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TROTSKYISM AND THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION

Editorial Statement from *The Militant*
(U.S.), May 13, 1944

It is clear to all political observers that Europe today stands on the verge of great events. The European revolution which was begun by the Italian masses is sure to flame again. All the so-called theories of the skeptics, the turncoats and the renegades are being destroyed by the march of events. Our ideas, our perspectives, our program are standing up to the test of history and are every day finding vindication in the international arena.

What is necessary today for the Trotskyists throughout the world is to solidify their ranks on the tested program and principles of Trotskyism in preparation for the great tasks that loom ahead. The unification of the Workers International League and the Revolutionary Socialist League in England and the successful launching of a unified Trotskyist organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party, on the basis

of the program and statutes of the Fourth International, is a sign of the times. It is an indication that the genuine Trotskyists are closing ranks.

The great resurgence of the class struggle that we see taking place in England today is only a small reflection of the gigantic upsurge we will witness on the European continent on the morrow.

In the coming resurgence of the revolutionary movement, we can genuinely help the revolutionary workers hew their path to the revolutionary party, we can help them build a strong Trotskyist organization, only by drawing a sharp line of demarcation between the genuine Trotskyists and the impostors and muddleheads. Nothing could be more fatal for the Trotskyist movement than to permit instinctive sympathy—for any insurgent groups fighting under the difficult conditions which exist in Europe today—to betray us into political conciliationism.

With this perspective in mind, we wish to especially call attention to the Manifesto recently issued by a group in Italy

and published in part in the April 8 issue of *The Militant* for the information of our readers. The Manifesto reveals that its authors attempt to straddle the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union, the necessity for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union.

Should the Soviet workers support the war against Hitler, in spite of the fact that it is led by the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy? The workers of Italy, of Europe, as of the Soviet Union, instinctively answered this question in the affirmative. The authors of this Manifesto, who apparently wish to deny such defense, felt the necessity of equivocating. No group can really be Trotskyist if it attempts to straddle the Russian question. The Manifesto does not call for the defense of the Soviet Union. It does not characterize the Soviet Union as a workers' state. Therefore, the Manifesto is not an authentic Trotskyist Manifesto.

It is our solemn duty to point out to all revolutionary workers that any groups arising in Europe today which take a false or ambiguous position on the Russian question, which attempt to construct a program and organization apart from the Trotskyist International movement can accomplish nothing more than the creation of new degenerate parties of the P.O.U.M. variety. Trotsky warned: "Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones."

The Trotskyists will pay close attention to all the new manifestations in the European labor movement. They will work most energetically to win all leftward moving groups to the Trotskyist program and banner. As a matter of fact, the Trotskyists have distinguished themselves in the past for their tactical flexibility in working with leftward moving groups. But tactical flexibility was of aid in the past and can be of aid in the future in the winning of new adherents to the Trotskyist banner only on the premise that the Trotskyists remain organizationally firm and programmatically irreconcilable.

The Trotskyist movement has a finished program, a tested cadre and a firm organization. We can aid the revolutionary workers in solving the herculean tasks they face only by remaining true to our program and banner. Such a principled position will prove a far more effective weapon in the struggle for building strong Trotskyist parties than any expression of sentimental solidarity at the expense of program.

Great developments loom ahead. The Trotskyists, on whose shoulders rest an

historic responsibility, must now be prepared, calmly, confidently and firmly to discharge that responsibility.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARIAT
BY THE SPANISH GROUP IN MEXICO
September 1, 1944

Comrades:

In December of 1941, the position of the Spanish members of the Fourth International in Mexico was announced publicly among the Spanish emigration in this country by means of the magazine "19 de Julio." Prior to that date, due to the Fourth Internationalists in this country, a series of preparatory tasks were carried out aimed at influencing politically the Spanish refugees. Due to the lack of financial resources, the life of the aforementioned magazine "19 de Julio" was limited to two numbers.

During 1942, without any organ of political expression appearing regularly, the work of the Group was limited to the development of such tasks as were possible to carry out in the environment of the emigration. The extent of our work was conditioned by the small number of our members in the emigration and, on the other hand, by the limited amount of time that these could devote to political tasks, given the necessity to devote most of their activity to earning a living.

In spite of the above-mentioned unfavorable conditions, as a consequence of the work of clarification, propaganda and penetration, a certain stability was achieved, and the numerical strengthening that resulted from the arrival of some comrades from Europe placed the Group in a position to initiate, after February 1943, political work and normal propaganda. It is in February 1943 when the first number appears of the monthly organ of the Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International, "Contra la Corriente" (Against the Current), a mimeographed magazine which until the present date has continued to appear regularly, already having published its number 14.

Together with the campaign of propaganda and orientation developed by the magazine it has served to carry to a large part of the Spanish emigration the political situation of the Fourth International on most of the contemporary problems of national and international interests. At present there is no event of political importance to the revolutionary interest that transpires without the Fourth Internationalist point of view being heard among the emigrants in Mexico. Besides, the

work of penetration by our comrades among members of other organizations has produced, as a result, movements of opinion that favor our tendency and permit it to progressively assimilate larger nuclei. Concretely, this work is carried out among the socialists, anarchists, and affiliates of the Spanish UGT and CNT union federations.

The foregoing has no other object than to inform briefly the Secretariat of our existence as a Spanish Group of the Fourth International in Mexico, organized since the beginning of 1941. We know that you are informed of all this through Comrade G.

And it is in our character of a Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International that we address the Secretariat, exercising the right conferred upon us by the practice of democratic centralism, basis of the functioning of our organization, in order to present our opinion about the internal problems of the organization which we deal with in the following:

(a) Information on the international organization.

Only in exceptional cases and accidentally has this Group succeeded in acquainting itself in an incomplete manner with the very rare internal problems of a political and organic character, in spite of there being posed many problems of vital importance to the process of theoretical and practical development of our international organization.

In pointing out this lack of information we refer concretely to the lack of an internal bulletin or of a regular correspondence of a political and organic character that would keep all the sections and groups of the Fourth International informed about the political and organizational progress and development of each other.

(b) Relations between the international organization and the sections and groups.

As it follows from point (a), the lack of information makes it impossible for us to know whether there exist normal relations and of what kind between the Secretariat and the other sections and groups.

As far as our group is concerned and in spite of the fact that on our part and through Comrade G. we have kept the Secretariat informed of our existence and activity, we have not succeeded as yet in having the Secretariat establish political relations with us.

(c) Organization of the Fourth Internationalist movement.

Lacking internal information and without political organizational relations with the Secretariat, our organic functioning as a Spanish Group within the international

organization imposes on us a certain autonomy, not desired but nevertheless tolerated, that harms, we don't know how much, the development of our international movement. The lack of organic coherency harms at least, the unity of political expression, permitting at times the struggle of tendencies that begin in our groups to overflow the limits of the Fourth Internationalist movement and degenerate to the point of being lost for the Fourth International.

Character and importance of these facts.

The character and importance of these facts demand—in the opinion of the Spanish Group in Mexico—a maximum effort to correct them; avoiding in this way that the persistence and the development of these functional ills cripple our organization for any effective international action.

In every revolutionary movement any fault in organization has inevitable political consequences. Organizational methods and political line are interdependent. Conclusive evidence (of this) abounds in the international workers' movement.

The Fourth International has clearly recognized democratic centralism as the norm and practice of its internal functioning, basing itself precisely on experience. The effective exercise of this would liquidate the mentioned vices and would avoid the consequences that derive from them.

What is the internal reality of the Fourth International as an organization? There is no centralism because the directing international organism with its ghost-like character does not coordinate the sections among themselves, it loses control of them and does not unify the policy to be developed when faced with the events of world significance that come up. There is no democracy because without normal relations of the Secretariat with the sections, it cannot submit any problem for internal discussion and when, on remembering one of its duties as the Secretariat, it does so, it tries to establish the point of view of the Fourth International by itself and on its own, without taking into consideration the point of view of the sections.

It is well illustrated by experience that democratic centralism can exist in reality to the extent that democracy and centralism are fully put into practice; in the contrary case both suffer. Centralism without democracy is converted into autocracy that, lacking a solid democratic base, can only make itself effective in a bureaucratic-dictatorial form. In its turn, democracy without centralism is easily transformed into an anarchistic breakdown that ends fatally in impotence from the point of view

of the interests of revolutionary internationalism. For greater democracy, greater centralism and vice versa: there is no other solution to the organizational functioning of a revolutionary international.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International believes it to be its unpostponable duty to make the present criticism of the Secretariat, making use of its right as an integral part of the international organization and, besides, with full understanding of the responsibility that falls on the Fourth International in this historic period with relation to the better future of humanity.

There is no doubt that the revolutionary perspectives foreseen by the Fourth International begin to have immediate reality, particularly in Europe. The development of international events have proven the correctness of Marxist theory in general and of the Trotskyist in particular at the present moment. But, if, as we know, no revolution is possible without revolutionary theory, neither can we ignore that without an international revolutionary organization it is not possible to face successfully the historic task of the world revolution. The Fourth International, with the guarantee of its tradition and vigorous ideology, has posed before it the fundamental problem which in the last analysis is its organizational problem, whose favorable or unfavorable solution will have its inevitable repercussion in the international proletarian revolutionary movement.

While it is true that the Fourth International has suffered the direct consequences of the decline in the revolutionary movement, which explained its organizational crisis from its foundation until the present, it must be recognized that the revolutionary movement is now on the rise and that our organization must try in the shortest possible time to get in step with this accelerating rhythm, solving its organic problem first of all. The organic problem of our organization could be explained, consequently, in past years when the revolutionary task was fundamentally the defense of the revolutionary theory, but it can in no way be justified today when the fundamental revolutionary problem is the preparation for the international revolutionary action of the proletariat. The Secretariat in particular and the sections of the Fourth International in general must act, taking into account this evident change and enter fully into the practical solution of the persistent, acute and transcendental problem of the internal organic functioning which is the life blood that will invigor-

ate the international organization. There is no time to be lost: with the solution of the organizational problem of the Fourth International goes the future of the world revolution.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International understands perfectly the difficulties of a technical order that must be overcome in order to solve the organic crisis of the Fourth International; it is not unaware that the Secretariat is confronted with the most difficult problems, but, far from ignoring, on the contrary, affirms and evaluates its transcendental historical responsibility. Taking into account these considerations, our criticism is energetic and our first requests of the Secretariat, which serve as conclusions to our criticism, are precise:

1. That the Secretariat pose as an urgent task the necessity to hold in the briefest time possible, fixing a date, an International Conference of the Fourth International.

2. That the Secretariat begin the publication of an internal bulletin of the Fourth International in which must appear the specific material that serves as a basis for the preparatory discussions of the Conference; in it will be included the document that we now send to the Secretariat.

3. That the Secretariat begin to elaborate, collect and distribute all the necessary material for the preparation of the Conference—making an effort to see to it that it reaches all sections and groups of the Fourth International.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International understands that the Secretariat in particular and the other sections and groups of the organization in general, will know how to appreciate in our message the profound revolutionary sense that it possesses since we point out frankly the defects of our organization—although they may be involuntary—with the exclusive aim that they be corrected; we do not seek a division within the Fourth International, but rather the theoretical unification and the real live and dynamic existence of the organization internationally; in no way do we try to ignore nor to deny the importance of the Fourth International at the present time. Very much to the contrary, convinced of its potential strength and of its future decisive action, we strive for and hope that the Fourth International will be found at the height of its historical responsibility. The Fourth International must respond with acts before history of one hundred years of Marxism, in one way only: with the world revolution.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International, at the same time that it will continue to intensify its practical work, proposes from now on, to send to the Secretariat political discussion material, requesting that it be presented as such internationally. The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International hopes to receive a rapid answer from the Secretariat to the present message and is confident that political and fraternal relations will be established with it; it hopes also that these relations will acquire a greater and better positive content for the interests of the world revolution and of the Spanish proletariat in particular.

With our proletarian greetings.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARIAT FROM THE SPANISH GROUP IN MEXICO

Dear Comrades:

June 1944

In the May 13th number of *The Militant*, there appears an editorial article entitled "Trotskyism and the European Revolution"—about which we consider it indispensable to make the following observations:

1. Since the war began, and even before, there has existed no real international contact. The groups, parties and national sections have developed and acted as well as they could without any kind of ideological contacts or external aid. Because of this, the tactical homogeneity of the movement had of necessity to suffer, even the ideological homogeneity on the most difficult questions.

2. In view of this situation of fact, we believe that before all of the groups that arise in Europe or in any part of the world defending the program of the Fourth International, an attitude must be followed at the same time critical and friendly, which will permit us to come to a real ideological and organizational homogeneity with them. This cannot fall from the sky; it must be the result of a collective work of discussion and action. Collective discussion and action having been absent from our international ranks for more than five years, it is absurd, disorganizing, mortal danger for the future of our movement blindly to launch excommunications of groups that do not coincide completely with the S.W.P.'s own appreciation of the Fourth Internationalist policy. The most elementary prudence, the experimental attitude that constitutes the base of every materialist position advises criticizing as much as one believes convenient, but at the same time to establish the means for coming to a complete agreement and to an organizational understanding.

3. The above-mentioned editorial does exactly the contrary. Without a minute's warning, after having been well treated in previous numbers of *The Militant*, the Italian comrades are denounced as impostors, imbeciles, or muddleheads. It seems to us the most effective way of throwing them into the arms of the Workers Party. With this method, every group that arises in Europe will be tripped up immediately and lost for the Fourth International, at least momentarily.

4. Treatment of them like impostors and imbeciles is based only on the position of the Naples group with respect to the U.S.S.R., the spiniest question in our movement, about which only experience will decide who is right and of which the Fourth International has not made a "sine qua non" question for membership during the recent years. If the "impostor, imbecile or muddlehead" Shachtman is not still in the S.W.P., it is because he did not want to be; the authors of the editorial know that. As we have said in other places, the question of the defense of the U.S.S.R. passes over more and more to the plane of the internal struggle against Stalinism and to the international revolutionary struggle. The definition of the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state, considered inadequate by the Old Man himself, does not aid at all at the present moment in the problem of our attitude toward the U.S.S.R. That which is fundamental is the process which operates within it. Taking this into account, the definition as workers' state is more and more static and false. After this war, assuming that all the revolutions fail, it becomes inconceivable that the "degenerated workers' state" will continue. It will necessarily be transformed into a new bourgeois state. The totality of the political characteristics of the "degenerated workers' state" coincide with those of a bourgeois state; the economic characteristics are on the road to identity. Do the editors of *The Militant* pretend that it is more important for the future of the Russian and world revolution to define the Soviet Union as a workers' state and to speak of its unconditional defense than to carry out a proletarian and internationalist policy in each country? It would be blind formalism. Let our Italian comrades be really intransigent in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and in internationalism. This will help the Russian workers more against Stalinism than the slightly patriotic defensism of the S.W.P.

5. The editorial contains a reference to

the P.O.U.M. dragged in out of place. Practically, the P.O.U.M. has been nearer to the defensism of the U.S.S.R. carried out by the S.W.P. than that spoken of in Naples. We believe, nevertheless, that the Italian documents do contain mistaken concepts with regard to the internal policy that could give rise to centrist attitudes and conceptions. It would seem to us much more important and justified if the editorial had dealt with those aspects, insufficiently clarified by the Italian comrades. But they should not because of this be treated as impostors. Above all it is necessary to establish contact with them and to exhaust every possibility of understanding. But we cannot omit saying that it seems alarming to us that the thunder is concerning the Soviet question while questions that can lend themselves to centrist deviations are passed over unseen. This obliges us to state unequivocally that we consider the criticism and the opinions of the S.W.P. exclusively their own, in no way representative of the international organization.

6. Consequently, and in anticipation of the next discussion and international conference, we propose to the Secretariat:

(a) that no group or party be condemned for maintaining a position in respect to the U.S.S.R. different from the one laid down in the program of the Fourth International.

(b) that with respect to the groups that arise there be applied a critical attitude fundamentally directed to their position on the national arena and with respect to proletarian internationalism.

(c) that no break be made with any group ahead of time, that is, before having been able to discuss seriously with it, except in cases of manifest opportunism.

(d) that the international discussion already proposed and the practical preparations for the next world conference be carried out.

Yours and for the Fourth International,
SPANISH GROUP

LETTER TO SPANISH GROUP FROM
THE SECRETARIAT

Nov. 25, 1944

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter and the accompanying document dated Sept. 1. We regret the delay in replying to your communications. But the fault is not ours... We did not receive your communications until Oct. 31. We would like additionally to call to your attention the fact that we have sent two letters to the Spaniard in the last several months to the addresses that were

given us. Both of these letters have been returned to us by the postal authorities because of incorrect addresses. I hope you have received our letter by this time. Please acknowledge receipt of it. Moreover, for almost a year we have had no communication from you and have received only one single copy of your organ. As a matter of fact, the first detailed news of your work came to us from Mike after his conversations with you.

It is, of course, improper that contact between you and us has been so poor. In view of the facts that I have related, we feel that we cannot assume responsibility for this.

Be that all as it may, let us now agree to organize a definite interchange of correspondence between us and overcome the defects and derelictions of the past. For our part we will answer all the communications you send us promptly and hope you can arrange a more direct method of correspondence which does not entail the long delay of your last letter.

The International is alive and is every day proving the vitality not only of our program, but of our cadre. In the last six months, as things have begun opening up, we have established more and more contact with our co-workers throughout the world.

[Here follows a description of the work of the Secretariat.]

So you see, dear comrades, the picture is by no means bad nor the Secretariat as "ghostlike" as you had imagined. As a matter of fact, we now stand on the eve of a great expansion of our work. And here we agree with you: the European Revolution is rising and it is our duty to perfect our organization and our work so that we may decisively intervene in the events and organize the masses behind our banner...

We agree with you that it would be very desirable to have a conference right away but our political acts cannot be determined solely by what is desirable but by what is objectively possible. Any sober consideration of the question must convince one that as yet it is impossible to hold a representative gathering. To set a date now for such a conference is distinctly premature. No one can tell whether the conference will be able to be held on the promised date. We can begin setting dates only when practical considerations make it possible. We approve of your proposal to begin the issuance of a discussion bulletin where all important problems can be considered as well as news and information of our various friends related. We had been discussing such a proj-

ect here for a number of weeks, and have been gathering material for the bulletin which we plan to issue. We will, of course, include your contribution in the bulletin.

We trust that with the exchange of letters a regular correspondence has been opened between us.

Yours fraternally,

P.S. We have just received your communication of June 1944 relative to the editorial in the May 13 number of *The Militant*. You advise us that our position on the USSR is "the spiniest question in our movement, about which only experience will decide who is right." We must advise you that we have no intention of putting a question mark over our position relative to the Soviet Union, which is part and parcel of our world program. Proceeding from this "question mark," it is natural for you to propose "that no group or party be condemned for maintaining a position in respect to the USSR different from the one laid down in the program of the Fourth International." Isn't this a proposal that our Secretariat embark on a policy of conciliationism towards opponents and enemies of the Fourth International? The Fourth International has a finished program, a tested cadre and a firm organization. We can fulfill our duty to our comrades-in-arms in Europe, and throughout the world, we can aid them in the building of strong parties, only if we display the greatest programmatic intransigence and organizational firmness. Such a principled struggle on our part will prove a far more effective weapon in helping to build genuine and strong Trotskyist parties on the continent than any expressions of sentimental solidarity at the expense of clarity. Tactical flexibility will be of aid to us in winning new adherents to the Fourth International, in building the Fourth International, only on the premise that we remain organizationally firm and programmatically irreconcilable.

Your dire predictions about throwing the Italian comrades "into the arms of the Workers Party" have, as you can see, not been borne out. Through our methods we helped them organize a real party on firm foundations and on the program of the Fourth International; not part of the program, but the whole program.

LETTER TO THE RCP (ENGLAND)
FROM THE SECRETARIAT

May 5, 1944

Dear Friend:

We received your letter of March 30. We are all extremely heartened by the unifica-

tion of the WIL and the RSL and the successful launching of the unified Trotskyist party, the Revolutionary Communist Party. You say, "The fusion will certainly strengthen our hands here." We are convinced that that is true. In the rising class struggles, in Europe, England is surely destined to play a great role, and our British Trotskyist organization can unquestionably emerge as the recognized party of the British revolutionary movement. What is necessary today is to consolidate the fusion, to weld the party into one homogeneous unit based on our tested program and principles, and to harden the cadre in preparation for the great events ahead.

We are all proud of the role that our British party played in the recent struggles and how staunchly and courageously our party fought for the interests of the working class. We have previously sent by one of our friends the resolution of the American SWP adopted at their 1941 conference just before the Minneapolis trial. It is our opinion that many of the observations and conclusions of that resolution are fully applicable to the English situation today and are deserving of the closest study and consideration by our English comrades.

As your letter indicates, our international ideas and perspectives are standing up to the test of history, and more than ever it is now necessary to solidify our ranks and to make all the necessary practical preparations for the building of strong parties throughout Europe and for that matter throughout the world. You speak in this regard of Italy and the headway "our people" are making there. We have some very definite ideas on this very important subject and are anxious to reach full and complete agreement with you on these matters.

First on the Italian group: the Manifesto issued by them deliberately attempts to straddle the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union, the necessity for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. Should the Russian workers support the war against Hitler, even though it is led by the Stalinist bureaucracy? The workers of Italy, as of Russia, have instinctively answered this question in the affirmative. The author of this Manifesto, who apparently wishes to deny such defense, felt the necessity of equivocating. This may well be the technique that will be employed in the coming days by centrist groups in Europe. We must

be on guard against all such attempts to straddle the Russian question; we must be suspicious of every attempt at evasion or outright deviation.

The Manifesto does not call for the defense of the Soviet Union. It does not characterize the Soviet Union as a workers' state. Therefore, the Manifesto cannot be considered a Trotskyist document, therefore these are not our people.

Furthermore, the Manifesto bears the signature of the secretary of the "Provisional Center for the Building of the Fourth International." Isn't it obvious that what is involved here is a deliberate ruse to pretend that the author is a Trotskyist while at the same time denying by implication the existence of the Trotskyist Fourth International?

In the developing political movement on the Continent there will be no lack of people who claim to be "Trotskyists." We can help the revolutionary workers hew their path to the revolutionary party by separating the genuine Trotskyists from the impostors and muddleheads. We must not permit our instinctive sympathy for any insurgent group fighting under the difficult conditions which exist in Europe today to betray us into political conciliationism.

The Fourth International has a finished program, a tested cadre and a firm organization. We can fulfill our duty to our European comrades-in-arms, we can aid them in the building of strong parties of the Fourth International only if we display the greatest programmatic intransigence and organizational firmness. Such a principled struggle on our part will prove a far more effective weapon in helping to build genuine and strong Trotskyist parties on the Continent than any expressions of sentimental solidarity at the expense of clarity.

That is the way, it seems to us, we should approach the problem, not only of the present Italian group, but of all groups and individuals that will emerge in the coming period on the Continent.

We do not, of course, propose to turn our backs on the new manifestations in the labor movement. On the contrary, we will devote great attention to them and will work energetically to win all promising groups to our program and party. Our friends should try to work within any centrist movement where we have reasonable hope of achieving fruitful results. But we must clearly distinguish between our principled position and aims and our tactical approach. As a matter of fact, tactical flex-

ibility will be an aid in winning new adherents to the Fourth International only on the premise that we remain organizationally firm and programmatically irreconcilable.

We are anxious to hear your reaction to our position. We hope that you are in complete agreement with that position.

We intend to write our friend in Italy along the same lines. We think that there is a tinge of conciliationism in his behaviour, judging by his letters. We are of the opinion that his work, as well as that of any of our other friends, will bear real fruit only if it is oriented along the line of our general policy.

Yours fraternally,

LETTER TO THE SECRETARIAT AND TO ALL SECTIONS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

By a Group of European Comrades

April 1944

This letter is addressed to you by members of different European sections of the Fourth International in order to request your intervention in a most important question, i.e., the situation in our German section, more precisely, the political line followed by comrades of the I.K.D. at present in exile.

We are convinced that those members of the Fourth International who have been able to follow the political development of the leadership of the I.K.D. are well aware of this political line. We will, therefore, restrict ourselves here to a brief reminder of some of these positions which may serve to illustrate the object of this letter.

The document known as "Three Theses" on the National Question in Europe is considered by the comrades of the I.K.D. themselves as one of the best expressions of their position. In the first of these "Three Theses" the successes gained by German fascism in the past period are listed as lasting victories.

This Thesis defines fascism, not as a political form of imperialism resulting from the disintegration of bourgeois democracy and the defeats suffered by the proletarian revolution in a number of countries, but as a "new form of exploitation." It should be remembered that this document was written in October 1941, only a few months after the long struggle in our ranks against Burnham's views. Burnham visualised capitalism being replaced by a new form of exploitation, instead of by the liberation of mankind by socialism. The expression

"new form of exploitation" used in the "Three Theses" thus inevitably appears as a semi-capitulation to the conceptions of the "managerial revolution." Of course, the comrades of the I.K.D. have not followed Burnham's path; but their theoretical mistake has no less serious consequences. They see Fascism triumphant all over Europe. They do not see that the regime in most occupied countries is not of the fascist type, but is a Bonapartist regime supported by German imperialism. Consequently they believe that the prospect of Socialism is deferred for a very long period. At the very moment when German fascism was beginning to decline and when new revolutionary waves were preparing within the imperialist war, comrade Held wrote: "Europe will be fascist for the next historical period." In the "Three Theses" the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe is abandoned in favor of a classless policy of defense of democracy and of national liberation; this means in fact a relapse into the People's Front policy.

The I.K.D. comrades will protest against our evaluation of their positions. That no other conclusion can be deduced is clearly shown, however, by Brink's article, a practical application (!) of the theoretical conception (!) contained in the "Three Theses." Marxism sees in the class struggle the motor of human progress. In Brink's article we find the fundamentally opposite conception: class promiscuity is there advocated as a school for Bolshevik-Leninists!

In a more recent article by M., democracy becomes an entity above the classes. Democracy is the aim, in decaying imperialist France as well as in semi-colonial China. No greater distortion of the theory of the permanent revolution could be imagined, and this is developed in the name of a section of the Fourth International!

* * *

These conceptions have already been attacked a number of times, especially in the "Fourth International." But articles by individual comrades cannot replace responsible organizational resolutions when it is a matter of theoretical conceptions and political position which are entirely alien to the Fourth International.

Far from being impressed by the articles directed against them the comrades of the I.K.D. have grown more persistent in their views and they now, after many years of silence, taking advantage of the solidarity of the English organization, have published a collection of articles developing their

views. This political act might appear to be of little importance if we considered only the number of copies issued. It is not, however, the quantity of paper that is to be taken into consideration, but the fact that a political program opposed to our program is being publicised by the German section of the Fourth International.

Every Bolshevik-Leninist will understand that we are not confronted here with theoretical differences which merely might eventually give rise to political differences in a more or less indefinite future. The European revolution is on the order of the day. In the course of the past months it has made its first steps in Italy. The coming months will be full of revolutionary events. The stages through which the revolution will pass cannot be foretold; but it is obvious to all of us that, more still than after the 1914-18 war, the struggle of the German proletariat will be decisive for the European revolution. By entering such a grand period with so erroneous a program as that of the I.K.D., we would more than damn ourselves before history. It would mean to betray Socialism and to deliver the European masses bound hand and foot to the maneuvers of Allied imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Having stressed the gravity of this internal danger, we wish to add that we are not asking for measures of expulsion. The comrades of the I.K.D. have known difficult years of exile, and have long fought for our program. It is necessary to save these comrades in spite of themselves. This can only be done by our sections, especially by those who still enjoy a relative legality. Their energetic interventions should ruthlessly condemn the positions of the I.K.D. and propose measures to ensure the political rearmament of our German section. It will be a task of vital importance for our international organization, and also a first act of solidarity towards the proletarian masses of Europe.

We are making this appeal, confident that it will be heard.

With Bolshevik-Leninist greetings.

LETTER FROM NATALIA ON THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

Sept. 23, 1944

Dear Friend:

From your reply I conclude that my letter was written far too generally. I shall try to concretize it.

I do not propose that we take off the slogan "defense of the USSR" but I find

that it must be pushed back to the second or third rank. In the process of war and especially of victories, its content has sharply altered. It is necessary to lay this bare tirelessly. The slogan of the defense of the USSR comprised in it a two-fold aim: a) the struggle with the internal enemy—Stalin's regime, and b) the struggle against foreign intervention. The final goal of the defense of the USSR is the world revolution.

"I consider that the main source of the dangers for the USSR in the present international situation is Stalin and the oligarchy headed by him. The struggle against them in the eyes of public opinion is indubitably connected for me with the defense of the USSR." (L.D.'s article on Stalin after the Finnish experience.)

The unconditional defense of the USSR was always for us a factor of a merciless struggle against the Bonapartist bureaucracy right up to its overthrow and the reestablishment of Soviet democracy.

The military triumphs have strengthened the position of the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy); reaction is growing—from this it is necessary to draw the conclusion with regard to the slogan of the defense of the USSR. You write that it is necessary to take our starting point from that which is; base ourselves on facts. Absolutely correct. But after all this means that the slogan of the military defense of the USSR withdraws to the background in the face of the new events.

The Soviet land stands on the threshold of revolution or counter-revolution. To carry through the counter-revolution under the conditions of encirclement by the revolutionary ferment in Europe is as difficult as to intrench the basic conquests of the October revolution in the reactionary encirclement of the Stalinist regime. When you underscore in your letter the meaning of that which is and the facts on which one must base oneself in his judgments—you apparently have in mind the still unliquidated nationalized sector of property and planned economy. But after all it is impermissible to analyze this most important fact outside of the general present Soviet conditions which could not have failed to find their reflection also in this fact. The nationalization which was carried out in the epoch of revolution had as its goal: the equality and raising of the living standards of the masses. In the conditions of advancing reaction and in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy it has still been

preserved, but has moved away from its initial task (as has the Red Army). The Bonapartist bureaucracy has used the greatest conquests of the revolution for its own personal interests. In addition to facts it is necessary to take into account the tendency of the development of this or that political phenomenon. Without such an accounting it is impossible to lead, or to prepare or to carry on propaganda, or to sketch out perspectives, etc., etc. In the pre-October epoch the Mensheviks, basing themselves on facts, predicted the crushing of the October revolution, assigning to it a two week period of existence. The Bolsheviks basing themselves on facts conducted a confident agitation for the overturn. How is it then? The evolution of the tendencies of political events must take into account, analyze, discuss from different standpoints right up to sharp polemics, right up to differences of opinion—in this consists the living creative work of the organization, its preparation for the impending events; otherwise it is doomed to inaction.

The Soviet bureaucracy, the most reactionary in the world, is pushing planned economy not in the direction of socialism but of capitalism. With the termination of the war the question of planned economy will be posed in all its sharpness. There is ripening a clash of planned economy with the Bonapartist bureaucracy which has strengthened its positions by victories. The contradictions may become unbearable and the break with planned economy can confront the bureaucracy as a vital necessity. Socialism or the restoration of capitalism? This most important problem of the USSR must be put in the center of our attention. A mortal danger is threatening the Soviet land, and the source of this danger is the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy). The war is not ended; the external enemy still exists. But at the beginning of the war we viewed it as the most dangerous one and the struggle against the bureaucratic regime ceded its place to the military struggle; at the present time matters must be put just the other way. It is necessary to explain this to the Soviet workers as well as to the workers of the whole world; we must with all the necessary clarity warn them about the threatening danger to the first workers' state.

Military victories of the Red Army cannot assure the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy; military defense does not lead

to the revolutionary struggle against the Stalinist regime. The military defense of the USSR in the present world situation has become transformed into the problem of struggle against Stalinism.

A few words about Soviet literature. In your opinion it does not reflect Soviet reality—this is correct, but not entirely, not wholly but only to a certain degree. And this certain degree must be taken into account. The war propaganda could not have failed to have its effect on the Soviet masses. The war, what was lived through—not only the sufferings but also the experience—has taught Soviet citizens a great deal. They are feeling more confident of themselves, more independent, more demanding and this has already found its expression in the local correspondence in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* despite the bureaucratic vise and “command.” But this is not all. In the same papers also is reflected the watchfulness and alarm of the bureaucracy in this connection and it is already issuing out calls for the restoration of order.

LETTER FROM MARTIN ON THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

October 1944

Natalia's letter draws attention to the accelerated pace of the Stalinist degeneration in the conduct of the war. The political policy of the bureaucracy is the most vulgar nationalism. There is abundant evidence on this side of the question, and the facts cited by Natalia add more concrete instances to fill out the picture whose outlines we have long known. We do not know, however, what sentiments animate the Soviet masses in their unprecedented struggles and sacrifices. I personally am strongly convinced that the conquests and the memories of October play a bigger part than the Stalinist appeals to the past glories of Czars and Czarist generals. And, I do not for a minute forget that the objective logic of the Red Army achievements in the war against the Nazis regardless of the officially declared aims, is profoundly revolutionary.

We know, and we have always said that the Soviet Union cannot be carried through the transition period from capitalism to socialism without workers' democracy. That is the reason we call for the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy and the reinstatement of workers' democracy. By this formula we sharply distinguish our position from that of the fetishists of democracy who regard it as an end. For us it is a means to an end, i.e., the construction of

the socialist society by the creative efforts of the masses and international collaboration between them. We are no less convinced that the transitional period which has assumed the form of a degenerating workers' state dominated by a nationalistic bureaucracy cannot be “permanent,” or even long-lived.

The fundamental alternative confronting the Soviet Union is and remains: Forward to socialism, or back to capitalism. By this formula we draw a line between ourselves and all the profound “theorists” of a new bureaucratic “class.” We have less reason than ever to reconsider our conclusions on these two basic propositions.

The bankrupt bureaucracy was capable of producing only the one evil which it promised to avoid, and to avoid which, it sold out the international revolution—a war on Soviet soil.

The “theory” of a new “bureaucratic” class interposing itself between defeated capitalism and unrealized socialism was given a certain superficial plausibility only by its bolder representatives, such as Bruno R., who assimilated the regimes of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin into one homogeneous system. The sorry fate of Italian and German fascism, after a brief rule of 20 years in one case and 10 years in the other, seems to me to have knocked the props out from under Bruno R's “theory” of “La Bureaucratisme du Monde.” It is not necessary even to speak of his half-hearted imitators and their anemic new nationally-limited class of “bureaucrats” in one country.

The national-reformist policy of the bureaucracy, in its degenerating course of reaction against the October revolution, can only—unless it is overthrown—pile quantity upon quantity, and this in turn must, at a certain point, result in a qualitative change in the state inherited from the great revolution. I think we must look for signs of such a change in the field of Soviet economy. Politically the bureaucracy seems to have done all it can do to erase the revolution. By their politics they brought the Soviet economic system to the very brink of overthrow by Nazi militarism, and now leave it exposed, in a terribly weakened position, to the still mightier and as yet unspent military power of the Anglo-American bloc.

The same type of superficial thinking, characterized by the attempt to form political conclusions without reference to economics—the type of thinking which deter-

mined an attitude toward the Soviet Union in war without any prior estimation of its class character; which, in another version lightmindedly assumed that the Stalin-Hitler pact would be long-lasting because of the "affinity" of the two regimes—is now quite convinced of the durability of the Anglo-American-Soviet pact of Teheran. In reality the irreconcilable conflict of economic systems completely excludes the possibility of an Anglo-American toleration of the Soviet economic system over one-sixth of the earth any longer than it is compulsory by reason of necessity, i.e., the relation of forces and the disunity in the imperialist camp. If we leave aside the prospect of workers' revolutions in the capitalist states, or such a state of unrest and insurgence as that which followed the first world war—and it is just these details that are omitted in all varieties of literary politics—then there is no room to doubt that an economic, and, if necessary, a military offensive of the allies against the Soviet Union is predetermined as soon as accounts are finally settled with the Nazis and the Japanese; perhaps even before.

Of course, there are all kinds of difficulties and complications, but—again, if we eliminate the detail of workers' revolution—the only serious question is whether the required economic concessions, opening up the Russian market to Anglo-American exploitation and, thereby, the overthrow of the Soviet economic system, are to be accomplished by war or by economic pressure and threats of war. Have such fatal concessions already been tentatively agreed upon? What was the real meaning of Eric Johnston's visit to the Soviet Union? There is ample ground for the deepest suspicion flowing from the inexorable logic of the situation even if we disregard such surface indications. But so far we do not know of any basic infringements on the Soviet economic system made during the war, and we therefore have no reason to change our attitude toward it in its relation to the capitalist world.

On the other hand, we do know that the nationalized property system permitting state planning and control, (even though it is monstrously distorted and crippled by bureaucratic mismanagement and privilege), revealed an enormous power under conditions of war. We Trotskyists had more confidence in the vitality of Soviet economy than anyone else, including the conservative and cowardly bureaucracy, but all our calculations were far surpassed. The re-

sults of the Soviet-Nazi war must have had profound effects on the Russian masses. We are shut off from every scrap of authentic information on this score. But how can anyone doubt that their self-confidence has been raised and that the returning soldiers will demand something from their victories bought at such a heavy price? What will they do when the bureaucracy offers them nothing but a still more odious oppression and an even sharper division between the privileged caste and the mass of the people? We had better not assume, prematurely, that the Russian workers have said their last word. We had better wait and see what is going to happen before we even think of playing with the idea of changing or modifying our policy which, of all schools of thought on the Russian question, is the only one that turned out to be based on the realities of the situation; the only policy that stood up under the test of such a devastating war that, as Churchill rightly said, no other regime in history could have survived it.

Our "Russian" policy, however, is only one section of a complete program based on a fundamental class concept and a world view. Our active political slogans of the day must always be consistent with our general program and express that phase of it which has the greatest urgency at the moment. It is important always to keep in mind this subordinate relationship of active slogans to the program as a whole and not to identify the one with the other. Serious politics is impossible without a firm program of Marxist internationalism; those who dispense with this chart produce nothing, as we have seen, but speculation, guesswork and irresponsible experimentation. We do not change our program. No amount of criticism and impatience can modify our "conservatism" in this respect. But to stand firmly by the program, naturally, does not authorize us to repeat the same active political slogans all the time with the same degree of emphasis. That would reduce the art of politics to memory work, and, as the Old Man once remarked, make every sectarian a master politician.

The art of politics consists in knowing what to do next; that is, how to apply the program of Marxism to the specific situation of the day. We do not change any of our slogans insofar as they represent, each in its own way, the various sections of our complete program. But if we are alive to the complexities and quick changes in the world political situation, as well as that at home,

we must always be ready to change the emphasis with which we advance one or more slogans while holding others more or less in reserve, as the situation may require.

We think Natalia's letter must be considered from this point of view. When the Nazi military machine threatened the destruction of the Soviet Union every communist had to put the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union in first place. Those who denied this defense were then no longer comrades having a different opinion on a theoretical question, as Morrison still wants to treat them, as if nothing had happened, but people on the other side of the barricade with whom comradely arguments were out of season. But this fight for the defense of the Soviet Union against Nazi militarism has been decisively won. The problem will most probably arise again, with another power in place of the Nazis, but that will take some time.

The political reality of the present day is: The military, economic and moral collapse of the Hitler "new order in Europe" which some people even in our own ranks took far too seriously; the military occupation of the continent by Anglo-American and Soviet troops; the indicated beginning of a workers' revolutionary movement and the conspiracy of the imperialists to crush it with the active aid of the Stalinists. Our active slogans, the slogans which we put in first place and emphasize in all our agitation, must correspond with this political reality.

In our opinion there can be no question of abandoning the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union; in principle it retains all its validity and will most likely acquire burning urgency again at a later stage of events. But to continue to shout this slogan in the present situation would be the greatest political ineptitude, putting us out of tune with events. All our emphasis now must be placed on the defense of the European Revolution against the conspirators. Our program gives us all the guidance we need, first to evaluate the problem theoretically and, on that basis, to deduce the appropriate active political slogans of the day.

RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN EUROPE

Issued from the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party (England)

FOR DISCUSSION IN THE PARTY

November 11, 1944

1. The Revolutionary Communist Party condemns and fights against the national oppression of one nation by another; it supports the right of complete self-determination and political secession of every nationally oppressed people.

2. In the epoch of imperialism and its present phase of imperialist war, all the objective conditions demand that a genuine struggle for national freedom must be linked to the program of the Socialist revolution and the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe.

3. Whilst condemning the Nazi oppression of the nations in Europe, the Trotskyists equally condemn the national oppression which is carried out by the French imperialists, the Belgian, the Dutch, and in particular the British and American imperialists. We conduct a ruthless exposure of the national oppression carried out in the name of democracy, not only in the colonial empires, but also in Europe, and by the satellites of Anglo-American imperialism.

4. The role of the European ruling classes is clear to see. They collaborated as a class with the foreign Nazi oppressor and now seek to play the same role as agents of the military victors—Anglo-American imperialism and of the Kremlin. Without the active support of Stalinism and Social Democracy the capitalists would long have lost all semblance of support among the workers and peasants. By subordinating the working class and its organizations to the leadership of the bourgeoisie and to the program of Anglo-American imperialism and Stalinism, the Social Democrat and Stalinist parties play a counter-revolutionary role. It is the duty of revolutionists, while striving at all stages of the struggle to win the rank and file to the banner of Trotskyism, to oppose and expose the role of these parties and their auxiliary organisations.

5. Despite their undoubted support from many thousands of the best proletarian fighters, who see in the Resistance Movements not an instrument for the replacement of one master by another, but rather the instrument for the overthrow of capitalism and the emancipation of the working class, these National Resistance Movements in Europe today are agencies of one

or another group of imperialist powers. As movements they are incapable of genuinely struggling for national freedom.

6. To these movements, and particularly to the leadership, the proletarian party and the proletariat must adopt an attitude of implacable hostility, opposing and exposing their class roots and anti-proletarian policy; explaining that such leaders seek national freedom only as part of their program of subjugation of the proletariat together with other peoples; and demonstrating that there is no possibility of genuine national freedom along that road.

7. In opposition to the military formations of the bourgeois and petit bourgeois-led and inspired Resistance Movements, the proletarian party must counterpose and organize independent military formations of the working class, as well as its own independent military formations.

8. The mass movements of resistance are, nevertheless, important fields for revolutionary activity. Within the Resistance Movements the class contradictions manifest themselves, and in some cases are carried to the point of civil war. So also do the class conflicts express themselves between the governments and the militias. As part of its tactics the revolutionary Party must send members into these Resistance Movements to create a conscious proletarian opposition to the bourgeois and petit bourgeois leaders, and thus help to destroy the influence of the bourgeoisie over militant sections of the working class and petit bourgeoisie. We oppose the attempts of the bourgeoisie to disarm the militias and incorporate them into the structure of the bourgeois state. We are for the complete independence of the militias and for proletarian state power. On this policy the best members of the Resistance Movements can be won for the socialist revolution.

9. In all European countries the bourgeoisie has outlived its progressive phase and now plays an absolutely reactionary historical role. The bourgeois democratic revolution has long been completed in the Western countries. In the Balkans the bourgeoisie is incapable of completing the democratic revolution. Bound to the landlords by countless economic and social ties; faced with landless, hungry peasants demanding the land, and with a proletariat which has assimilated the experience of its Western class brothers—demanding inroads into bourgeois property rights—the capitalist class of the Balkans cannot solve the problems of the democratic revolution. Only the

proletariat can take mankind a step forward through the socialist revolution.

10. The conception that the Nazi domination of Europe levelled everything and united the workers with the capitalist class in face of the common problem of national subjugation, is a capitulation to reactionary bourgeois and petit bourgeois politics. So also is the conception that the next phase of the revolution in Europe is basically equivalent to the democratic revolution which the proletariat must lead. It is necessary to brand these ideas as a petit bourgeois deviation from Marxism and from the Fourth International.

11. A bourgeois democratic phase in the next immediate stages of the evolution of European society is most likely in the Western states. This would have no stable character and would represent, in essence, not the democratic revolution, but the bourgeois counter-revolution. From one state to another the regimes may alter, expressing themselves as military dictatorships or as unstable democratic forms of government.

12. The proletariat, however, must inscribe the transitional democratic slogans into the socialist program as a powerful means of arousing and uniting the masses in the struggle for power. The Constituent Assembly, freedom of press, speech, together with the slogan for Soviets, the fraternization of the workers and soldiers of the warring powers—all these and other transitional slogans and demands will arise out of the concrete and objective course of the revolutionary upheavals. But they must be conceived as part of, determined by, and integrated with the slogans and ideas of the socialist program and workers' power, and the unification of the peoples of Europe through the United Socialist States of Europe.

13. The Great Russian Stalinist bureaucracy stifles the national aspirations of the national minorities within the Soviet Union. While subordinating the struggle for independence to the defense of the Soviet Union, the Revolutionary Communist Party stands for the right of the Ukrainian, Baltic and other Soviet minorities to secede from the Stalinist Soviet Union and form independent socialist states. But such secession is a reactionary utopia unless it is conceived of as part of a struggle for Soviet democracy, the overthrow of Stalinism and for the unification of the democratized U.S.S.R. with the United Socialist States of Europe.

14. In general, the self-determination of nations is an illusion and a utopia in the

present epoch of imperialism and while capitalism continues to exist as the economic system of production. For the solution of the national and socialist problems, the proletariat must place itself at the head of society as a class. In this it must be united as a class under the leadership of the Trotskyist parties, under the banner of the Fourth International.

PROGRAM OF WORKERS' COMMUNIST PARTY (ITALIAN TROTSKYISTS)

Reprinted from *Il Militante*, October 1944

The Workers' Communist Party affirms its position of struggle against collaboration with the Government, with the committees of national liberation and for the formation of a socialist-communist government upon the following transitional program:

- (1) Abolition of the monarchy and the institution of a democratic republic.
- (2) Freedom of speech, press; freedom to organize, strike, demonstrate, etc.
- (3) A Constituent Assembly and the holding of immediate elections with the participation of all parties.
- (4) The right of universal, direct and secret suffrage for all citizens, soldiers and members of both sexes 18 years of age and over.
- (5) Complete separation of Church and State: application of a progressive tax on the wealth and property of the Church.
- (6) Compulsory free education, with no religious instruction until 18 years of age. Free technical education for all—without taxation.
- (7) Progressive tax on all capital revenue.
- (8) Monetary stabilization.
- (9) Abolition of the black market and all powers of distribution to the cooperatives, trade unions, and consumers' councils.
- (10) Stabilization of salaries and a minimum wage and stipend, corresponding to the economic needs and guaranteed by the state, on a sliding scale in relation to the cost of living.
- (11) Workers' control of industrial production, insurance, banking, transportation, land, through internal commissions.
- (12) Confiscation without indemnity of all industries and capital of Fascist proprietors and societies and their operation by the state under the direction

of the trade unions and workers' councils.

(13) Construction of experimental stations upon state territory.

(14) Expropriation without indemnity and nationalization of all fascist landed property; such properties to be assigned to the Agricultural Workers' Councils and poor peasants. The same applies to rich landowners.

(15) Abolition of all peasants' debts and interests owed to banks and rich proprietors.

(16) Industrialization of agriculture with a new scientific system of work and cultivation under the direction of Agricultural Workers' Councils and poor peasants.

(17) The state must assure just prices for agricultural products and enlarge subsidies for direct cultivators and agricultural workers.

(18) De-fascistization of all administrations under the direction of the trade unions and workers' councils. De-fascistization of the armed forces, election of officers by soldiers' councils. Abolition of social distinctions. The military is to receive pay equal to that of the industrial workers. Military schools are to be under the direction of trade unions and workers' councils.

(19) The partisans must be considered as regular soldiers and must keep their arms.

a) Formation of armed squads of workers and peasants under the direction of trade unions for the defense of all democratic liberties and against reaction.

(20) Immediate publication of the armistice terms between the Allies and Italy.

(21) Independence for all Italian colonies.

(22) For an immediate, just and democratic peace for all peoples. At the conclusion of the war, we must demand a socialist peace as against the aims and decisions for an imperialist peace; and the constitution of a government of workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils.

(23) Liberty and national independence for all colonial people from the oppression of the imperialist powers.

(24) Reconstruction of the world based upon the freedom of transportation and commerce, through an international organization with all peoples having

free access to the world's raw materials and the raising of the economic and industrial level of all colonial and backward countries.

(25) The constitution of the Socialist United States of Europe as part of the World Socialist Federation.

LETTER OF ADHERENCE TO THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

From the Italian Party

The Bolshevik-Leninist movement which heads The Militant, the Provisional National Center and the Internationalist Communist Workers Party has decided to adhere to the Fourth International.

It declares that only a World Congress of the parties and movements adhering to Bolshevik-Leninist principles and the program of the Fourth International on the bases of the experience of October of 1917 and of the first four Congresses of the Communist International can definitely build the Fourth International.

The revolutionary movement of Italy is not only tied and dependent on the revolutionary events of Europe but its success depends on its ties with the workers' struggle of all countries.

We call the workers everywhere to be vigilant against the intervention of international finance in coalition with reformism, Stalinism which attempt through "bourgeois democracy" to crush the revolutionary movement of the European countries.

The task of the revolutionary vanguard, in this period, is to regroup itself around the program and principles which guide the Fourth International.

LETTER OF SECRETARIAT TO ITALIANS

January 2, 1945

Dear Friend:

I had a long talk with Phil and also studied the first issue of the paper. We are all extremely gratified that your friends have succeeded in holding a conference and that the voice of Trotskyism is beginning to be heard in Italy.

Permit us to offer a criticism of the 25 point program. First, and most important, everything seems to be included in it, but nothing stands out in it. In other words, it reads more like a catalogue of various demands rather than a fighting program of action, a guide for agitation, what to do next. We will discuss this with you more fully another time.

We wish in this letter to discuss with you particularly "The Letter of Adherence." Frankly we are very disturbed by it. It states "only a World Congress of the parties and movements adhering to B. L. principles and the program of the Fourth International...can definitely build the Fourth International."

According to this statement the Fourth International is as yet not an organization at all; simply a program. As you know, this is not in accordance with the facts as the letter itself virtually admits, because it declares that its organization has decided to adhere to this "non-existent" Fourth International.

"Only a World Congress...can definitely build the Fourth International." Thus the letter attempts to wipe off the slate twenty years of struggle and achievement.

A lot has happened between "the experience of October 1917 and the first four Congresses of the CI" and today. To mention just a few things: The proclamation for the organization of the Fourth after Hitler's rise to power. Five years of struggle against the centrists and opportunists who agreed "in principle" with this program only to oppose it in practice. The 1938 Founding Conference of the F. I., which not only adopted a program, but also formally founded an organization, adopted a set of statutes and elected a leading body, an executive committee and a secretariat. Two years later was held an Emergency Conference, which removed the Shachtmanite turncoats, reorganized these bodies, and issued the Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution. The Fourth International possesses not only a tested program but a firm organization. And the program, we know, cannot be achieved except through the instrumentality of the organization. That is why we are always on guard against all attempts to deny, explicitly or implicitly, the existence of the Fourth International, in order to escape from organizational obligations and discipline.

Joining the Fourth International means not only adhering to its program but also to its discipline.

We hope your friends will discuss our letter in the comradely spirit in which it is intended and will arrive at full agreement with us.

We will defer action on the "Letter of Adherence" until we hear from your friends.