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ON THE EUROPEAN SITUATION AND OUR TASKS

(Contribution to a criticism of the draft resolution
of the National Committee of the S.W.P.)

By Daniel Logan

When the draft resolution is analyzed, it appears to contain two ingredients. On the one hand, we have informations about the conditions in Europe, or rather in Italy, for, according to the method followed by the writers of the draft resolution, the situation in that country only is examined. These informations are quite minute and the parts of the draft resolution that contain them are often textual reprints of articles published in The Militant or Fourth International a few weeks or a few months ago. Some of these details hardly have a place in a resolution for a national convention, but would have room only in a much more expanded thesis. On the other hand, we have reiterations of our socialist position, which could have been written one, two, five or ten years ago.

But somehow, between these two component parts of the draft resolution, it seems that the concrete reality of the period we are now entering, with its specific problems, needs and tasks, is not grasped. Some attempts have been made in that direction, but they remain quite limited and, on the whole, unsuccessful. The draft resolution does not seem to be exactly focused. The focus is either too close and too limited, or too remote.

This defect is closely connected to a series of false political appreciations, concerning the coming regimes in Europe (and the present one in Italy), the nature of the democratic interludes, etc. These political errors throw out of balance a resolution which, of course, contain many correct points. The first thing to do is to examine these errors.

Is Italy Ruled in the same Manner as under Fascism?

Point 73 of the draft resolution states:

Fascism bereft in its last days of all mass support, could rule only as a naked military-police dictatorship. The Allies and their native accomplices are today ruling Italy in virtually the same manner.

The writers of the draft resolution deemed it prudent to put in the last sentence the word "virtually", which can provide ground for a great deal of casuistry. However, either the manner is the same, -- then the word "virtually" is useless, -- or it is not the same, then the first obligation of the writers was to state what the difference is. Since they did not, we will consider the little word merely as an involuntary symptom of uneasiness in the mind of the writers when they put on paper their astonishing affirmation.

What does the draft resolution mean by the "native accomplices of the Allies? Apparently, the Bonomi government and the parties

that participate in it. The two most important of these parties are the Communist and Socialist parties. These two parties have, -- as the draft resolution says in point 16 (and rightly so), -- the "support and allegiance" of the masses. As far as I know, Fascism did not have, "in its last days", "support and allegiance" of the masses. Thus, it appears clearly enough that Italy is not at the present time ruled in the same manner, -- as the draft claims it is, -- as under Fascism "in its last days".

The draft resolution in point 20 explains, -- correctly, -- that, after the Allies entered Rome, the Badoglio government "simply melted away under the hostility of the masses". A new government, headed by the liberal Bonomi, had to be formed. Why such a move, if the Allies rule by "naked military dictatorship"? Moreover, according to the draft resolution,

the Stalinists, Social-Democrats and their liberal allies directly took over the task of keeping the Italian masses subservient to the Allied invaders.

If the Allies use the Stalinist and Socialist leaders to maintain their rule, it means that their dictatorship is not "naked", but covered with something, and not merely "military", for, as far as I know, the Stalinist and Socialist parties do not hold the "support and allegiance" of the masses with naked military force. The draft resolution is clearly incorrect in identifying the present rule in Italy with Fascism, be it "in its last days" or at any other time, and by doing so falls into insoluble contradictions.

These two sentences quoted from point 73 reveal how far the writers of the draft are from understanding the real present political situation in Italy, the mechanism of Allied rule and consequently how ill-prepared they must be to outline the present revolutionary tasks. Suppose that tomorrow the Bonomi government falls and that the Allies call Badoglio, so carefully kept in reserve by Churchill, to "clear the mess", or even attempt to do this themselves. According to the draft resolution, there would be no political change, for there would be, after as before, the same "naked military dictatorship". How far is the draft from our tradition of careful and precise characterization of political regimes, or vigilant observation of every move, and how dangerously close it comes to the Stalinist method of sweeping identifications and generalizations (social-fascism)!

"Naked Military Dictatorship"

Point 73, already quoted, declares:

Fascism bereft in its last days of all mass support, could rule only as a naked military-police dictatorship. The Allies and their native accomplices are today ruling Italy in virtually the same manner. This is the pattern of their intended rule in all Europe.

And point 75 states:

The Anglo-American imperialists and the native capitalists do not intend voluntarily to grant the slightest democracy to the peoples of Europe.

Let us note how the problem is put by the draft resolution: the intentions of the imperialist masters are considered. It is, of course, indispensable to examine the plans of the enemy. This, however, is only a part of revolutionary politics. Another necessary part of it is a careful investigation of whether and how these plans can be carried out. The imperialist overlords do not fulfill their intentions in a vacuum. Their intentions clash with those of other classes. The result of this conflict is a concrete political situation, in which we have to act.

However, the draft resolution does not go through this part of the inquiry and, therefore, the imperialist intentions are given as the coming reality. The discussion of political perspectives thus threatens to take a subjective character (what the imperialists want or do not want to do), which is alien to Marxist method.

Nothing reveals the error of the draft resolution more clearly than the word "voluntarily". Point 75, as we have seen, declares:

The Anglo-American imperialists and the native capitalists do not intend voluntarily to grant the slightest democracy to the peoples of Europe.

But has the bourgeoisie ever granted any democracy "voluntarily"? Even in the 19th century universal suffrage had to be conquered in many European countries on barricades. Classes never "intend voluntarily" to grant anything. They act under the impact of the action of other classes. This, at least, is the Marxist way of analyzing political moves. And the draft resolution presents this fact, -- that the imperialists do not intend voluntarily to grant the slightest democracy, -- as a profound revelation about the character of the post war epoch!

With the investigation of the European political situation so erroneously switched on the plane of intentions, we are forced, in order to proceed with the criticism, to temporarily adopt the assumption the draft resolution implicitly makes, namely, that the imperialist intentions will coincide with reality, and we must examine the question: will the rule of the Allies and their native accomplices over Europe be a "naked military-police dictatorship", similar to Fascism "in its last days"?

To that question we must answer "no" for many European countries. We must answer "no" even for Italy today, as we have seen. Of course, there is no enthusiastic support of the Allies in that country, -- far from that. But until now and for some time to come the masses give "support and allegiance" to the Stalinist and Socialist parties and these, in turn, are cogs in the mechanism of Anglo-American domination, -- which means that this domination is not a "naked military dictatorship".

How will the situation be in other countries? We have had in the last few weeks the experience of France and Belgium. Thousands of Parisians shouted to the American troops "Thank you!" These are petty-bourgeois crowds? Probably, although there must be many young workers among them. But there is no doubt that the Parisian workers are mightily glad to be freed from German thralldom. Thus, the Allies have accumulated a capital of illusions, which they may quickly exhaust by their reactionary policy, but which nevertheless exist for a certain period; and when a rule is tolerated because of certain illusions, it is not a naked military dictatorship.

Let us even suppose for a moment that the French workers today see no difference at all between the Germans and the Anglo-Americans (and I do not think that is true). There is, however, the petty bourgeoisie. Aren't there any illusions about the Allies? Won't they find any support there? If so, -- and I do not think it can be denied, -- then the dictatorship will not be "naked", it will find "covers" and the existence of these "covers" raise many important tactical problems for the revolutionary party. But these questions simply do not exist for the draft resolution. It is based upon a false theory ("naked military dictatorship") and, in accordance with that theory, ignores the real problems of the real revolution.

In many European countries the situation will be similar to the present one in France. The theory of the "naked military dictatorship" may have immediate reality in one country, Germany. Strangely enough, for that country the draft resolution speaks of a Badoglio-type of government as a definite plan of the Allies (point 70):

These measures (taken by the Allies) are deliberately designed to pin down the German people under a Badoglio-type dictatorship subservient to the conquerors.

Even such a government would be a kind of "national" cover for the Allied military dictatorship. In reality, such a government does not appear to be at the present time the most likely perspective and the Allies seem prepared to rule Germany even without a national government, through high commissioners. This is one out of two or three historical variants. However, probably because the writers of the draft resolution do not like to outline possible variants but prefer sweeping affirmations, they failed to see the one case to which their theory of the "naked military dictatorship" would immediately apply. An editorial in the August 1944 Fourth International, directly contradicting the draft resolution, declares;

They (the Allies) have no intention of repeating the pattern of the precarious native bonapartist regime tried with Darlan in North Africa and Badoglio in Italy.

A resolution adopted by a national convention does not have to be as categorical as an article on concrete questions. While giving the general perspective, it can outline various possibilities. If, however, we want to choose between the variant given by the draft resolution and the one sketched in the Fourth International editorial, we must say that the latter seems at the present time much closer to reality.

If the Allies' rule over Europe were to last, it would inevitably degenerate into a "naked military dictatorship". But we must consider the problem dynamically. Today at the start the Allies have in many countries a certain capital of democratic and patriotic illusions to cover their rule. This capital will be gradually spent? The illusions will disappear? Of course. But that will be a certain process, -- precisely the process of revolutionary maturation of the masses, and our tactic must be adapted to the different stages of this process. For the draft resolution there is only the end, no beginning and, consequently, no process. No troublesome questions about tactic either!

What political moves have we witnessed during the last months in countries which are in the Allied military sphere? I see three important ones; the shift from Darlan-Giraud to de Gaulle, from Badoglio to Bonomi, from Mikhailovich to Tito. All of these moves are from the right to the left. They represent, in a very limited and very distorted way, the result of the pressure of the masses. Can we expect more shifts of the same kind in the future? I think we can, and they will go much farther to the left. Of course, they will intermingle in the most motley way with "naked military dictatorships". But it is precisely where such shifts will occur that perspectives will open up for the proletarian revolution. The cases where we will jump from an Allied "naked military dictatorship" to the dictatorship of the proletariat will be exceptions, not the rule.

The draft resolution speaks of possible bourgeois democratic regimes in Europe as "a brief episode in the unfoldment of the revolutionary struggle" (point 77). This is incontestably true, if we call "brief" interludes that may last from a few months to a few years. But from this indisputable fact the draft resolution draws a wrong conclusion, namely, that such regimes do not deserve much attention. As a matter of fact, they deserve just six lines of the draft resolution. Here, however, the time element does not exhaust the problem. From the February revolution in Russia to the October revolution barely eight months elapsed. In the passage from Tsarist society to the workers' state this period is indeed a "brief episode". But these eight months were packed with more sharp political turns, more tactical moves by Lenin's party than eight years of illegality under Tsarist despotism. That is why today we study these eight months so carefully. A bourgeois democratic "episode", however "brief" it may be, is a period of tremendous political responsibility, of which we have had great historical experiences. We will enter such "episodes" in many European countries. At what tempo? We do not know, but it is precisely during such episodes that the proletarian revolution has the greatest chances to prepare for success. It is precisely during such episodes that the most numerous and important problems of tactics rise. That is why a resolution of the national convention of the S.W.P. should devote more than six lines to them. To limit our attention toward such "episodes" under the pretext that they are "brief", of a "transitional" character, mere exceptions in a general "pattern", is utter pedantism.

Finally, let us note that the theory of the "naked military dictatorship" implies a complete revision of our conception of the role played by the Stalinist and Socialist parties or by bourgeois-

democratic tendencies. If the military dictatorship is "naked", none of these groups has any role to play. That these groups are not heading toward a bright historical future for decades, we may well agree. However, they may and will play an important role during a period, -- precisely the period we are now entering, -- as brakes on the revolutionary locomotive. In fact, the draft resolution says so in another point. But it contradicts itself when later on it puts forward the theory of the "naked military dictatorship" and thus shows that it rests on a theoretical basis which is far from being clearly and thoroughly thought out. We shall now see another example of that.

A New Type of Bourgeois Democracy?

One of the most perplexing parts of the resolution is point 76. Let us try to disentangle it, although it won't be any easy job. The draft resolution tries to establish a fundamental difference between the democratic regimes which existed in the period between the two World Wars (1918-1939) and those that may appear in the future.

The coming democratic regimes in Europe will be more anemic, less stable, more prompt to become dictatorships, than those of the past, -- there is no discussion about that. But that is not enough for the draft resolution. It intends to establish a kind of essential distinction between the past and the future based upon "economic and political conditions".

Point 74 declares:

Bourgeois democracy, which flowered in the period of the rise and expansion of capitalism and the moderation of class conflicts which furnished a basis for collaboration between the classes in the advanced capitalist countries, is outlived in Europe today.

The writers of the draft resolution know, I think, that the period of the rise and expansion of European capitalism came to an end not in 1939, but in 1914. And, in a sense, bourgeois democracy is outlived since 1914. But this is not what the draft resolution means. When it says that democracy is "outlived in Europe today", it does not mean "today" in a general way as being the period we entered in 1914, but specifically as the end of the second World War, in contradistinction to the period 1914-1939. Point 76 says:

Economic and political conditions forbid the restoration of bourgeois democracy even in the crisis-torn forms which existed after the last war.

Stated in clear terms, the theory advanced by the draft resolution is as follows: the end of the period of rising capitalism, which occurred in 1914, prohibits in 1944 the restoration of political forms which existed between 1918 and 1939. One of two things: Either the economic cause has an immediate political effect, then no democratic regime should have appeared or existed after 1914; this is clearly false. Or, although the economic basis has collapsed, political forms may survive, "outlive themselves", for quite some time because of a peculiar combination of circumstances (failure of the proletarian grave-digger to finish off bourgeois society). This side

of the alternative is the correct one. But then why should this "out-living of itself" by bourgeois democracy be stopped in 1944 by an economic condition which came to existence in 1914?

The writers of the draft resolution may cite the second World War as a possible explanation for the impossibility of the restoration of bourgeois democratic regimes even "in the crisis-torn forms" which existed between 1914 and 1939. This, however, would be a completely different theory from the one given in the draft resolution, for this draft tries to base this impossibility upon an economic condition, the end of the rise of capitalism in 1914. But let us wait and see how the writers of the draft resolution will try to get out of the sorry theoretical straits they got themselves into, and, independently of whatever the cause may be, let us look at the alleged impossibility of the return of political forms which existed between 1918 and 1939.

Let us reread point 76 of the draft resolution:

Economic and political conditions forbid the restoration of bourgeois democracy even in the crisis-torn forms which existed after the last war. Bourgeois democratic governments can appear in Europe only as interim regimes intended to stave off the conquest of power by the proletariat.

The possible future democratic governments in Europe will be interim regimes, and they will not be a repetition of forms which existed between 1918 and 1939. This distinction implies that the democratic forms between 1918 and 1939 were not of an interim character. Quite an innovation in our movement! The false perspective about the future suddenly turns into an embellishment of the past.

Do we really have to inform the writers of the draft resolution that most of the democratic regimes in Europe between the two World Wars did have an interim character? It is clear enough in Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain, etc., etc., not to speak of Kerenski's regime. In certain countries of Western Europe (France, England, Scandinavian countries) bourgeois democracy was relatively more stable, but even there was more and more taking an "interim" character in the years preceding the outbreak of the second World War. No, really, the attempt of the draft resolution to draw a distinction between the two kinds of democracy is not very fortunate.

Maybe the writers of the draft resolution meant that in the past democratic regimes quite often came into existence after an unsuccessful revolutionary upheaval, as a kind of by-product, while in the future they can appear only before a revolutionary assault. This would imply that in the future either (1) no revolutionary attempt will ever be defeated, or (2) every defeat will be followed by a dictatorial regime. In fact, that is what the draft resolution says in point 77:

Inevitably, they (the bourgeois democratic regimes) will be displaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat emerging out of the triumphant workers' revolution or the savage dictatorship of the capitalists consequent upon the victory of the counter-revolution.

Neither of the two propositions (1) and (2) is justified. Let us take our most authoritative international document, the Manifesto of the Fourth International on "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution". It states;

Will not the revolution be betrayed this time too, inasmuch as there are two Internationals in the service of imperialism while the genuine revolutionary elements constitute a tiny minority? In other words; shall we succeed in preparing in time a party capable of leading the proletarian revolution? In order to answer this question correctly it is necessary to pose it correctly. Naturally, this or that uprising may and surely will end in defeat owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. But it is not a question of a single uprising. It is a question of an entire revolutionary epoch.

This answers proposition (1), that defeats are not possible. As for proposition (2), the document goes on;

The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered. It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades of war; uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars and new uprisings.

"Brief interludes of truce", this is precisely what democracy has been in many countries of Europe between the two World Wars, interludes of truce, during which the contending classes prepared for new struggles. This is what the Weimar republic was. Tomorrow as yesterday we may expect such democratic interludes after the eventual temporary defeat of revolutionary assaults. The only difference between the past and the future is that in the future the interludes will be more brief. This is a certain quantitative difference, but there is no qualitative difference between two kinds of bourgeois democratic regimes, before 1939 and after 1944, a difference allegedly based upon "economic conditions" which are present since . . . 1914. The statement of the draft resolution that

Economic and political conditions forbid the restoration of bourgeois democracy even in the crisis-torn forms which existed after the last war

shows that it does not clearly understand either the past or the future.

A Rescue That Failed

This discussion may seem rather involved and somewhat obscure to the uninitiated reader. But now I shall give the key to the mystery.

The story began almost a year ago, as far back as the Fifteenth Anniversary plenum (October 1945). The writers of the original draft resolution for that plenum presented a draft which explicitly denied the possibility that bourgeois democratic governments would ever exist again in Europe.

Confronted with the opposition of some comrades, especially comrades Morrow and Morrison, to this conception, the plenum had to abandon such an untenable position, although it did so without full clarity and precision. Since then events have revealed the falsehood of the original theory to everybody, perhaps even to its authors. Thus, the writers of the present draft resolution had to admit the possibility of democratic regimes in Europe, but, since they felt some solidarity with the unfortunate authors of the plenum theory, and maybe even some sympathy for them, they had to find some sort of an excuse: "Yes, there will be democratic regimes in the future, but, you see, they will not at all be what they have been in the past." Thus came to the world the theory of the two kinds of bourgeois democracy, the pre-1939 and the post-1944. The creation was perfected when an "economic" basis was found for it: "The difference comes, you see, from the end of the rise of capitalism," . . . which occurred in 1914.

The distinction between the two kinds of democracy is as theoretically false as the alleged impossibility of bourgeois democratic regimes in the future, and, in a way, more confusing, for it creates confusion about the past as well as about the future.

We should not be surprised if the draft resolution, with a theoretical arsenal supplied with such conceptions as the "naked military dictatorship" or the two kinds of bourgeois democracy, is unable to exactly focus the political tasks of the present period.

The Problem of Democratic Demands

Europe is now seething with revolutionary movements that have sprung up under the impact of German tyranny. Throughout Europe the masses have moved far to the left; they are crying for freedom, sensitive to any kind of oppression. This is an enormous potential danger for Allied domination and, consequently, for the whole bourgeois rule in Europe. How to transform this potential danger into an actual and direct peril? This is the central problem of the hour. In this transformation programs of democratic demands have an important role to play. Their role has been great in the development of every revolutionary crisis (Russia, Germany, Spain, etc.) But with the conditions prevailing in Europe today they acquire a peculiar importance.

Thousands, tens of thousands can learn through direct propaganda. They constitute the vanguard; they come to the revolutionary party on the basis of its socialist program. But millions, tens of millions -- and revolution is impossible without the active participation of tens of millions -- have to come to socialism through their own experience. They have to discard, one after the other, regimes about which they have had illusions. They have to discard false leaders in whom they have put their confidence. The task of the revolutionary party is to speed up and facilitate that process as much as possible, but it cannot jump over it. This is precisely what programs of democratic or transitional demands are designed for. This is precisely the Bolshevik method of winning the masses, by going together with them through action, as opposed to the propagandistic enlightenment about the advantages of socialism, in the spirit

of the Second International.

Under the monarchy we call for the proclamation of the republic. Under a bourgeois democratic regime we call for the most democratic forms (one House, immediate elections, etc.) When the revolutionary tide is high enough, we call for the expulsion from the government of the representatives of bourgeois parties. We call upon the opportunist leaders to take power if they enjoy the confidence of the majority of the workers, Etc., etc. These will be vital problems of revolutionary tactics in Europe in the coming months

Truly enough, the draft resolution speaks of democratic demands. It even devotes to the problem at least five lines -- no less! But it fails to show the specific connection of such a program with the present political situation. How could it fulfill such a task, armed as it is with the false political theories we have examined? Thus the phrases about democratic demands in the draft preserve a general, abstract character and cannot fail to appear as merely ritualistic.

For years we had discussions with opponents about the problem of democratic demands, especially concerning countries dominated by fascism. We made certain predictions. Thus, Trotsky wrote more than eleven years ago, at a time when fascism had not yet established the most brutal tyranny upon the whole of Europe (four hundred millions have now had to suffer under it!):

The fascist regime preserves democratic prejudices, recreates them, inculcates them into the youth, and is even capable of imparting to them, for a short time, the greatest strength.

What about that prediction? Has the recent experience of France confirmed it or not? What is the present situation? The draft resolution gives no answer.

The casual and perfunctory way the whole problem of democratic demands is treated is exemplified by the slogans mentioned in the text. These democratic slogans are given: "free election of all officials, freedom of the press" (point 33). Why are these two slogans singled out? What about others? True, there is at the end of the sentence a little "etc.", into which anything can be stuffed.

The "free election of all officials" includes the election of administrators in villages, towns and cities. But does it include the election of deputies? What about the whole problem of the parliament and of democratic representation? More than thirteen years ago Trotsky found it possible to raise in a hypothetical form the slogan of the Constituent Assembly for Italy at the time of Fascism's downfall. In August 1943 The Militant reprinted Trotsky's article without adding any commentary about the use of the slogan. However, we are no longer in 1931, but in 1944. We now have -- or should have -- the reality before our eyes. How does the problem present itself today? The draft resolution maintains on this question the same silence as The Militant did.

Another important democratic slogan in Italy at the present time is the republic. Apparently, the writers of the draft did not put it down among the democratic demands because, although in the tradition of our movement, it is not as ritualistic as the freedom of the press, it does not flow as easily from the pen. Or is there any other reason? The slogan is one of those that seem most indicated by the present situation, and we shall consider it for a while.

The Question of the Republic in Italy

One of the central problems of Italian political life has been, until now, the existence of the monarchy. The discussions on that point have thrown a bright light on the servility, the corruption and the ignominy of all the Italian official parties, including the Stalinists. The king was Mussolini's accomplice for twenty years. Before leaving the United States for Italy, the self-styled liberal Count Sforza wrote: "It may be that a fraction of the Italians is still for the Monarchy, but after so many shameful acts and treasons this could be so only for reasons of expediency." However, it soon appeared that the "reasons of expediency" were strong enough to be respected, even by Sforza himself. We then witnessed the most repulsive political farce, whose players were some wrecks left by liberalism like Croce or Sforza himself, the Stalinists and the various democratic and social-democratic parties. Behind the stage, the king and his son, the reactionary upper crust of Italian society and the Allied diplomacy were rejoicing at such an extraordinary spectacle.

Croce, the philosopher of compromise, explained that he was "against the king as a person, and not against the monarchic institution". It has always been the dream of the craven liberals to keep the monarchy and to have only "good" kings. The Stalinist messenger boy Palmori Togliatti (Ercoli), arriving from Moscow, declared that he was "against the king as an institution, and not as a person", having probably been impressed by the remarkable and generous personality of the king. A shameful compromise was attained when the Crown prince was made lieutenant general of the realm.

The monarchy remains the rallying center of reaction: the reactionaries of the "Blue party", the Church and the Allied diplomacy. Any new development of the Italian revolution will inevitably raise the question of the existence of that focus of intrigues against the people, the Court.

To all the horse-trading among the monarchists, the ambulating corpses of liberalism and the Stalino-royalists, the revolutionary party must answer with the cry: Immediate proclamation of the republic! Arrest of the king, the Crown prince and all of the royal family! Immediate confiscation of all the royal properties for the benefit of the people!

The party that during the present weeks would untiringly diffuse these slogans among the large masses would infallibly draw their attention and thus prepare their ears to receive more advanced slogans. At a further stage it would enjoy the authority of having foreseen the march of the development and of having been with the

masses in their most elementary struggles. The benefit would be tremendous.

The slogan of the republic is imposed all the more by the present situation, since the official workers parties have rallied to the monarchy. The slogan is not only directed against the present regime and the Allies, but is also a sharp weapon against the coalitionists, the Stalinist and Socialist parties.

To throw some light on this problem we have to try to determine at which stage of the Italian revolution we are now. For this purpose historical parallels and examples are useful, even indispensable. Provided we are cautious enough not to forget the differences, they may furnish us with convenient land-marks.

During twenty years Fascism had gradually lost its petty-bourgeois "mass" following, and had become a dried up Bonapartist regime, resting mainly on the police apparatus. Thus Mussolini's removal was to be almost as painless as the dismissal of another Bonapartist ruler, Primo de Rivera of Spain, in January 1930. Rivera was succeeded by General Berenguer. The first result of the shift was the breaking up of the censorship, political discussions sprang up, and the problem around which they centered was the existence of the monarchy. A year passed, during which the students demonstrated and the workers fought against the police. In February 1931 Berenguer resigned, two months later Alfonso had to flee and the republic was proclaimed. The Spanish revolution was going toward new heights.

If we are to follow the Spanish revolutionary calendar, we must say that the present regime of the Lieutenant General corresponds to the Berenguer interlude.

The differences between the two situations are important and obvious. There is now a world war, in which Italy is participating, being occupied by both camps. Foreign troops will be on Italian soil for quite some time. On the other hand, a general European revolution is coming, to which the fate of the Italian revolution will be most closely connected. However, at the present stage, the historical parallel clearly shows the correctness of the slogan of the republic.

For months the problem of democratic demands for Italy was as good as forgotten by our press. There were journalistic comments on political moves taking place there, such as the formation of the Bonomi government, etc. There was a constant reaffirmation of our socialist program. But there was no indication of how to call the masses to action. A semi-turn occurred on July 22nd, when The Militant came to write about a series of democratic slogans, although in the most unclear and confusing way. The slogan of the "overthrow of the monarchy" was raised. Why in that negative form and not as the immediate proclamation of the republic?

Since then, our press has come to speak a few times of a "Workers' and peasants' republic". It must be clear that this is not a democratic, not even a transition, demand. It is merely a more popular expression for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, as such, has at the present time a purely propagandistic character.

There is no objection to its use, of course, but it must be clear that it does not eliminate the present need for the democratic demand of the immediate proclamation of the republic.

This discussion should not, of course, tend to give to the slogan of the republic in Italy a disproportionate importance. It is at the present time a very useful agitational slogan, the specific weight of which in our daily activities should be left, however, to be determined by comrades who are directly on the stage. If we have insisted upon it particularly, it is because the slogan is extremely important as a test case. It is always very easy to write or adopt general formulations about democratic demands. They have been in our documents for years. But all that has little value if concrete applications are indefinitely postponed. On the other hand, many signs point out that we may soon enter a new stage in Italy. It may happen that the question of the republic will be quickly solved. A slogan which may soon gain great importance is: For a Togliatti-Nenni government!

The Danger of Ultra-leftism

Some comrades may raise against the present use of democratic slogans the following argument: such use would be all right if the Fourth International now had in Italy a big party capable of setting in motion large masses, but unfortunately this is not yet the case. Therefore the problem is quite different; it is at the present time the building of a strong revolutionary party, and for that purpose any program of democratic demands is useless. The premises of this reasoning are correct, but the conclusion -- false. It is true indeed that the building of a revolutionary party in Italy is still ahead of us, and that victory is inconceivable without forging such a party. But this task cannot be fulfilled outside of the daily struggle of the masses, -- in a hothouse, as it were.

This problem has been discussed in Europe quite often, especially in France and Belgium in 1934-36, at the time when the political situation there was already in a state of pre-revolutionary fluency and the organizations of the Fourth International still very weak. Trotsky and the executive body of the Fourth International always resolutely opposed the tendencies that wanted to restrict our groups to strictly propagandistic programs and slogans until the day when we would have assembled a large party and come like Minerva out of the head of Jupiter. We cannot thwart a possible opportunist danger in a young party by a "little dose" of ultra-leftism, but only by outlining the correct Bolshevik policy.

I think the resolution should contain a short but sharp warning against ultra-leftism. The war has stirred up a tremendous wave of reaction. The official workers parties have not been the last to follow or even to propel this wave. The Stalinists have been, in words and in deeds, at the point of reaction. The remnants of the Second International, slightly shocked by such brazenness, follow them as best they can.

In such conditions one may well say: "The main danger is opportunism. Why bother now about ultra-leftism?" Such a way of

putting the question would be utterly wrong. The danger of opportunism is tremendous, indeed, but it is precisely why the danger of sectarianism should not be ignored; on the contrary, it should be carefully watched. Opportunism does not eliminate ultra-leftism, but engenders it. Ultra-leftism is only the other face of opportunism, its shadow, an infantile reaction to it and, in a sense, the punishment the working class has to pay for it.

The putrefaction of the Second International during the last war brought about many an ultra-left tendency. The German organization of Luxemburg and Liebknecht was impregnated with ultra-leftism and broke its head precisely because of that ailment; in France opportunism blended with ultra-leftism in grandiloquent phrases, etc., etc. Lenin had to write a special pamphlet against the infantile sickness of ultra-leftism.

At the end of the present war and in the coming revolutionary upheaval we may expect the same occurrence, probably with much greater intensity. At the last plenum I spoke about this coming danger of ultra-leftism. Since then events in one country at least have arrived, on schedule, as it were, to show the reality of the danger. In England the "breakaways" are becoming a serious problem. Disgusted with the treacherous policy of the union leaders and the Stalinist party, workers quit the unions and ask; why a union? Anarchists are taking advantage of this mood. This is only the first sign of things to come.

A new generation of young revolutionaries is now appearing, which has not accumulated much experience. In many countries they have grown up under illegality, without much opportunity to study the lessons of the past. The crimes of the bourgeois order have been so atrocious, the servility of the official workers parties is so repulsive that many impatient reactions may be expected. Moreover, Europe has known for four years sabotage and terrorism, and these cannot fail to leave traces of adventurism in the policy of many a good revolutionary workers party.

Under the blows of experience ultra-leftism had been forced during the twenty years between the two wars to abandon many of its original positions. But the point to which it clung most obstinately was its opposition to the use of democratic and transition slogans. Our movement had to conduct a long fight precisely on that problem.

We are now entering an historical epoch in which general propaganda is not enough. Liberals, reformists and all the admirers of bourgeois progress always hoped that Tsarist Russia would gradually rise to the level of cultured and democratic Western Europe. Quite the contrary occurred. With the disintegration of capitalist civilization, Western Europe has catastrophically sunk to the level of despotic Russia and even far below. Reformists and centrists used to view Bolshevism as a product of backward Russia, not good enough for enlightened Western socialism. But now all Europe has been made "good enough" for Bolshevism. History puts all the teachings of Bolshevism on the order of the day more imperatively than ever. And one of these lessons is Bolshevism's contempt for mere enlightening propaganda about the virtues of socialism, its ability to feel the aspirations of the masses, to seize upon the progressive side of these aspirations

and on that point to drive a wedge that would detach the masses from their conservative parties and leaders.

The Socialist United States of Europe

The draft resolution states in point 32 on the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe:

It corresponds to the needs and experiences of the European masses who are learning that only by the destruction of the outlived and reactionary national state and through the economic unification and socialist collaboration of the free peoples of Europe can the menace of recurrent devastating wars be abolished and freedom and economic well-being assured.

A few lines before, the draft resolution had indicated that the proletariat of a European country will give military help to the workers of another

by boldly disregarding the outlived and reactionary national boundaries.

These formulae are not lacking in ambiguity and they can cover a correct as well as a false position. Without knowing the exact interpretation given to them by the writers of the draft resolution, I deem it necessary to state here my own position, as a contribution toward a more precise formulation of the subject in the final resolution.

No doubt, in the military struggle against imperialism and its agents, the proletariat will not hesitate to "boldly disregard" national boundaries. But does that mean that state borders will disappear from one day to the next? I do not think so. The European national problems cannot be erased by the signing of a decree abolishing state borders. It will take a whole historical epoch to solve them.

"United States" implies the existence of different states, that is to say, borders. It means that each nation of the federation has the right to say or no, the right of self-determination, up to and including the right of secession. Socialist United States can only rest upon the conviction of each people that only by a federative organization Europe can live. Violence cannot speed up the acquiring of this conviction, but on the contrary can only delay it.

After the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, we do not wish to march to socialism by violence, but by patiently convincing the peoples of the superiority of centralization. Just as, in the agrarian problem, we are not partisans of "forced collectivization", but we want to demonstrate to the peasant, by his own experience, the advantages of large collective enterprise over small property, so in the national question we are against any "forced unification" and the only real, not fictitious, guarantee is the right of secession.

The slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe is an attempt to solve the conflict between the centripetal necessities of a planned economy and the centrifugal tendencies inherited from past centuries. It is a dynamic formula, the content of which will continuously change. It will probably start with military collaboration, then a coordination of economic plans will come, and so far, up to a complete economic, political, social and cultural unification of the continent. This will not be reached in a day, not even in a few years, and will largely depend, moreover, on what happens in the rest of the world.

At a certain stage, the process of political centralization will be accompanied by the process of the withering away of the state. Will the various European states blend into one state, which will subsequently wither away, or will they begin to wither away before reaching complete amalgamation? We cannot tell now, but we may never have a single state.

The best examples we have until now of federative unification are those of two bourgeois nations: Switzerland and the United States of America. In both cases the driving force toward unification came from an external threat. In Switzerland the urban and rural cantons had widely diverging interests, but upon both the danger of Austrian domination was threatening. In America the thirteen colonies were far from seeing eye to eye with one another on all questions, but they had to unite their forces in order to resist England. Similarly, in Europe the driving power toward unification will be the necessity to fight the domination of the Yankee overlord and it will lead to military, economic and political cooperation.

At what tempo? We cannot tell. The example of America shows also how the building of the federal power was a long process, extending over more than a century and necessitating a civil war of four years. The European nations today are certainly more separated than the thirteen colonies were. Socialism will have, undoubtedly, other methods than capitalism for reaching unification. It would be childish and dangerous, however, to expect the erasing of national boundaries and the sudden disappearance of all national problems some fine morning by the signing of a decree.

Putrefying capitalism will bequeath to the victorious proletariat a continent torn by wars and national hatreds. Suspicions will have to be quieted. Any precipitated step can only revive them again and delay real, socialist unification. Anyway, whatever may be the tempo, the first big step will not be the establishment of a single European state, but the formation of a federation of states, which implies borders, borders of a new type indeed, borders between workers' states, but borders nevertheless for some time.

Conclusion

I cannot say that I have touched upon all the questions I intended to, but this document is long enough, and the coming discussion will undoubtedly show us which questions deserve most investigation and clarification.

The theoretical errors of the draft resolution about the "naked military dictatorship" or the two kinds of bourgeois democracy have to be unequivocally corrected. That would straighten up the axis of the resolution. The attention has to be focused on the specific problems of the period we are now entering. The question of the democratic demands should not be dealt with in five lines, but all its aspects have to be carefully examined. The slogan of the immediate proclamation of the republic in Italy has to be incorporated. Although many parts of the draft resolution can be used, a great deal of rewriting should be done.

We are now entering a period of transition which will go from the collapse of German domination over Europe to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The question of the character and length of this period is directly tied to the problem of the formation of the revolutionary party. Whoever does not pay enough attention to that period, assumes that we will go through it automatically, tries to jump over it theoretically, ignores its peculiar problems, etc.-- whoever does that (and I believe the writers of the draft resolution do it to a great extent) obscures the problems, and therefore increases the difficulties, of the building of the party. The greatest help that the members of the S.W.P. can now give to their European comrades is to carefully correct the draft resolution and present an impeccable document.

October 1st, 1944.

THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION -- ITS PROSPECTS AND TASKS

Speech of E. R. Frank to N. Y. Membership Meeting, October 4, 1944
As Reporter of the National Committee

In opening this discussion on the political resolutions now before the party, the resolution passed by the November Plenum of the National Committee and the draft resolution of the National Committee to be presented to the coming convention, I am inviting the comrades to study, to consider, to view the question of the European revolution in its entirety, to proceed to a Marxist, and therefore to a many-sided analysis of this crucial problem.

Nothing is so futile in revolutionary politics as to begin a discussion of this character by getting lost on some incidental question, or to attempt to answer or solve this or that immediate problem of the day by divorcing it from your fundamental analysis, from your whole perspective. Before a Marxist can answer an immediate question of the day, he must be clear on his perspective, on his line. And that is precisely what the resolutions attempt to provide. These resolutions are not a new program. As a matter of fact, they are not even a full restatement of our old program. They are simply timely documents; they are documents that, on the basis of our program, analyze more concretely the new events, show the underlying forces at play, delineate the underlying tendencies and more sharply point to the tasks that lie ahead.

I am not going to deal, in this opening speech, with every aspect of these resolutions. I am going to attempt first to elucidate those fundamental points on which there seems to be most confusion, or controversy, or misunderstanding.

To understand the European revolution, its tasks and its perspectives, let us begin by a rough analysis of Europe, its economy and the forces at work on the continent. Capitalism began its absolute decline in Europe some 30 years ago at the time of the first World War. Capitalism in Europe was no longer expanding, but contracting. In addition to the internal decline, the capitalist states in Europe were further suffocating because of the Balkanization of the continent because the national states had become national fetters on the economy and each national state was choking to death behind its tariff walls and its Gargantuan militarisms which were eating up the substance of its wealth. The first World War, with its unparalleled destruction smashed Europe's pre-eminence and further accelerated its decay. Economic hegemony was shifted to the hands of American imperialism. Two revolutionary waves swept over Europe like a terrible paroxysm. One, started by the October revolution, shook Europe to its very foundations and wrenched the territories of the U.S.S.R. out of the grip of capitalism. The second wave of incipient revolutions during the 30's in Spain and France was betrayed by the Stalinist and Social-Democratic traitors. With the revolutions aborted and defeated, the path was cleared for the plunging of the European peoples into the second world slaughter.

European capitalism, I said, lost its economic pre-eminence to the United States after the first World War. Capitalism in Europe is shattered, is finished as a world power, as a result of the destruction wrought by the second World War. Europe today is ruined and prostrate, and its peoples are starving and dying.

Now as Marxists, we know that the political superstructure is determined in the last analysis by the economic foundation. We are historical materialists; we know that bourgeois democracy is a specific political form, which arose and flowered during the rise and growth of capitalism. Bourgeois democracy was made possible as the form of capitalist rule in the more advanced and wealthy capitalist countries because of the advances of capitalism, because of the increasing wealth of the nation, by the ability of capitalism to buy off, to corrupt the middle classes and the labor aristocracy, and thus to moderate and attenuate the class struggle. Bourgeois democracy has certain definable and easily recognizable features; parliamentarism, more or less free elections, accompanied by the traditional bourgeois rights; freedom of press, speech, assembly, etc. With the economic decline of Europe after the last war, bourgeois democracy likewise declined. It was virtually wiped out throughout Eastern Europe. As for Western Europe, the class struggle came to a breaking point in Italy immediately after the war and the question was sharply posed: either fascism or socialism. With the inability of the working class parties to lead the revolutionary struggle forward to the conquest of power, the bourgeois-democratic regimes quickly gave way to the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini. Bourgeois democracy was ground to dust between the forces of the sharpening class struggle. Ten years later the same process took place in Germany. And even France, the victor of Versailles, possessor of a great colonial empire, even victorious France reached a blind alley. The class struggle between the two fundamental classes grew so acute that even before the disastrous plunge into the maelstrom of the second World War, bourgeois democracy gave way to one Semi-Bonapartist regime after another followed in the end by the imposition of the senile Bonapartist dictatorship of Petain propped up by the Nazi bayonets. Bourgeois democracy was not simply destroyed in France by military intervention from without. It was decaying and falling apart because of the unsolvable crisis of French capitalism and the sharpening class struggles from within.

Such was the history of Europe between the two world wars. Today the European masses, who have gone through five years of devastation and slaughter, are in a furiously revolutionary mood. Throughout Europe! The masses are entering the political arena as an independent force. Capitalism in Europe is so shaken, so weak, decrepit and compromised, so bankrupt, that with its own forces it is unable to preserve its rule, to rehabilitate its power. For five years capitalism in Europe has been propped up by the bayonets of Nazi imperialism. Today, if European capitalism is to preserve its rule, it must be propped up by the bayonets of Anglo-American imperialism.

The masses in Italy and now in France, and so it will be throughout Europe, quickly brushed aside the capitalist and liberal parties and gave their support to the traditional parties of the working class. The masses support the Social-Democrats and Stalinists not because the Social-Democrats and Stalinists are betrayers, but

because the masses mistakenly believe that these parties will lead them forward in the struggle for socialism, for communism. Just the other day we had a first-hand report from Italy. We were informed that everybody must talk for socialism in Italy today if they wish to get a hearing from the workers. We can put it down as a definite fact; the workers of Europe want a decisive revolutionary change. But the workers are not alone. Fascism, which for a while attracted and hypnotized the middle classes, exposed itself after a brief period as simply the bloody tool of decaying monopoly capitalism. Fascism, the last bulwark of capitalism, has pauperized and disillusioned one section of the population after the other. Today the peasantry and great sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie follow the lead of the working class in seeking a revolutionary road out of the madhouse of capitalist war, starvation and death.

I have read and heard it bruted about that there is going to be a tremendous revival of democratic illusions among the masses because the younger generation has not gone through the school of parliamentarism, that it must first go through this "body of experience" until it is able to shed democratic illusions. What a pathetic schoolboy schema! What inability to understand the meaning of events and to sense the mood, the aspirations, the feelings of the masses. The Russian masses, as we all know, had far fewer democratic illusions in 1917 than did the German masses who had a rich parliamentary tradition. Yet the Russian workers didn't go through any extensive parliamentary school. The political consciousness of the Russian masses was conditioned by their experiences, by the blind alley in which the Russian autocracy thrust the masses, by the fact that the bourgeoisie and the landlords had disgraced themselves by their support of the bloody Czarist dictatorship. The Russian masses were forced, because of the intolerable situation, to seek for bold and revolutionary solutions and to support the boldest and most intransigent, the most extreme of the left-wing parties. A similar process is taking place in Europe today. The capitalists have disgraced themselves by collaborating with Hitler and will today further disgrace themselves by their collaboration with the Anglo-American imperialists. The European masses are finding the situation intolerable. The very conditions of their existence are forcing them to seek for bold revolutionary solutions out of the death crisis into which European capitalism has thrust them. It is interesting in this connection to recall the profound analysis of the consciousness of the European masses made by Trotsky in his 1940 Manifesto. "Today almost nothing remains of the democratic and pacifist illusions. The peoples are suffering the present war without any longer believing in it, without expecting any more from it than new chains. This applies also to the totalitarian states. The older generation of the workers who bore on their backs the burden of the first imperialist war and who have not forgotten its lessons are still far from eliminated from the arena. In the years of the next to the oldest generation which went to school during wartime the false slogans of patriotism and pacifism are still ringing. The inestimable experience of these strata who are now crushed by the weight of the war machine will reveal itself in full force when the war compels the toiling masses to come out openly against the governments."

And even more decisive than this analysis, than this prediction, if you will, are the events themselves which are now taking place before our very eyes. Even the least perspicacious of the bourgeois commentators have understood and informed us that the European masses are in a revolutionary mood. They have many illusions to be sure. They do not yet support the parties of the Fourth International. But their illusions, if correctly analyzed, concretized and properly broken down, are found to be not at all those pictured by Morrow. The masses have very little illusions about the bourgeoisie. They do not have too many illusions that they can solve their problems within the confines of the capitalist system. Even the illusions concerning the Allies are a more or less transient affair and will quickly give way before the realities of the situation. We saw that in Italy. A year ago the Italian masses of the South undoubtedly greeted the Allies with great enthusiasm and hope. In the course of a few months this enthusiasm was converted to hatred and deadly opposition. So it will be in France on the morrow. So it will be throughout Europe.

The greatest illusions of the masses, if this question is properly analyzed, is found to be their belief, their trust, in the Social-Democratic and Stalinist leaders, especially the latter. They do not yet understand the counter-revolutionary role of these scoundrels. A great dynamic process is taking place in the revolutionary education of the masses, and in this first period it is probably strengthening Stalinist influence. While small sections of the most advanced workers may be recoiling before the treachery of these misleaders, millions of masses, first entering the political arena, seeking a way out of the death crisis of capitalism, naturally throw their support behind the parties which in their minds have stood traditionally for socialism, for communism. That is why the struggle to help the masses overcome their illusions is, in one of its most important aspects, the struggle to expose Stalinism and destroy its influence.

There is no question at all that Europe today is a red-hot cauldron of revolution. Everyone admits it. Into this seething cauldron is now entering the new imperialist overlord -- American imperialism. This unbridled imperialist power, which aims to make Wall Street the center of world tribute, which seeks to establish its hegemony over all the continents and all the seas, must now strangle the European revolution and prop up decaying capitalism if it is to realize its imperial program. I see in this connection that Morrow objects to our characterizing American imperialism as equally predatory to Nazi imperialism. The objection is not well taken.

German imperialism, which emerged so late on the world scene, which was starving for resources and colonies, attempted to unite all of Europe around the highly organized German industry. But the unification of Europe is a task which capitalism is unable to accomplish. Hitler, despite his military might, could only bring havoc to the continent, could only further ruin its economy, enslave its masses and turn the continent into a prison house. American imperialism, which is not a European power, and whose empire lies outside of Europe, aims not to unify the continent, but to dismember it and to keep it dismembered. Wall Street wants not the rebuilding of European economy, but to render impossible its revival as a competitor. Wall Street's program of dismemberment, despoliation and plunder can only deepen

Europe's ruin. Allied rule over Europe spells thus not the mitigation, but the aggravation of Europe's catastrophic crisis. The least you can say about American imperialism, whether on a long-term or a short-term basis, is that it is as predatory as Nazi imperialism.

The study of the role, the motive forces, the aims and the program of American imperialism, shows you why the political program of Wall Street calls and must call for military occupation, for policing of Europe for ten, twenty, or as the late unlamented Knox proposed, for one hundred years. This study makes clear why American imperialism must seek to refurbish the decrepit monarchies, why they must seek to build up the prestige and power of the Vatican, why they must elevate a lot of monarchic and fascist generals to the seats of power, why they must prop up police military dictatorships. This political program is not something accidental or arbitrary. It is the necessary program for American imperialism, the only program to realize its economic, its imperialist aims, the only method by which they can put over their predatory and savage program to keep Europe prostrate, helpless and subservient to American imperialism.

On the basis of this rounded analysis, not only of the general historic decline and decay of European capitalism, but of the specific stage in this process of decay, we affirm: bourgeois democracy is outlived in Europe today. Bourgeois democracy is incompatible with the continued existence of capitalism in Europe. If it was possible for American imperialism to stabilize European capitalism after the last war by loans on the basis of a bourgeois-democratic regime in Germany, then today American imperialism sees as its only program the dismemberment and destruction of Germany as an economic power and the preservation of capitalism with its own bayonets propping up dictatorial regimes.

Naturally we Marxists understand that economics do not automatically determine politics. The bourgeoisie, the Anglo-American imperialists, will practice all kinds of trickery, of deception, to sidetrack the revolutionary anger of the masses, to strangle the revolution, to save their rule. Our resolutions call specific attention to the fact that when the sweep of the revolution threatens their rule, the imperialists and their native accomplices will push forward the Social-Democratic and Stalinist agents and, if necessary, will even set up bourgeois-democratic regimes for the purpose of disarming and strangling the workers' revolution. But we also point out that these regimes, by their very nature, can only be interim regimes -- transition regimes, very unstable, very short-lived. Society cannot exist very long on the basis of a fierce class struggle, of an uncompleted revolution, of a split. A new equilibrium must be established. These interim regimes must either give way to the dictatorship of the proletariat or to the savage military dictatorship of the capitalist counter-revolution. There is no third road.

Now what is Morrow's objection to this perspective, which is the logical, the necessary link in the perspective on Europe held by our movement from its first days. What is Morrow's position? The final conclusion you must arrive at, despite all of his back-tracking

and doubletalk, is that Morrow anticipates the revival of bourgeois-democracy in Europe for a period of time. Reminding himself that for this extraordinary thesis he must provide proof, he must provide a foundation, Morrow proceeds to give us an appreciation of the differences of program between American and Nazi imperialism, how American imperialism is not as predatory as the German variety. Now I am not making any of this up out of my head; I am reading it right out of Morrow's article in the internal bulletin; "The short-term perspective is that American imperialism will provide food and economic aid to Europe and will thus for a time appear before the European masses in a very different guise than German imperialism. . . Unlike Nazi occupation American occupation will be followed by an improvement in food supplies and in the economic situation generally." Morrow, then warming up to his theme, tells us; "Where the Nazis removed factory machinery and transportation equipment, the Americans will bring them in. These economic contrasts, which of course flow entirely from the contrast between the limited resources of German capitalism and the far more ample resources still possessed by American capitalism cannot fail for a time to have political consequences."

Thus we have a more or less rounded thesis for the revival, from however a short-term point of view, of European capitalism and for the improvement, however temporary, of the standard of living. If that were true, there would exist, of course, some solid justification for the idea that illusions would revive among the European masses concerning the role of American imperialism and that on some basis, however low, bourgeois-democracy could be revived for a time. But this perspective has nothing in common with cruel reality. It is quite clear that Morrow himself is the victim of illusions about American imperialism, its supposed unlimited powers, its role, its purposes, its program. Apparently he took for good coin some of the stories floating around about building TVA's on the Danube. For the benefit of any comrades not clear on this matter, we literally piled up the statistics in our resolution of the results of one year of Allied rule in Italy. It is unnecessary to go over all this data again. It adds up to growing starvation, disease, unemployment, a monstrous rising of the death rate, the worsening of the crisis. And Allied treatment of Italy will appear as beneficent, compared to their rule of Germany. Yet it is on this flimsy economic foundation, and only on this foundation, that the theory of the revival of bourgeois democracy in devastated and ruined Europe, rests. Without it, it falls to the ground of its own weight.

Now I am told that some people are going around informing the comrades that the proof of Morrow's theory of bourgeois democracy can be found in the Bonomi and de Gaulle regimes, that we already have bourgeois democracy in Europe today, or reasonable facsimiles thereof. This kind of talk only demonstrates how deep is the confusion and how necessary it is to remind some comrades again of the fundamentals, of some of the ABC's of our program, of our doctrine. I described before the historical origins of bourgeois democracy and what a bourgeois-democratic regime is. I told you that a number of its features included free elections, government by elected parliament, various bourgeois-democratic rights, etc., etc. What is the first thing that hits you in the eye when you analyze the Bonomi and de Gaulle regimes? They haven't the first pre-requisite of a bourgeois-democratic regime or any other kind of regime -- sovereignty. Power rests in the hands of

the foreign conqueror. The very first democratic right is lacking -- the right of the Italian and French people to determine their own fate. Secondly, the cabinets are handpicked. There is no parliament and there are no elections. These governments "rule" by decree. Is it necessary to argue that governments which "rule" by authority of the military forces of the foreign conqueror, whose troops are stationed in your country; governments which are hand-picked, governments which "rule" by decree, with no parliament and no elections, is it necessary to argue that these are facades of a military dictatorship?

We are told that some democratic rights exist both in France and Italy. To be sure. These rights have been grabbed up by the masses in the course of the struggle, they attest to the rising class struggle in Italy and France but do not prove the democratic character of the Bonomi or de Gaulle regimes. Even under blood-thirsty Czarism, the Bolsheviks were able to publish for a time a legal daily newspaper. There existed, for a time, a consultative parliament with elected deputies. Up until the world war the Bolsheviks, as well as the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, sent their deputies to this assembly. The argument that de Gaulle's democracy is revealed by the fact that he rests on the left-wing organizations is equally unimpressive. Every Bonapartist regime attempts to balance itself between the two conflicting forces of society.

Isn't de Gaulle, however, evolving in the direction of a bourgeois-democratic regime? The whole manner in which this is posed is false. It is not our business to indulge in idle speculation. We know that de Gaulle, that the European capitalists, that the American imperialists, will grudgingly grant this or that democratic right or even, if necessary, set up a full-blown democratic regime if the sweep of the revolution rises to great heights and they fear for their existence. How de Gaulle, or how Bonomi, or how any other regimes will "evolve" depends on the course of the struggle. It is, I repeat not our business to indulge in idle speculation. It is our business to expose the treacherous maneuvers of de Gaulle. It is our business to teach the masses that every concession de Gaulle or the Allies are forced to grant has the sole purpose of sidetracking the struggle, lulling their revolutionary vigilance in order to gain time to organize the forces of the counter-revolution for a definitive settlement with the working class. It is not our business to lose our sense of proportion and falsely paint up de Gaulle's regime as democratic because of every episodic concession won as a by-product of the revolutionary struggle, but to utilize all concessions to penetrate more deeply into the worker-mass, to further heighten their class consciousness, to expose the fact that all concessions are transitory, that all promises of improvement are lies, that outside of the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of the Soviet power, there is no salvation for Europe and its peoples.

The perniciousness of this theory of the renaissance (with whatever qualifications are attached) of bourgeois democracy is clearly revealed in the two questions I have just discussed. This theory has so disorientated and confused its proponents, has so thrown them off the track, that in the first instance they proceeded to paint up American imperialism and even altered the facts to suit the exigencies of their false perspective. In the second instance,

they proceeded to paint up the thinly veiled military dictatorships imposed on the people of Italy and France as ~~bourgeois democratic governments or something very close to it.~~ The imperialists have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. By covering up their military dictatorship with a little -- and very little -- democratic veneer, they succeeded in fooling even a few Trotskyists. You cannot fight democratic illusions if you yourself have them. The job of the Trotskyists is not to accept for good coin, the fraudulent democratic facades that cover the military dictatorships. The job of the Trotskyists is to expose this facade and show how behind it stands the military force of the conqueror who denies to the people their right to select governments of their own choosing; to show that the shadow regime is subservient to the conqueror, propped up by Anglo-American imperialism which aims not to liberate, but to oppress.

This false perspective of Morrow has a further implication if it is really drawn to its logical end. If American imperialism has such inexhaustible powers that it can, as he thinks, improve the standard of living in Europe, then of course there exists a certain basis, on however low a foundation, for the establishment of bourgeois democracy in the immediate period ahead. From that we must assume the softening of class conflicts for a period, that the class struggle will be very largely refracted through the parliamentary struggle, that for a time the parliamentary arena will dominate the stage. If that were true, we would have to revise our conception of American imperialism. And of course the Trotskyist movement would have to attune its work to these new conditions -- conditions for a while of slow, painful growth, propaganda, election campaigns, etc., etc.

Morrow apparently draws back and cannot get himself to enunciate this perspective in clear-cut fashion. Despite all the vaporings and demands to provide the European masses with a blueprint, he really does not come to grips with what tasks confront the Trotskyist movement, if this theory of the renascence of bourgeois democracy (with whatever qualifications) is correct; except to mouth a little bit about democratic demands. But this whole question is far broader, deeper, far more profound than that. That is why so many comrades have experienced a feeling of dissatisfaction, of frustration, in studying the Morrow documents. Many ask the question: What is his real criticism; it cannot be the affirmation that democratic demands must be employed in the struggle to rally the masses for revolutionary action. That is in the resolutions, black on white. There is no point in trying to break through a wide open door. No, apparently what is involved here is not a debate over this or that incidental slogan, but a question of perspective, and that has got to be clarified first. Once we are clear on the perspective, the tasks of the Trotskyist movement will fall into their rightful and proper place.

While I am on the subject of democratic demands, let me ask this: Why all this agitation suddenly on democratic demands? Why this insistence to involve our party in this totally artificial debate? We accused Morrow at the Plenum of wanting a blueprint, of trying to draw up a concrete program of action and set of demands for the European proletariat. Here is Morrow's answer to our accusation as given in his speech to the Plenum: (Bulletin #4, pp. 23 and 24) "By a

blueprint is meant an unwarranted attempt to anticipate what concrete situations our European comrades will be faced with, which democratic demands our European comrades should raise at various conjunctures and in what sequence they should raise them. . . Frank said for the Sub-committee that they don't want a blueprint. Neither do I. Their objection is not well taken. Frank said, what is true enough, that the sequence and formulation of democratic demands are things which will have to be left to our European comrades to work out in the heat of battle as they sense the mood of the masses. True enough, but irrelevant to my points on democratic demands. For my points do not at all attempt to anticipate which democratic demands and in what sequence they should raise them, but I simply indicate why the METHOD of democratic and transitional demands will have to be employed under the general conditions which are likely to prevail in Europe in the next immediate period." If that is what Morrow wanted -- an affirmation of the method of fighting for democratic as well as transitional demands, in order to mobilize the masses -- he has got it. This is incorporated in the Plenum resolution, and we have included a section on it in the convention resolution. The clamor for and around and about democratic demands, however, has not ceased, but seems to be growing more insistent.

Today Logan comes forward, speaking presumably for the Morrow position, and presents us with a demand not only for the "method" of democratic and transitional demands (a strange "demand" to be put to our party in 1944) but with a full-fledged program of action, a veritable blueprint, -- with slogans and all -- just how the French, Italian, German and other Trotskyists can win over the masses and make the revolution. Of course, every experienced comrade will simply laugh such blueprints out of court. The attempt is ludicrous. Slogans, especially if we are speaking of democratic, episodic slogans, depend by their nature on the consciousness, the mood of the masses, the flow and tempo of the class struggle, the relationship of forces. That is what determines which slogan is put forward as against another one. That is what determines exactly how the slogan is advanced. Sometimes events alter sharply overnight and the slogan of yesterday must be withdrawn and a new one substituted in its place. What particular slogans to push, to agitate for at a given time, what slogans take precedence over the next -- these are all questions which can be determined fully only by the people involved in the struggle who have the necessary information, can gauge the sentiment of the masses and understand the relationship of the forces that obtain. This question of slogans and demands and immediate programs of action cannot be decided by the American party, much less incorporated by us in resolution form, because we do not have adequate information.

Moreover, we are writing a resolution on the European revolution. We would attempt to sloganeer and write blueprints, we would have to write separate programs of action for a half dozen or a dozen different countries. Because we know that revolutionary developments do not proceed uniformly, that the conditions, tempo of development,

mood of the masses, vary from country to country.

The whole concept of inaugurating a big debate in the United States on which particular democratic slogans our Italian or French co-thinkers should stress, and what weight this or that slogan is to have in their agitation -- that whole concept is false to the bottom and only reveals the presumption, as well as the purely literary approach, of its authors.

In striving to say something new and original on the question of tactics, Logan propounds to us yet another riddle. (We remember only too well the riddle school of politics and politicians). He writes: "The draft resolution speaks of possible bourgeois-democratic regimes in Europe as 'a brief episode in the unfoldment of the revolutionary struggle' (point 77). This is incontestably true if we call 'brief' interludes that may last from a few months to a few years, but from this indisputable fact the draft resolution draws a wrong conclusion; namely, that such regimes do not deserve much attention. As a matter of fact they deserve just six lines of the draft resolution. ...It is precisely during such episodes that the most numerous and important problems of tactics arise. That is why a resolution of the national convention of the SWP should devote more than six lines to them. To limit our attention toward such 'episodes' under the pretext that they are 'brief', of a 'transitional' character, mere exceptions in a general 'pattern', is utter pedantism."

(We pass over the thoroughly dishonest statement that we draw the conclusion "that such regimes do not deserve much attention." Of course we have never said that or implied that. This is simply an example of dishonest argumentation which we in our movement do not practice.) No one is interested whether a problem is dealt with in six or sixty lines in a resolution. What our comrades are interested in is: has it been correctly and adequately dealt with.

Now let us see. The classic example of how to win the masses to the banner of the revolutionary party and how to lead them forward in the struggle for power is the activity of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the 1917 revolution. Trotsky has exhaustively described and analyzed this whole process in his monumental work The History of the Russian Revolution. Our program is built on the program, strategy and tactics of the October revolution. This whole question has been further enriched by the experiences of the past twenty-five years, the Chinese revolution, the Spanish revolution, the events in Germany, France and elsewhere. Our tasks are further clarified by the elaborate and thorough-going foundation program of the Fourth International -- the program of transitional demands -- that is, the tactical program of how to mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle, the slogans to be employed to win the masses to the banner of the Fourth International in this epoch. For years we have been preparing ourselves for the present revolutionary developments. Today, we know, Europe is in a revolutionary ferment.

The job, we would imagine, is to take this rounded program and apply it. This is a strange time to attempt to invent something new. What should the European Trotskyists do to mobilize the masses

for revolutionary action, whether today in the first stage of the European revolution, or later when the class struggle rises to higher ground and possibly interim bourgeois-democratic regimes are set up? Our resolution points out the program and tactics in a broad, general way which our European co-thinkers will have to employ. As for immediate tactics, what immediate slogan to push forward, etc., our resolution says something on this matter also: "Only through the struggle and in the struggle will the Italian revolutionary party grow, learn how to lead the masses and how to conquer. There are no blueprints on how to make a revolution. We do have, however, the program and tactics which brought victory to the Russian revolution. These need to be mastered and correctly applied. What is necessary now is to organize the party and plunge into the battle!"

What different, what new magic prescription do you want to offer? Apparently Morrow and Logan want to say something new, something very original and profound in this sphere. What, they are not sure themselves. There are no cookbooks, however, there are no blueprints on how to mobilize the masses or how to make the revolution. In essence this represents the science and the art of Bolshevik leadership. We have the program and the tactics which brought victory once and can bring victory again. We must only learn to apply them to the concrete situations correctly. And as the great poet Keats wrote: "That's all you know and all you need to know."

Here we can repeat the advice of Trotsky at the time of the crucial events in France in 1938, in his article "The Decisive Hour in France":

"We have not the least intention of offering from afar counsel on tactics to our French friends who find themselves on the scene of action and who can feel much better than we the pulse of the masses. Nevertheless, for all revolutionary Marxists it is now more than ever evident that the only serious and definitive measure for drawing a balance of the forces, among them the willingness of the masses to struggle, is action. Pitiless criticism of the Second and of the Third Internationals has no revolutionary value except to the extent that it aids in mobilizing the advance guard for direct intervention in the events. The fundamental slogans for the mobilization are given in the program of the Fourth International, which has in the present period a more timely character in France than in any other country. On our French comrades there rests an immense political responsibility. To aid the French section of the Fourth International with all our forces and with all our means, moral and material, is the most important and most imperious duty of the International revolutionary vanguard." (Coyoacan D. F., December 14, 1938).

The attempt to create a thoroughly artificial and uncalled-for debate over democratic slogans, the attempt in a thoroughly unwarranted manner to magnify their proper importance in our full program and constantly push them to the forefront as a kind of panacea designed to solve every problem and overcome every difficulty, stems from the completely one-sided, tendentious, arbitrary and therefore thoroughly false theory that ultra-leftism represents the main danger in the Fourth International today. Morrow tells

us (Bulletin No. 4, page 5) "The main danger within the Fourth International appears to me to lie in the direction of ultra-leftism." And of course, as everyone knows, ultra-leftists are opposed to fighting for democratic demands. That is why "it is necessary," according to Morrow, "to emphasize and underline the role of democratic demands."

What is the proof for this amazing theory that in the period of revolutionary upsurge the main danger is ultra-leftism? It is laughable to even talk about it. Proof number one is historical. According to Morrow, "the rich lessons of the first years after the last war" reveal the fact that "the young parties of the Comintern suffered primarily not from opportunism but from ultra-leftism." And we are told that "the same phenomenon is far more likely to confront the Fourth International at the end of this war." History does not confirm this fantastic theory. As a general proposition it is far more correct to say that in the period of revolutionary rise the main danger comes from the opportunist direction. Consider Lenin's own party. In 1917, before Lenin's arrival, virtually the whole Central Committee of the Bolshevik party approved the policy of conciliationism with Menshevism, and only by Lenin's own timely and energetic intervention was the crisis solved and the helm turned toward a correct revolutionary course. A few months later Trotsky was defeated in the Bolshevik fraction on his and Lenin's policy of boycotting the pre-parliament, which caused another minor crisis in the Bolshevik ranks. And then, on the very eve of the revolution, the Bolshevik party was thrown into a new terrible crisis by the crackup of Zinoviev and Kamenev under the pressure of bourgeois public opinion. The 1919 revolution in Hungary was defeated in part because of Bela Kun's policy of conciliation with the Social-Democrats. The young Italian party was unprepared for the critical events of 1920 because the Serrati leadership refused to break with and purge the party of its incorrigible opportunist wing. We can, as a matter of fact, sum up the first years of the Comintern by stating that this period was devoted to a fight for the 21 demands, the fight to purge the parties of opportunist elements and destroy the opportunist tendencies. It was only at the Third Congress of the Comintern, after the first wave of the revolutionary tide had already passed, that the struggle was first launched against the ultra-leftist danger.

Proof number two consists of an "analysis" of the situation inside the Fourth International today. And here again we are treated to a one-sided analysis with the facts arbitrarily selected to fit a pre-conceived theory. We are informed of "the consistently ultra-leftist course of our official British section and its consequent deterioration." And from this evidence the sweeping conclusion is drawn: "Thus the present evidence is that within the International the danger of ultra-leftism is far more likely than the danger of opportunism." How is it, in discussing England, that less than one-half of the situation is described? Why is there no attempt, if England is to be discussed, to discuss the whole English problem as far as the British Trotskyist movement is concerned? As a matter of fact, the more important half of the information has been left out -- the fact that the old WIL leadership, for a number of years resisted international discipline and manifested traits of nationalistic exclusiveness. Today the ultra-leftists represent a truly insignificant tendency inside the fused party. The main problems of the British

Trotskyist movement lie in an entirely different direction.

We are further aware that a group of European comrades submitted to the Fourth International and still support the "Three Theses" (published in the December 1942 F.I.), a thoroughly opportunist, revisionist as well as liquidationist document. Our Cuban section has just recently been guilty of what is, in our judgment, an opportunist error, when it supported, even though critically, Grau San Martin in the recent presidential elections in that country, etc., etc.

To make any definitive judgments today on the varying tendencies within the Fourth International is distinctly premature. And in any case it will never be made in the flippant, irresponsible and one-sided manner attempted by Morrow.

We have always been taught that as a general rule the main danger comes from the opportunist direction in the period of revolutionary rise. Trotsky established in his "Lessons of October" that in every revolutionary crisis, bourgeois public opinion beats down upon the proletarian party and creates a crisis inside the central leadership itself. This, said Trotsky, is an historic law.

The question at hand, however, raised by Morrow, stands on somewhat different ground. When someone proposes that we write a resolution or devote a section of a resolution exorcising a deviationist tendency, then it is not permissible to confine oneself to generalities. One is obliged to tell us where is the danger, what groups or individuals represent it, how have the tendencies manifested themselves. We stand ready at all times to fight real dangers, whether from the left or the right. We will not launch a struggle, however, against dangers that have not yet arisen, but which somebody simply conjures up out of thin air, based on a misreading of the history of the Comintern and a one-sided analysis of the parties of the Fourth International.

Proceeding from our perspective on the death agony of capitalism in Europe, on the predatory counter-revolutionary and tyrannical role of American imperialism, on the clearly revolutionary mood which pervades the masses of Europe and the fact that the European revolution has begun, we are steering the course toward building Trotskyist parties in the very heat of battle. We understand that the class struggle is not about to be softened, nor primarily refracted through parliamentary channels. We know the very contrary is true. The class struggle is growing more fierce. And in the period of revolutionary rise, basing ourselves on the lessons of the October revolution, we stress first and foremost to our European co-thinkers the necessity of unfurling our full banner and stepping forth before the masses as the intransigent fighters for the socialist revolution, for working class internationalism, for the Socialist United States of Europe. We step forth as the most indefatigable builders of the soviets and the boldest fighters for the soviet power. Our transitional program is not of a propagandistic character now, but is invested with immediate burning importance in Europe today. Many of the slogans will unquestionably become slogans of the day and will be taken up by the masses. And of course, of course, the Trotskyists, who aim to be not only propagandists or agitators, but leaders of mass action, will issue at every

turn of the struggle those necessary sharp fighting slogans of an immediate character dictated by the moods of the masses and the needs of the day.

For us it is not a question of speculating whether the process will take months or years. That will be decided only in the struggle and by the struggle. We do not view the European revolution as one gigantic apocalyptic event, which with one smashing blow will finish with capitalism. The European revolution will probably be a more or less long drawn-out process with many initial setbacks, retreats and even defeats. We know full well the military might of American imperialism and what treachery its Stalinist and Social-Democratic agents are capable of. We know all their counter-revolutionary designs. We know they aim to drown the German revolution in its own blood and that they are already proceeding to draw a Cordon Sanitaire around the German nation. But more decisive than their schemes and plots and grandiose plans is the disintegration of capitalism, the melting away of its reserves. Once the inexhaustible power of the proletariat is unleashed, once the proletariat creates a Bolshevik leadership, it will prove mightier than all the foul conspiracies, than all the military prowess of the imperialists, and it will emerge triumphant in the end.

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LETTER FROM CASSIDY

The membership is scarcely encouraged to read the Plenum documents when it finds them preceded by a Political Committee foreword arguing that the documents are not worth studying. Publishing them "only as a concession to Morrow" the Political Committee denies they will help educate the membership. Moreover, they "will confuse more than clarify by cluttering up the discussion with preliminary and tentative documents. . ."

There are a number of very specific reasons for giving the membership the documents. Let me indicate some:

1. The Political Committee's foreword outlines the usual technical procedure by which the National Committee proceeds from preliminary drafts to a final resolution, and then blandly asks; "What political purpose can be served by insisting upon all drafts as well as the final resolution?" As if this case were a mere matter of preliminary drafts discarded in favor of a final one unanimously considered better than the previous drafts! But among these "preliminary drafts" are the Morrow-Morrison amendments which were not considered by their supporters to have been superseded by a better resolution. Moreover, Morrow never accepted the final resolution, but wanted to take the issue to the membership immediately after the Plenum (more accurately, as soon as he recovered from an operation and was able to read the final resolution which a subcommittee issued after the Plenum). In a word, this is not a question of "preliminary" drafts but of opposing viewpoints, a political dispute of the Plenum which can be understood intelligently by the membership only if it studies the Plenum documents, including my Plenum speech.

2. This Plenum dispute still continues; I understand that the Political Committee is presenting to the convention a resolution substantially like its Plenum resolution; certainly the Political Committee has not informed me that we are nearer agreement. From the Militant and the Fourth International it is all too clear to me that at least the dispute on democratic and transitional slogans remains unresolved. Hence I am sure the member who studies the documents will find extremely illuminating the origins of this dispute. In particular (a) That the Political Committee's original resolution contained not one word about democratic and transitional demands. (b) That when this fundamental omission was attacked by Morrow and Morrison, the subcommittee offered as an amendment a quotation from the 1938 Fourth International Program about the relation of democratic and transitional slogans to fundamental program. (c) When Morrow and Morrison argued that a 1938 quotation of that character was no substitute for a 1943 estimation of the need for democratic and transitional demands, the Political Committee's subcommittee introduced a few of Morrow-Morrison's sentences on this question into the final resolution. In Morrow's document to the N.C. of December 1943, he tried to show that the few added sentences did not change the essence of the false methodological approach of the resolution to democratic and transitional demands. How can the membership understand this important dispute without the documents which record it.

3. Finally, the Political Committee's own foreword tells the member that the very same documents which won't educate him nevertheless did, says the Political Committee, serve to educate the N.C. members! The latter, says the foreword, speaking in particular of the P.C.'s subcommittee, "are to be commended rather than condemned for

showing that they had the capacity to learn from the debate of the full Plenum." By all means, let us commend them for what they learned. But please, explain, if you can, why the membership should not also be given the same opportunity to learn from the Plenum documents, instead of being forewarned against them? If P.C. members fell into errors, isn't it likely that some members might fall into the same errors, and that they might learn something from seeing the errors and corrections as they appear in the original documents? For example, Comrades Warde, Frank, and others, in the first two days of the Plenum pronounced the differences to be nothing less than "programmatic", "different perspectives for the epoch" and hence "irreconcilable" but dropped these views, at any rate became silent about them, when Comrade Cannon finally found out the differences were not programmatic, etc. If, in the course of the Plenum N.C. comrades like Warde and Frank could change their views so considerably, certainly the membership should have the opportunity to glean a little from the Plenum documents.

Were the Political Committee to extend hereafter to other similar situations its present objections to publishing the Plenum documents, one would then have to conclude that there are two opposing conceptions of the relation of the N.C. to the party. This is not at all a "Charge of suppressing documents" which the Political Committee's foreword superfluously refutes in advance. It is, rather, a question of the Political Committee's attitude toward the membership.

I wanted these documents to go to the membership immediately after the Plenum. The Political Committee argued against me that the documents should not go to the membership during the time the principals to the dispute would be in prison -- an argument which, if seriously held to, should have led the Political Committee now, too, to refuse my demand for their publication. That argument carried no weight with me because I consider the membership quite capable of discussing the international question in the absence of the principals to the dispute.

The Political Committee's present argument against publishing the Plenum documents indicates a general attitude of opening to the membership's gaze the door of the N.C. only for the display of the N.C.'s final work on a political question. Lest someone insist on misunderstanding, I do not mean that the N.C. should think aloud and take its preliminary debates before the membership. I mean that when the N.C. does conclude its debate on an important political question, the membership has a right to -- and needs for its education -- not only the final document but also the documents, or a summary of them, which will show the membership how the N.C. arrived at its position. Again lest someone insist on misunderstanding, I am not proposing that on all conceivable questions the membership be given the subject matter with which the P.C. and N.C. works. Always there are organizational and personnel questions which remain and should remain exclusively within the N.C., and this is usually advisable also in the case of minor political issues. All I insist on is that on important political questions, and especially when they are disputed, the membership be given the important documents.

This criterion certainly applies to the documents which I have insisted on having published. Even more certainly, every member can judge this for himself by conscientiously studying the documents and seeing whether or not he does not then have a clearer conception of the dispute.

October 8, 1944

COMMENTS ON THE LETTER FROM JAMES T. FARRELL

By Harry Frankel

I should like to bring a few points to the attention of the party in connection with the letter of James T. Farrell objecting to two articles in our press. (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI; No. 6). I need deal only with the attacks on our review of Shachtman's book, "The Struggle for the New Course", that appeared in the F.I., since Farrell's remarks on Comrade Hansen's have already been taken up.

If the charges against the review of Shachtman's book are reduced to their essence, they constitute an accusation of demagoguery. It should be made absolutely clear that we reject such methods of struggle. We reject demagoguery because the demagogue disarms the party, depriving it of the proper principled arguments, which are the weapons of Marxists. The demagogue provides us with treacherous weapons which will explode in our hands at the first encounter. That is why the demagogue is the enemy of the party.

Our press is written and edited with that injunction in mind. The review of Shachtman's book is no exception. Not one word of the review need be altered to make it comply with the requirements of principled polemic. As for the harshness of the "attack", any improvement that the article requires, and it could stand many, would be in the direction of increasing the hostility and irreconcilability of our attack against this most recent and least original school of revisionism as represented by Shachtman.

I have read and re-read Farrell's letter with care, but I cannot find in it any support for his attack on the review. Farrell, apparently, read the review with his political eye closed, and his subjective, emotional eye open. That is the only way I can interpret his avoidance of the main political points of the article, and pre-occupation with secondary, insignificant points.

For example: The review opens with the point that, in his edition of the "New Course", Shachtman makes an unprincipled attempt to use Trotsky's writings as a vehicle for an anti-Trotskyist, anti-Marxist position on the Soviet Union. What other significance can the linking of Trotsky and Shachtman in one volume have? But Farrell detours just before coming to this point and attacks us wildly for referring to a "new" edition of "The New Course", construing this in some way as an attack on Shachtman for publishing a pirated edition of the book! If Farrell will permit me to explain; to publish "The New Course" is no crime; to publish it together with Shachtman's attack on Trotskyism is charlatanism.

Farrell makes a similar detour on his second point. In our review we develop the point that Shachtman, in writing about the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union, chose as his springboard one of the very few of Trotsky's writings on the Russian question which could not by political and even by chronological necessity (it was written in 1923) present the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet Union. We point

out that Shachtman should attempt to refute "The Revolution Betrayed", or "The Soviet Union and the Fourth International", or even to review "In Defense of Marxism", which he has never done. Farrell seizes upon our mention of "The Revolution Betrayed" with the shout that Shachtman could not republish it since the publication rights are owned by a bourgeois firm!

Copyrights are not involved in this matter. How can Farrell replace the main political point with such a technicality? If Shachtman undertakes to revise Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union, it is incumbent upon him to answer the main works dealing with that analysis, and take them as his point of departure. Farrell might have noticed that we mention two other of Trotsky's writings in addition to "The Revolution Betrayed". One of them was published by us recently. All Shachtman need do is review it.

We are told that Shachtman is prevented from replying to Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union as it is presented in his many books, articles and resolutions because . . . Doubleday Doran holds publication rights to one of them! No, that is false. Shachtman's sidestepping on this matter is part of his renegacy; his desire to hide behind Trotsky's name while betraying Trotsky's ideas, as so many renegades before him have attempted to do with Marx and Lenin. Our point here is scrupulously principled, and exposes the Shachtmanite unprincipledness.

I must say that I read with indignation Farrell's misinterpretation of the review in his third point. Let me repeat his words; "Also, Harry Frankel would have us believe that in the United States, Max Shachtman has abandoned the Marxist conception of a trade union; in other words, that he is a scab and a strike breaker. I wonder who will believe that?"

How can Farrell give this false twist to our characterization of Shachtman's venture into the field of the trade union analogy? The review says nothing of the sort. It is clearly stated that Shachtman adopts an "ultra-leftist" criterion for the trade union movement to justify his arbitrary normative method in determining the nature of the Soviet Union. If the Shachtmanites are scabs and strikebreakers thus far it is in relation to the Soviet Union.

Piling one final error on all the others, Farrell adds that Trotsky made an "important concession" to Bruno, Shachtman's revisionist predecessor. Trotsky conceded, he says, that history "might prove Bruno to have been correct" in his theory of bureaucratic collectivism, and I should have discussed this. But Trotsky discussed it himself, denying categorically that he had made any new "concessions". He explains this fully, pointing out that; "Marxists have formulated an incalculable number of times the alternatives; either socialism or a return to barbarism".

The claim that Trotsky had made concessions to the Bruno type notions, concessions which amounted to a "revision" of Marxism, was one of the innumerable phantasmagoria conjured up by the Shachtmanites during the factional struggle of 1939-40.

Answering them, Trotsky wrote:

"If we are to speak of a revision of Marx, it is in reality the revision of those comrades who project a new type of state, 'non-bourgeois' and 'non-worker'. Because the alternative developed by me leads them to draw their own thoughts up to their logical conclusion, some of these critics, frightened by the conclusions of their own theory, accuse me. . . of revising Marxism. I prefer to think that it is simply a friendly jest." (Page 31, "In Defense of Marxism").

It is Shachtman who makes all the concessions to the Bruno type notions that Trotsky discussed. We bear no responsibility whatsoever for that.

Such are the points upon which Farrell bases his many epithets against the review. Those who can find a basis for all his epithets in his arguments could also succeed in erecting a building on sand piles. Such serious charges demand more serious proof.

Among the most amazing aspects of Farrell's letter is his interpretation of our branding Shachtmanism for what it is as an attempt to besmirch Shachtman's "personal character". "Unjust attacks on him and his character", "strip his adversary of all. . . sincerity" are among his comments. We can assure Farrell that there are very few things that interest us less than Shachtman's "character". There is not one argument in the review that is not aimed at the political position and political methodology of the Shachtmanites. Can it be that his too personal view of the polemic caused Farrell to miss the main political points? We fear that is what happened.

For non-political, personal denigration, Farrell will have to consult the writings of Shachtman. In answering my review, this poor slandered character makes reference more than once to my youth, an indubitable fault, but one which I hope to correct in time. Will Farrell write a letter protesting such arguments "ad hominem". . . ?

Farrell advises me to reread Trotsky's "New Course" in order to learn more about the "methods of Leninism". (How can Farrell forget that Trotsky characterized Shachtmanism just as the review did, only far more harshly?) I as well as all of us have much to learn in this field. But I can assure Farrell that, study as I may, I will not find conciliationism towards revisionists among the methods of Leninism.

During the early days of the Comintern, Trotsky once wrote in July, 1921, the following words of advice to a young French party that had the problem of dealing with a revisionist grouping:

"A split is a very, very serious matter, and once we have recognized the inevitability of split, it is necessary that the masses should understand its full significance. It is necessary mercilessly to expose the policies of Dissidents (the minority followers of Longuet who split in 1919 -- H.F.). It is necessary to make their leaders and

their press ludicrous and hateful in the eyes of the masses."

Not a "comradely discussion" but a ruthless struggle; not a polite polemic but a head-on attack to make the opponents "ludicrous and hateful" -- such was Trotsky's advice.

Are these not authentic words of advice as to the methods of Leninism? There is no more Leninist way to deal with splitters and revisionists.

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