the countries, quite as significant as in Europe</sup> and, while there are more difficulties in consolidating the ~~results~~ gains, the election results in Peru show quite spectacular openings. An important development has also taken place in Central America, Furthermore this growth of organisations occurs in a context where, as the World Political Resolution correctly analyses, an increased instability of the Latin American dictatorships is occurring and the class struggle is beginning to recover from defeats. The combination of the basic <sup>underlying</sup> economic, social and political instability of ~~Latin~~ Latin America, a new rise of class struggle, major crises of alternative poles in the workers movement, and growth of our sections poses the possibility of gains for the Fourth International in Latin America at least as important as in Europe. Furthermore the bourgeoisies in

that continent, as in Africa, are far weaker than in the imperialist countries and the possibilities of the class struggle assuming at ~~least as much~~ <sup>even</sup> more, advanced forms than in Europe exists. The General Strike in Peru in May 1978 assumed forms more advanced than those seen anywhere in Europe, with the possible exception of Portugal, ~~and the possibility of a strike such as that of Ethiopia~~ ~~quantitatively exceeds anything which exists in an imperialist country.~~ The <sup>world</sup> political resolution, ~~but~~ not clearly distinguishing <sup>between</sup> the historically true statements concerning the imperialist countries ~~and~~ and ~~various~~ conjunctural situations, which can undergo sharp turns, could disarm

PS  
1978

the International in the face of absolutely major events. The failure to initiate any campaign on Chile before the coup, when it could have had a much greater impact with the reformists when the coup, which we correctly predicted, occurred; the evident ~~fix~~ slowness in taking up the first imperialist intervention in ~~Paris~~ in 1977 and the fact that the response of the vanguard in 1978 was still not high compared to preceding years ~~for~~ with the second intervention; the failure to mount a serious solidarity campaign during the Lebanese civil war; the fact that the European sections press was not prepared for the remarkable events in Peru should be warning signs on this. A

fixation on the situation in the imperialist countries, with confusion over historic and conjunctural ~~reasons~~ <sup>-with a factor capable of undergoing sharp turns</sup> justifications for this, could seriously <sup>in the face of absolute major events</sup> disarm the International. This <sup>point</sup> is particularly important precisely as the tasks outlined by the World Political Resolution in gaining a base in the working class are achieved. As yet ~~there~~, and of course not as an historic trend, ~~internationalist~~ consciousness on the colonial revolution is not as high amongst trade union cadres and workers in the reformist parties <sup>in most countries,</sup> as in student layers and among young workers who are not as yet really playing a key role in the mass organisations. Without clarity on our part we could come seriously under the pressure of trends accomodating to imperialism and finding

rationalisations for this in quoting ~~historical~~ historical truths concerning the predominance of the revolution in the imperialist countries. <sup>\* We have already had some bad experiences on this - previous page - etc.</sup> We should in my opinion state clearly that penetration into the working class demands heightening our propoganda and education

on international and anti-imperialist struggles. Confusions in the <sup>World Political Resolution</sup> text do not help on this. ~~and should produce~~ <sup>a</sup> failure to take openings in the colonial countries and a wrong consciousness in the imperialist countries. In the context of important advances of the colonial

revolution which can undoubtedly occur in the next period ~~there~~ would be a very dangerous combination for the International - particularly one in which a very large number of members are in the imperialist countries and therefore subject to inevitable pressures of them.

Even before such struggles <sup>in the colonial countries -</sup> however the lack of clarity on these issues in the text could have dangerous consequences. It is already obvious that not merely issues of distance but of the distribution of the weight of the <sup>forces of the</sup> international make many problems for relations between the sections in the imperialist countries, and the centre, and the cdes in colonial countries. Even where we have major forces, in Latin America, problems of lack of communication are evident. With cdes in Africa, ~~South~~ South and East Asia, and the Arab East, where our forces are smaller and problems of distance and resources even greater, these problems are ~~even~~ <sup>still</sup> more acute. This combination poses great <sup>practical</sup> difficulties even ~~if~~ if we had an absolutely correct line but they will be immensely multiplied by any lack of clarity politically. The 'imperialo-centric' character of the document, and its failure to separate out historic and more conjunctural questions, will make this situation worse if it is not corrected. <sup>So try out this</sup> ~~They are therefore~~ <sup>is therefore not a</sup> ~~not~~ semantic purely conceptual questions but <sup>a</sup> very important ones for ability to take hold of openings in the colonial countries, for vital tasks of solidarity, and for relations ~~wixk~~ between the centre, sections in the imperialist countries, and sections in the colonial

~~International or a collection of organisations linked together in the imperialist countries.~~

2. An <sup>world wide</sup> ~~international~~ tactic of the <sup>construction of the</sup> Class Struggle Left Wing?

The World

Political Resolution stresses among tasks the question of the construction of the class struggle left wing. This is certainly a key strategic task in the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and I suspect most imperialist countries. However this is a world political resolution. Does someone seriously propose that <sup>it</sup> is the correct tactic in the workers states (and in which mass organisations incidentally in these countries - the state controlled unions, the ruling CPSs <sup>- should we be building it?</sup>)? or in Zimbabwe or Lebanon? or in the past war in Vietnam? A world wide tactic of the construction of class struggle left wings would be a quite ridiculous generalisation and I doubt that anyone in the International would seriously defend it. However unfortunately the <sup>and elsewhere</sup> introduction to the document <sup>poses</sup> such a formula. In analysing the appearance of <sup>A</sup> "a <sup>of</sup> vanguard radicalised workers' (p 1 pt 4), which is indeed a universal characteristic of the present period developing not only in the imperialist countries, but in the colonial ones, and even in the workers states, the the first accusation levelled at them is that "this heterogeneous layer of the working class has not yet been able to organise a class struggle left wing in the labour movement". So apparently this entire layer of workers, in all countries, should have been constructing class struggle left wings?!? This is stupid. The point concerning the fact that such vanguard workers cannot spontaneously find a way forward for the masses, which requires a vanguard party, is the point which needs to be made and not an accusation concerning a specific tactic. For example our ~~criticisms~~ criticisms in Zimbabwe are ~~about~~ about illusions in the role of Muzorewa, Nkomo, Mugabe and relations with the bourgeoisie,

and description of

limitations they place on the struggle, and not at all primarily on their failure 'to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ <sup>organize</sup> class struggle left wing. Similarly in Lebanon was the real <sup>Problem</sup> ~~failure~~ of the <sup>fighters of the</sup> PLO ~~to~~ failure to organize a class struggle left wing? Is this the correct tactic for the workers in Poland radicalised out of the struggles of 1970 and 1976? ~~These~~ <sup>Any suggestion of advocacy of</sup> ~~is not merely being wrong~~ <sup>advocacy</sup> of the class struggle left wing <sup>LAB</sup> would merely make the Fourth International look ridiculous - rather like those sects who are <sup>the</sup> more definite concerning the line in a country the further it is away and the less they know about it. To put such a ~~generalized~~ <sup>universal</sup> tactic in a world resolution <sup>in the way that is done,</sup> is an unwarranted generalisation from particular elements crucial in the main imperialist countries - and even here we must note that crucial as this tactic is at present, future developments of the class struggle can change it <sup>surely concerned</sup> at least as regards the forms dealt with in the Resolution.

3. Regroupment

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

Unfortunately however nowhere in the text is there <sup>any</sup> indication that ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ anything other than these two categories exist. To judge from the text one would assume that the world to the left of the reformists was composed only of Trotskyists and centrists. While this may be true conjuncturally it is not at all an historically ~~correct~~ or theoretically correct position. Trotsky



was clear that there could be authentically revolutionary forces which were not Trotskyist. This general position was of considerable importance for the Fourth International at the time of the Cuban Revolution, and with the evolution of Malcolm X, and e de Cannon correctly drew the attention of the International to reaffirming this position in the process leading to reunification. <sup>in 1963</sup> In the future this position can again be of considerable significance - particularly with the evolution of currents coming out of the mass parties. While the World Resolution should of course concentrate on the immediate openings it should however also briefly reassert our general position. This is important both theoretically and to arm our cadres for ~~development~~ future developments.

4. The currents inside the mass parties

The document correctly lays great stress on the possibility of opposition currents emerging ~~both~~ in the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. However the somewhat unilateral~~ist~~ statements in the document, and its too great ~~emphasis~~ theoretical generalisation of particular and conjunctural developments, does not at all clearly outline the axes of development of these currents and therefore ~~appropriate~~ necessary methods of approach, problems, and tactics towards them - something rendered more difficult to grasp by the 'imperialo-centric' characteristics <sup>of the document</sup> remarked on earlier.

In fact none of the most <sup>developed</sup> ~~significant~~ oppositions which have emerged <sup>in the mass parties</sup> have been propelled in a ~~simple~~ way which is simply a direct product of the rise of working class struggles without other political mediations of elements arising. This is particularly the case of the ~~Stalinist~~ oppositions in the CPs, for example in Spain, where a crucial element is of course relations with the Soviet

and developments in Eastern Europe

bureaucracy. In the French CP the most left current, that generally with a figure head of Althusser, emerged out of a crisis of general political line of the CP, <sup>associated with its tactics for the Union of the Left and the elections,</sup> and not simply out of a rise of workers struggles - even although of course the latter provided the conditions for its existence. In the case of left social democratic currents at least the one I am most familiar with, that in the British Labour Party with its figure head of Benn and its chief theorists people such as Stuart Holland and ex-Trotskyist Ken Coates, ~~was~~ was influenced in its base and theorists by international developments ( French and Italian SPs, Allende, left liberal wings in the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe) ~~just~~ over and above, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~more~~ ~~than~~ ~~direct~~ ~~upsurges~~ ~~of~~ ~~workers~~ ~~struggles~~.

This question is very crucial in the way we deal with such currents. It is impossible to deal with say the Althusser current in the French CP, or the Benn-Holland-Coates elements in Britain, ~~simply with merely~~ ~~formulas of implantation or delivery to the unions, and to the class~~ ~~struggle left wing. these things are necessary to reach such currents~~ without going far beyond simply any economic and social agitation and the tactic of building a class struggle left wing. These currents, which will increasingly include worker cadres with much greater weight in the mass organisations than our average members, want above all answers to the general political impasse and roadblocks of the reformists. Implanting ourselves in ~~the~~ industry, building a class struggle left wing in countries where appropriate, are vital steps to reach these cadres and currents but they are not at all adequate as a means of winning first individuals, and then hopefully whole currents, to our organisations and the Fourth International. The unilateral, and overgeneralised, elements,

of the resolution do not aid in, or properly prepare us for, this task.

Conclusions

The World Political Resolution as a statement of immediate tasks, particularly in the imperialist countries, can be supported. However to be a proper preparation for our sections, particularly in dealing with currents emerging in the mass parties, it must be developed on a number of points - a whole ~~number~~<sup>series</sup> of purely exhortatory affirmations in my opinion could well do with eliminating and replacing with serious arguments drawn from important resolutions of the International passed in the last period on Socialist Democracy, Women's Oppression, and Eurocommunism, as well as materials which have appeared on the colonial revolution. Most seriously however the document contains unwarranted generalisations and theoretical confusions which could do serious damage ~~texts~~ in disorienting sections in the long, and, ~~xxx~~ in the case of <sup>com</sup> colonial ~~xxx~~ countries, short, term. The resolution therefore in my opinion should be ~~taken rather than opening the discussion than~~ <sup>to eliminate the self-defeat</sup> ~~closed~~ and should be considerably worked on before adoption at the World Congress. A clearer estimate of the balance <sup>between</sup> of the strengths of the resolution and its errors will be possible after the European and Latin American resolutions <sup>are</sup> produced as these cannot but either correct its weaknesses or deepen its ~~errors~~ <sup>dangers, dangers confusion and errors</sup>.

6/7/78