

MINUTES OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING

July 4-6, 1978

PRESENT: Adair, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Jones, Kurt, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Roman, Rudi, Stateman, Susan, Walter

IEC PRESENT: Bob, Dunder, Karl, Petersen

GUESTS: Allio, Cannon, Enrique, Fuad, Greco, Laura, Holden, Pola, Renaud

- AGENDA:
1. Sri Lanka
 2. Peru
 3. Lebanon
 4. Draft Resolution on World Political Situation
 5. World Congress Preparations
 6. Bureau Report

Chairpersons: Allio, Brewster, Dunder

1. Sri Lanka

Bob reported on the political situation in Sri Lanka, the ongoing struggle against the government's attacks on trade-union freedoms, and developments with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP -- People's Liberation Front).

Discussion.

2. Peru

Martinez reported on the political situation in Peru and on the prospects for fusion of the organizations adhering to the Fourth International in that country.

Discussion.

MOTION by Duret: 1) After having heard the report by Comrade Martinez concerning political developments in Peru, the United Secretariat decides that a delegation composed of Riel and Galois should visit Peru as soon as possible.

2) The delegation -- working in collaboration with United Secretariat member Hugo Blanco -- should seek to help the process of unification of all the organizations of the Fourth International, and, in consultation with the leaderships of these organizations, to investigate the various possible forms of aid to the Peruvian comrades.

3) To help achieve these two goals, the United Secretariat requests that the leadership of the PST postpone its plenum for several days in order to enable Comrade Hugo, as well as the United Secretariat delegation, to participate.

For: 19 (Adair, Allio, Bob, Brewster, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Holden, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan)

Against: 0

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Abstaining: 2 (Greco, Laura)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

MOTION by Fourier: To delegate the Bureau to send message of solidarity to the Fourth Internationalists in Peru.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Lebanon

Fuad reported on the current situation in Lebanon since the Israeli invasion of the south. He expressed the point of view of the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), Lebanese section of the Fourth International, on three major points which have been the object of an exchange of letters between the RCG and the United Secretariat Bureau: the role of UN troops in Lebanon and the attitude revolutionaries should take toward them; the assessment of the March 1978 Fatah commando operation on the Haifa-Tel Aviv road; and the participation of RCG members in the military efforts in southern Lebanon during the Israeli invasion. (See attachment A.)

Stamman introduced the Bureau draft of a United Secretariat letter to the RCG in reply to their letter of June 4.

Discussion.

Proposals from the RCG leadership:

1) To publish the exchange of correspondence between the RCG and the United Secretariat Bureau in the International Internal Information Bulletin.

AGREED

2) That the International help to launch a campaign against a new wave of repression in Syria which has struck a blow against several organizations of the Syrian left.

PROPOSAL: To refer this matter to the Bureau, since more concrete information is needed.

AGREED

3) To circulate the comments of the RCG Central Committee, expressed in the June 28, 1978, text entitled "Remarks About the Report of the Fact-Finding Commission Concerning the Revolutionary Communist Group, Section of the Fourth International in Lebanon," to the same people who received the report of the ad-hoc fact finding commission established by the United Secretariat to investigate disciplinary action taken by the RCG against several comrades. To reverse the decision of the March 31-April 2 United Secretariat meeting which, in addition to approving the commission's report, adopted a motion to distribute this report to three former members of the Lebanese section interviewed by the commission, among others. The RCG does not agree that two of these three comrades -- comrades Adnan and Nadira -- should receive the report.

MOTION: To concur with the proposal of the RCG leadership not to distribute the report to comrades Adnan and Nadira and to circulate the RCG's remarks on the United Secretariat fact finding commission report to the same people who received the report.

For: 26 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Bob, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Jones, Karl, Kurt, Laura, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 0

Abstaining: 1 (Fourier)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

MOTION by Fourier: To postpone the vote on the Bureau draft of a United Secretariat reply to the RCG letter of June 4.

DEFEATED

MOTION by Fuad: To approve the general line of the tactical approach of the Lebanese RCG toward the UN troops in Lebanon (as contained in the June 4 letter from the RCG, pages 7-9).

DEFEATED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Fuad: To approve the general line of the Lebanese RCG concerning the overall assessment of the character of the United Nations (as contained in the June 4 letter from the RCG, pages 9-11).

DEFEATED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: To approve the general line on the United Nations troops expressed in the draft United Secretariat letter to the RCG.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Jones: To extend the allotted time in order that discussion can be held around amending the part of the United Secretariat letter dealing with the Fatah commando operation in Israel, to take up the March 22 United Secretariat statement published by the Bureau.

DEFEATED

MOTION: To approve the general line of the United Secretariat letter concerning the March 1978 Fatah commando operation in Israel.

For: 26 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Frej, Fourier, Georges, Greco, Holden, Jones, Karl, Kurt, Laura, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 0

Abstaining: 1 (Bob)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

MOTION: To approve the general line of the United Secretariat letter concerning participation of RCG members in the military efforts in southern Lebanon.

For: 22 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Holden, Karl, Kurt, Manuel, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 0

Abstaining: 5 (Bob, Greco, Jones, Laura, Martinez)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

MOTION by Dunder: To send the United Secretariat letter to the RCG after editing by the Bureau and to include in the letter the record of votes at the United Secretariat.

MOTION by Jones: To send the United Secretariat letter to the RCG as it has just been adopted by this meeting without further editing by the Bureau and to include in it the record of voting at the United Secretariat.

Vote on Dunder motion:

For: 25 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Bob, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Karl, Kurt, Laura, Manuel, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 2 (Jones, Martinez)

Abstaining: 0

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

Vote on Jones motion:

For: 2 (Jones, Martinez)

Against: 25 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Bob, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Karl, Kurt, Laura, Manuel, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Abstaining: 0

Not voting: 0

DEFEATED

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Statement by Jones: 1) I consider the remarks on the United Nations troops are correct and the Lebanese comrades have made an important mistake on this. I therefore vote for the United Secretariat letter on this point.

2) On the Fatah operation. I consider this attack was an attempt to find a spectacular military action to draw attention away from its political impasse. The tone of the United Secretariat declaration, however, was unfortunate and wrong as it placed too much emphasis on this error as compared to the chief issue of the Israeli attack on Lebanon -- an attack which had in any case been prepared long before the Fatah operation. I therefore vote for the letter as a political judgment on the Fatah operation and not as an endorsement of the particular United Secretariat formulas in the Bureau declaration.

3) On the question of "participation of the RCG fighters in the military efforts in South Lebanon." The United Secretariat should know from first principles and experience that this type of issue cannot be decided outside of detailed knowledge of concrete circumstances, which the United Secretariat does not possess. To judge by the report of the Lebanese comrade at the Secretariat I think this action probably flowed from a wrong assessment of the Palestinian resistance's present dynamic. However, it is ridiculous to try to judge if every concrete action was correct from general analysis and without enough concrete information. It merely lowers the authority of the United Secretariat to take firm positions on such questions rather than raise some questionings. It also directs attention from the really important issues under discussion. I therefore abstain on this part of the letter.

4. Draft Resolution on the World Political Situation

Celso introduced the draft of the resolution on the world political situation for the next world congress.

Discussion.

MOTION by Jones: That two amendments Jones wishes to move to the draft be considered now.

DEFEATED

COUNTERMOTION by Celso: To refer the two Jones amendments to the editing commission.

CARRIED

MOTION: To approve the general line of the draft resolution on the world political situation.

For: 22 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Holden, Karl, Kurt, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 2 (Greco, Laura)

Abstaining: 1 (Bob)

Not voting: 2 (Jones, Manuel)

CARRIED

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MOTION: To add comrades Duret and Pepe to the editing commission, now composed of comrades Celso and Walter.

CARRIED

MOTION: To refer all amendments to the editing commission.

For: 24 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Bob, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Holden, Karl, Kurt, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 1 (Jones)

Abstaining: 0

Not voting: 2 (Greco, Laura)

CARRIED

Statement by Jones: I was quite prepared to vote for the line of the World Political Resolution, as indicated in the discussion, on the basis of agreement with the tasks it outlines because I assumed that the weaknesses pointed out, and some obvious errors such as the implication of a worldwide tactic of the building of the class struggle left wing, would easily be sorted out by amendments. However, the rejection by the United Secretariat of taking amendments and referring them to a drafting commission, under conditions where some of the amendments on the most elementary points had not been accepted by the drafting commission previously, is a wrong procedure in my opinion. It raises the possibility that perhaps the confused aspects of the document had a rather greater weight than I had supposed -- previously I had been inclined to the view that they were just loose formulations. Under these circumstances I therefore prefer to wait and see the amended document before voting on it.

Statement by Manuel: The fact that I did not vote on the world political resolution does not signify any political judgment on my part. I could not read it, since it was available only in English. That's all.

5. World Congress Preparations

A. Stateman presented a motion on behalf of Duret, Greco, and Stateman. The date of the World Congress should be set for as early as possible, taking into account the new situation in the International following the dissolution of the LTF and the IMT, and the previously agreed requirements for a democratic World Congress contained in the October 1976 motion of the United Secretariat, "Motion on Preparation for a Democratic World Congress," as well as the agreement at the December 1977 United Secretariat meeting to restrict the agenda of the next World Congress. The majority of the leaderships of the LTF and the IMT agreed that past drafts of resolutions would be set aside following dissolution of both formations, and that a process of discussion would begin within the leading bodies of the International on drafts of resolutions, without prior lineup along the old lines. This process would necessarily take some time, and began on the new basis after the November 1978 dissolution of the IMT.

Previous to the dissolution of the LTF and IMT the resolution "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" had been adopted by a large majority vote of the United Secretariat. The resolution "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation" was adopted at the April 1978 meeting of the United Secretariat. At this meeting, we have adopted by majority vote the "World Political Resolution." It is realistic to project that a draft of a resolution on capitalist Europe can be finished in time for consideration at the September meeting of the United Secretariat, and that a draft resolution on Latin America for the November meeting. Both require not only collaboration on the drafting commissions, but also consultation with the leaderships of sections in the areas involved. This schedule would mean that the World Congress could be held six months after the November United Secretariat meeting, and still fall within the guidelines set at the October 1976 United Secretariat.

An additional question concerns the rights of minorities of the United Secretariat or of the IEC, or other comrades who wish to present counterresolutions to those adopted by the United Secretariat. Comrade Greco, speaking for the Bolshevik Tendency, discussed this with a subcommittee of the Bureau. He indicated that the Bolshevik Tendency was considering submitting counterresolutions on a number of points, but that they thought they could prepare these by January. We therefore thought we should make an explicit provision relating to the schedule of resolutions counter to those of the United Secretariat majority. This would apply to the tendency called by Nemo et al as well as any others.

Considering all these factors, and the practical difficulties of holding a congress in the summer, the date of June 1979 is indicated.

We also discussed with Comrade Greco a proposal by the Bolshevik Tendency to form a commission representing the Bolshevik Tendency, the Nemo et al tendency if they wished, and members of the United Secretariat in neither of these tendencies. Its purpose would be to oversee the translation and publication of documents for the World Congress, and to prepare a report on mandates of sections and sympathizing groups for the mandates commission of the World Congress. Any disputes within the commission concerning mandates would, of course, go before the mandates commission of the World Congress.

Therefore we propose the following joint motion:

MOTION by Duret, Greco, and Stateman:

1) To set the date for the Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (Eleventh World Congress) at June 1979.

2) To establish a commission of the United Secretariat, composed of two representatives of the Bolshevik Tendency, representatives of the Nemo et al tendency if they so wish, and two non-members of either the Bolshevik Tendency or the Nemo et al tendency. The purpose of this commission will be to help oversee the translation and publication of documents for the World Congress and to prepare a report on mandates of sections and sympathizing groups for the mandates commission of the World Congress.

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3) To make the following addition to the "Motion on Preparation for a Democratic World Congress" adopted by the United Secretariat at its October 1976 meeting: Line resolutions counter to the line of resolutions adopted by the United Secretariat by majority vote which are submitted by January 1, 1979, will be translated, published, and mailed to the sections by March 1, 1979.

4) To set the following agenda for the Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (Eleventh World Congress):

1. Resolution on the World Political Situation
2. Resolution on Women's Liberation
3. Resolution on Capitalist Europe
4. Resolution on Latin America
5. "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"
6. Organizational Report
7. Election of the International Executive Committee

Discussion.

MOTION by Walter: 1) The United Secretariat will send immediately a circular letter to the sections announcing the final date and agenda of the Congress and appealing to them to organize from now on the discussion on the documents already voted by the United Secretariat, which should be enumerated, and to set dates of national conferences preparatory to the World Congress in accord with the date of the World Congress.

2) It decides that this final date will not be changed if bodies having to submit documents -- either majority or minority ones -- do not respect the fixed dates for submission. This will simply mean that documents submitted too late will not be voted on by the Congress, if the Congress thus decides.

Vote on part one of Walter motion:

For: 24 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Kurt, Laura, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 1 (Jones)

Abstaining: 1 (Bob)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

Vote on part two of Walter motion:

For: 10 (Brewster, Claudio, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Kurt, Manuel, Martinez, Walter)

Against: 2 (Adair, Holden)

Abstaining: 5 (Bob, Dunder, Petersen, Roman, Susan)

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Not voting: 9 (Allio, Aubin, Celso, Duret, Greco, Jones, Laura, Pepe, Stateman)

CARRIED

AMENDMENT by Claudio to the Duret, Greco, Stateman motion:
To reject the date of June 1979 put forward in the motion and instead maintain the date of January 1979 for the next world congress, as was fixed by a motion adopted at the December 13-14, 1977, meeting of the United Secretariat.

For: 2 (Claudio, Kurt)

Against: 22 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Jones, Laura, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Abstaining: 2 (Bob, Fourier)

Not voting: 0

DEFEATED

AMENDMENT by Fourier to the Duret, Greco, Stateman motion:
To add a phrase to part three so that it would read: "Line resolutions counter to the line of resolutions adopted by the United Secretariat by majority vote which are presented by recognized tendencies and factions and submitted by January 1, 1979, will be translated, published, and mailed to the sections by March 1, 1979."

For: 6 (Brewster, Claudio, Fourier, Georges, Martinez, Walter)

Against: 11 (Adair, Aubin, Celso, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Holden, Pepe, Roman, Stateman, Susan)

Abstaining: 6 (Bob, Frej, Jones, Kurt, Manuel, Petersen)

Not voting: 3 (Allio, Greco, Laura)

DEFEATED

Statement by Fourier: The vote on my amendment concerning the regulation of tendencies and factions demonstrates that this question, which I raised unexpectedly and with a hastily written text, wasn't sufficiently discussed. The United Secretariat should thus once again place on its agenda this question of the regulation of tendencies and factions as an element in the organization of the discussions for the next World Congress.

MOTION: To adopt the motion by Duret, Greco, Stateman.

For: 24 (Adair, Allio, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Fourier, Frej, Georges, Greco, Holden, Jones, Laura, Manuel, Martinez, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Against: 1 (Kurt)

Abstaining: 1 (Bob)

Not voting: 0

CARRIED

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Statement by Bob: I have abstained from voting on the joint motion for the further postponement of the date of the World Congress and the agenda and I have also abstained from voting on the other motions in that connection as I regard the reality of the Fourth International today as being an international united front of Trotskyist groupings, and as I regard the World Congress as being in reality a World Conference of Trotskyist groupings and not a World Congress to be held in accordance with the true meaning of the statutes of the Fourth International as the world party of the Fourth International and not merely as a set of formal rules.

Statement by Claudio, Fourier, Frej, and Walter: We vote for the proposed resolution under protest. We consider that the new postponement of the World Congress is both highly irregular from a statutory point of view and detrimental to the priority task of integrating the leaderships and ranks of the sections more closely with the political elaboration and the building of the International. However, we vote for the resolution because, as a result of irregular modes of functioning, there is now no alternative possibility.

Statement by Kurt: I oppose the resolution (postponement of the World Congress) and I protest the method behind it. I see absolutely no extraordinary reason for this new violation of the statutes. The IEC members decided (by postal vote, which was in itself neither correct nor appropriate) that the final date of the World Congress should be January. A postponement of another half year is outside the margin in which the United Secretariat can change this IEC decision. All these various postponements have served to bring about an irregular and irresponsible situation in which the World Congresses, as the highest body of our movement, are for the majority of our membership not a fact in real political life, but an abstract requirement of the statutes which is permanently violated.

Statement by Petersen: Although I consider further postponement of the World Congress to be a very undesirable development, I voted for the new June date because I consider that, in the concrete circumstances, it is impossible not to accede to the request of the Bolshevik Tendency for such a postponement.

Statement by Roman: On the agenda for the next World Congress. I voted for the agenda of the World Congress as it was presented at this United Secretariat. Nevertheless, it highlights a basic political problem of which we must be fully conscious. It can be posed beginning from the removal of the point on Indochina from the agenda, since from all general political points of view we should have kept this question on the World Congress agenda.

The objective importance of the 1975 victories in Indochina is incontestable; this is made clear in the draft world political resolution. New workers states were born for the first time since Cuba. The war in Indochina was one of the major international questions throughout the past period, and had profound interna-

tional consequences. The extremely rapid evolution of the situation in the region since the victory is also a very important element in the world situation.

The importance of the Indochinese revolution in our own history is also incontestable. Up until the last several years Indochina was at the heart of the activity of our sections and was one of the main common themes of internationalist activities. We have undergone a prolonged political discussion on this question, sanctioned on several occasions by voting on resolutions (IEC and United Secretariat).

Neither should the political necessity for a rounded document on the balance sheet, lessons, and problems of the Indochinese revolutions be contested. Despite the place of this question in our activities and discussions, we have never adopted an overall analytical document on this subject. We must draw the lessons of the victory of these revolutions for our own militants as well as for our sympathizers and for militants in the semicolonial world. We have a great deal to say about the crises and problems confronting these revolutions today. This is also essential for us and for all those we are able to reach, especially militants in the semicolonial world. Finally, all the International's work on South and East Asia requires that the International have its own line on this question. This work exists.

As for the concrete situation of preparations for the next World Congress, the draft resolution was the first one to be published; that was around two years ago, after having been adopted by the United Secretariat. It has begun to be discussed (even though there's been a delay in translating the Feldman article into French). From this point of view, it was the preparatory discussion for the World Congress that was begun the earliest.

Nevertheless, we are now in a situation where it seems there is no other solution than to take this point off the World Congress agenda. The world resolution does not enable us to present an analysis of the Indochinese revolution. The Eleventh World Congress will have almost nothing to say about the lessons the Trotskyist movement draws from the successes and crises of the Indochinese revolution, from the birth of new bureaucratically deformed workers states.

The argument that there are "too many points" on the World Congress agenda obviously doesn't justify the removal of this one, given its objective political importance. In fact, there are only two explanations for removing it. The first falls in the framework of preparations for the Eleventh World Congress after the dissolution of the LTF and the IMT. Even though it was the first published, the leadership has not been able to rediscuss the Indochina resolution during the past eight months. The second stems from a certain conception of our immediate priorities, namely the necessity to first discuss questions directly linked to world sectors and themes around which we are actually intervening from the inside. This is obviously not the case in either Indochina or Southeast Asia.

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I am not dismissing the weight of these two arguments. That's why I voted for the agenda. But we should be aware of the dangers implied in this approach. The entire agenda of the Eleventh World Congress is symptomatic on this level. Regional and international resolutions are turned in a decisive way toward problems and activities of our sections on three continents: Western Europe, North America, and Latin America. These are the places where our forces are concentrated and where we've had a regional experience. It should be noted that while Latin America is part of the semicolonial world, it's also the continent that is socially, economically, and culturally (as a whole) the closest to the Western imperialist world. The problems of the revolution in the bulk of the semicolonial world -- that is, the African, Arab, and Asian worlds -- are dealt with only in a very superficial manner. In the draft world resolution, for example, the part on the colonial revolution is politically the weakest.

This agenda and the contents of the international resolution reflect these facts: outside of the three continents cited above, our organizational network is extremely loose; our main section (in numerical terms) is in Japan, "the" non-Western imperialist country; our most solidly implanted section (Sri Lanka) is numerically very weak and located in a country of secondary objective importance. Everywhere else our groups are very weak in both numerical terms and in terms of social implantation.

We can't deny this situation in the International and try to give equal weight to the questions and regions where we have forces and those where we don't. Nevertheless, we have to be conscious of the gap that separates our internal political priorities -- a reflection of our unequal development -- and the entirety of political problems of the world revolution. Because if we don't correct the overly unequal nature of our implantation on the level of elaboration and international intervention we run a double risk: the political impoverishment of the International as a whole and a crystallization and worsening of the unequal nature of our implantation. Despite the fact that we have no forces in Indochina and Southeast Asia, the Indochina resolution should have been on the World Congress agenda, given the general political importance of this question for the International. The fact that it wasn't discussed as a matter of course by the leadership of the International in the last period and the fact that it had to be taken off the agenda should be an alarm signal for us. We're "covering" world "events" in a general way more or less correctly, sometimes with big weaknesses. Some work approaches the evolution of the relations between the imperialist countries and the semicolonial world in a highly abstract way. But if we compare our current production with what we were doing two years ago, we're forced to admit that we're dealing with the political problems confronting the revolution in the semicolonial world less today than in the past (outside of Latin America). That's the problem the World Congress agenda underscores and one we'll have to discuss in coming months, especially in relation to the reorganization of our work in the new period opened by the dissolution of the LTF and the IMT. Because fundamentally this question is related to the extreme numerical weakness of the International center, which prohibits us from correctly dividing up tasks and responding to the current needs of our movement and forces to respond to immediate pressures, to concentrate our forces on a very limited number of questions.

MOTION by Martinez: If by the time of the next United Secretariat meeting the draft of a resolution on Latin America for the next World Congress has not been prepared, the United Secretariat should recommend that Comrade Nahuel Moreno take charge of writing it.

For: 1 (Martinez)

Against: 18 (Adair, Aubin, Brewster, Celso, Claudio, Dunder, Duret, Enrique, Frej, Georges, Holden, Jones, Pepe, Petersen, Roman, Stateman, Susan, Walter)

Abstaining: 3 (Allio, Bob, Kurt)

Not voting: 4 (Fourier, Greco, Laura, Manuel)

DEFEATED

B. MOTION: To accept the following submissions for publication in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB):

1. Exchange of correspondence between the United Secretariat Bureau and the Revolutionary Communist Group of Lebanon (see point 3 of these minutes).

2. "For A Change in the Fourth International's Position on Cuba," by François Massion (Belgium), Andrés, Rodrigo, Sara (Costa Rica), Scott Cooper and David Keil (USA). At its March 31-April 2, 1978, meeting, the United Secretariat approved a letter to the leadership of the Costa Rican OST, which had officially submitted this contribution on behalf of the Costa Rican comrades who have signed it, recommending that the OST leadership wait before submitting this article until the United Secretariat draft document on Latin America was prepared. The OST leadership has replied to this letter, saying that they do not agree with this recommendation and instead request that this submission be accepted for immediate publication. The United Secretariat Bureau is therefore recommending that it be accepted for publication in the IIDB.

3. Document on women's liberation submitted by the leadership of the Mexican Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores.

4. Document on the question of women's caucuses adopted by the last convention of the British IMG and submitted to the IIDB by the IMG leadership, along with the record of the vote on this document excerpted from the official minutes of the convention.

5. Exchange between Nahuel Moreno and Ernest Mandel around Mandel's article on Eurocommunism that appeared in the Spanish magazine Viejo Topo.

6. "Comments on the Draft of the World Political Resolution," by Alan Jones.

AGREED

C. Stateman reported that what was formerly the Manifiesto Obrero group in Argentina (the group has now fused with two others and the new organization publishes the journal Desafío) has requested that their declaration on the unification of Trotskyists in Argentina as well as an exchange of correspondence

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between themselves and the Argentine PST be printed in the IIDB. After discussing with a representative of the new organization, they have agreed that it is appropriate to make this material known to the International through a mailing to IEC members instead of publishing it in the IIDB.

MOTION: To mail the Desafio comrades statement on unification of Trotskyists in Argentina as well as the exchange of correspondence between them and the Argentine PST to IEC members instead of printing it in the IIDB.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Greco: That this mailing to IEC members be accompanied by a covering letter that specifically says the material is restricted to the information of IEC members only.

COUNTERMOTION by Georges: To refer to the Bureau the question of how the material is circulated.

CARRIED

6. Bureau Report

A. Walter reported on an international campaign launched by Bukharin's son for rehabilitation of his father. He indicated that the campaign has begun to receive broad support and has provoked a response from leading intellectuals in the Italian CP, who have raised the more general question of the rehabilitation of all Stalin's victims. He urged sections and sympathizing organizations to take the offensive in aiding this campaign and in joining in the broader discussions it has stimulated.

B. Allio reported on the June 17-18, 1978, meeting of the directors of women's liberation work of the sections and the proposal for reorganization of international coordination of women's liberation work that meeting approved. (See Bureau circular letter of May 12, 1978.) She indicated that a meeting initiated by the British National Abortion Campaign (NAC) took the first steps in beginning an international campaign on the question of abortion. The Bureau will send a circular letter detailing both the results of the meeting of women's liberation work directors and the progress of the international abortion campaign.

Discussion.

C. Frej introduced a proposal from the Bureau that the next United Secretariat meeting have a full discussion on the situation with Combate, the Spanish-language publication produced in Sweden, which would be prepared with written material. The Bureau would, in the meantime, continue to discuss this question.

Discussion.

AGREED

D. Statenman brought in a Bureau proposal that the next United Secretariat meeting be held September 29-30.

AGREED

E. Roman put forward a Bureau proposal for a meeting of the European Political Bureaus to discuss the draft document on capitalist Europe for the next World Congress.

Discussion.

MOTION by Dunder: To refer the exact dates of the meeting of European Political Bureaus to the Bureau, which will send out full information in a circular letter.

CARRIED

meeting adjourned.

NOTE

The following explanation of vote by Comrade Nemo, member of the IEC, was inadvertently omitted from the minutes of the United Secretariat meeting of March 31-April 2, 1978, at which the results of the polling of the IEC on recognition of three recently fused organizations as sections were ratified.

EXPLICATION DE VOTE Nemo (LCR, France)

1. Je vote en faveur de la reconnaissance de la LCR comme section officielle de la IV Internationale dans l'Etat espagnol. Cette position est fondée sur un argument qui suffit à lui seul à trancher la question: l'actuelle LCR constitue aujourd'hui l'organisation qui regroupe incontestablement l'ecrasante majorité des militants qui, dans l'Etat espagnol, se réclament de la IVe Internationale.

2. Ce vote ne signifie pas nécessairement que je partage l'ensemble des considérants de la motion adoptée par le Secrétariat Unifié lors de sa réunion de 13-14 décembre 1977. Les informations fournies aux membres du C.E.I. se limitent en effet au texte de cette motion et ne comportent aucune indication sur le contenu de la "présentation par Pablo de la fraction publique de la LC" à laquelle se réfèrent les minutes du S.U. de décembre.

Cela ne permet pas de se prononcer de façon responsable sur la validité des caractérisations données par la motion du S.U. du processus intervenu récemment entre les organisations espagnoles se réclamant de la IVe Internationale.

3. En tout état de cause, la reconnaissance de la LCR comme section officielle et l'appel qui en découle à tous les militants trotskistes de la rejoindre, ne sauraient, à mon avis, être interprétées comme devant impliquer la mise à l'écart des rangs de l'Internationale, de ceux des militants de la L.C.E. qui refusent d'entrer dans la L.C.R. tout en continuant à manifester leur volonté de participer à la construction et au débat de l'Internationale.

July 4-6, 1978

Telle serait, à mon connaissance, la position actuelle des militants de la Fraction "trotskiste". Je suis pour ma part, gravement en désaccord avec ce que je sais des positions politiques de ces camarades et avec leur refus persistant de tout processus de réunification des forces de la IVe Internationale dans l'Etat espagnol. Je considère cependant que le refus de leur part de rejoindre la LCR constitue une question politique qui doit être résolue par des moyens pleinement politiques et non par une voie administrative ou disciplinaire. Ceci est d'autant plus vrai que leur situation présente trouve son origine dans la crise exceptionnelle de l'Internationale au cours des années récentes, crise dont nul ne peut dire qu'elle soit pleinement surmontée même si les processus de réunification à l'oeuvre dans plusieurs pays assurent le dépassement de l'une des formes les plus extrêmes prises par cette crise, la scission de sections nationales. Dans une telle situation, il est juste de sanctionner les avancées d'un tel processus par la reconnaissance comme section officielle des organisations concernées mais ce serait faire abstraction de son caractère encore incomplet et nécessairement inégal, que de choisir d'exclure de nos rangs des camarades qui, pour quelques raisons que ce soit, refusent de s'intégrer dès maintenant dans un tel processus.

Dans un cas à certains égards comparable, l'Internationale a correctement pris en compte le caractère exceptionnel d'une situation nationale, lorsqu'elle a conservé dans ses rangs les militants de la LS mexicaine (fraction BL), alors que ceux-ci se tenaient à l'écart de la réunification intervenue entre la majorité de la LS et le GCI.

En ce qui concerne les camarades de la "F.T.", mon opinion est donc qu'en dépit du caractère sectaire de leur attitude présente (et afin que celle-ci puisse être combattue de façon pleinement politique), la Direction de l'Internationale devrait leur reconnaître un statut qui, tout en refusant de les traiter à parité avec la section officielle, leur conserve les moyens de participer à part entière au débat de l'Internationale au moins jusqu'au prochain Congrès mondial.

J'ajoute que toute mesure tendant à écarter ces camarades de notre Mouvement ne saurait, vu sa gravité organisationnelle et politique, être prise que par le C.E.I. et qu'à l'issue d'un débat pleinement contradictoire et devrait être, en conséquence, différée jusqu'à la prochaine réunion de cet organe.

Paris, le 27 janvier de 1978

July 4-6, 1978

ATTACHMENT A

Correspondence with the Revolutionary Communist Group
of Lebanon

March 24, 1978

Political Bureau
Revolutionary Communist Group
Beirut

Dear Comrades,

The next meeting of the United Secretariat, which will take place in Brussels on March 31-April 2, will hear a report from the fact finding commission designated by the United Secretariat on the Lebanese section and the sanctions taken against two of its members, comrades Magida and Selim. We would very much like to have a representative of the RCG leadership at this meeting, if possible Comrade Jaber, who is a member of the IEC.

As well, the United Secretariat Bureau read an article in Rouge (Thursday, March 23) reporting that "the RCG has decided to join its forces with those of the FLP" on the southern Lebanese front.

On the basis of this information -- and, obviously, insofar as it is accurate -- the Bureau unanimously expressed its disagreement with this political decision on the part of the Lebanese section. Under these conditions, the presence of Comrade Jaber at the next United Secretariat meeting is even more indispensable, so that a discussion can be held immediately on this matter.

Fraternal greetings,

The Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Beirut, April 9, 1978

Bureau of the United Secretariat of
the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

The March 22 declaration that you issued in the name of the United Secretariat as well as your March 24 letter to our Executive Bureau were a bitter disappointment to us, one which can't be compensated by the (belated) circular letter of March 22 concerning the reorganization of Arab work, with which we entirely agree.

We are sending you under separate cover our comments on the "United Secretariat declaration" and we ask that they be published in Inprecor/Intercontinental Press. As for the publication of the declaration in Arabic, we're giving you a choice between having it published with our comments or not publishing it (which is preferable in our opinion). This regrettable incident is unquestionably due to the method that consists of writing and publishing a declaration concerning the situation in a country without bothering to consult the (official) section in that country, which could be done simply by telephoning.

As for your letter of March 24, it is really stupifying. How can a body as responsible as the United Secretariat Bureau "unanimously express its disagreement with the political decision of a section" on the basis of a single line read in Rouge, ambiguous to boot, written by someone who isn't even a member of the section? If you had the slightest sense of political correctness, the slightest sense of responsibility you would have been prompted to ask the section about the merit and the meaning of the line in question BEFORE expressing your unanimous disagreement.

As well, the ambiguity of the line in question is only equaled by the mystery of your disagreement, which you don't at all explain. What political error can there be in the fact that Trotskyist fighting groups participate with full political, organizational, and military independence -- but collaborating unconditionally on a strictly military level (providing materials and provisions, common trenches) with a radical nationalist organization whose anti-imperialism is beyond doubt -- in a fight which all anti-Zionist forces of their country are waging against the invasion by the Zionist army of the territory of that country. (Besides, in addition to the unconditional logistical aid we're given by the PLF, our common military front in the field includes several other groups.) Inasmuch as we think we've assimilated the Bolshevik conception of an anti-imperialist front, we think our attitude is indisputable from the political point of view. If you're still in disagreement after this precision, we ask that you explain this immediately.

That said, this isn't the first time that in a particularly critical situation in our country (this time the Zionist invasion, last time the Syrian invasion) INSTEAD OF CONTACTING US, ORGANIZING AN EFFECTIVE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH THE MASSES IN STRUGGLE IN OUR COUNTRY (COLLECTING MONEY, DEMONSTRATIONS, ETC.), ORGANIZING A

CAMPAIGN FOR AID TO OUR SECTION IN STRUGGLE, WHICH IS UPHOLDING THE BANNER OF TROTSKYISM DESPITE ITS LIMITED MEANS, THE UNITED SECRETARIAT BUREAU FAVORS US WITH ITS DISAGREEMENT.

Consequently, comrades, we ask: 1) that this correspondence be made known to members of the United Secretariat; 2) that it be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the United Secretariat; 3) that it be published in its entirety in the international bulletin.

Communist greetings,

The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Group,
Lebanese section of the Fourth International

ON THE ZIONIST AGGRESSION IN LEBANON

The declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International dated March 22, 1978, and published in Inprecor/Intercontinental Press (No. 24, March 30, 1978) prompts us to draw up the following four main remarks (in their order of importance):

1. The use of the terms "terrorist," "disastrous," and "unfortunate" in relation to the operation of the Fatah commandos north of Tel Aviv is particularly unfortunate. They are politically wrong and can only harm our movement by providing arguments to imbeciles of all stripes who like nothing better than to show that they're more anti-Zionist than we are. The attitude of the sections of the Fourth International in the region is totally unambiguous: the RCG's attitude is contained in an interview with one of our comrades conducted by Inprecor/IP on April 2. It completely concurs and thoroughly parallels that of our comrades of the LCR (Matzpen-Marxist) whom we take this opportunity to salute for their internationalist courage. We are enclosing a translation of Matzpen-Marxist's position. Like the interview we mentioned, it indirectly replies to the terms used in the USec declaration, which we are persuaded are a result of the fact that the authors of this declaration were ill informed.

2. The slogan "No to the UN intervention" as such is wrong in the case of Lebanon. Our attitude on this subject is also explained in the April 2 interview: it combines matter-of-fact, tactical neutrality in regard to the replacing of the Zionist troops by those of the UN with opposition to the deployment of these UN troops into the areas not occupied by the Zionist army, and it pledges to defend the freedom of anti-Zionist Lebano-Palestinian struggle against anybody who tries to stop it -- UN forces, Lebanese, Syrians, or others.

3. The last line of the first paragraph, "Once again it (the Zionist state) bears the responsibility for creating a situation with the potential to lead to a war that might have fearful consequences for the entire world" has a distinctly pacifist connotation. Is it necessary to recall that our movement calls upon the Arab regimes to launch a sweeping prolonged war for the liberation of Palestine?

4. The declaration totally ignores the fact that the forces fighting in South Lebanon are combined Lebano-Palestinian ones, and not only Palestinian resistance fighters as the Zionists and Lebanese reactionaries claim.

April 2, 1978

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Group,
Lebanese section of the Fourth International

* * *

April 17, 1978

RCG
Lebanon

Dear Comrades,

We're sorry that Comrade J. wasn't able to attend the last meeting of the USec and that it wasn't possible to have a telephone conversation despite our repeated attempts to reach you. There were three points in the interview with a member of your Executive Bureau published in number 26 of Inprecor with which the members of the Bureau disagreed. We'd like to explain our positions on these three points so you can think them over and discuss them.

It would be preferable to be able to discuss these questions directly with you. Moreover, it would be important to have a more extensive discussion on how to improve relations between the RCG and the international center. We therefore ask that if it's possible a member of your leadership come here for discussions with us. In the event that you can't do this, we're ready to send a member of the United Secretariat Bureau to Beirut. We await your reply on this matter.

The most important political point on which we disagree is the following. In his answer, the RCG comrade explains "the dual character of the U.N. intervention": "Insofar as they are able to force the Zionist army out of southern Lebanon and to protect the Lebanese border against their intervention, we support the UN forces; to do anything else would be to allow the occupation to continue. On the other hand, whenever the troops try to quell the Palestinian resistance and that of the Lebanese left they will be treated like anyone else who makes such an effort, whether they are French, Norwegian, Iranian, Senegalese, Syrian, or Lebanese. . . . The flexibility of our position on the UN troops flows from the fact that the only alternative right now seems to be the continuation of the Israeli occupation and of the misery it has caused for tens of thousands of refugees. The anti-imperialist forces cannot do anything that could possibly be used as an excuse to continue the occupation (and a people's war for the liberation of southern Lebanon is not a realistic alternative in the short term). Rather they have to throw the ball back into the Zionist camp."

We think this puts forward a wrong concept of the nature of UN troops and of the real purpose of their intervention. Ever since the Korean war, launched by American imperialism in the name of the United Nations and its "peace-keeping" role, the Fourth International has not had the slightest doubt: UN troops constitute an army that defends the interests of world imperialism, whatever pretexts are conjured up at any given time. Those who have fostered illusions about their "neutrality" -- like the Congolese nationalists did in 1960 -- have paid a terribly high price for their error.

Even if all the Israeli forces left Lebanon under the "pressure" of the UN troops, it would result in the replacement of one pro-imperialist army by another pro-imperialist occupying force. The intervention in Lebanon has the effect of giving international legitimacy to the occupation of South Lebanon as well as the attempt to expel the Palestinians from this region. In this regard it's interesting to read what the April 18, 1978, Herald Tribune had to say: "In Jerusalem yesterday, Prime Minister Menachem Begin told his parliament's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that the establishment of a UN peace-keeping force on Israel's northern border has been a political achievement, but that its long-range effectiveness is still in doubt."

While the UN intervention can go against certain choices of the Zionist leadership -- in the framework of the discord between Tel Aviv and Washington -- its strategic goal is totally indisputable: it is a question of imposing a pax americana in the region with the collaboration of the Arab regimes, in particular Sadat's Egypt, at the expense of the Palestinian resistance and the Palestinian people as a whole.

Such an operation may succeed or fail; that's not the question we're dealing with now. But the UN troops are there to facilitate it and not in any way whatever to hinder it. That's why revolutionaries mustn't leave any room for doubt on the nature of UN troops. The Fourth International must demand their total and immediate withdrawal at the same time as the withdrawal of the Zionist army. The sections in the countries that have provided contingents for this international police operation must be in the front lines of this battle. On this point, what should the orientation of these sections be if they base their policy on the judgment expressed above as to the character of the UN intervention?

Second, we would like to deal with the question of the participation of "fighting groups of our organization in the military effort in South Lebanon, in collaboration with the PLF."

We don't think this is a correct orientation for our organization. As we see it, we are at the embryonic stage of a long process of building a revolutionary party in Lebanon. The participation of our comrades in the military effort risks having very little effect other than disorienting and perhaps dealing a heavy blow to the small nucleus of a revolutionary organization which is in need of strengthening. It seems to us that the priority for the RCG is not to involve our weak forces -- or even a part of them! -- in such risky operations, but, particularly in the present situation, to continue the difficult work of building an organization: that is, an effort to regularly publish a journal, which is a central element of our work of propaganda and political clarification, an increase in our work "to accumulate cadres," an insertion among the toiling

masses and the development of the long-term education of cadres, especially given your role on a regional scale.

We think the above points are valid no matter what judgment we could have of the orientation of the PLF or other organizations of the Palestinian resistance. On this matter, we would be interested in reading the joint communiqué that you signed with the PLF and another far-left Lebanese group. We haven't received this particular communiqué. Can you send it to us as rapidly as possible?

Now let's deal with the question of the Fatah commando operation on the Haifa-Tel Aviv road. Frankly, we don't understand why it wouldn't be appropriate for revolutionaries to "pass judgment on such an operation." Once the revolting hypocrisy of the Zionist propaganda has been unambiguously condemned and the pretexts Begin used to cover his aggression in South Lebanon have been denounced, we have the right -- and even the duty -- to express our evaluation on such an important question. First of all, such an operation, which is inscribed in the framework of the general political orientation of the PLO, does not help to assure the long-term mobilization of the Palestinian masses in the struggle. But it also harms the goal of dividing the Zionist camp and winning the Israeli to support the rights of the Palestinians. In fact, such an initiative wins sympathy for the Zionist regime and masks the fact that this regime represents the real terrorists in the region. The Zionist bloc is not inevitably a social and political monolith. Recent events, especially the large demonstration in Tel Aviv, point to the possibility that the Israeli masses could be mobilized against the policy of the Zionist regime. This shows the importance of developing actions that can correspond to the strategic goal of dividing the Israeli workers from the Zionist bourgeoisie.

We hope to be able to discuss all these questions directly and thoroughly with you soon.

Awaiting your reply.

Fraternally,

The United Secretariat Bureau

Beirut, June 4, 1978

United Secretariat Bureau

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed you will find the unanimously approved reply of our Central Committee to your letter of April 17. We ask that you communicate it to all concerned, especially to our comrades of the LCR (Matzpen-Marxist), place it on the agenda of the next United Secretariat, and publish it along with your April 17 letter and the earlier letters (March 24 and April 9) in the international bulletin.

As well, we're still waiting for the publication in Inprecor/ IP of our April 9 declaration (not April 2 -- please correct this typing error).

Fraternally,

s/ Jaber, for the Executive Bureau of the RCG

* * *

United Secretariat Bureau

Dear Comrades,

Your letter of April 17 informs us that you have made "repeated attempts" to reach us by telephone. Allow us to doubt the seriousness of these attempts, especially because since March 15, the day the Zionist aggression in South Lebanon began, we've received several telephone calls from Paris, none of which, unfortunately, were from Bureau members. Telephone contact with Beirut has been continuously possible these past months for anybody who wanted to get through. We are persuaded that if the Bureau had been determined to contact us BEFORE publishing its March 22 declaration and expressing its disagreements of March 24, it would have been able to do so without difficulty. As for your proposal for direct discussion a posteriori, this must not supplant the present written, public discussion within the International, to which we attach great importance. No member of our leadership is in a position to leave the country for several days under the present circumstances. It would therefore be preferable for a Bureau member to come to Beirut, especially since we've been asking for such a visit for nearly two years!

Let's go on to our disagreements and examine the three points they deal with in the order that you presented them in your letter of April 17.

1. The United Nations intervention in South Lebanon.

First of all, let's suppose, as you affirm, that the UN troops constitute a pro-imperialist army. According to you, the intervention of these troops in South Lebanon has no other purpose than to replace the Zionist occupation, which under the

circumstances is illegitimate according to the norms of the UN, with an occupation enjoying international legitimacy but identical in character to that of the Israelis. You write, "Even if all the Israeli forces left Lebanon under the 'pressure' of the UN troops, it would result in the replacement of one pro-imperialist army by another pro-imperialist occupying force." Again according to you, as a result the Fourth International must demand the full and immediate withdrawal of the UN troops at the same time as the withdrawal of the Zionist army."

In our opinion this attitude is a model of schmatism and abstraction. One has only to examine the demand that flows from it: the total, immediate, and simultaneous withdrawal of UN troops and Zionist troops from South Lebanon. The least cunning Shiite peasant or Palestinian refugee will answer you: "thanks a lot for your help, but how do you propose to force this double withdrawal?" How would you answer him? That our sections in Europe, Africa, and Asia will force the withdrawal of the UN troops at the same time as our section in Israel will impose this on the Zionist army? This is too ridiculous to be believed. Maybe you'd counsel him instead to take up arms in order to force this double retreat. He'll answer you that while it's possible for the patriotic forces to force the retreat of the UN troops, they're in no shape whatsoever to rout the Zionist army. So then what? The only thing you'd have left to say to him, in his own language, is "rely on Allah!"

This, comrades, because basically your attitude is imminently abstract, because it is not at all based on "a concrete analysis of the concrete situation." A little analogy will demonstrate this to you more clearly.

Take a city in the United States, Boston for example. Bands of white racists, superior in numbers and arms, invade the black ghetto following demonstrations by the population of that ghetto against segregation. Federal troops then intervene and ring the borders of this ghetto, stopping the racists from getting in. Question: What should be the slogan of the American Trotskyists? Answer of the USec Bureau: The intervention of the federal troops has replaced the pro-bourgeois bands with another repressive bourgeois force; we therefore demand the simultaneous withdrawal of the federal troops and the racists. Our answer is different: we'll demand that the federal troops enforce the application of anti-segregation laws and not intervene in the internal affairs of the black community, without, however, demanding the withdrawal of these troops. We'll call on the black population to continue its struggle for its rights and not to hesitate to confront the federal troops if they try to oppose this struggle. You know that during the racial violence in Boston the American Trotskyists did more: they organized a campaign demanding the intervention of federal troops! If memory serves us right, the USec Bureau approved of this campaign.

But getting back to South Lebanon: Especially since the war in Lebanon began in 1975, the Zionist invasion has always been the sword of Damocles, constantly invoked by Lebanese and Arab reactionaries in order to stifle the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon. What stopped this invasion -- which was compensated for by limited interventions of the Zionist army on several occasions -- was above all the attitude of the Americans, who were worried

about preserving the fragile Lebanese bourgeois equilibrium. Since 1970, every time the Zionist army intervened in South Lebanon the American government has demanded its total and immediate withdrawal. During the Lebanese war, the Zionist army succeeded in protecting its borders through a practically impenetrable network of barbed wire, electronic detection systems, and mine fields along the 77 kilometers of the line separating Lebanon and Israel. As well, it armed reactionary bands of Christian peasants in the frontier villages to broaden its "safety belt" in Lebanese territory. This belt was all the more necessary in that the Zionist army could not stop either the bombardment of border kibbutz by the Palestinian resistance or the training of commandos for penetration into Israel either through Jordan or by sea. But, especially in the beginning of March, the evolution of the fighting in South Lebanon between the reactionary Christians and the patriotic Lebano-Palestinian forces clearly demonstrated that the former were not in shape to buckle the "safety belt." That's why the Begin government judged it necessary to invade South Lebanon, this time ignoring American injunctions in order to complete the belt of occupied territories with which the Zionist state had encircled itself in 1967.

By getting the UN to intervene, the American government is trying to impose its own concept of a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. "It is a question of imposing a pax americana in the region." We're all agreed on that. But precisely what does this pax americana consist of? As far as Israel's security is concerned, we think that it is based essentially on the principle of an international guarantee of the 1949 borders of the Zionist state, with the reactionary Arab forces (in Lebanon: the Lebanese army and possibly Syrian troops) taking the responsibility themselves for repressing all attempts at anti-Zionist armed struggle launched from their territories once the Zionist army has withdrawn behind its borders. (The Soviet Union shares this conception, with the slight difference that it is trying to force its own "clients" to participate in the settlement.) The Zionists have an opposed conception: Israel must count only on herself; for security reasons it is out of the question that the Zionist army retreat from all the territories occupied in 1967. This is the main disagreement between Washington and Tel Aviv, between the best interests of American imperialism and those of the Zionist establishment.

In light of the above, it would appear clear that the UN troops didn't intervene in order to "smash" the Lebano-Palestinian patriotic forces as some have maintained, including inside our International. It would be completely absurd from the point of view of accomplishing such a task to replace 30,000 Zionist soldiers supported by artillery, air and naval power with 6,000 poorly armed and not at all motivated UN troops. The UN troops can (just barely) stop the infiltration by small groups of combatants into the territory under their control. In order to do this, they're counting on the rightist leadership of the Palestinian resistance itself! They can in no way eliminate the armed presence of the patriotic Lebano-Palestinian forces in the rest of South Lebanon; they can't at all effectively protect the Zionist state. However, their presence can stop the Zionist army from reoccupying South Lebanon. The Zionists have understood this, as have the reactionary Lebanese Christians who, because of the UN intervention, have been deprived of their trump card:

the Zionist intervention. That's why they strongly protested against the UN intervention. The declaration by Begin to which you refer in citing the Herald Tribune is a pitiful attempt on his part to justify his action and the results to which it has led in face of criticisms from the opposition. Besides, read it carefully: "Its long-range effectiveness is still in doubt." Itshak Rabin was much more direct in an interview he gave to Paris-Match (May 19, 1978):

"Paris-Match: Is the presence of UN troops on the Lebanese border a constriction on Israel?"

"Rabin: That can happen and I think it will be inevitable; suppose the Palestinians succeed in what they're now trying to do, that is, retake their South Lebanese bases for attack against Israel. The UN troops are incapable of stopping them from moving south. That's already been proven. But the UN troops will prevent Israel from effectively responding to any Palestinian attack launched from South Lebanon. You see where this leads us. The Palestinians are going to act anyway, in spite of the UN presence. But Israel risks having problems in defending itself. In the end, we're the ones who are going to suffer from this."

The UN protection of the Lebanese border is in the interests of the patriotic Lebano-Palestinian forces. The UN troops can't hamper the anti-Zionist struggle of these forces if they are deployed along the border: it's impenetrable in any case for the resistance fighters. The presence of the UN troops makes it impenetrable for Zionist army (by land), thus facilitating the activity of the patriotic forces throughout Lebanon. That's why we don't demand a pure and simple withdrawal of the UN troops. However, the presence of these same UN troops in the non-border regions and their attempt to stop the armed patriotic fighters from penetrating into these regions constitutes interference in the internal Lebanese affairs. We are firmly opposed to this and demand the withdrawal of UN troops from these regions and their deployment along the border. We call upon the UN to force the total, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist army from South Lebanon (if not, it will be considered that its troops are protecting the Zionist occupation of Lebanese territory and they will be treated accordingly). Moreover, we think that the French troops, though intervening in the framework of the United Nations, have a special reactionary task that devolves to them as a result of their character of imperialist intervention troops as well as the French designs on Lebanon. We demand the withdrawal of these troops from Lebanon.

These are the general lines of our position on the subject of the UN troops in South Lebanon. This position is detailed in a long resolution that we adopted on May 1. We think that the Fourth International as a whole should adopt the same position. The total withdrawal of the UN troops -- in the framework of the current relationship of forces -- can only lead to a reoccupation by the Zionist army of everything south of the Litani River. In the present circumstances, the demand for total withdrawal is a grave political error. It is also totally rejected by those mainly concerned: the peasant masses of South Lebanon.

* * *

Up to now we have stayed in the framework of the Boston analogy, the framework of defining the UN troops as a pro-imperialist army. But while no debate is possible as to the character of American federal troops, the same is not true for UN troops. You say, "Since the Korean war the Fourth International has not had the slightest doubt: UN troops constitute an army that defends the interests of world imperialism." This is serious, comrades! It's serious that the dubito of the leadership of our International is so slight. Because just as the productive forces have continued their growth after 1938, the relationship of forces inside the UN (and outside the UN!) has evolved, and evolved considerably, since the Korean war! At that time, the UN was exclusively dominated by American imperialism; People's China was excluded; the Soviet Union did not attend the meetings of the Security Council that decided on the Korean intervention. Today the USSR and People's China participate in Security Council meetings as permanent and full members with veto rights (it's true that China's role is rather modest). The relationship of forces within the General Assembly is no longer favorable to imperialists. Under these conditions, could it be possible that nothing has changed in terms of the character of UN troops? Then why didn't they intervene in Vietnam, thus giving "international legitimacy" to the imperialist occupation? Why didn't they intervene recently in Zaire? Come on, comrades!

UN troops are no longer an imperialist intervention force; they rather constitute an army charged with preserving the status quo jointly agreed to by American imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Their role is not always and everywhere reactionary: from 1956 to 1967 the UN emergency forces deployed along the Egyptian-Israeli armistice line much more protected the radicalization of Nasserist Arab nationalism than the "interests of world imperialism." It would have been stupid to demand their withdrawal; we hope that no component of the Fourth International did so. In South Lebanon, the UN troops have no offensive role. The Soviet Union can force their withdrawal at any time. For our movement, this isn't just some trifling nuance. Insofar as we haven't changed our analysis of the nature of the USSR and insofar as the political map of the world has changed since the Korean war, it's time to change our analysis of the role of the United Nations.

2. The participation of the GCR fighters in the military efforts in South Lebanon.

On this subject we admit we were surprised, disagreeably surprised, to see that your disagreement didn't concern the modalities of the participation (with whom? under what conditions?), but the participation itself.

Your point of view comes close to caricature: our Lebanese organization being at an embryonic stage, "the participation of our comrades in the military effort risks having very little effect other than disorienting and perhaps dealing a heavy blow to the small nucleus of a revolutionary organization which is in need of strengthening." So how can it be strengthened? The method is the tried and true old tactic: "effort to regularly publish a journal . . . , increase in our work to accumulate cadres (?), insertion among the toiling masses (???)".

We don't know if the author or authors of the April 17 letter are great builders of organizations implanted among the toiling masses. Nonetheless, one thing is certain: their concept of the building of an organization implanted among the masses is diametrically opposed to that which presided over the founding of our International. Without reviewing the attitude of our European sections in the struggle against Nazism (they were almost embryonic at the time), we'll content ourselves with quoting the resolution of the 1938 founding congress concerning the Far East. The tasks of the Chinese section, which was super embryonic, were defined in this way:

"In China, in particular, the Bolshevik-Leninists must participate bravely in the anti-Japanese struggle and raise thereby slogans corresponding to the needs of the struggle and the interests of the masses at each new stage. By these means they will win the confidence of the masses and will be able to mobilize them in their own independent organizations for revolutionary action." (Documents of the Fourth International, 1933-1940, Pathfinder Press, p. 241.)

Yes, comrades! It is by participating bravely in the struggles of the masses that we gain their confidence; it's in this way that the propaganda we put out gets the slightest hearing from the masses and "cadres"; it's in this way that a revolutionary organization acquires even the slightest chance to strengthen itself. Because the "cadres," that is, revolutionaries committed and devoted to the struggle, have all participated in the combat against the Zionist invasion of their territory and country. We're not going to recruit the militants our organization needs from among the cowards safely entrenched in their own homes.

If we would have followed your recommendations, comrades, our group (and therefore Trotskyism) would have been irreparably discredited; we wouldn't even have been able to distribute any written material. Even more, not only would our organization have been "disoriented," but it would also have assuredly lost its best militants, who from the outset of the Zionist invasion insisted that we participate in the fight of the Lebano-Palestinian resistance. In our case, to take account of the weakness of our forces means not to send all our comrades into South Lebanon at the same time and not to expose comrades to serious dangers on the battlefield. It didn't mean to watch from afar while ALL the left parties and groups of our country were fighting and then lavish our lessons of "political clarification" on them.

Comrades, we acted with full understanding of the motive and not out of "romanticism." We think we fulfilled our duty; we think we've strengthened the cause of Trotskyism in our country, if not in the entire region (all the left from neighboring countries is represented in Beirut); we think we've increased our possibilities. We think your attitude is shameful; we feel that you should have instead organized a multileveled campaign of support for our organization; we think that a new self-criticism on your part is entirely called for, a genuine self-criticism that is sincere and consistent, and not another consolation prize that you would award us.

This said, there are two comments that seemed to us necessary on this question:

-- The first concerns the political behavior of the leadership of our International. It can be described by a stock formula: a 180 degree turn! How can it be described otherwise when the leadership of our International, after having advocated a "guerrillaist" orientation for our Latin American embryos which were hardly "implanted among the toiling masses," comes around to reproaching our Lebanese embryo for having participated in an anti-imperialist resistance war waged by the entirety of the political mass movement of its country? The stick was bent in one direction, agreed! In order to correct this, maybe it was necessary to bend it in the other direction, agreed again! But it is now high time to correct this definitively; if not, a danger even graver than leftist infantilism will threaten us: right senility, refossilization!

-- Our second remark deals with the big, general criteria used in our International: they must be relativized. It's impossible to evaluate the political role of an organization solely by considering the number of members it has, without taking into account the population of its country. Our RCG would be totally insignificant in India; in Lebanon it's a well known component of the far left with a not negligible political audience. In the United States, the SWP is embryonic; an organization of its quantitative importance in Lebanon would be sufficient for leading the toiling masses toward the seizure of power!!!

3. The Fatah commando operation.

We don't contest the right of revolutionaries to pass judgment on this operation. Only we think it's inappropriate for them to pass judgements of "a moral or pseudo-political order" (see the text of the interview in Inprecor/IP) on this type of operation.

To qualify it as "terrorist" (sic), "disastrous," and "unfortunate" as you did in your March 22 declaration has a rather moralizing connotation. The arguments you put forward in your April 17 letter are clearly pseudo-political.

We're not going to repeat the actual circumstances of this operation, the fact that it was the intervention of armed Zionist bands that transformed it into a slaughter, as even some survivors affirmed. Let's also leave aside the humbug that consists in saying that this operation "is inscribed in the framework of the general political orientation of the PLO," whereas in past years the PLO has abandoned armed struggle for strictly political and diplomatic struggles, before being betrayed by Sadat. Let's just consider your arguments:

-- "Such an operation," you say, "doesn't help to ensure the long-term mobilization of the Palestinian masses in the struggle." What do you know about it??? This is a pedantic and gratuitous affirmation, a worn out cliché. In fact, Fatah's operation greatly increased the morale of the Palestinian masses and their vanguard fighters; it created the conditions for mobilization which enabled them to valiantly resist the Zionist invasion of South Lebanon. All military operations of the resistance in occupied Palestine, inasmuch as they don't end in defeat, that is in a sacrifice of the participants without any compensation, fuel the mobilization of the Palestinian masses in the short, medium, and long term. They signify that the Palestinian people will not give Zionism any respite.

-- You also say that such an operation "harms the goal of dividing the Zionist camp and winning the Israeli workers to support the rights of the Palestinians." For, you explain, "the Zionist bloc is not inevitably (fortunately!) a social and political monolith." The proof: "Recent events, especially the large demonstration in Tel Aviv, point to the possibility that the Israeli masses could be mobilized against the policy of the Zionist regime." Congratulations, comrades! You have mastered the boomerang technique. Haven't you noticed that the events you're talking about took place precisely AFTER the Fatah operation? It's after this operation that the Zionist state experienced one of the most important strike waves in its history, the first to unfold while a military mobilization was under way, as well as the most important and most representative pacifist and "anti-extremist" demonstration in its history. This should have at least prompted you to think twice before peremptorily affirming that the Fatah operation "harms the goal of dividing the Zionist camp"! In fact, it's by creating a permanent climate of insecurity within Israel despite all the "safety belts" surrounding the Zionist state that the Palestinian resistance can divide the Zionist camp, convince a section of the Israelis of the fact that the intransigence of their government places them in direct danger, and induce them to demand "peace now" and "de-Zionization" tomorrow!

Your arguments are pretty weak, comrades, and you don't explain at all in what way the Fatah operation "doesn't help" and "harms," etc., contenting yourselves with gratuitous statements. You don't explain how, according to you, the Palestinians can continue their war of national liberation, their anti-Zionist military operations, without running the risk of sacrifices like the one on the Haifa-Tel Aviv road, given the inclinations of the Zionists. That's why we think what's involved are pseudo-political arguments, behind which are the outlines of "fear of bourgeois public opinion" in the imperialist countries, which finds the pale reactions of the Palestinians against Zionist atrocities "abominable," Zionism being a defender of Western civilization or the incarnation of its guilt complex (depending on the political leanings of the opinion groups). To conclude, we can't resist the temptation to remind you of Trotsky's point of view on the taking and executing of hostages, expressed in oh so very brutal terms:

"It is possible and even probable that our moralists will refuse to say frankly what is, and will try to beat around the bush: 'to kill at the front is one thing, to shoot hostages is quite another!' This argument is quite simply stupid, as we will demonstrate. But let's linger for a moment on the terrain chosen by our adversary. The system of hostages, you say, is immoral "as such"? Good, that's what we wanted to know. But this system has been employed in all civil wars of ancient and modern history. Obviously, it flows from the very nature of civil war. Only one conclusion can be drawn, namely that the very nature of civil war itself is immoral. . . .

"Tangled in his contradictions, the moralist could perhaps argue that an 'open and conscious' struggle between two camps is one thing, but capturing nonparticipants in that struggle is quite another. Nevertheless, this argument is only a worthless and stupid subterfuge. Tens of thousands of men were fighting in the French camp who had been duped and enlisted by force. The republican armies shot at these unfortunate captives of a reactionary general and killed a good many of them. Was this moral or immoral? Even more, with its long-range artillery, aviation, toxic gases, its retinue of destruction, famine,

conflagration, and epidemics, modern war inevitably implies the loss of hundreds of thousands and millions of people, including old people and infants, who have not directly participated in the struggle. Those who are taken as hostages are at least linked through class ties and family solidarity to one of the camps or the leaders of this camp. In taking hostages one can make a conscious selection. A projectile shot from a cannon or dropped from an airplane is dispatched at random and can easily destroy not only enemies but also friends, or their parents and children. So why do our moralists isolate out the question of hostages and close their eyes to what's involved in the civil war as a whole? Because they're not characteristically courageous. As men on the "left," they're afraid to break openly with the revolution. As petty bourgeois, they're afraid to burn their bridges with official public opinion." (Their Morals And Ours, French edition, J.J. Pauvert, ed., pp. 111-113.)

We hope, comrades, that we've won you to our point of view. In any event, we are ready to continue the discussion and we ask that you (1) add your April 17 letter and our reply to the dossier that we've asked be put on the agenda of the next United Secretariat meeting; (2) publish them in their entirety along with the previous letters in the international bulletin without delay, especially since the debate has direct bearing on the next world congress, at least concerning the general political resolution.

Communist greetings,

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Group,
Lebanese section of the Fourth International

June 1, 1978

July 11, 1978

Central Committee
Revolutionary Communist Group
Lebanon

Dear Comrades,

We have received your letter of June 1. As you already know from the telephone conversation between a comrade of the United Secretariat Bureau and Comrade Jaber, the Bureau decided to invite a representative of the RCG to participate in the July meeting of the United Secretariat, where the exchange of correspondence between the Bureau and the RCG leadership was on the agenda. At that meeting, the United Secretariat decided to publish in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin this correspondence, including this letter.

1. The United Nations intervention in southern Lebanon.

You draw a parallel between your position and the position adopted by comrades of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States during the events in Boston in 1975. But the analogy does not stand up. In the case of Boston, the SWP comrades demanded, as part of their campaign to mobilize the Black community and its supporters against racist attempts to block school desegregation, that the federal government utilize troops to stop the racist attacks and to enforce the desegregation of the schools. It was a demand upon a bourgeois government to enforce its own laws and court rulings, in its own territory, against racist discrimination and violence -- laws and rulings which, while limited, our movement supports. The UN occupation of southern Lebanon is not at all analogous; rather the opposite. The UN is not a government, but a pious fraud covering for imperialist objectives. Its occupation of southern Lebanon is an imperialist project aimed at the Arab masses and which violates their right to self-determination, carried out by troops under foreign imperialist control for imperialist objectives which we not only do not support but which we oppose.

In analyzing the reasons for the UN occupation, you state: "By getting the UN to intervene, the American government is trying to impose its own concept of a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. 'It is a question of imposing a pax americana in the region.' We're all agreed on that. But precisely what does this pax americana consist of? As far as Israel's security is concerned, we think that it is based essentially on the principle of an international guarantee of the 1949 borders of the Zionist state, with the reactionary Arab forces (in Lebanon: the Lebanese army and possibly Syrian troops) taking responsibility themselves for repressing all attempts at anti-Zionist armed struggle launched from their territories once the Zionist army has withdrawn behind its borders. (The Soviet Union shares this conception, with the slight difference that it is trying to force its own 'clients' participation in the settlement.) The Zionists have an opposed conception: Israel must count only on herself; for security reasons it is out of the question that the Zionist army retreat from all the territories occupied in 1967. This is the main disagreement between Washington and Tel Aviv, between the best interests of American imperialism and those of the Zionist establishment."

Your conclusion is that "The UN protection of the Lebanese border is in the interests of the patriotic Lebano-Palestinian forces," and that we should call for the deployment of the UN forces along the border while calling for their withdrawal from the non-border regions.

Your conception appears to be that there is a basic clash of interests between Washington and Tel Aviv, which you deduce from their diplomatic positions regarding their proposed "settlements" of the Middle East question. There undoubtedly are frictions and clashes of interests between the Israeli ruling circles and the U.S. imperialists. In each phase of the struggle in the Middle East, whether in open war or in negotiations, the Israelis will look out for their interests first and foremost, and vice versa for Washington. But you give far too much weight to the diplomatic stance taken by Washington, as opposed to its basic policies.

First of all, even if you were correct there there is a basic clash of interests between Washington and Tel Aviv, in any case, Washington's objectives can be no other than to maintain imperialist domination in the region in general, and to defend U.S. imperialist interests in particular. Any utilization of UN troops by the Americans can only have as its objectives to further these interests. One imperialism -- especially the world's most ruthless and powerful -- cannot be viewed as a "lesser evil" to another. Our job is to point that out to the toiling masses.

But over and above this, it is wrong to view the aim of U.S. imperialism as to first and foremost achieve a "settlement," much less any particular "solution" being peddled at any one time by the State Department. Imperialism is expansionist and aggressive in its very nature; any "settlements" it agrees to are made within the context of the protection and extension of its interests. Fundamental to U.S. policy in the Middle East is maintaining the Israeli state as an imperialist beachhead in the whole region. Thus there is an overriding, fundamental identity of interests between Washington and Tel Aviv.

It is false to say that the Zionists believe that "Israel must count only on herself." Israel always has and for the foreseeable future must reply upon the United States, and the U.S. utilizes Israel to defend its own interests in the region. This fact is underscored by the massive U.S. military aid Israel received following the 1973 war, which has put Israel in the position of being able -- militarily -- to wage offensive war against all the Arab powers combined. One of the objectives of the Israeli action was to demonstrate this fact. U.S. policy has been based on achieving this capacity for Israel. It is on the basis of this threat that Washington seeks to impose a "settlement" in the region. Therefore U.S. objectives were not harmed by the Israeli invasion, they were enhanced, even if Washington, for diplomatic and domestic reasons, took some verbal distance from it.

We should remember that in the situation following the Vietnam war, the antiwar attitude of the American people is a factor Washington must take into account. It is less able to intervene either directly or openly around the world. For example, when they could not intervene directly into Angola for this reason, they supported covertly the South African invasion, while publicly denying any involvement with it. Also involved, as you

point out, is a diplomatic stance toward the Arab regimes; Washington does want the help of these regimes in "disciplining" the Palestinians. It has already gotten such help, most notably in Jordan in 1970, and more recently in the Syrian attacks on the Palestinians in Lebanon. But Israel shares these same objectives.

What are the real results of the Israeli invasion and UN occupation?

Let's ask the question, could the United Nations have sent troops to occupy southern Lebanon before the Israeli invasion? If it had tried, wouldn't the UN troops have more nakedly appeared to be what they in fact are -- tools of imperialism? The invasion set the stage for the entry of the UN troops under the guise of "peacemakers." Of course, we can say that the Israelis would prefer to occupy southern Lebanon themselves. They would have undoubtedly done so if they could have gotten away with it politically. But for international as well as domestic political reasons, the Israelis could not occupy the region for a protracted period. Consequently, Tel Aviv has its own reasons for viewing the UN intervention as a political success. The Israeli invasion achieved creating a situation where the Palestinian forces were compelled to leave the area, and be kept out by a supposedly "neutral" UN force that is in fact under imperialist control. This allowed the Israelis to gradually withdraw -- all the while threatening to reintervene if the UN forces are not able to contain the Palestinians. This was also useful for the Zionist rulers in attempting to defuse the opposition to the invasion that developed among the Israeli Jewish masses themselves, as well as among other peoples including the American people. That is why Begin said that the UN occupation was a "political achievement" for Israel.

Your argument that the UN troops can "stop the Zionist army from reoccupying the south of Lebanon" but can only "just barely" stop the infiltration of Palestinian commandos is self-contradictory. More important, it would be a great illusion to think that the UN troops could or would stop another Israeli move into the region, should the UN's "long-range effectiveness" not measure up to Israeli standards.

A more dangerous argument you raise is that the nature of the United Nations itself has changed. The point made in the letter of April 17 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat that UN troops have always intervened in order to carry out imperialist interests remains a fact. You do not reply on this point, particularly concerning the intervention in the Congo in the early 1960s. You state, however, that from "1956 to 1967 the UN emergency forces deployed along the Egyptian-Israeli armistice line much more protected the radicalization of Nasserite Arab nationalism than the 'interests of world imperialism.'"

This interpretation is false. In reality, a conflict broke out in the imperialist camp in 1956 between those who considered that it was still possible to successfully apply the classical colonialist methods (France and England) and on the other hand, Washington, which had understood that such methods would only lead to catastrophe. Moreover, Washington was interested in furthering its own interests in the region at the expense of its imperialist allies. Given the relationship of forces on a world scale and the attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy, the line of the United States came out on top, and this was in the long-term interests of impe-

rialism. This is the context in which the UN sent its troops (emergency forces): not to protect -- even if only objectively -- "the radicalization of Nasserist Arab nationalism," but rather to prevent the possibility that this nationalism could take on a much more dangerous dynamic and spread throughout the Arab world.

"UN troops are no longer an imperialist intervention force," you go on to write, "they rather constitute an army charged with preserving the status quo jointly agreed to by American imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy."

Let's accept this statement for a moment. What would that mean? What is the "status quo" in the Middle East? In the world? In other words, the function of the UN troops would be to defend the status quo of the world capitalist system against the development of the socialist revolution. The fact that the Soviet bureaucracy can support such an operation says nothing about any change in the nature of the UN. Ever since the 1930s the bureaucracy of the USSR has sought compromises with the imperialists which were fundamentally aimed at preserving the status quo or a readjustment of the status quo made necessary by wars, revolutions, etc.

This counterrevolutionary role of the Kremlin (and Peking) was exemplified in its refusal to vote against the U.S. motion to send the UN troops to Lebanon in the Security Council -- leaving aside the question that they shouldn't be covering for this imperialist set-up at all by being members of it.

The character of the United Nations has in no way changed. It is not basically different from that "thieves kitchen" the League of Nations, which Lenin denounced. It has not become, as you suggest, a kind of agency jointly dominated by American imperialism and the Kremlin, with troops at its disposal for "jointly agreed" progressive causes like invading Lebanon. It remains dominated by imperialism. The "relationship of forces" in the General Assembly, far from being "no longer in favor of imperialism," remains one, even in terms of votes, where the imperialist powers and the capitalist semicolonial powers under their domination (most under reactionary dictatorships) remain an overwhelming majority as against the bureaucratic workers states. No one speaks for the working people and oppressed masses of the world. In the Security Council, the imperialists have a veto. But more important, the UN is of use to the imperialists only insofar as it serves as a useful cover for some of their operations. It has no power at all. All important decisions of world politics are made outside its "deliberations." Whenever its "decisions" run counter to imperialist interests, they are ignored. If ever the imperialists decide the UN no longer serves their interests they will abandon it just as they did the League of Nations. Your position that the presence of the Soviet Union and China has transformed the UN so that it is no longer a tool of the imperialists naively rejects world realities. Your position that it has become a force "charged with preserving the status quo" and that this can be progressive, at least in the case of Lebanon, borders on accepting the Stalinist conception that the world relationship of forces has so changed that imperialism can be forced to accept "peaceful coexistence" with the world revolution.

To conclude, changes have indeed taken place in the composition of the UN, but this has not produced any qualitative change in its nature. UN troops intervene at times when the decisive imperialist countries judge it necessary for counterrevolutionary purposes in situations where the imperialists themselves are unable or find it difficult to do so directly. In the case of Lebanon, we repeat, the UN troops have intervened as an instrument of a strategy corresponding to the long-term interests of imperialism, an instrument of the "pax Americana," which will not have much "pax." It is simply grotesque to make subtle distinctions between the various national contingents, as if the French could have one function and the Swedish another. Do you perhaps think that the Fourth International should ask that the LCR carry out a campaign for withdrawal of the French troops but that the KAF should remain silent or give advice about the deployment of the Swedish contingent?

We will be more brief concerning the question of the raid by Fatah.

The reason that the Palestinian resistance was able to withdraw without excessively grave consequences on the military field of the invasion of Lebanon was because its contingents avoided frontal confrontations with a technically superior army and resorted to the usual kinds of operations which the Fedayeen have long been trained in. They had no other choice, and the Tel Aviv operation had nothing to do with this.

It is not true that the mass mobilizations in Tel Aviv demanding "peace now" were a result of the Fatah operation. The mass actions were in response to the invasion of Lebanon, which dashed the hopes for peace developing in growing layers of the Israeli Jewish masses. This new mass movement is of singular importance. Tactics in Israel should be geared to linking this sentiment to the concrete struggles of the Arab masses living under the Israeli state. Tactics such as the Fatah raid cut across this perspective, giving no lead to either oppositionist Jewish masses or the Arabs in Israel.

In discussing what tactics and strategy the resistance should utilize in Israel, we have to break out of the framework of the false dichotomy: "continuation of the armed struggle (by which is meant actions like the Fatah raid)" or "acceptance of a peaceful solution (by which is meant acceptance of the Zionist state." Nor is it a matter of supporting spontaneous actions by Arabs living under direct control of the Zionist state, or feeling that we cannot criticize actions by the resistance within Israel. The fact is that the PLO has not given the masses of Arabs living under the occupation a political strategy that can carry forward the strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of mass struggle we have seen develop in the past year or two; nor has it shown how to link these struggles of the Arab masses with the beginning of the movement among Israeli Jews, including the struggles of the Israeli working class. Isn't our program much better suited to deal with these problems than the simplistic answers given by the PLO, which, moreover, have been tried and found wanting? Applying the method of the Transitional Program to these struggles and thereby coming up with a concrete program for them seems to us the indicated way forward. Within this framework, we have to say what we think about the Fatah action.

Thirdly, concerning the "participation of the RCG fighters in the military efforts in South Lebanon."

The quotation you cite from the documents of the founding conference of the Fourth International concerning China do not seem to us to have much to do with the operation you were engaged in. First of all, your action was not part of the apparently well organized retreat of the Palestinian forces from the region as the Israeli army advanced, since it took place after that. There was no massive resistance at the time of your action which you were a part of. Since your operation lasted only a few days, and you were careful "not to expose comrades to serious dangers on the battlefield," it appears that it was more designed as a symbolic gesture than as participation in a mass movement.

Comrades, the Lebanese section has very few members. Actions by yourselves or other small left groups cannot substitute for the failures of the Arab regimes (and the Soviet Union) to effectively counter the Israeli aggression. And merely symbolic military actions do not advance the struggle of the masses or our section. Our tasks lie in another direction, to participate in the genuine mass movements with a clear political line to build the Lebanese section. In this framework we can develop effective propaganda, recruitment, and cadre building. This will often mean swimming against the stream -- for example, countering the positions of the PLO and other petty-bourgeois nationalists and the Stalinists on the nature of the UN and of its intervention in Lebanon.

This mass orientation should take into account the overall dead-end of the line followed by the PLO, from their reliance on the bourgeois Arab regimes, hopes in big power diplomacy, to their "militarist" strategy of relying on military actions by a dedicated vanguard as opposed to the mobilization of the power of the masses. We should ask ourselves, why was there no organized massive opposition among the Lebanese and Palestinian masses to the Israeli invasion? Although our forces are small, shouldn't we be pointing in the direction of building such a mass movement, which can take up the question of self-defense in a real and massive way, rather than engaging in actions that at best only reinforce the false strategy presented by the PLO? It is not a question of counterposing "propaganda" to "action," but which actions and orientations we should support.

We understand that you are working in a difficult situation. We understand the efforts you are making to establish links with the Palestinian movement. But if we want to build a revolutionary party in Lebanon, we will have to politically counter the false conceptions dominant in the Palestinian movement, while we at the same time participate in the real struggles of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses to the best of our abilities, and defend unconditionally the Palestinian and general Arab struggle against Israeli, U.S., and all other imperialist attacks.

Communist greetings,

s/ Stateman,
for the United Secretariat