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## C O N T E N T S

A BALANCE-SHEET OF THE DISCUSSION ON EUROPE

By Felix Morrow

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## A BALANCE-SHEET OF THE DISCUSSION ON EUROPE

By Felix Morrow

The December 1944 issue of Fourth International is an ominous landmark in the history of our party. It purports to acquaint its readers with the nature and the results of the political dispute at the Eleventh Convention in November. Actually, however, the account which it gives is so hopelessly inaccurate that it is necessary to go back to the documents and remind the party of what really has happened.

The political dispute began at the October 1943 plenum of the National Committee, when the Political Committee presented a draft resolution on the European situation to which a minority objected. The three principal items objected to are listed below and under each I indicate its final fate:

1. The theory of "Franco-type governments" as the sole method to be employed by U.S. imperialism and the European bourgeoisie in ruling Europe. On this the minority stated: "That the draft resolution erred in excluding the possibility of the use of bourgeois-democratic methods by the European bourgeoisie and its American imperialist masters; they would in all probability attempt to stem the European revolution not only by the use of military and fascist dictatorships but also where necessary by the use of bourgeois democracy." A few sentences from the minority amendments were included in the final text of the Plenum resolution, but side by side with them remained the contrary view of the majority's main formulations. In September 1944, the Political Committee issued its draft resolution on the same subject for the coming Eleventh Convention; this again enunciated the theory of "naked military dictatorship" as the Allies' sole "pattern" for ruling Europe. The minority offered amendments to delete this theory. Until the very eve of the convention the Political Committee stood its ground. But then it presented a series of "clarifying and literary amendments" which deleted the formulations on this question which the minority had proposed to delete. Thus came substantial agreement between minority and majority.

2. The failure of the Political Committee to say one word, in its draft Plenum resolution, about the method of democratic and transitional demands, i.e., the method of winning the majority of the workers and peasants to the revolutionary party. Amendments to rectify this omission were introduced by the minority. Instead of accepting them, the Political Committee introduced into the final Plenum resolution the statement that the 1938 program of the Fourth International "makes clear the value and necessity, as well as the limitations and subordinate character, of democratic slogans as a means of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary action."

This formulation was confusing because (1) it did not affirm the method of democratic and transitional slogans -- the method includes both and does not counterpose one to the other -- as the method of winning a majority of the masses and (2) it appeared to minimize

the role of democratic demands in the coming period in Europe. Hence the dispute on this question continued after the Plenum. The Political Committee a year later corrected its position substantially, when its draft convention resolution dropped the Plenum resolution's characterization of "the limitations and subordinate character" of democratic slogans and instead spoke of a "bold program of transitional and democratic demands" as the method "to rally the masses for the revolutionary struggle." The one concrete democratic slogan proposed by the minority -- for Italy; immediate proclamation of the democratic republic -- was rejected by the majority; but the resolution took no position on the question. All that is in the final resolution is the formally correct generalization on the role of democratic and transitional demands. So far as the resolution is concerned, therefore, nothing remained in it of the original dispute on this question.

3. The third important dispute which originated at the October 1943 Plenum was formulated as follows by the minority; "That the draft resolution erred in minimizing the Stalinist danger; we must recognize that the victories of the Red Army have temporarily strengthened the prestige of Stalinism; and we must, therefore, include in the resolution a warning of the very real danger of Stalinism to the European revolution." Rejecting this view, the majority persisted in repeating in the final Plenum resolution its original formulations; a whole section on "The Significance of the Soviet Victories" which saw in them only progressive consequences; and a condemnation of "defeatists" who "foresee only a repetition of the Spanish events in Stalin's political maneuvers in Europe" whereas the majority proclaimed "the vast difference in conditions between the Spanish revolution and the coming European revolution." But a year later the Political Committee had to retreat; its September 1944 draft convention resolution abandoned the formulations of the Plenum and -- as the minority had originally proposed -- warns of the "unmistakable danger signals that Stalin is prepared to repeat his hangman's work in Spain on a continental scale." Thus this dispute, too, was resolved.

Such, in brief, were the three principal questions in dispute, and such their final outcome. Most of this article will be given over to a much more detailed exposition of these three questions and to documentary proof of what was the position of majority and minority on them. The aim of the foregoing preliminary outline of them is to enable the reader first to understand the character of the December 1944 issue of Fourth International.

#### "Fourth International" on the Convention Vote

An article "by the editors of Fourth International" informs readers that the resolution on Europe was adopted "by a vote of 51 to 5." Such is the wording in the December 1944 issue, repeated again in the January 1945 issue.

The minutes of the convention show that the minority delegates introduced and voted for a motion in two parts; (1) for the minority amendments and (2) for the resolution. Before they came to

the convention the minority delegates were prepared, once the minority amendments were disposed of, whether accepted or defeated, to vote for the resolution. They were ready to do so because, as Comrade Logan, the author of the minority convention amendments wrote, in presenting them to the Internal Bulletin in October: "It must be clear that there is, between the writers of the draft resolution and me, no fundamental disagreement about the strategic perspectives for Europe. . . True enough, the future may show that the present differences cover deeper and more fundamental differences. But, at the present stage, my aim is to straighten up and correct the draft resolution, not to supersede it by a new draft. . . We are only at the very beginning of the greatest revolutionary crisis in history. We will follow its development from month to month, from week to week. Soon our European comrades will help us more and more in this work. We will develop, refine and, if necessary, correct our forecasts. . . That is why, now, at the beginning of such a period, I have no intention of excessively sharpening the political differences with the writers of the draft resolution."

When Comrade Logan wrote this, the original differences on the role of democratic and transitional demands, and on the Stalinist danger, had been resolved by the majority's change in position from the final Plenum resolution to the draft convention resolution. But there still remained the difference on the theory of "naked military dictatorship" as the "pattern" for Europe.

At the convention, however, the last-minute amendments of the Political Committee took over from the minority amendments the proposed deletions which removed this theory from the resolution. So that all three of the original differences were resolved.

Under these conditions, how could the minority delegates have voted against the resolution? They had the satisfaction of knowing that their fight had not been in vain. Their principal amendments had been incorporated in the resolution. That the majority leaders did not admit their change of position bodes ill for the future health of the party; such methods miseducate and confuse the party membership. The resolution itself suffered from such methods; while yielding on the disputed questions its authors retained in it many an ambiguity and nuance of their old position. Nevertheless, read as it stands, the final convention resolution had obviously dropped the disputed positions of the Plenum resolution. Even had the minority delegates desired to accentuate political differences, there was no remaining basis on which they could vote against the final resolution.

What is particularly outrageous about Fourth International's report of the minority vote on the resolution is that the minority had to fight a long battle at the convention for the right to vote for the resolution. The Political Committee attempted to have the vote occur only on a motion endorsing the line of the resolution and condemning the "line" of the (minority) Morrow and Logan documents. But the minority delegates voted only for their own motion -- for the minority amendments and for the resolution. And then what the majority floorleaders failed to gain at the convention they stated as fact in the pages of Fourth International.

A "Documentary" Yet False Picture of the Dispute

In the December Fourth International documents of both sides are printed; the reader may well believe he is seeing both sides of the dispute. But the documents of the majority are the unanimously adopted final convention resolution of November 1944 and a speech by E. R. Frank, spokesman of the National Committee, in defense of that resolution in its draft form; while the minority document printed side by side with these is my December 1943 criticism of the October 1943 Plenum resolution. True, my article of December 1943 is relevant to a complete understanding of the dispute which, as I have explained, originated at that Plenum; that is why (originally it had been given only to National Committee members) I insisted on its being given to the membership. But my article is relevant when one reads it in conjunction with the October 1943 Plenum resolution which it criticised; it belongs to that stage of the dispute. Without a word of explanation, however, the December 1944 issue of Fourth International counterposes my 1943 article to the final convention resolution of November 1944. The reader is not told that this resolution of a year later does not repeat the errors which I objected to in the 1943 Plenum resolution. Thus the puzzled reader finds me complaining about things which he does not find in the final convention resolution. What is going on here? the reader must wonder. He is provided with an answer by the article of the editors and by the speech of Comrade Frank, the reporter for the National Committee. These two items tell the reader that behind the minority's ostensible position lie far more deepgoing differences; the minority has "an exaggerated appraisal of the role of bourgeois democracy and its potentialities," a false economic theory on which it bases this appraisal, it thinks U.S. imperialism has "inexhaustible powers," it has been fooled by the democratic veneer of the imperialists, etc., etc.

None of this nonsense would have been at all plausible had the Political Committee published alongside the final convention resolution a document of the minority corresponding to that stage of the dispute. Such a document was at hand; the speech to the convention by the reporter for the minority, Comrade A. Stein. Read together with the final resolution, Comrade Stein's speech would have made the whole situation understandable; for it dealt with the last-minute amendments introduced by the Political Committee and showed how, far from being "clarifying and literary amendments" as the Political Committee claimed, these had deleted from the draft resolution the principal remaining items objected to by the minority. Read in conjunction with the final resolution, Comrade Stein's speech would have made clear to the reader that there was now substantial agreement and how it had come about. But it was not published.

Soon after our return from prison, Comrade Goldman protested in the Political Committee at the way in which the minority position had thus been presented in Fourth International. We proposed that Comrade A. Stein's minority report to the convention, which should have been published in the December issue, be at least published now.

We were voted down. E. R. Frank stated the grounds; the majority has the right to choose which documents of the minority shall be published when the dispute is made known to the outside public. This is a thoroughly bureaucratic proposition; to refuse a minority the right to choose by which documents it shall be represented. Even, however, if Comrade Frank's proposition were correct, it certainly does not justify the majority's counterposing its October-November 1944 documents to a minority document of December 1943 and claiming to the public that this gives an accurate picture of the position of both sides at the November 1944 convention. Every thinking party member, no matter where he stood in the original dispute, must condemn this procedure.

We come now to the article of the editors on the convention. Ostensibly it is a summary of the course of the dispute since the October 1943 Plenum. Yet it fails to mention the three principal questions which were in dispute! Instead, it adduces "three main flaws" in the Morrow article of December 1943 and alleges that these were the issues in dispute, although, as we shall see, none of them are central to the issues which actually were disputed.

Before we can show this, however, we must return to the real disputes, demonstrate by adequate documentation what these were, and how they were resolved.

#### Our Differences in Method

In addition, however, we shall attempt to indicate something more; the very real differences in method between the majority and minority. In the name of Marxian orthodoxy the majority leaders attempt to stick as close as possible to the letter of programmatic documents and are quick to call the minority heretics and seekers after novelty. In actual fact most of what the minority had to say is part of the written tradition of the Trotskyist movement, though the majority leaders seem blissfully unaware of this material. But the test of Marxists comes precisely where the writings of our masters do not provide us with a ready-made answer. "We have a finished program and all we need to do is to apply it," cry the majority leaders. But is our program finished for our time, any more than the program of revolutionary Marxism was finished in 1870, 1914, 1923? Every situation has some element of novelty in it, some more than others, so that they are never quite like the preceding situations -- precisely this process is the material basis for the never-ending growth of the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism. This does not mean that the fundamentals of our program change; they are the distilled essence of nearly a century of the revolutionary movement. But one must know how to distinguish between what is fundamental and what, in a programmatic document, is actually not programmatic at all but is merely a prediction concerning future events and which obviously must be tested and corrected in later years. First one must look at the present reality and then see how far and precisely how it relates to our previous programmatic documents; this is the Marxist method. The majority leaders do the opposite; repeat by rote without regard to the present reality "fundamentals" which often are not programmatic propositions at all but merely earlier predictions. In the following pages we shall see grotesque examples of this. We shall see, too,

propositions proclaimed as the very essence of Marxism which, upon examination, turn out to be altogether alien to the Marxist method. Let the reader attentively study what follows and then let him decide who are the true heirs of the Marxist tradition: the quotation-hurlers and heresy-hunters or those who try in all modesty to do for our time what our predecessors in the Marxist theoretical tradition did for their time.

### 1. THE THEORY OF "FRANCO-TYPE" OR "NAKED MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS"

What next in Europe? This was the question we had to try to answer as we prepared for the October 1943 Plenum. Enjoying far more fortunate conditions than our European comrades, we were in a position to offer them our considered opinion of the developing situation and their tasks in it.

The Allies were already in southern Italy. Soon they would be in France. Slowly but surely the continent was being wrested from the Nazis. What kind of governments would replace the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian regimes as the Nazis were driven out of one country after another? In what kind of arena would the European proletariat have to conduct its struggle in the coming period?

Trotsky, Italian and German comrades and others had often analyzed the question, what would happen when fascism collapsed in Italy and Germany. Their answer, in brief, had been: unless the Fourth International parties were able to grow into great mass parties under the extraordinarily difficult conditions of totalitarian oppression, the overthrow or collapse of fascism would be followed by a period of bourgeois democracy. That is, the transition from fascism to the Soviet republic would be direct or almost direct only if the revolutionary party had already become the principal leader of the masses. But if the revolutionary party were small, then the stormy rise of the workers' movement, under the limitations imposed by the leadership of the reformist parties, would go no further in the first period than to destroy the fascist dictatorship and establish bourgeois democracy. In the bourgeois-democratic arena the revolutionary party would be able to struggle for the majority of the masses. Victory would bring the Soviet republic, decisive defeat would eventually lead to the collapse of bourgeois democracy again into one or another form of military or totalitarian dictatorship, as had happened to the Weimar Republic.

The foregoing theory was based on the assumption that fascism would be overthrown by the internal forces within the country, that is, directly by the masses. Before that happened, however, the war came; and as it actually turned out fascism collapsed in Italy, and the semi-totalitarian Vichy regime collapsed in France, under the conditions of military defeat and occupation by the victorious armies. Hence the workers' movement had no sooner risen to its feet and shown its power than it felt the heavy weight of the Allied armies.

What would be the effect of the presence of the Allied armies? Would the collapse of fascism lead now, as it would have under peacetime conditions, to a period of bourgeois democracy? (It was clear

that the other variant, mass parties of the Fourth International previously arising under fascism, had not happened.) Or would the Allied armies make that impossible?

The answer of the majority of the Political Committee was that bourgeois democracy was impossible, not only because of the intent of the Allied armies -- primarily U.S. imperialism -- but also because of the stage of economic decline which Europe had reached. The majority's draft resolution stated:

"...Today the deals with Darlan and Badoglio outline in precise terms the counter-revolutionary policies and imperialist aims of Anglo-American capitalism...

"...This policy has been climaxed by the deal with Marshal Badoglio and King Victor Emmanuel...Roosevelt and Churchill are using their armies and resources to prop up this military-monarchist dictatorship, detested and distrusted by the Italian masses...

"The policies pursued by the Allied leaders in North Africa, Sicily and Italy demonstrate that their backing of the ultra-reactionary forces are neither accidental deviations nor 'military expedients,' but flow from a calculated plan which is dictated by the interests and necessities of the Anglo-American imperialists. They provide a preview of the Anglo-American program in Europe. These capitalist powers aim to impose new forms of servitude upon the European peoples. They propose to crush all manifestations of revolutionary independence by the European workers and to set up military-monarchist-clerical dictatorships under the tutelage and hegemony of Anglo-American Big Business...

"The Allies cannot afford to sanction the slightest democracy in Europe...Roosevelt and Churchill understand that it is not in the cards to establish stable 'democratic' capitalist governments in Europe today. Given free scope, given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require overly much time to organize its revolutionary party, and to overthrow all of its capitalist oppressors. The choice, from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view, is a Franco-type government or the spectre of the socialist revolution."

And further on;

"But Stalin cannot turn back the wheel of history. It is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar Republics in Europe."

Such was the view of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy in Europe enunciated by the Political Committee.



It should be noted that this theory consists of the following two quite different ingredients:

(1) Military dictatorship as the subjective aim of the imperialists; an aim which they "cannot afford" to replace by that of bourgeois democracy because "given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require overly much time to organize its revolutionary party, and to overthrow all of its capitalist oppressors."

(2) "It is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar Republics in Europe." This is so because, the majority explained, the economic preconditions for bourgeois democracy no longer exist in Europe.

In contradiction to this theory, however, another paragraph stated: "While interim regimes modelled after the Weimar Republic may be set up here and there as by-products of uncompleted revolutionary movements, they must by their very nature prove short-lived."

Commenting on this contradiction, I stated at the Plenum:

"Need I point out, comrades, that 'short-lived' Weimar Republics are still Weimar Republics, and that one cannot assert that Weimar Republics are impossible and also assert that there may be Weimar Republics? Both these propositions cannot be true; one or the other must be false." (Internal Bulletin Vol. VI, No. 4, p 26.)

#### The Minority Criticism of the Theory

Let us now show what is wrong with the two separate ingredients of the theory of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy in Europe.

(1) Military dictatorship as the sole aim of the Allies.  
On this my report to the Plenum stated:

"It is a half-truth when the resolution states: '...Given free scope, given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require overly much time to organize its revolutionary party, and to overthrow all of its capitalist oppressors.' And this half-truth becomes a falsehood when the sentence immediately following it states: 'The choice, from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view, is a Franco-type government or the spectre of the socialist revolution.' False because the two choices are not the only ones to which capitalist strategy is limited. Roosevelt-Churchill are unfortunately much more flexible than are the writers of the resolution; the imperialists even at this moment are keeping Franco's democratic opponents on the leash for use tomorrow.

"The writers of the resolution appear to forget the two-sided character of bourgeois democracy. One of its sides is that which they state in rather glowing terms when they say in paragraph 31 that the democratic republic means for the workers that they are 'given free scope, given their democratic rights...'. But there is the other side of bourgeois democracy; the way in which it can for a time breed illusions that the democratic republic is a sufficient framework in which to achieve the demands of the masses and even to achieve socialism -- illusions which unfortunately will be fostered by the fact that the principal parties of the masses in the immediate future will be reformist parties and the further fact that these masses in most cases have had little or no experience with bourgeois democracy during the past generation or two.

"Under the conditions we have indicated, U.S. imperialism will proceed to make use in Europe of this second side of bourgeois democracy and in spite of the fact that bourgeois democracy also has the other side which favors the masses." (Internal Bulletin Vol. VI, No. 4, p 29.)

2. "It is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar Republics in Europe." What was the Weimar Republic? A highly unstable bourgeois democracy, torn by conflict throughout its fifteen years of existence. Why its instability? Because the classical economic foundations of bourgeois democracy -- economic progress, rising standard of living, free competitive capitalism -- had given way to monopoly capitalism and economic decline in Europe. This process has continued. Has anything else been added to it so that one can now say that even Weimar Republics are now impossible? No, nor did the majority offer any claim that something new has happened since 1914 in the economic process of capitalism which could justify its denial of the possibility of bourgeois democracy.

Even had something else happened in economics, it would still be absurd to argue, in the name of Marxism no less, that bourgeois democracy is now impossible. As Lenin had to explain more than once to ultra-leftists, it is true that bourgeois democracy was more stable and more easily achieved under competitive capitalism but that does not make it impossible under monopoly capitalism (imperialism); it simply makes it more difficult and more unstable. As I put it at the Plenum, arguing against the majority's proposition that it is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar Republics in Europe because "the wheel of history" cannot be turned back;

"What is true, and we all agree on it, is that the further unfolding of capitalism has caused the disappearance of certain economic preconditions on which bourgeois democracy was based during the Nineteenth Century.

"But the disappearance of certain economic pre-conditions does not also mean the disappearance of political preconditions. The existence of workers' parties leading great masses is a precondition of bourgeois democracy in our epoch, and is a precondition which does not disappear because economic pre-conditions of bourgeois democracy have disappeared.

"In other words, the 'wheel of history' cannot be turned back in economics, but it can be 'turned back' in politics. True, only for a time, only under conditions of instability, etc. But we are Marxists and not Hegelians, and where Hegel was only interested in epochs and types and could dismiss a period of bourgeois democracy of short duration as being 'unreal' and hence non-existent, we Marxists should know that our understanding of the reality and existence and importance of a three-months' duration of a democratic republic may well be decisive for the future of the revolution." (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 4, p 27.)

Thus neither the economic nor the political ingredients of the majority theory of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy in Europe could stand the test of analysis.

Yet most of the majority formulations cited above remained in the text of the final Plenum resolution. True, some sentences from the contrary view of the minority amendments were also inserted, producing a contradiction between the two elements. The dominant theme, however, remained the theory of "Franco-type" governments.

Likewise the Political Committee retained this theory\* in its draft resolution for the November 1944 convention. The relevant paragraphs will be cited below, when we show what finally happened to them.

#### The Dispute on the de Gaulle and Bonomi Governments

Meanwhile, the first Badoglio cabinet, unsupported by any of the anti-fascist parties, had given way to the second Badoglio cabinet backed by the six-party coalition, then Badoglio had been ousted altogether. The Allies had driven the Nazis and Vichy from France and the de Gaulle government, including the Communist and Socialist parties, was installed. Already at the October 1943 Plenum the character of the Italian and Free French governments had been a sharply disputed issue. This dispute continued during the pre-convention discussion. The one exception which the majority leaders had allowed to their theory of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy, namely that "interim regimes modelled after the Weimar Republic may be set up here and there as by-products of uncompleted revolutionary movements," obviously did not yet apply to France and Italy, where the

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\*More accurately, it replaced "Franco-type" by "naked military dictatorship." I reserve for another occasion a discussion of the majority's failure to distinguish between a Franco (i.e. fascist) government, the various forms of Bonapartism, and "naked military dictatorship."

mass movement could not be said to have risen to revolutionary heights. So the majority leaders held on to the position that the de Gaulle and Bonomi regimes were military dictatorships.

The firmness with which this position was advanced, is indicated by the "speech delivered in the name of the National Committee of the SWP at the New York Membership meeting, October 4, 1944," by E. R. Frank (December 1944 Fourth International.) His argument merits examining at some length not only for the documentation of the majority position, but also as an example of the false method of the majority. Comrade Frank says:

"Now some comrades have informed us 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. 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 prerequisite of a bourgeois democratic regime or any other kind of independent 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 hand-picked. 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 the 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?"

E. R. Frank's method in the above paragraph can only be described as idealistic. Instead of examining the living process, its movement and direction, he sets up normative categories -- sovereignty, parliament, elections, i.e. categories derived from certain periods in the history of bourgeois democracy -- and anything which does not fit in with his eternal categories, he refuses to recognize as bourgeois democracy. The actual history of bourgeois democracy is an extraordinarily varied kaleidoscope of changing forms. The Marxist who understands this has no difficulty in identifying tendencies away from, tendencies toward bourgeois democracy and the very different forms which bourgeois democracy takes in various countries today. But with Frank's idealistic method, it is impossible to move one step.

#### A Criticism of Comrade Frank's Categories

Frank's first category is sovereignty, which is defined as not existing when a government "rules by authority of the military forces of the foreign conqueror, whose troops are stationed in the

country." Where did E. R. Frank find in the Marxist tradition any warrant that such sovereignty is "the first prerequisite of a bourgeois democratic regime"? Consider the case of defeated Germany after World War I; Allied troops occupied the Rhineland and nothing prevented them from occupying the whole country as well; an Allied Control Commission exercised the power of veto over the acts of the German government. Nevertheless, no Marxist at the time found it difficult to recognize that the Germany thus oppressed by the Allies was a bourgeois democracy.

Can anyone seriously assert today that the de Gaulle government exercises less sovereignty than the German government of 1919? On the other hand, we will grant that the Bonomi regime -- even after its latest grant of powers by the Allies -- exercises less sovereignty than the 1919 German government; but this quantitative difference is not a qualitative one between Italy 1945 and Germany 1919. Is it not clear that the category of sovereignty, which Comrade Frank adduces as decisive in determining whether a government is a bourgeois democracy, is not decisive, and that the real as distinct from the formal sovereignty of a government may be extremely limited and yet that government may be a bourgeois democracy?

"Secondly," says Frank, "the cabinets are hand-picked. There is no parliament and there are no elections."

Comrade Frank's absurd argument forces us to repeat the ABC's of Marxism. In April 1931, King Alfonso fled and a republican cabinet was set up, "hand-picked." Did we have to wait for parliamentary elections to determine that this was a bourgeois democratic government? In February 1917, Prince Lvov hand-picked a cabinet which did not even abandon the attempt to continue the Czarist succession... But do we need to continue listing the numerous governments which have thus arisen, before and after 1917, as the aftermath of military defeat or coups d'etat or political revolution, and which it used to be ABC Marxism to identify as bourgeois democratic?

Comrade Frank adduces the "Marxist" categories of sovereignty and elections, but fails to say one word about the category which stares one unavoidably in the face when one looks at the de Gaulle and Bonomi regimes: the category of participation in or support of the government by the workers' and bourgeois-democratic parties which represent a majority of the politically active population. Comrade Frank triumphantly points out that the existence of some democratic rights does not make a regime a bourgeois democracy; "Even under blood-thirsty Czarism," he points out, "the Bolsheviks were able to publish for a time a legal daily newspaper," etc. Quite true. But the Czarist government, Frank fails to point out, ruled without the support of the parties representing the majority.

And then Comrade Frank tries a bit of sleight-of-hand: "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." True, every Bonapartist regime balances itself between the two conflicting forces. What is more, almost every regime in the world today shows very strong Bonapartist tendencies;

Roosevelt and Churchill's regimes little less so than de Gaulle's. That, however, has not led us to denying that Roosevelt and Churchill's regimes are bourgeois democracies. Bonapartist tendencies everywhere are making great inroads into the democratic content of bourgeois democracy; nevertheless Bonapartist tendencies and bourgeois democracy are not mutually exclusive. The bourgeois-democratic character of the de Gaulle regime flows from the fact that the "left-wing organizations" on which de Gaulle "rests" represent the overwhelming majority of the population. Comrade Frank's sleight-of-hand cannot get him around this simple fact, that Bonapartist tendencies in a bourgeois democracy are not at all the same thing as a Bonapartist regime.

To look through our press during the past year and more is a sad experience in the lamentable results of the false method typified by Comrade Frank. Trotskyism means the most attentive analysis of the significance of changes in the composition of capitalist governments. One need only recall, during the German crisis of 1931-'32, Trotsky's analysis of the significance of the difference between Bruening's first and second cabinets, between the latter and Schleicher's succeeding cabinet, between that and Von Papen's cabinet. In those days too there were people who condemned Trotsky's method, called it a glorification of bourgeois democracy and proclaimed it much more revolutionary to shout that all these cabinets were one and the same fascism. In those days, however, all those who called themselves Trotskyists knew that this ultra-leftist nonsense of the Stalinists was a mortal danger to genuinely revolutionary tactics. During the last year, however, in the name of Trotskyism, our press has found no difference, for example, between Badoglio's first cabinet -- a military dictatorship supported by none of the anti-fascist parties -- and Badoglio's second cabinet which was constituted with the support of the majority parties; nor between the first Badoglio cabinet and the two Bonomi cabinets. Likewise our press found no difference between the first Papandreou cabinet, which included the EAM, and the second which did not. And so on. Everything that has happened simply served as the occasion for repeating the false formula of the Plenum resolution: "The choice, from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view, is a Franco-type government or the spectre of the socialist revolution."

As I wrote on July 23, 1944, from Sandstone, in protest against the June 10 editorial in the Militant on "Allied Plans in Europe", which for the nth time repeated this "Franco-type" government formula:

"Why, let the Polcom explain why, it must cling to this demonstrably false formula. Does it make its proponents more revolutionary? On the contrary, the formula fails to prepare our comrades (if our European comrades took it seriously) for the revolutionary struggle against bourgeois democracy, which bids fair to be the main problem in Europe, rather than the main problem alleged by Polcom, that of 'Franco-type governments.' And as bourgeois democracy comes to the fore, we seem to be in the impossible position of having staked our fate on the prediction that capitalism will stand or fall in defense of 'France-type governments'. Would it were so! That capitalism had only this feeble weapon in its arsenal! But it is not

so, and we must speedily learn to analyze correctly the arsenal of the class enemy."

The foregoing documentation should be sufficient to make clear beyond any possibility of distortion that the dispute on the question of bourgeois democracy concerned the majority theory of "naked military dictatorship" and its denial of the possibility of bourgeois democracy. Now let us see what happened to that theory.

### "Clarifying and Literary Amendments"

Two or three days before the November convention the Political Committee issued a series of amendments to its draft resolution. At the convention, where the delegates saw these amendments for the first time, and afterward also, the Political Committee maintained that these were merely "clarifying and literary amendments." Let us see.

The principal amendments order the deletion of the following underlined material;

Deletion from Paragraph 49: the Allied "program...propping up reactionary dictatorial regimes. The word "subservient" is put in instead, as the minority amendments proposed.

Deletion from Paragraph 73: 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." This deletion had been proposed by the minority amendments.

Deletion from Paragraph 75: "The Anglo-American imperialists and the native capitalists do not intend voluntarily to grant the slightest democracy to the peoples of Europe." The minority amendments had also proposed the deletion of this and the following paragraph.

Deletion from Paragraph 76: "Economic and political conditions forbid the restoration of bourgeois democracy even in the crisis-torn forms which existed after the last war." This becomes "for any extended period, even to the extent that it existed after the last war."

After these deletions, what remains in the resolution concerning bourgeois democracy in Europe in this period? The principal paragraph which remains, and which will be cited in a moment, is essentially the position put forward from the first by the minority. Nothing remains in it of the majority theory of "Franco-type governments" or "naked military dictatorships" which was the principal issue in dispute from the Plenum of October 1943 until the convention of November 1944. Yet the amendments which do this are presented to the party as merely "clarifying and literary amendments"!

And with this goes a renewed barrage against the minority. The very paragraph which concedes the position of the minority, the paragraph which has had deleted from it the theory of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy, is cited now by the editors of Fourth International in refutation of the minority! Here is how they do it:

"Implicit in Morrow's criticism and in the position of the convention minority is an exaggerated appraisal of the role of bourgeois democracy, its potentialities, etc. in the next period. The party resolution gives the following correct estimate:

"Bourgeois democratic governments can appear in Europe only as interim regimes, intended to stave off the conquest of power by the proletariat. When the sweep of the revolution threatens to wipe out capitalist rule, the imperialists and their native accomplices may attempt as a last resort, to push forward their Social Democratic and Stalinist agents and set up a democratic regime for the purpose of disarming and strangling the workers' revolution. Such regimes, however, can only be very unstable, short-lived and transitional in character. They will constitute a brief episode in the unfoldment of the revolutionary struggle. Inevitably they will be displaced either 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."

How can the paragraph thus cited from the resolution conceivably be claimed to refute the minority? From the very beginning of the dispute, the minority amendments stated: "The decay of capitalism and the acuteness of class conflicts forbid another extended period of bourgeois democracy for devastated Europe." The sole issue was whether there would be bourgeois democracy at all. The above paragraph concedes there will be. Where did this idea come from? It comes from the original minority amendments to the draft Plenum resolution; paragraph 23 of the minority amendments stated:

"The fact that the economic pre-conditions for an extended period of bourgeois democracy in Europe have disappeared does not, however, put an end to the role that bourgeois democracy can play to stem the advance of proletarian revolution. Just as fascism served to halt the masses, so bourgeois democracy will now attempt to disorient the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. When no other shield can protect them, the forces of capitalism retreat behind the protection of the democratic republic. This phenomenon will in all likelihood appear in our epoch as it has in previous periods." (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 5, p 14.)



Compare this paragraph of October 1943 with the paragraph in the resolution of November 1944, and you will see that the editors of Fourth International refute the minority with the minority's own idea against which the majority fought for over a year.

The refusal of the Political Committee to admit its change of position results in indescribable confusion. One example must suffice. What has happened to the Political Committee's contention, based on the deleted propositions, that the de Gaulle and Bonomi regimes are military dictatorships? The October speech of the P.C. reporter, E. R. Frank, which asserted this, appears in the December 1944 Fourth International and the editorial in the same issue, summing up the dispute, makes no mention of having dropped this position. Thus the public is told that Frank's October speech including the material on de Gaulle and Bonomi, is still the position of the party.

But if one looks at the final resolution, the picture is quite different, and presumably such questions, and above all such questions when they have been the subject of over a year's dispute in the party, are settled by convention resolution. What does the resolution say about the Bonomi regime? Very precisely it tells -- what nobody questioned -- that the first Badoglio cabinet was a military dictatorship. But about the Bonomi regime -- which was the point in dispute -- all that it says is that it is a "screen" for the Allies' military rule. Quite true, but the question was: what is the nature of this screen? Is it a military dictatorship? This question the resolution does not answer.

Even more astonishing is the resolution's position on the de Gaulle regime. I read it through and find...nothing. I cannot believe my eyes. I read it again. Again there is nothing.

The convention resolution, then, takes no position on the Bonomi and de Gaulle regimes, and no doubt a year or two hence when we come to an International Congress, the present majority leaders will point to that resolution as proof that the minority's description of the majority position is a caricature. But meanwhile the majority leaders point to Frank's assertions as proof that the majority has not changed its line.

Before we leave the majority's last-minute amendments, let me give another example of the inaccuracies in the December Fourth International.

Both Morrow and Logan, writing for the minority, had called the Plenum and draft convention resolutions "ritualistic" and "over-optimistic." They were referring to such incantations (to cite but one example) as the following in the Plenum resolution: "Given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require overly much time to organize their revolutionary parties and to overthrow all of their capitalist oppressors."

Here is how the editors in the December Fourth International answer Morrow and Logan:

"Nothing could be more false than to attempt, as do Morrow and Logan, to characterize the convention resolution as 'ritualistic' or 'over-optimistic.' The resolution clearly states:

"We cannot anticipate how long the revolutionary process will take. That will be decided only in the struggle. The European revolution is not to be viewed as one gigantic apocalyptic event, which will with one smashing blow finish with capitalism. The European revolution will probably be a more or less drawn out process with initial setbacks, retreats and possibly even defeats...'

"This isn't 'ritualism' nor 'over-optimism'; this is revolutionary realism.

"The Morrow-Logan criticisms as a whole, along with the proposed Logan amendments were overwhelmingly rejected by the convention."

This is a very powerful refutation of Morrow and Logan. But it contains one peculiarity. The paragraph it cites from the final convention resolution to refute Morrow and Logan was not in it when Morrow and Logan made their criticisms and is a view which they demanded be included in the resolution. The paragraph is another one of those "clarifying and literary amendments" introduced at the last minute by the Political Committee! You will search in vain for that paragraph, or that idea, in the draft resolution.

#### "Fourth International's" Strange Picture of the Minority Position

We now come to the main part of the December Fourth International's attack on the minority: the article "by the editors" on the convention. Ostensibly that article summarizes the dispute, but it does not say one word about the theory of "naked military dictatorship" which was the principal question in dispute between October 1943 and November 1944. Nor does it deal with the minority's amendments -- neither those offered at the Plenum nor those offered to the draft convention resolution. Nor does it deal with the arguments in the articles of Comrade Logan, the principal spokesman for the minority in the pre-convention discussion.

Instead it limits itself to my article of December 1943. In that article I stated: "In the following pages I have attempted as far as possible not to repeat the points made in the Morrow-Morrison amendments, or in my Plenum speeches. The Plenum material is taken for granted, since this is written only for N.C. members, most of whom were present."

Why, then, does Fourth International deal only with my supplementary article and not with the Plenum material and the convention

material?

Fourth International's editors attribute to the minority a theory it never held. The theory has all the marks of veracity -- quotations from Morrow, what could look more genuine? -- but it is nevertheless not to be found in the documents of the minority.

Under the heading "Convention Minority," Fourth International's editors write:

"The convention minority which took issue with this resolution (not true -- the minority took issue with the draft but voted for the final resolution -- F.M.) had its origin at the party Plenum... Comrade Morrow's article was written in criticism of the Plenum resolution. Contained in it are three main flaws:

"1) The contention that American imperialism is less predatory in character than German imperialism; that 'this difference between the two great imperialisms aspiring to subjugate Europe is based on the difference in the economic resources of the two'; and that therefore 'it is quite false' to refer to them as 'equally predatory.'

"2) From this appreciation of the 'less predatory' character of American imperialism, Morrow proceeds to construct his theory that the European masses will in the period ahead fall prey to illusions centering around the character and role of U.S. imperialism. He contends that these illusions will persist because:

"Unlike Nazi occupation, American occupation will be followed by improvement in food supplies and in the economic situation generally. Where the Nazis removed factory machinery and transportation equipment, the Americans will bring them in. These economic contrasts...cannot fail for a time to have political consequences.'

"On this double foundation of a 'short-time' improvement in European living standards and the consequent reinforcement of bourgeois democratic illusions, Morrow greatly exaggerates the role of bourgeois democracy in Europe.

"3) The contention that 'the main danger within the Fourth International' lies 'in the direction of ultra-leftism.'"\*

Such are the "main" issues, according to the editorial in Fourth International, and the reader of that organ who has no other information -- and that includes not only non-party readers here but

\*The "third main flaw" will be dealt with in the next section of this article.

also most comrades in Europe, who are unlikely to see the Internal Bulletins -- may easily think it is so. But I appeal to every member of the party who has read the Internal Bulletins to ask himself, honestly and searchingly; were these the "main" issues in dispute? Isn't it a fact that Fourth International keeps silent about the real issues in dispute? Insofar as the "three main flaws" now found in the minority position were at all part of the dispute, were they not secondary items which arose in the course of the much more important three political disputes which I outlined at the beginning of this article?

### The Real Position of the Minority

Fourth International's description of my position makes it seem that I stated that bourgeois democracy would have a role in Europe solely as the result of "illusions centering around the character and role of U.S. imperialism." The party member has only to turn to the minority's Plenum amendments to see that this is not so.

Here, too, I must underline the profound difference in method between the majority and minority. The majority based its denial of the possibility of bourgeois democracy primarily on the subjective aims (methods) of the Allies: "The Allies will not sanction the slightest democracy," etc. It failed utterly to understand that the subjective aims (methods) of the ruling classes change under the impact of the class struggle. The minority, on the other hand, saw an evolution toward bourgeois democracy in Europe as the objective resultant of the class struggle and of the struggle between the contending capitalist classes. The Allies may not desire this objective resultant, the working class may and in fact strives for something more, nevertheless this is the objective resultant of the conflict among the various forces at this stage.

In our Plenum amendments we predicted the evolution toward bourgeois democracy not as the result of subjective aims but as the objective resultant of the general conflict. Factor No. 1 for us was the struggle of the European proletariat and its objective effect on the state power. That was the factor we began with, and not the aims of U.S. imperialism, in the first section of the Plenum amendments, under the heading "Problems of the European Revolution." It was an entirely new section; there was none like it in the majority resolution for which there simply did not exist any problems of the European revolution other than the Allied armies. I quote the relevant paragraphs of that section:

"The fact that the economic pre-conditions for an extended period of bourgeois-democracy in Europe have disappeared does not, however, put an end to the role that bourgeois democracy can play to stem the advance of proletarian revolution. Just as fascism served to halt the masses, so bourgeois democracy will now attempt to disorient the revolutionary struggle against fascism. When no other shield can protect them, the forces of capitalism retreat behind the protection of the democratic republic. This phenomenon will in all likelihood appear in our epoch as it has in previous periods.

"Tomorrow, if necessary, the Badoglio regime will concede general elections just as it had to concede factory committees. It is of course the masses who wrest these democratic rights from their oppressors. But the oppressors understand also the necessity of sanctioning these democratic rights when they have no alternative.

"The Italian events indicate that after the collapse of fascism the bourgeoisie is prepared to evolve in the direction of a bourgeois-democratic government. In all likelihood the collapse of Nazism will likewise witness an attempt by the German bourgeoisie to save its rule by hiding behind bourgeois-democratic forms.

"This stratagem of the European bourgeoisie will be aided at the beginning by the inevitable revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses. The intensification of national feeling in Europe as the result of the struggle against Nazi occupation, a progressive sentiment at the given moment, nevertheless can serve to feed democratic illusions about 'new governments of the people' after the collapse of Nazism.

"In Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc., new generations have grown up without any knowledge of bourgeois democracy and with active participation in political life. After the collapse of fascism and military dictatorship, these masses must go through a certain body of experiences before they will understand that their needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the democratic republic.

"The principal parties which emerged after the fall of Mussolini were the Communists, Socialists and Action (Liberal) parties. Since they were ruthlessly persecuted by the fascist regime, these parties were not held responsible by the masses for the decades of fascist rule. Nor could the masses test the program of these parties under the conditions of totalitarian oppression. Programs can be tested only in the course of mass activity, i.e., only after the collapse of totalitarianism and military dictatorship. Hence it is to be expected that both Social Democracy and Stalinism, as well as centrist and liberal-democratic parties, will emerge throughout Europe as the principal parties of the first period after the collapse of the Nazis and their collaborators.

"The foregoing variant could have been avoided only by the growth of mass parties of the Fourth International during the past decade. However, conditions proved too unfavorable for such a development. Under the persecution of the bourgeois 'democrats', the Nazis and their collaborators, and the Stalinists, the forces of

the Fourth International had to be gathered together on the European continent under the most fearful conditions. Only the most heroic struggle of the small cadres of the Fourth International enabled them to survive, and even to grow, under these conditions. That they did survive and grow is the most eloquent verification of the correctness of the program of the Fourth International."

The last paragraph is particularly important. With the collapse of fascism and the rise of the masses again to their feet, the question of what is to come can only be answered in terms of the situation of the revolutionary Marxist parties in the various European countries. As I have already stated, Trotsky said more than once that the collapse of fascism and military dictatorships could be followed by the socialist revolution only under the condition that great mass revolutionary parties had managed to form themselves under the extraordinarily difficult conditions of fascism and dictatorship; otherwise one would first have a period of bourgeois democracy. That is all that the above tries to say in the concrete terms of the unfolding reality in October 1943.

In contrast, the completely ritualistic character of the majority position is to be seen in the fact that the idea of the above last quoted paragraph does not appear in any way in the majority's draft Plenum resolution. In other words it attempted to predict the unfolding situation without any reference to the question whether or not the revolutionary parties were or were not leading the masses!

#### The Variant Methods of U.S. Imperialism

Having sketched the internal forces in Europe making for bourgeois democracy, my Plenum amendments then went on to deal with the role of U.S. imperialism. There was not of course any disagreement between minority and majority on the role of U.S. imperialism as the attempted subjugator of Europe and its readiness to use every reactionary force in its service. Disagreement arose, however, because the majority refused to concede that U.S. imperialism would employ variant methods in attempting to dominate Europe; for the majority there was only one method of "military-monarchist-clerical dictatorships."

As I stated at the Plenum: "Characteristic is the fact that the writers of the draft resolution devote a paragraph to the Darlan deal but say nothing about the debacle of the Darlan policy and the consequent shift forced upon Washington whereby it has had to arrive at an unstable agreement with the Gaullists, i.e. with the bourgeois-democratic tendency within French imperialism."

There was much indignation at the Plenum, notably from Comrade Cannon, when I defined the Gaullists as a bourgeois-democratic tendency. The majority could not understand this quite simple phenomenon, that a section of the French capitalist class, first to resist German imperialism and then to resist U.S. domination, was for a period basing itself on the masses through the mediation of the reformist parties. Hence the majority rejected the following minority amendments;

"The kind of resistance that U.S. imperialism will meet from other (European imperialism is indicated by the debacle of its French policy. It attempted to foist Darlan-Giraud, the most docile agents it could find, upon the French people. But this proved impossible even before the intervention of the French masses. The Gaullists, representing French imperialism but backed by national feeling and the Stalinists, were able to thwart Washington's plan. Roosevelt was compelled to come to terms, on an unstable basis, with the Gaullist-Stalinist forces. French imperialism is certain to resist Washington domination even more forcefully when France is re-conquered.

"...Any bourgeois-democratic republics which would be established would become arenas for decisive struggle between the proletarian revolution and the imperialist world. Since they would be relatively more favorable arenas for the workers than dictatorial regimes, Washington will do all it can to foster fascist and military dictatorships.

"Nevertheless Washington will in all likelihood soon find itself compelled to 'sanction' democratic regimes in Europe for the same reasons which impel the Italian and German bourgeoisie in this direction. Naked military force alone is insufficient to achieve the aims of U.S. imperialism; it must also resort to deceit, i.e., bourgeois democracy. The pressure of the American and British masses will also push Washington along this line."

Such was the minority's conception; that there was an evolution toward bourgeois democracy in Italy and France -- these were the countries in dispute -- as the objective resultant of (1) the rising struggle of the proletariat; (2) the limitations of that struggle due to the present hegemony of the Stalinists and Social Democrats and the smallness of the Fourth International parties; (3) the resistance of French imperialism, supporting itself on the masses, to U.S. domination; (4) the ability of U.S. imperialism to shift from methods of military dictatorship to bourgeois democratic methods under the above conditions; (5) the pressure of the U.S. and British masses in opposition to imposition of dictatorships.

Instead of conscientiously reporting this as the position of the minority, we have in Fourth International a picture based on secondary arguments. Let us now deal with these.

#### Are Nazi and U.S. Imperialist Methods Identical?

Fourth International's editors raise an outcry against my saying that German and U.S. imperialisms are not "equally predatory." They quote that phrase and let revolutionary-minded but miseducated comrades be horrified by it. They take good care, however, not to try to refute me on the real question I had posed: is it not a fact that U.S. imperialism is employing very different methods than Nazi imperialism in Europe? I had written: "Hence it is quite false when

the Plenum resolution, without distinguishing between the long-term and short-term perspectives, says: 'Europe, today enslaved by the Nazis, will tomorrow be overrun by equally predatory Anglo-American imperialism.' Equally imperialist, yes, but not 'equally predatory.' One could permit oneself such language loosely in an agitational speech; but it has no place in a Plenum resolution, which should provide a coldly precise estimate of the different methods which are being employed by different imperialisms." Instead of politically grappling with the different methods of the two imperialisms, the editors of Fourth International frighten little children with an outcry because Morrow has said U.S. imperialism is not equally predatory.

I am told that the majority leaders made speeches in the branches against Morrow's outrageous theory that U.S. imperialism was going to feed and reconstruct Europe. That, of course, was not my thesis; I said that U.S. imperialism would bring food and machinery whereas the Nazis took these things away. Unfortunately the majority speeches on this question were not published.

However, a vestige of their arguments remains in the final convention resolution. It states: "One year of Allied rule of Italy has made it unmistakably clear that the Anglo-American imperialists, in this sphere, will continue the robbery, looting and oppression practiced by Nazi imperialism in its rule of occupied Europe." And this generalization about Italy should be understood in the light of the peculiar method of the resolution, which treats only Italy in detail and states that "Italy provides a key to the understanding of events in France, in Germany, in all Europe."

The robbery and looting practiced by Nazi imperialism we all know about: outright confiscation of Jewish property; dismantling and shipping factories and machinery to Germany; looting of gold stores and art treasures, etc. Nazi oppression, too, we know about: the cremation plants, the mass executions of hostages, totalitarian rule, mass deportations and forced labor, etc.

Are the Allies doing the same in Italy and France? Obviously not. Call the Allies' rule, if you will, robbery and looting. But you cannot call it "continuing the robbery, looting and oppression practiced by Nazi imperialism." If you call it that, as the majority has insisted on doing, it makes us look ridiculous to the world which knows better.

We grant the resolution's statement that "the economic situation in Allied-occupied Italy has not improved but drastically worsened" in the first year. But what is the meaning of following this immediately with the statement that "One year of Allied rule of Italy has made it unmistakably clear that the Anglo-American imperialists, in this sphere, will continue the robbery, looting and oppression practiced by Nazi imperialism in its rule of occupied Europe." Does this mean that the worsened economic situation is the pattern of U.S. practice for the next year, too, and for the next? And not only in Italy, which "provides a key to the understanding of events in France, in Germany, in all Europe"?



Here is an extraordinary example of dogmatic blindness and obstinacy. Having shifted the argument with the minority concerning bourgeois democracy into an argument about whether or not America will send food and economic aid to Europe, the majority leaders have well-nigh committed the party to the insane proposition that no aid will be forthcoming.

A "clever" head among them, however, put in a safety clause. Immediately after the sentence that "the Anglo-American imperialists will continue the robbery, looting and oppression practiced by Nazi imperialism in its rule of occupied Europe," there follows this sentence: "The Allies moreover will take advantage of the hunger of the masses and utilize their control of the food supplies at their disposal as an additional lever for counter-revolution." But if the food referred to is food brought from America, then, true, it is an "additional" lever of counter-revolution, but one of an entirely different kind than the Nazis had; in a word, it is precisely the type of difference between the methods of Nazi imperialism and those of U.S. imperialism which I pointed out and against which the majority raised such an outcry.

#### Why the U.S. Will Ship Goods to Europe

The minority tried to introduce into the convention resolution a note of sanity on this question. Our amendments stated:

"The Allies have not stopped talking about the sending of food to Italy. They try by that to save the remnants of hope in their benevolence. No doubt, when the Italian masses return to their offensive, this talk may materialize in a precipitated sending of food. Food will become, as it has often been in the past, a counter-revolutionary weapon, a means of blackmail against revolution and a tool to try to revive confidence in the bourgeois system."

Isn't this ABC Marxism? Then why was the amendment rejected? Can the majority comrades seriously deny that the concentration of shipping for military purposes has been a cause of small food shipments and that when this eases much more food will be sent?

Even leaving aside the fact that U.S. imperialism will be forced to send food and machinery to Europe in order to back the European bourgeoisie against the danger of proletarian revolution, is there any reason why U.S. imperialism would not make large loans for food and machinery (not to mention selling the goods and being paid in gold, art treasures, materials, etc.)? Majority comrades tell me that their leaders say there is such a reason: U.S. imperialism does not want the European nations as competitors in the world market. True enough, but since when has any capitalist nation refused to sell and lend to another because that would eventually result in the latter becoming a competitor?

I am told that majority leaders have stated that U.S. imperialism is now fulfilling Trotsky's prediction of 1924 that the U.S. would put "Europe on rations." This phrase of Trotsky is interpreted to

mean, in all literalness, that U.S. aid to Europe will be limited to starvation handouts of food, clothing, etc. What nonsense! Trotsky never said that America would not sell or lend heavy machinery to the European countries. It was not in this way that he thought of America as ruining Europe. He knew very well that it was with the aid of America's 1924-1928 loans that German industry was reconstructed and that this could happen again after the next war, if not in Germany itself, then certainly in other countries of Europe. Simultaneously, however, with its loans to Germany, U.S. imperialism was spreading everywhere so that when German industry was reconstructed it found its possible markets preempted by American and other imperialisms. America was aiming to put Europe "on rations," said Trotsky, in the sphere of world markets. One must understand the elementary distinction between America lending Europe money and materials to help rebuild its industrial plant and then America barring the reconstructed industries from returning to a large part of their former markets. Both to save Europe from revolution and to keep American factories going, U.S. imperialism will help Europe rebuild its industrial plants. But it will keep Europe "on rations" so far as permitting Europe to retrieve its former markets. And without these markets, Europe is condemned to ruin under capitalism. This is the ABC of this question.

So much for the secondary arguments about U.S. imperialist methods, which Fourth International raises up as the issue while it is silent on the real dispute about the theory of "naked military dictatorship."

WHY WAS THERE A DISPUTE ABOUT THE METHOD OF  
DEMOCRATIC AND TRANSITIONAL DEMANDS?

The second main dispute, on which Fourth International's editorial summary is equally silent, was on democratic and transitional demands.

The same December issue prints a speech by E. R. Frank, which polemicizes with the minority over this question. Let us examine it. Frank writes:

"Why all this agitation suddenly on democratic demands? Why this insistence upon involving 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 as given in his speech to the Plenum:

"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 Subcommittee that they don't want a blueprint. Neither do I. Their objection is not well taken

...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." (pp 380 - 1.)

The unwary reader would assume from this that from the first the majority's position on democratic and transitional demands has been that which he finds in the convention resolution, and might well wonder what Morrow and the minority were fighting about. Comrade Frank helpfully provides the reader with an answer: that Morrow in reality has a theory of the renaissance of bourgeois democracy, and that "Morrow apparently draws back and cannot get himself to enunciate this perspective in clear-cut fashion...except to give exaggerated emphasis to democratic demands."

But what Frank and the editors of Fourth International do not tell the reader is that this dispute began because the majority's draft Plenum resolution did not have a single word in it about democratic and transitional demands.

To write a document about "Perspectives and Tasks" in Europe today without even mentioning democratic and transitional demands can be done only if one is simply saying hurrah for the revolution. The Nazi tide was retreating, the political arena was opening up, it was clear that the arena was to be dominated in the first period by the reformist parties, that our small cadres were faced with the task of finding their way to the masses. How? The draft Plenum resolution gave them only the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. Not a single other slogan! Not a word about the problems of winning the masses.

The error could have been corrected easily enough. The minority pointed out the error, it only remained to get together in collective work, to accept the minority amendments and in addition make the other necessary change that the incorporation of these amendments implied.

The majority leaders, however, never admit an error. They would not accept the minority amendments. Why? To this day they have not explained why. Yet the Morrow amendments simply repeated the ABC of Marxism. The main paragraph stated;

"In general, only cadre elements will be directly recruited by our program and central slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. To win the masses

will require linking ourselves with them as we find them, with all their inexperience and illusions. We must show them that we share their hopes while differing on how to achieve them. Our task is rendered all the easier by the fact that democratic demands as a whole have a revolutionary character today in Europe, if seriously fought for, because the bourgeois governments cannot satisfy them. The Trotskyists must appear as the most resolute fighters for democratic demands; freedom of assembly and elections, freedom of the press, trade unions and political parties, etc. Our transitional demands -- for jobs and social insurance, workers' control of production, etc. -- are certain to play a major role."

The majority raised a hue and cry against my distinction between those ("cadre elements") to be won by the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe and the great masses to be won by other means. They proclaimed a programmatic difference between us on this question. Since my sentence on this point was not directly essential to the paragraphs on democratic and transitional demands, Goldman and I withdrew it. In my December 1943 article I returned to this "programmatic difference," conceded to the majority's objection to the term "cadre elements", and re-stated the problem as follows:

"The best and most thoughtful of the European workers -- and this means not merely cadres but hundreds of thousands and even millions -- will understand that the socialist unification of Europe is the only way out. But the best and most thoughtful workers will not be enough to make the revolution by themselves. They will succeed only by rallying behind them not merely millions but tens and hundreds of millions. And these will not be rallied by the relatively abstract conception of the Socialist United States of Europe."

To win a majority of the masses -- this is the function of the method of democratic and transitional demands. This should have been instantly agreed upon between majority and minority. Why, then, were not the minority amendments accepted?

The majority, instead, introduced its own amendments on this question, and they appear in the final Plenum resolution.

The majority amendments consisted of quotations from the 1938 Transitional Program of the Fourth International (written by Trotsky) and conclusions drawn from it.

The quotations come from the program's section entitled: "The program of transitional demands in fascist countries." In those countries, Trotsky writes, "At present, it is imperative that primarily propagandistic, preparatory work be carried on which will yield large scale results only in the future." What kind of propagandistic, preparatory work? The next paragraph explains; "A merciless exposure of the theory and practice of the 'People's Front' is therefore the first

condition for a revolutionary struggle against fascism." In short, Trotsky is explaining how, under fascism, one can do primarily only propagandistic work. This work consists of contrasting the program of the People's Front with the revolutionary perspective of the Fourth International; where the People's Front proposes to stop with democracy, we propose to go on to the proletarian revolution. Trotsky makes this contrast in terms of a prediction that when fascism is overthrown the mass movement will speedily go beyond merely democratic slogans and will create factory committees and soviets. This prediction of 1938 is the basis of the majority amendments, which read as follows:

"The Trotskyist parties everywhere have the basic duty to expose and fight against the illusions that stable bourgeois-democratic regimes, which have lost their material foundation, can be restored in Europe. They must wage irreconcilable warfare against the reformist and Stalinist parties, and their perfidious 'People's Fronts' which attempt to limit the struggle of the workers to this reactionary-utopian program. The Fourth International has long ago foreseen the emergence of this question in the first stages of the downfall of fascism and has spoken explicitly in regard to it. The program adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International (1938) affirms that 'once it breaks through, the revolutionary wave in fascist countries will immediately be a grandiose sweep and under no circumstances will stop short at the experiment of resuscitating some sort of Weimar corpse.'

"The same program makes clear the value and necessity as well as the limitations and subordinate character, of democratic slogans as a means of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary action. 'Such slogans at certain moments can play a serious role. But the formulas of democracy (freedom of press, the right to unionize, etc.) mean for us only incidental and episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat and not a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents (Spain!). As soon as the movement assumes something of a mass character, the democratic slogans will be intertwined with the transitional ones; factory committees, it may be supposed, will appear before the old routinists rush from their chancelleries to organize trade unions; soviets will cover Germany before a new Constitutional Assembly will gather in Weimar. The same will be true of Italy and the rest of the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian countries.'"

And from this the Political Committee goes on to declare:

"In all the developments of the military struggle and the shifts on the war front, in all the twists and turns of imperialist and Stalinist diplomacy, the revolutionary militants need not the search for 'new formulas' and improvisations but to resolutely adhere

to their program which was written not for a day but for this whole epoch of wars and revolutions."

### The Method -- Or Lack of Method

Consider the nature of the method whereby the Political Committee thus "refuted" the minority. The minority had attempted to deal with the situation as it actually was unfolding in October 1943; the majority refutes us -- by quoting a prediction from a 1938 document.

This is done, very sternly, in the name of Trotskyism and as proof of the adherence of the majority to the Trotskyist program, as against those who are guilty of "new formulas" and "improvisations." True, the quotation comes from the 1938 program. But that document (it is truly disgraceful that one has to explain this to the majority of the party leadership) consists, as the quotation shows, not only of programmatic positions but also of tentative predictions ("it may be supposed that", it says, that such-and-such will happen at such-and-such a time). It should be obvious that these two very different elements in the 1938 document -- the programmatic positions and the predictions -- cannot possibly have the same weight for us. The programmatic positions are the concentrated experience of a century of revolutionary practice; the predictions are...nothing but predictions. Trotsky made many time-predictions of this type which proved wrong. He never dreamt of giving them programmatic weight. He said more than once that to guess the tempos in advance for a prolonged period is impossible, and it is necessary to introduce the necessary correctives into it in the course of experience. To introduce the necessary correctives into it in the course of experience. Trotsky would have been the first to make the necessary corrections in the six-year-old prediction which the Political Committee quotes as evidence in 1943.

For Trotsky the prediction was simply a dramatic way of expressing the difference between what the Popular Front would do in a revolutionary situation and what the Fourth International would do if it stood at the head of the masses. Can one imagine Trotsky quoting such a six-year-old prediction as an argument against those who are trying to estimate the meaning of events unfolding before our eyes? The majority's literal-minded presentation of Trotsky's prediction makes Trotsky look absurd. The section of the program from which they quote says a few lines beyond the sentences they quote: "The advanced workers of all the world are already firmly convinced that the overthrow of Mussolini, Hitler and their agents and imitators will occur only under the leadership of the Fourth International." For one thing this sentence shows that the hypothetical prediction quoted by the majority was constructed on the assumption that the Fourth International parties would be mass parties when fascism was overthrown. For another thing, it shows the symbolic character of the specific images throughout the section: Trotsky does not mean to affirm literally that the specific Mussolini and Hitler will be overthrown only under our leadership, but that the final struggle against fascism and all capitalist reaction can be waged only by the Fourth International.

If, instead, one insists on taking the quotations literally, look how wrong they are; "once it breaks through, the revolutionary wave in fascist countries will immediately be a grandiose sweep" in

Germany, Italy "and the rest of the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian countries." Can one seriously speak of the mass movement in Italy in the nearly two years since Mussolini fell as a "revolutionary wave" and a "grandiose sweep"? And in France since Vichy fell? And in Bulgaria, Jugoslavia, Roumania? Have factory committees, as the prediction indicated, taken precedence over trade unions? Are there signs anywhere yet of soviets?

Trotsky would have been the first to make the necessary corrections in his estimate (and, indeed, would have laughed not a little at comrades who quote as evidence six years later his dramatic images). But that is not the method of the majority. For them Trotsky's tentative guess of 1938 -- the word guess is his own, as for example when he says: "It is understood that to guess the tempos in advance for a prolonged period is impossible" -- becomes a sacrosanct question of "program" to be hurled like Jove's thunderbolts against the heretics who merely grapple with reality.

A year later, the Political Committee writes another resolution, its draft convention resolution, which begins by stating: "This resolution is a reaffirmation and an extension of the Plenum resolution." But from it disappears the above-cited quotation from Trotsky against the minority. Why has it disappeared? The authors of the resolution do not tell us. But we can hazard the guess that they dared not repeat it after the further developments in Italy, and in France.

Here we see the extreme arbitrariness of this method or, rather, lack of method. A position is taken and quotations adduced for it, without reference to reality. A long dispute ensues, in the course of which the Political Committee without explanation drops its quotations and formulations resting on them. It drops them, not with an avowed recognition of their incorrectness, but with redoubled abuse of the minority. It drops them only when events make it absolutely impossible to carry them any further. Under these conditions -- and they are the conditions in the leadership of the American party -- the ending of a political dispute brings no improvement in the political education of the party members nor in the relations of the majority and minority in the leadership.

The convention resolution no longer talks of "the limitations and subordinate character" of democratic slogans, but does essentially what the minority had asked in the first instance at the October 1943 Plenum. It no longer counterposes democratic and transitional demands to each other but instead speaks of a "bold program of transitional and democratic demands" "to rally the masses for the revolutionary struggle." That is all the minority asked for in October 1943.

Meanwhile, however, a year had passed -- and what a year! In Italy especially events called for further analysis -- and one must remember that the convention resolution, like the Plenum resolution, treated only Italy in detail, devoting at least a third of the resolution to it.

It seemed to the minority that one slogan in particular was especially important for Italy; immediate arrest of the royal family and proclamation of the Republic. The majority rejected this. But

it did so in its own inimitable way. The resolution says nothing about it. The alleged justification for this is that the resolution is "not a blueprint." All right then; why did not the majority leaders record in a simple motion at the convention, separate from the resolution, their position on the slogan of the republic? The answer is that they decided to evade the question. Some of them spoke in the branches (and Comrade Frankel at the convention) against the slogan as being opportunistic; others said we were too far from the scene to judge its value, etc., etc. But nothing in writing. I leave to Comrade Logan, who fought vainly to get the majority to declare itself on this question, to tell that story and analyze its implications.

To sum up on this question; It arose because of the silence of the majority in its draft Plenum resolution on the whole question of democratic and transitional demands; it continued because of the confusion produced by the irrelevant quotation from the Transitional Program; it was concretized in the dispute on the slogan of the republic. The latter showed that, despite the formally correct generalization on the role of democratic and transitional demands which appears in the convention resolution, endless confusion remains in the heads of the leaders and through them in the party. The way to further clarification is not by generalizations which the majority leaders will agree to, but by discussing specific slogans as the need for them arises in the various countries.

#### How the Question of Ultra-Leftism Arose

Having abandoned their original position on the question of democratic and transitional demands, the editors of Fourth International say not one word about that dispute but make a big thing of a question which arose incidental to it: the danger of ultra-leftism in the Fourth International. The editors solemnly condemn Morrow and his associates for saying there is such a danger.

How did the question of the ultra-left danger arise in the first place? I tell this in my article of December 1943; "In the Plenum discussion, a number of supporters of the draft resolution justified its passing over the problem of democratic demands and its preoccupation with reiterating programmatic fundamentals, by referring to the danger within the Fourth International of opportunism and revisionism." In answer, I stated in part:

"The young parties of the Comintern suffered primarily not from opportunism but from ultra-leftism. It was against this tendency that Lenin in 1920 wrote 'Left Wing' Communism -- An Infantile Disorder. If, despite the tremendous prestige of the victorious Bolsheviks, the Comintern was so pervaded by ultra-leftist deviations, the same phenomenon is far more likely to confront the Fourth International at the end of the war."

I confess that it would never have occurred to me that anyone in our movement would take issue with this statement. Our parties in Europe are young parties. Even where, as in France, there is some continuity with the past, the leading cadres are decimated, new and



inexperienced elements must provide leadership. All I was saying, then, is that ultra-leftism is an infantile disorder. The only practical conclusion I drew is that we must warn our European comrades of the necessity of a program of democratic and transitional demands. This practical conclusion is at last accepted by the majority -- which then proceeds to attack me for the entirely incidental references to the danger of ultra-leftism!

And such profound arguments are made against me! "It is far more correct," Comrade Frank lectures me, "to say that in the period of revolutionary rise the main danger comes from the opportunist direction. Consider Lenin's own party. In 1917..." etc. But I was talking about young, infant parties, just beginning to make their way; and Comrade Frank refutes me by telling us about the opportunism of Zinoviev and Kamenev on the eve of the Bolshevik seizure of power! He then proceeds to enumerate some examples of opportunism in the Comintern parties in 1919 and 1920. True. But the same period was also full of ultra-leftist errors; the one kind does not exclude the other, except in the head of Comrade Frank.

Finally, this crushing argument from Comrade Frank: "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." The Third Congress took place June 22 - July 12, 1921. But Lenin's 'Left Wing' Communism -- An Infantile Disorder is dated April 27, 1920 and was explicitly issued to prepare the discussion at the Second Congress which took place July-August 1920, i.e., in the period of revolutionary rise.

The majority justified its incompetent Plenum resolution by referring to the danger of opportunism. Arguing for democratic demands, I referred to the even greater danger of ultra-leftism. In a sane discussion there would have been not a moment's disagreement with my truism. But this discussion ends, according to Fourth International, with nothing less than a convention rejection of my "theory" of ultra-leftism! I see nothing in the convention minutes or documents which says so, but Fourth International tells me so: "The convention rejected the contention that ultra-leftism is the main danger within the international Trotskyist movement." How did it reject this? By what passage in the convention resolution? By what motion? None exists.

### The Dispute on the Stalinist Danger

The third dispute at the Plenum was on the scope of the Stalinist danger to the European revolution. This one too is not mentioned by the editors of Fourth International in their summary of the disputes. Moreover, the convention resolution gives an untrue explanation of the shift in position from the Plenum resolution to that of the convention. It is necessary, therefore, to give a very brief documentation of this dispute and its outcome.

The dispute arose because the draft Plenum resolution had in it a section entitled "The Significance of the Soviet Victories" which saw only progressive consequences from the victories. Its principal errors were:

(1) The assumption of a speedy break between Stalin and the Allies because of the class differences between the Soviet state and the imperialist powers. The draft resolution stated:

"The USSR, by virtue of the social foundations laid down by the October revolution, still remains a workers' state in fundamental contradiction with world imperialism. The reactions of the Allies to the Soviet successes and their repercussions among the capitalist rulers of the neighboring countries once again shows that the imperialists, at least, recognize this fact. The prospect of further Red Army advances has terrified rather than encouraged the 'democratic' capitalist world and produced a growing breach between the Kremlin and its Anglo-American allies. Despite Stalin's subservience, the subsequent development of this division can and must lead to an open break, and eventually to armed conflict, between the USSR and Anglo-American imperialism." (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 5, p 8).

Commenting on the last sentence, I stated at the Plenum:

"The clear implication of this sentence is that the break between the USSR and the Anglo-U.S. imperialists will be a 'subsequent development' from the present situation in the sense that it will directly follow the present situation. This idea leaves no room for the possibility of a new and more thorough-going agreement for the next period as an aftermath of the Moscow Conference. To exclude the possibility of such an agreement seems to me to be a false estimate of the present situation and of Stalin's policy...I find it hard to understand how the writers of the resolution excluded such a variant and expect that we shall come to speedy agreement on this point." (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 4, p 30).

But the majority leaders obstinately rejected the minority amendments. They made a few minor corrections but the dominant theme remained that of an imminent break between Stalin and the Allies. Thus the most immediate danger of all to the European revolution, the three-power collaboration against it, was passed over.

(2) The assumption that it is impossible for Stalin to repeat in other countries what he did to the Spanish revolution. The draft Plenum resolution stated:

"These professional defeatists who foresee only a repetition of the Spanish events in Stalin's political maneuvers in Europe ignore the vast difference in conditions between the Spanish revolution and the coming European revolution. A pre-war revolution in the corner of Europe could be isolated, strangled and sold out as part of the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers. A continental revolution cannot be harnessed by any bureaucracy,

including the Stalinist, or permanently held down by any imperialist power, including the Anglo-American."

Against this I argued at the Plenum:

"But there is also another side to the Soviet victories; the unparalleled prestige of the Soviet Union is appropriated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and therefore we must face the fact that the power and ideological influence of Stalinism will not wane quickly under these conditions. We must recognize the fact that Stalinism is the principal organized force today in the European working class.

"Unfortunately the resolution refuses to recognize this second side of the Soviet situation. It says nothing indicating the power of Stalinism today. Instead of doing what is politically indicated -- say what is and warn against the terrible dangers yet to come from Stalinism -- the resolution avoids indicating the strength of Stalinism at this juncture and devotes several paragraphs to scolding 'professional defeatists' -- unnamed and unidentified in any other way, a kind of anonymous attack which does not belong in a Bolshevik resolution -- who dare to think that Stalin can repeat elsewhere what he did in Spain...

"Consider, first, the astonishing description of Spain as being a 'corner of Europe' and hence capable of being isolated and strangled. It is true that geographically Spain is in one corner of Europe. But so are the British isles, the Scandinavian countries, Italy, the Balkans. Did Spain's geographical position perhaps isolate it from Europe during the Spanish civil war? No, Spain's border was contiguous with that of France, and the flames of civil war blew over that border...The occupation of the factories in France occurred in June 1936, the civil war began in Spain on July 16. Neither geographically was Spain isolated from the rest of the European proletariat, nor emotionally...Spain was isolated POLITICALLY, in a way which could have happened in the heart of Europe just as well as in a corner.

"...More likely, the (coming) revolution will not begin simultaneously in several countries, but only in one or two -- in other words the situation may not be unlike that in which Stalin crushed the Spanish revolution. And Stalin will approach that revolution (or two) with more prestige than he had in 1936." (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 4, p 31-2).

All this fell on deaf ears. The final Plenum resolution repeated the nonsense about the "vast differences" between crushing a revolution "in the corner of Europe" and the present situation.

Commenting on the resolution's failure to place in the forefront the three-power alliance and the danger from Stalinism, I wrote in my December 1943 critique:

"The refusal to distinguish between short-term perspective and long-term perspective, which we have noted in other parts of the resolution, is perhaps even more evident in the sections on Stalinism. They 'ignore' the short-term perspective, that is, they fail to describe the real situation of the present and the immediate future. As a result they can have but a purely ritualistic character, convincing only those already convinced."

We were not able to convince the majority, but events did after a year -- events and the intervention of Comrade Natalia, who sharply called attention to the errors being made by the majority on all phases of Stalinism. As a result, the convention resolution does not repeat the formulations which we objected to in the Plenum resolution.

But here again the Political Committee sows endless confusion; instead of admitting the previous errors it presents the change of position in the following way in the resolution.

"Throughout the period when the Nazi military machine threatened the destruction of the Soviet Union, we pushed to the fore the slogan: unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack...Hitler's 'New Order in Europe' has already collapsed...We therefore push to the fore and emphasize today that section of our program embodied in the slogan: Defense of the European revolution against all its enemies."

This change of emphasis is correct and necessary -- but it has nothing to do with the question which was in dispute and on which the majority has reversed its position. In the Plenum resolution the majority condemned "defeatists" for finding the coming situation analogous with Spain. In the convention resolution the majority itself now says that recent events "constitute unmistakable danger signals that Stalin is prepared to repeat his hangman's work in Spain on a continental scale." That means that the Plenum resolution was wrong, the convention resolution is right, and the contradiction between the two cannot be bridged over by referring to the change in slogans dictated by the defeat of Hitler.

Our dispute was over the present extent of the ideological influence of Stalinism. The majority condemned us as "defeatists." A year later, having silently abandoned its position, the majority dares to say, through its spokesman Frank: "The masses have many illusions,

to be sure...But their illusions, if correctly analyzed, concretized and properly broken down, are found to be not at all those pictured by Morrow...The greatest and most dangerous 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." (December Fourth International, p 378). In a word what the minority insisted on, and which the Plenum refused to accept is, a year later, trumpeted by Frank as an argument -- against the minority!

### In Conclusion; The Question of Method

We have seen what the real issues in dispute were. We have seen how they were resolved, by the majority swinging over to the position of the minority. We have seen how the majority leaders have failed to acknowledge the change.

How to prevent a continuation of such conduct in this discussion and in subsequent ones? I fear that so long as the leadership is successful by such means, it will continue them. And thus far it has been successful in mustering a large majority in this way.

The party today is composed in the main of young and inexperienced comrades. I ask these young comrades to study closely not only the original differences between the majority and minority, but especially the continuing difference in method of analysis. A brief summary of the principal difference in method should provide a touchstone by which these comrades henceforth can be more alert to the real issues.

It used to be almost a truism in the Trotskyist movement that the most important question in politics is: what next? This was the question that the minority tried to answer for the first countries in Europe from which the Nazis were being driven. To answer the question intelligently required a clear distinction between short-term perspective and long-term perspective. In the long run, we are sure, the proletarian revolution will successfully sweep Europe; but this long-term perspective does not answer the question; what next? what comes next and what shall our comrades do about it?

The majority's principal error in method consisted in refusing to make a distinction between short-term and long-term perspectives and in letting the comrades think that the two were one and the same. A few examples will serve to clarify this.

The minority saw the next stage in Italy and France as an evolution toward bourgeois democracy. The majority answered that the Allies and the European bourgeoisie would employ military dictatorship against the forces of the proletarian revolution. It is certainly true that in the end the bourgeoisie will employ military dictatorship (more accurately, dictatorship and civil war) against the revolutionary masses rather than let them go forward to socialism. MEANWHILE, however, there will first be an arena of bourgeois democracy in which the preliminary stages of the rising class struggle will be fought out. It is this MEANWHILE, so crucially important for the fate of the revolution and the Fourth International, which the majority leaders first denied and then brushed aside as unimportant.

The minority said that our young, inexperienced parties in Europe must be urged to formulate a program of democratic and transitional demands, in order to find their way to the masses. As the collapse of fascism actually came about, under the conditions of military defeat and occupation, it turned out that in Italy there are still to be achieved democratic tasks which under other conditions would have been achieved in the first hours of the collapse of fascism: proclamation of the democratic republic; separation of Church and State; division of the latifundia, etc. All these unfinished tasks are at one and the same time obstacles on the road to socialism and opportunities for the revolutionary party to mobilize the masses in action to achieve them and to sweep beyond them. Hence the insistence of the minority on recommending to our new Italian party the slogan of the republic in particular. In contrast the majority devotes one-third of the convention resolution to Italy and yet manages to avoid any reference to the most important question of all; what next. That is why the whole attitude of the majority toward democratic and transitional demands is a purely perfunctory one.

The minority called attention to the role of U.S. food and economic aid to the European bourgeoisie. The majority refutes this by saying that U.S. imperialism does not desire the return of Europe to a competitive level. True enough, but that is a later stage, and in no way refutes the idea that first the U.S. will send food and machinery. The majority here is confusing the short-term perspective -- U.S. sales and loans to Europe -- with the long-term perspective -- U.S. monopolization of world markets against reconstructed European industries.

The minority warned that the most immediate danger to the European revolution comes from Stalin's present growth of ideological influence over the European masses and from his alliance with U.S. and British imperialism. The majority refutes this by referring to the future split in the three-power alliance and to the eventual disappearance of Stalin's hold on the European masses. True enough that these things will happen, but they are the music of the future whereas Stalin's prestige and the three-power alliance are the realities now.

These examples should suffice to show that the majority has not distinguished between short-term and long-term perspective and has refuted the minority's statements on the short-term perspective with irrelevant assertions about the long-term perspective.

Hereafter every party member should be alert to this false method or lack of method. He should not think that the majority's assertion of "fundamentals" is an answer to the minority's attempt to grapple with the present realities. He should not think that those who proclaim themselves for the "program" are thereby sanctified but should realize that Marxism includes not only "fundamentals" but all questions of tactics. Above all, he should not follow leaders simply because they are leaders; his allegiance must be, first, last and always, to correct ideas.

New York, March 25, 1945.

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