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15¢

CONTENTS

A Statement On The Internal Situation
By Oscar Shoenfeld and Alfred Russel. Page 1

We Arrive At A Line, By A. Roland 7

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A STATEMENT ON THE INTERNAL SITUATION

By Oscar Shoenfeld and Alfred Russel

The authors of this article returned to New York on October 20 after an absence of nearly ten months. We had stored up considerable energy and eagerness to get back into the work of the party.

We had read all the Fourth Internationals for 1944 and the Militants from July on. We had read Morrison's criticisms of Hansen's article in the F.I., the censure of the four, the refusal to publish Farrell's letter, Morrison's proposal that his answer to Macdonald be printed and his comments on Comrade Martin's education proposal.

We found eight internal bulletins waiting for us, plus a New York City membership meeting at which an alarming atmosphere was manifest. Needless to say, we were very glad to be back, but were dismayed at the internal atmosphere within the party.

We have each been in the Trotskyist movement for many years. We do not mention this in order to appeal to our authority, but to make clear that to us the condition of our party is of great concern. We feel it an elementary obligation to speak out frankly and tell the party members exactly how we feel about the questions that have arisen during our absence.

It may be that many comrades are weary of the mass of material which has been written; they may have made up their minds. We appeal to the comrades to be patient with us and study carefully what we have to say.

To our knowledge there are no differences between the "majority" and the "minority" of the N.C. on questions of program. All stand on the program of the Fourth International. The authors of this document present their own opinions. Comrades Morrison and Morrow and others may be in agreement with some of our views. They have no responsibility for them.

The first issue which we reacted to was the Hansen article, "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail." And here we must state frankly what our reaction was. We learned first that this article was resented by many comrades and that a protest had been made against its publication in the F.I. Later we were able to read Macdonald's attack on it, which included certain quotations from the article. Some time later we received Morrison's answer to Macdonald's attack and finally the issue of the F.I. containing Hansen's article.

We shared the resentment that was manifested by many comrades of the party to Hansen's article. We found the article to be utterly alien to the tradition of Bolshevik journalism. This was something new in our movement and we found it distasteful. It is the type of writing that is common in the Stalinist press, but never, up till now, has found a place in the Leninist-Trotskyist press.

It was distasteful because of the tone of adulation and the completely personalized and sentimental idealization of a leader.

We approve of emotional appeals, but we must be careful that these appeals never obscure what is always fundamental; the political ideas. We considered the publication of this article in the party's theoretical organ to be a mistake, but, of course, did not consider it to be a mistake of major proportions.

But then we learned that Morrison's answer to Macdonald's conclusions, which included a criticism of Hansen, would not be published in the party press. We considered this to be a worse mistake than the publication of the original article. It now appeared that the party leadership was operating on the principle that everything which appeared in the party press, regardless of whether it was an editorial on the European Revolution or a comrade's personal reaction on how the Trotskyists go to jail, had to be the official policy and binding on all comrades.

Certainly, on programmatic questions, we had always agreed that the press give the party's program -- and that every party comrade defend the party position on these political questions. But to our knowledge, the concept of not publishing divergent views on questions of a non-programmatic character is entirely new, and incorrect. To publish Morrison's answer would have been an extremely effective answer to Macdonald and a convincing demonstration of the democratic regime within the party. Not publishing the article is a reflection of an unhealthy condition wherein self-criticism within the party press is not permitted.

Next we learned of the Farrell letter, and the party's decision not to publish it. Here, too, we know of no precedent in the history of our movement for such an action. This is not a question of opening the columns of the press to enemies of the party. It should be abundantly clear that the author of this letter is the best type of friend to the revolutionary workers' movement. Witness his support to the defense of the 18 and his publicly stated anti-war position. Testament indeed!

What did we have to fear from publishing this letter? Was it as Comrade Stein has said, that the party leadership feared that the rights of the "minority" would not be represented if this letter were published together with an answer to it? The proof that this solicitude for the rights of the "minority" is not the answer can be seen in the fact that Comrade Stein and the leadership were so set against publishing Morrison's attack on Macdonald.

The Censure of the Four

In our opinion the dispute on the Censure of the Four does not involve any issue of democratic centralism. There is no disagreement on the right of the party to control collaboration of members of our party with any other party. To make the theory of democratic centralism the issue in this case is to cover over the real dispute; namely, the false use of the right of censure by the highest bodies of the party as a method of educating young and inexperienced comrades; comrades who in the course of their education have made and will continue to make mistakes. The net result of this kind of procedure is an atmosphere in which the members feel that they have no right to talk with members of other groups.

The following statement by Comrade Morrison has apparently disturbed many comrades; "...I have never heard nor read of any case where responsible Bolsheviks have even discussed such a question as was raised at the New York membership meeting. I have always felt free to attend any meeting of any opponent organization or to arrange a discussion with any members of an opponent organization. I still feel free to do the same thing. If it was important enough I informed some member of a higher body; if it wasn't of sufficient importance I did not mention it." We solidarize ourselves with this attitude. This is not a proposal to build a "soft" party, nor is it an invitation to undisciplined activity in relation to an opponent organization. It is a reiteration of a basic attitude which we have always had. We do not attempt to obtain party loyalty by using the tactics of forbidding association with members of opponent organizations, just as in the same way we do not attempt to obtain theoretical understanding by preventing members from reading books written by enemies of our movement.

We had many experiences with Stalinists in our early days. They were very "hard" on us; they refused to hear or read our views. We have no need for such "hardness". We do not conciliate opponent organizations by studying their program and actions. It is wrong to inculcate a fear of discussion with opponent organizations and it is precisely this which is the net result of the censure of the four. Using a sledge-hammer to kill a gnat may wreck much more than the gnat!

Hansen's Answer to Morrison

Upon our return we were confronted with Hansen's reply to Morrison. This in many ways is the most dangerous of all the articles which have appeared defending the actions of the majority. We wish to protest against Hansen's method of argument. We cite the following as the type of argument we object to; "Rank and file members of Morrison's tendency who whisper among themselves that the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-40 was right on the organizational question have probably been advised by their leader not to state openly their views about the source of infection but to confine themselves simply to stamping out Stalinist germs whenever they become manifest."

This is an example of the method of argument by innuendo and false implication. Which members of "Morrison's tendency" "whisper" among themselves that the petty-bourgeois opposition was right on the organizational question? Hansen can make these vague charges precisely because he has no evidence to back up anything more specific. So far as we know, his assertion is made up out of the whole cloth. This attempt at an amalgam with Shachtman serves to prejudice comrades against seriously considering the arguments on their merits and makes an atmosphere where comradely discussion is extremely difficult.

It would take up much space and we simply do not have the time to deal with the many other examples of innuendo such as the above. We believe that Comrade Morrison has dealt adequately with many of them in his answer.

We feel that we must deal with a dangerous theoretical concept that Comrade Hansen gives in his article. It is Comrade Hansen's

contention that degeneration within a revolutionary workers' party can take place through only one of two forms; (1) the Stalinist degeneration, taking place after a successful revolution in an isolated backward country and (2) a social-patriotic degeneration, prior to revolution, which begins "under the banner of independent thinking."

It is very well to construct a logical schema; unfortunately, this concept does not square with reality. It provides a facile guarantee that since our party is not social-patriotic there can be no danger of degeneration.

The fact is that within present-day capitalist society there are many sources from which degeneration can infect revolutionary workers and revolutionary workers' parties. We live in the most powerful capitalist nation in the world; we are part of this society and subject to its influences. It should be clear to all that there are no guarantees of immunity; constant vigilance and intellectual alertness is a prerequisite for maintaining unstained the revolutionary program.

Comrade Morrison has reminded us of the tremendous weight of the degenerated workers' state. Can we blind ourselves to all the implications of the role of Stalinism, not only in the Soviet Union, in Europe, but also in the U.S.? The fact is that we must not recoil in horror, but face calmly the fact that we are operating as a small party, in a labor movement in which the Stalinists have great influence. The methods of the Stalinists pervade the arena in which we operate. Only a constant guard can check against well-meaning comrades beginning to adopt certain characteristics similar to the methods of the Stalinists.

The charge that those comrades who warn against the dangerous influence of Stalinism even on our party constitute a brake on the growth of the party is false. To charge that these comrades seek to change the goal of the party from an active penetration into the ranks of the labor movement, to simply becoming a society for the prevention of Stalinist infection, is also false.

We are party builders. That also means for us that we have a duty to speak up in clear terms whenever we see instances of practice that are not compatible with the democratic tradition of Bolshevism.

The latest article by Comrade Martin in Bulletin #10 states; "We believe that the tendencies in our own ranks in the U.S. toward conciliation with the petty-bourgeois opposition, represented by the present opposition to the party leadership, is an anti-Trotskyist tendency." Thus the majority's case is now complete. An amalgam has been constructed and the present "minority" is placed side by side with Shachtman and Co.

How does Comrade Martin prove that we are an "anti-Trotskyist tendency"? One must go to the end of the document for the proof. "It is not without interest to note that the party leadership, in the dispute over the incident of the New York membership meeting, shows its unqualified hostility to signs of looseness or irresponsibility -- to say nothing of disloyalty -- in relations with the Menshevik traitor clique of Shachtman and Co.; while Morrison, in his plea for

unsupervised fraternization, manifests a more conciliatory attitude. On both sides, here as always, the organizational method serves the political line."

So therefore anyone who objected to the censure of the four -- an action later rescinded -- automatically becomes a member of the anti-Trotskyist tendency! This no doubt falls into the category of political analysis. We have always been educated in the school that proves a political tendency by analyzing its political line; by showing where its line diverges from orthodox Marxism. This charge is so fantastic that Comrade Martin cannot even attempt to prove it.

If, then, as one deduces from Comrade Martin, the censure of the four becomes the criterion whereby one divides the Trotskyists from the anti-Trotskyists, how is it then that the Political Committee was able to rescind its action so lightly? Could it be that this political criterion was not recognized until Comrade Martin spoke?

And is it true that Morrison pleads for "unsupervised fraternization"? This charge is false both in letter and spirit. This is an unwarranted assumption, drawn apparently from the fact that Morrison has defended the right of party members to attend meetings of other political groups. Isn't it true that this is the only proof of this sweeping charge? If it is not, it is up to Comrade Martin to produce other proof.

It was a mistake, we believe, for the party leadership to schedule this convention at the present time. In view of the fact that Comrades Morrison and Cassidy, who have been the main protagonists of the points of view that are in difference, would have been able to attend a convention were it held three months hence, we think that the convention should have been postponed until the end of January or February. We do not believe that the other questions to be taken up by the convention are of such immediate importance, that it is imperative to hold the convention at this time.

We feel that the refusal to postpone the convention is an indication of a certain rudeness, impatience and intolerance on the part of the party leadership towards those leading comrades who have raised differences with the leadership. We do not question the legality of this action. What we are calling attention to is the spirit of democratic functioning rather than the letter.

We have raised these issues not so much because they are signs of a crisis within the party, but rather because they are important for the future conduct of the party. To approve of them now means they become accepted guides and models of behavior. It is necessary to speak out now and say plainly that they are not models of Bolshevik conduct.

We urge the convention of the party to discuss all the issues with great care. It is not enough however, to merely discuss them, and we therefore propose that the convention formally state its disapproval of the publication in the Fourth International of the Hansen article "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail". To indicate clearly both

to our own membership and our periphery of sympathizers how we react to this type of difference within the party, we propose that Morrison's answer to Macdonald be printed in the next issue of the magazine. We also propose that James T. Farrell's letter of protest be printed with an answer by the Editorial Board, stating the action of the convention. This answer should also reiterate our position on those other questions which were raised in the letter.

By prompt action of this sort, we can turn this whole situation from one where the party loses to one where the party makes a great gain; a gain in the deeper understanding of the party membership and a demonstration to our friends on the outside that the Trotskyist party, precisely because it is Bolshevist, is also the most democratic in the working class movement.

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WE ARRIVE AT A LINE

By A. Roland

The convention has before it a resolution on the European revolution and the tasks confronting the advanced workers. So far as I am aware, this resolution will be adopted unanimously with possible amendments which are unlikely to affect its "line". A separate resolution, not unrelated to be sure, will deal with the question of our attitude on defense of the Soviet Union. Here again we will most likely arrive at unanimity. I have not seen this resolution, but I base myself on the published letters of Natalia and Martin and on what I know went on in the P.C.

Here, one would suppose, is an ideal convention for the fundamental education of the party. Unfortunately, this is far from the case. Actually, the Committee is trying to avoid any kind of real education of the membership, due to its unusual hypersensitivity to criticism. The very resolutions adopted should have been the occasion for some open self-criticism, as I propose to show.

Let me explain here that what is involved is not at all mere polemics that went on inside the precincts of the P.C. It is perfectly natural that differences should exist on questions that arise inside the Committee. What concerns me is not how we arrived at a line through discussions of the Committee itself. No. I am concerned with a line arrived at without discussion at all (except on my part), without any motions made in the Committee "officially"; a line that appeared in the press of the party on the initiative of the editors with the consent of a committee within the committee, as a "fait accompli". I am concerned with a line that was wrong not in the Committee alone, but in the public press, one that has since been "corrected" after the lapse of months of incorrectness without so much as informing the party. I am concerned with the attempt to hide this patent fact from the Convention and to place, not organizational criticism, but political criticism, in a virtual strait-jacket under the guise of "discipline."

The question of "record" has been raised in connection with my criticisms. This question must also be decided by the party. The political record stands perfectly plain in the open press, both mine and that of the editors. But what is meant is also the record in the P.C. Let us see how this stands. The Constitution of our party (quoted in another connection on this score by members of the Committee) states that it is the duty of the N.C. to establish the line of the party, between conventions. More particularly is this the case when a change in line is involved. Such a change must be motivated by discussion and a motion in the Committee. The question of line in respect to the European events first arose in connection with Poland and Yugoslavia. Wright raised the question of our attitude towards the Partisan movement on the one side, and towards Stalin's grabs of territory on the other. Wright was encouraged in this matter by Comrade Cannon. But when I challenged the new line, Cannon refrained from participation in the discussion. No motion was made at all, and it was more or less understood that the matter would be discussed further. It was I who raised the problem of Yugoslavia twice more on the agenda, each time criticizing the attitude already adopted in the

press without any authorization. The line was in fact adopted as a "fait accompli". My criticism was never even discussed, but was met by complete, frigid silence. Let the Committee now read to the convention one single scrap of evidence authorizing the line taken in the press! Instead we have a line thrust into the press over my sole protest.

But was there any change in line? We must now examine this question. We turn to an editorial in the April 1943 issue of Fourth International.

"As John G. Wright explains in the 'Civil War in Yugoslavia', in this issue, Stalin himself is being driven to take steps which may well go beyond his control and in the end undermine the Kremlin bureaucracy and unleash the European Revolution."

I shall quote later somewhat extensively from Wright's article, because there are two questions involved, one our attitude toward Stalinism and its role, the other our stand on movements of National Liberation. Here we merely quote the following:

"But the same fundamental forces arising out of the irreconcilable clash between Soviet economy and world imperialism are driving the bureaucratic caste to measures which are revolutionary in their objective consequences... The Stalinist bureaucracy depends for its own existence upon the maintenance of the workers' state created by the October Revolution. In desperation and as a last resort this bureaucracy has proved itself capable of acting in self-defense as to stimulate revolutionary developments."

Bethinking himself of our previous line, Wright adds a caution that

"The record of Stalinism warns that the Kremlin clique at a later stage will try to restrain within its bureaucratic strait-jacket and to suppress the self-action of the revolutionary workers and peasants."

He continues, however:

"But given continued successes of the Red Army and a favorable relationship of forces vis-a-vis London and Washington, the Sovietization of Yugoslavia along with sections of Poland and Eastern Europe is, even under Stalin, by no means excluded."

Far from being excluded, this became more and more the line followed by the editors of both the F.I. and The Militant.

Wright laid the basis for his thesis on Stalinism becoming "objectively" revolutionary, like it or not, in earlier issues of the F.I. This we shall see in connection with his theory on the Red Army. The February 20, 1943 issue of The Militant contains an article on "Military Aspects and Political Roots" by Wright. This

begins to set the foundations of the idea that military necessity forces Stalin to use revolutionary means. No wonder Wright (and with him the P.C.) was willing to support every fait accompli of Stalin's! This political support was given each time on the grounds of Defense of the Soviet Union. Speaking of the attempted Federation proposed by Poland, in reality directed against the Soviet Union, he writes:

"Such a coalition would obviously not be directed primarily against Germany, which would have to be defeated before a Federation could be established; its chief purpose would be to block off and isolate the Soviet Union from the rest of Europe, to function as an organized obstacle to the spread of revolution."

The spread of the revolution is here clearly to come from Stalin and the Red Army.

To be sure, Wright thought that he was basing himself on Trotsky's views on Poland and Finland, views concerning which he, miseducated the party quite badly.

"Just as in the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact Leon Trotsky used the events in Poland as the key to the Finnish developments, so today we can use the events in Finland, the northern flank of the USSR to understand the civil war in Yugoslavia and the meaning of Stalinist intervention there... Stalin took preparatory steps for the Sovietization of Finland by trying to provoke a civil war and by establishing his puppet Kuusinen government."

Thus Stalin was preparing the ground for the Sovietization of Yugoslavia. (The Militant, April 3, 1943) This same issue contains another article by Wright on the "Civil War in Hitler's Rear Spreads to Poland."

"The successes of the Red Army and the heroic defense by the Soviet masses of the remaining conquests of the October Revolution have added new explosive power to the irrepressible conflict in Yugoslavia and have spread it beyond the boundaries. Poland is now aflame. This inspiring news can no longer be concealed by the 'democratic allies' of the Kremlin."

What remained concealed to Wright was that these same allies would shortly recognize the regime he was so busy hailing. But, had his analysis been correct, that recognition need not have so abruptly changed his mind about Yugoslavia.

The January 29, 1944 Militant contains Wright's article "Red Army Victories Alarm Stalin's Allies". He quotes Browder as openly declaring Stalin's intent to prevent any revolution. Browder was interpreting the Teheran agreement and he said in his speech:

"British and American ruling circles had to be convinced that their joint war together with the Soviet Union against Hitlerism would not result in the Soviet socialist system being extended to Western Europe under the stimulus of the victorious Red Army."

"But the whole point is", says Wright, "that the capitalists refuse to reconcile themselves to the price that Stalin needs and demands, that is, the strengthening of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe. Stabilization of capitalism in Europe is impossible without a capitalist Poland as a 'buffer' in order to keep the Soviet system isolated in preparation for its eventual destruction. Churchill and Roosevelt know this and are working to this end... Furthermore implicit in the Kremlin's territorial demands is the extension of Soviet property forms to the whole of Poland. That this threat is not distant is borne out by the latest pronouncement by Stalin's Union of Polish Patriots calling not only for the inclusion of Silesia, Pomerania, East Prussia and Danzig in a 'New Poland', but also for the seizure of Polish landed estates, their division among the peasants and the 'nationalization of industries and mines taken from the Germans.' Inasmuch as Polish industry is almost wholly in the hands of the Germans, the realization of this program would signify the complete destruction of Polish capitalism and a giant step in the inevitable extension of Soviet property forms far beyond the frontiers of 1939. In its turn, this carries a twofold threat to capitalism; first, in addition to strengthening the USSR immeasurably, it would greatly hamper further attempts to isolate it. Second, the revolutionary wave in Europe, especially in Germany, would receive so mighty an impulsion from such developments in the territories of former Poland, let alone Silesia, East Prussia, etc., that the attempt to drown the coming European Revolution in blood would be rendered well-nigh impossible."

How did this line prepare the party for later events? How did it prepare for our present revived Trotskyist line on the role of Stalinism? Where was Cannon with his warning against speculation? The line of Wright, quite different indeed from that of Trotsky, was filled with illusions, could lead only to surprises, gave credit to the Stalinists "despite themselves" as pursuing policies which would "immeasurably strengthen" the USSR, and would practically automatically, through the victories of the Red Army, spread the Revolution throughout Europe.

This line was in complete contradiction to all the warnings of the Old Man. It gave first importance to the "nationalized property" under Stalinism, treating this nationalized property as a fetish. Trotsky said:

"The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution."

Trotsky warned again and again that the extension of territory dominated by the bureaucracy, even when "cloaked" by socialist measures,

might augment the prestige of the Kremlin, and "engender illusions concerning the possibility of replacing the proletarian revolution by bureaucratic maneuvers." Wright (and not alone Wright) tended to engender precisely all the illusions that Trotsky tried so unremittingly to dispel. Said Trotsky; "We do not entrust the Kremlin with any historic mission. We were and remain against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin."

But that is hardly the only sphere in which illusions were created. I must be pardoned for going back to the F.I. for 1941, because the formulations there are completely in line with what Wright had to say later concerning the Red Army. At the time it appeared as exuberant exaggeration. The August 1941 issue contains his article "Soviet Union at War". Here we have the beginnings of a very "special" theory concerning the place and role of the Red Army. To make perfectly clear the difference in attitude revealed on the part of Wright and his collaborators, it is only necessary to see what Trotsky wrote as far back as 1936 in "The Revolution Betrayed".

The section on the Red Army shows how the degeneration of the Soviet Union is most clearly of all indicated in the changes in the Red Army. Theoretically this would naturally be so. Practically it is indubitable. Trotsky says:

"The army is a copy of society and suffers from all its diseases, usually at a higher temperature."

Further, in discussing the restoration of caste and rank worship, he says:

"No army, however, can be more democratic than the regime which nourishes it. The source of bureaucratism with its routine and swank is not the special needs of military affairs, but the political needs of the ruling stratum. In the army these needs only receive their most finished expression. The restoration of officers' castes eighteen years after their revolutionary abolition testifies equally to the gulf which already separates the rulers from the ruled, to the loss by the Soviet Army of the chief qualities which gave it the name of "Red", and to the cynicism with which the bureaucracy erects these consequences of degeneration into law."

This was in 1936-7 when the purges took place in this very army to bend it completely to Stalin's will.

Now Wright in 1941, carried quite away by his "Soviet patriotism",

"It is not Stalin's Red Army that has successfully resisted the first two Nazi offensives. It is the Red Army of the October Revolution. It is Trotsky's Red Army, which was built in the fire of the Civil War, built not from the wreckage of the old Czarist armies but completely anew -- unlike any other army in history."

One must believe in ghosts to write this after all that had happened. By October Wright had hypnotized himself completely with words. His

article on "Trotsky and the Red Army" performs what might be termed a mighty service -- for Stalin. Degeneration hasn't gone so far after all! The Stalinists were saying that the purges had actually strengthened the Red Army. Victories, it seemed, went to Wright's head like wine.

"Without the essential organ of the Red Army the workers' state could not have endured for more than a few months. It could never have survived the years of Stalinist rule. Again this should not be understood in a purely military sense. In the life of the workers' state the army plays a role that is qualitatively different from the role played by military forces in a class society ruled by an exploiting minority."

Is there perhaps hidden in these words the idea that the Red Army, despite Stalin, fights for the International working class?

"The Kremlin is of course trying to usurp credit for the heroic resistance of the Red Army, but Stalin will not succeed in this. We Trotskyists link up the present heroic resistance of the Red soldiers directly (!) with the Russian October and the Civil War. Whoever is astonished by the power of Soviet resistance is unaware that only the revolution unleashes forces capable of overcoming insuperable obstacles. This is being demonstrated in the battlefields today. This was most graphically illustrated in 1918 in the organization of the first victorious army of the proletarian revolution... Terrible as were the blows dealt by Stalin to the Red Army, it remains the one institution least affected by his degenerated regime. This extraordinary development (note: extraordinary indeed) which no one could have foreseen, may well play a vital role in determining the future not only of the Soviet Union but of mankind."

One could pursue this theme right up to the present moment in the writings not only of Wright but of almost all comrades of the Committee. The Red Army apparently is something totally different from the other institutions of Stalin. Yes, our resolution now "corrects" this view somewhat by magisterially laying down that the Red Army is just another instrument of Stalinist policy. Stalin does really control the army and runs it on nationalist lines. But where is the criticism of the kind of "Soviet patriotism" that engendered illusions concerning this instrument of Stalinist policy? Trotsky taught that there were no guarantees concerning the use of the Red Army. He refused to guarantee that it would never be used for reactionary purposes. Wright gave somewhat of a guarantee by declaring that the institution most affected by degeneration was least affected. Wright helped create an illusion that when it came to a final show-down and the Red Army might be ordered to drown a workers' revolution (say the German workers) in blood, the Red Army would refuse and would turn its arms against the Stalinist bureaucracy. There can be no guarantee at all on this score, one way or the other. We can only watch to judge tendencies and evaluate events. But certainly one can say that if at some stage the Red Army should reach the stage of disobedience of reactionary orders (so far it has carried out completely the will of Stalin) then this will be no simple process in which the Red Army

itself remains intact. A vast section of the officers' caste will undoubtedly be found on the side of the bureaucracy. A political revolution is no palace affair. It will mean civil war with every institution involved, not at all excluding the Red Army by some magic of Wright's.

Our party had been the most consistent and correct regarding phenomena connected with the USSR. We prided ourselves on our ability to grasp every nuance of Stalinist degeneration and expose it to the working class. How does it come then, that we have now to devote such length in our resolution to variations on the theme of the reactionary role of Stalinism? That very fact shows that we consider this (certainly no new line) essential at this time. It is essential because it is a necessary corrective of a false line that was pursued in our press. But the resolution tries to hide this fact. It contains criticism in a completely hidden form known only to the initiate at the top. Let us for a moment look at the one paragraph that indulges in such "distant" criticism. It is contained in what was Paragraph 51 in the first draft.

"All those who are propagating the idea that the Kremlin bureaucracy intends to 'Sovietize' Europe under Stalin's bonapartist dictatorship misunderstand both the class nature of the Soviet Union and the meaning of Stalinist foreign policy. Their theory, which can only disorient the European proletariat and divert it from its necessary tasks, represents in essence a theoretical 'justification' for their own abject surrender to Allied imperialism. The European Revolution cannot be harnessed by any bureaucracy."

When I inquired in the Committee as to whom this was directed at (a not altogether naive question on my part) I was informed that it was meant for the Social Democrats who were warning the "democracies" against Stalinism because it had this aim. But I had taken up in the Committee some time before the common attitude expressed by Wright and by Dan, the Menshevik. Both were in favor of the grabs of territory by Stalin on the ground that they served to spread the proletarian revolution over Europe. Dan and Wright had in common the views that Stalin despite himself would be forced to resort to revolutionary measures to save himself. I brought in quotations from Dan's magazine Novy Put which could not have been in any way distinguished from Wright's line, except that Dan thought it possible to reform Stalinism.

The truth is that Wright had been "hauled over the coals" for his whole line when events had broken over the head of the Committee and shown how disastrous that line was. M. Stein informed me concerning this fact and was himself taken aback when I expressed astonishment that this should be done in hidden form among a group of "friends", not even in the P.C.! Naturally in that case there could be no question of criticizing Wright openly in the party or in the convention. But what becomes then of the political education of the party membership? Are they permitted to know what is correct and what is incorrect? Or is it sufficient in a centralized party for the leadership to be educated? The paragraph remains inexplicable

except for its indirect and implied criticism of Wright and Warde.

How does the record stand with regard to my criticisms, past and present? I stated at the outset that a new line was followed in the press by the process of making it an accomplished fact. But the accomplished fact was approved not in the form of a motion, but by tacit agreement of all but myself. My protests met with complete silence. There followed then a kind of competition for the press in the form of articles. Here I was distinctly handicapped by the pin-prick method of delaying publication of my articles or not printing them at all. Here then is the record of my articles, which often enough appeared incongruously, side by side with Wright's.

The issue of The Militant of February 27, 1943 contains the article by A. Roland, "A Common War Aim of Stalin and the Allies." The line set forth in this article is consistently followed in every later one, and it is the line presented now in November 1944 in the European Resolution.

"The Soviet victories with their distinct effect in shortening the entire war and bringing victory sooner than was previously expected, have at once brought the reminder that the Allied coalition consists of two distinctly different camps. An enigma hangs over the Soviet war aims. Already the Soviet embassies here and abroad have given wide publicity to certain Russian demands; the retention by Russia of the Baltic States, once part of the Russian Empire, and of Bessarabia, forcibly torn from the Soviet Union in the Civil War following the October Revolution. This demand would hardly have disturbed the Allies as much as it has, if it were not for the question of the spread of the Soviet system of society. What kind of Russia will exist after this war? That is one of the fundamental questions facing the capitalist nations -- and also the world's working class! What sort of regime would be set up in any territory added to Russia? The analysis of this question is far from simple. The inner effects of the war on Russian economy are veiled to us. True enough, the nationalized industry was of inestimable advantage to the Soviet Union for conducting the war. Its superiority over the anarchy of capitalism has now been demonstrated in war as it was previously in peace. But the war itself, with the previous victories of the Hitler armies, has struck frightfully heavy blows at the bureaucratically distorted planned economy, that had made considerable gains over a generation. An enormous portion of the capital accumulated at such a frightful cost under the Stalinist methods of planning, has been destroyed by the super-gangster Hitler... Here we are concerned not with this primary problem, but rather with a subsidiary political problem, the role of Stalin.

"Long in advance of the war it was perfectly clear that Stalin, left in control of the Soviet Union, would play the same reactionary role that he had pursued all the years... Such a regime could never survive another wave of working class revolution. What are the aims set by Stalin for the role of the Soviet Union in the world war? He has spoken in the nationalist terms of 'throwing the fascist invader off our soil'. Is this all he

will have to show to the Russian workers and peasants and the Red Army after the war? Yes, he will be able to point perhaps, as a new 'aggrandizer' to the regaining of Latvia, Esthonia, Bessarabia. And to 'nationalist' Russians that might be something.

"There is one aim that is common to Stalin and his capitalist allies. That is the prevention of a working class revolution anywhere in Europe, but especially in Germany...

"The reason why the Allies view Russia with misgivings is not because they fear Stalin. He is not the enigma. On the contrary, they understand quite well the counter-revolutionary aid which Stalin affords to them. But Russia is as yet a working class state. Its further degeneration could only mean the restoration of capitalism. But the capitalists cannot breathe easy until this is not a potentiality, but a fact... The real enigma therefore is what will happen in Russia when events demonstrate the one common aim of the leaders of the Allies and of Stalin with regard to Germany."

This article, written in advance of events, places matters in proper perspective, without fatalism, without mechanist thinking. It was followed on May 1, 1943 with the article "Stalinism and the Plans to Save Capitalism in Europe." Remember again that this article was written programmatically and well in advance of the later events that led to the present resolution.

"The fate of the European continent and of the world lies in what happens in Germany and France in the near future. It is only a question of time for Hitler's doom to be sealed. Germany will stand defeated in the second world war, just as in the first. France, having tasted all the dregs of the bitter cup of catastrophe, will face the problem of renewing her national life. She will be in the position of a step-child of the victorious allies. What will be the class relations in these two countries as the war begins to terminate? It is in the decisive phases of wars, when it becomes quite clear where the victory will fall and where the defeat, that the social problem of the relation between the classes assumes primary importance... The capitalist nations now fighting him (Hitler), were faced with the contradiction of supporting the Hitler regime inside Germany in its suppression of the German proletariat -- but of opposing him in his world aims. This contradiction now takes on a new form. How to defeat Hitler in the war, thus depriving the German ruling class of its savior, and yet somehow maintaining this same ruling class in power...

"It is with this openly avowed perspective that we must examine the role of Stalinism in and after the war. Stalin's aim in Yugoslavia or in Poland have entirely secondary importance compared to the role he proposes to play with regard to France and Germany. These will be the decisive sectors for the world working class in the coming period... Stalin and his Kremlin clique occupy a strategic position at a time which must prove so momentous for the future of humanity. The Soviet Union under revolutionary guidance could today play a decisive role

in assisting the European workers to achieve the socialist revolution. Only Stalinism stands squarely in the way. The most far-seeing section of the capitalists understands this quite well. This section is prepared to pay a heavy price for Stalin's aid in disorienting and suppressing the working class revolution in France and Germany... These capitalists know that this will mean the nationalizing of property in those sections of Poland, Esthonia, Latvia, etc. taken over by Stalin. But better that temporary calamity than to lose all of Western Europe and especially powerful industrial Germany."

This attitude has nothing in common with that of Wright and Wardo, and it is the stand now taken in the European resolution.

In the May 15th issue of The Militant there is the article by Roland, "Problem of Post-War Italy". It states;

"The end of the campaign in North Africa places on the order of the day for the Allied armies the problem of knocking Italy out of the war... If the political steps taken by Roosevelt and Churchill in North Africa proved dishearteningly strong medicine for the liberal and social-democratic supporters of the war, they stand to be sadly cast down indeed at the policies to be pursued in Europe."

The article then takes up the possible attitude of the Allies and their chosen native leaders in the conquered territories, to the underground movement. This movement will be suppressed as soon as possible. That is the general attitude taken.

May 22, 1943, Roland; "A Russian Menshevik Turns to Stalin". This is an answer to the Menshevik Dan who had taken a position in defense of the Soviet Union but was in reality defending Stalinism as well by thinking that it could reform itself. The article ends with, "The fear of war always stood in the way of the opening of the struggle by the masses against the Kremlin bureaucracy. That fear is now gone-- or will be with the emergence of a victorious Soviet Union."

In the June 19, 1943 Militant I again return to the theme "Fear of German Revolt Worries the Allies Too." Here again is the line taken on Stalinism;

"But Stalin succeeded in convincing the leaders of 'democratic' capitalism that so long as he dictates the policies of the Soviet Union, they have nothing to fear from that quarter."

And again, on the plans of the Allies;

"That is why Churchill and Roosevelt, in order to save capitalism and stave off the socialist revolution, propose to impose a military dictatorship from the outside."

We were told at the plenum and before that too much attention was paid to the machinations of the Allied and Stalinist leaders, not enough to the movement among the masses. Cannon called this a breeder of pessimism. But we learned from Lenin and Trotsky that it is necessary

at all times to expose the machinations of the capitalist leaders and all their henchmen. This would serve to forewarn and thus forearm the masses. At any rate the point of view expressed by Roland may now be found in the European Resolution.

In the August 7, 1943 Militant is the first article on the "Free Germany" movement sponsored by Stalin. It needs quotation in full to show its reasoning. Its conclusion is:

"This is the meaning of the 'Free German' movement bureaucratically constituted on Russian soil. Its purpose, aside from any immediate propaganda value as a military weapon to undermine Hitler's armies, is not to 'free' Germany, not to aid the proletarian revolution, but on the contrary to set up a capitalist Germany favorably inclined towards Stalin and willing to ally itself with him. Stalin errs badly. He is mistaken when he thinks that the post-war world can possibly settle down again to the old game of power politics. The problems of European and world economy have become too acute to await solutions in the distant future."

The same line is followed in the article of September 4, 1943; "The Conflict Between the USSR and Her Allies". Let me quote just a few sentences;

"The Quebec Conference and Stalin's reaction to it can thus be seen in the light of moves in the game of power politics... The trend within the Soviet Union -- towards capitalism or once more towards socialism -- remains an uncertain quantity. This class question will not be solved at any conferences, even at the future ones in which Stalin will be included. It is the masses of Europe, including Soviet Russia, who will give the final answer. The Churchill-Roosevelts and the Stalin bureaucracy have one aim in common -- to prevent the success of any proletarian revolution anywhere in Europe. In their inevitable upheavals, the European workers and peasants will have to face the opposition of both the imperialists and their aids within the degenerated workers' state, the Soviet bureaucracy. Stalin hopes to keep the Russian workers and peasants quiescent under the spell of national expansion... Not the seizure of territory by the Stalinist clique, but the independent action of the toilers will resolve the awful crisis brought on by the second world war."

Is this or is this not the attitude of the resolution now being adopted? It is entirely different from the "speculative, independent-spirited" thinking of a Wright.

The October 30, 1943 Militant contains an article by Roland on "The Kremlin's Revival of Feudal and Czarist Military Traditions." This shows a reactionary Stalin looking backwards. In the same issue appear two articles by Wright on the Red Army victories. They are veritable paeans of victory, without a single trace of warning that these victories by the Red Army do not necessarily lead to the revolution, but with continued Stalinist domination would lead to reaction. The theme underlying these hosannas remained that the Red Army was not

the same as Stalin at all, that its victories would inevitably bring the revolution; in fact, the very advances of the Red Army were part of the revolution. Wright says:

Militarily the Soviet Union is beginning to assert itself as a dominant power. The revolutionary forces in Europe threaten to explode with unprecedented force. Under the impact of the war, the masses who suffered one defeat after another for more than two decades are clearly preparing to reenter the political arena. The altered relationship of forces greatly narrows down Stalin's field for diplomatic maneuvers and agreements. The more this relationship of forces alters in favor of the USSR, all the more decisively must the laws of the class struggle assert themselves, bringing to the forefront what has temporarily been submerged; that is, the fundamental antagonism of our epoch between the decayed system of capitalism, and the new social order which the Soviet Union still represents despite its degeneration under Stalin... Stalin and his allies are seeking a common solution for problems which can be resolved in life only through mortal struggle."

The very next issue of The Militant, alas, had to devote itself to an explanation of the Moscow Deal. The victories in short gave Stalin more scope than ever before for agreements on his own terms. The prestige of the Kremlin, we must reluctantly admit, grew among the workers also. Instead of warning against the effects of this growing prestige, Wright was lulling the workers with soporifics.

Let us sum up the theses followed explicitly or implicitly by Wright and the editors of our press, in order to see how these same views expressed themselves on the question of national liberation movements in Yugoslavia, Poland, Greece.

- (1) The advance of the Red Army creates automatically a revolutionary wave in the occupied lands.
- (2) Stalinism against its own will, due to the exigencies of military defense, is forced to resort to revolutionary measures. Its objective role is therefore progressive and worthy of support.
- (3) To the Red Army in particular must go the credit for the extension of the Revolution through Sovietization and the nationalizing of property, since this institution is the least of all tainted by Stalinist degeneration.

We must now add to this line a profound error in the evaluation of the movements of national liberation. This error is all the more astounding in view of the fact that the essence of this line was rejected in theory long before in the controversy with the German comrades, only to be completely accepted in fact at every turn. Here again it must be said in advance that the line followed was never accepted by motion in the Committee. It merely became an accomplished fact in the press, with the complete acquiescence of the Committee. My protests went unheeded. Articles which would have laid the basis for correction were delayed for months or completely suppressed.

The question of national liberation movements and of national liberation in general remains for discussion in the party. Here I propose to deal only with the pertinent phases of the problem. The Germans had early advanced the thesis that our forces in Europe should become the ardent proponents of national liberation from the Nazis. They maintained that in this movement the masses would be found. In this movement would be the workers who would fuse their class struggle against the ruling class with the struggle for national liberation. The two would be completely merged one in the other and our forces, by becoming the foremost proponents and advocates of national liberation, would at the proper time be able to lead this movement against capitalism itself.

We decisively rejected this point of view. Against it we posed the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe as more correctly expressing our program. Not that we were opposed to sending our forces into movements for national liberation directed against the Nazis. On the contrary, our forces must be present with the masses of workers and peasants in their struggles, but in order to tear away from the national liberation movement those advanced worker and peasant elements who could be propagandized and taught by their experiences that their fight must be directed not only against the Nazi invaders, but also against the native exploiters. The collaboration of the home exploiters with the fascists would help us enormously in the necessary task of education. So long as the masses remained in the movement for national liberation, they would be in a people's front, immersed in class collaboration and necessarily under the domination of petty-bourgeois and outright bourgeois democratic elements. At most our task must be to agitate through the best demands and slogans possible in order to create a sharp differentiation between petty-bourgeois elements and the toilers who mistakenly saw in the anti-Nazi national liberation movement their social salvation. If they were ready to fight, they could be made to fight for a program of their own, a program setting them in opposition to the leaders of the movement for national liberation whose object was the restoration of power to the ruling class. We were emphatically not the ardent proponents of national liberation, but of the socialist revolution.

This, all too briefly stated, was my understanding of our position as against that of the Germans. Had our press followed this line meticulously, its correct interpretation of events would have served as a complete refutation of the false theories. Once again we could have shown the enormous value of correct theory for the working class. It is a bitter irony that the position taken by Wright and Warde on the role of Stalinism, led them all unconsciously to adopt in practice the views that we had rejected in theory. One error unfailingly leads to the next. As Trotsky says, not even the smallest mistakes pass unpunished, much less the big ones. "And the greatest mistake of them all is when the mistake is veiled, when one seeks mechanically to suppress criticism and a correct Marxist estimate of the mistake."

Remember that it was the events in Yugoslavia that above all set Wright and Warde on the course of making serious political concessions to Stalinism by giving support to movements that were "objectively revolutionary, despite the will or desire of Stalin." It was only when events conclusively demonstrated their false course,

that our editors recoiled and found -- that they had been betrayed! Tito, the GPU Stalinist, you see, betrayed them -- and of course, the workers and peasants of Yugoslavia. Let us begin at this end of things. We shall return later to the earlier statements in our press.

By December 25, 1943 Wright was remarking in The Militant (it was the time when Churchill and Roosevelt were making clear their support of Tito):

"One year after the formation in Yugoslavia of the Anti-Fascist Soviet (Vece) by the Partisan movement on November 26-7, 1942, comes the news of the formation of a provisional government. This marks a new and important stage in the development of the Partisan movement, dominated from the outset by the Kremlin... Whatever its actual content may be, in its structure the newly created Partisan government parallels closely bourgeois democratic forms. It consists of a parliament and an executive... Many of the circumstances surrounding this latest development in Yugoslavia are most sinister in their implications."

He explains further that they "adopted the decision to transform the Anti-Fascist Vece of the People's Liberation Front of Yugoslavia into a supreme legislative and executive body; and the Presidium of the Vece into a National Committee for the liberation of Yugoslavia." Wright wasn't quite sure yet whether he had been betrayed or not. But he felt the need for a "bridge" to a new position. So he adds; "The links that have been and are being forged between the Stalin-Tito clique and the capitalist 'democracies' can at a certain stage basically alter the character of the struggle that has been conducted in Yugoslavia by the Partisan movement, and can transform it from a civil war into a mere appendage of the allied war machine."

Warde shows us how well we prepared for further events and how open-eyed we were to the role of Stalinism in his article of January 1, 1944 on "Secret Diplomacy and the Yugoslav Partisans". He says;

"These figures show that King Peter's government-in-exile and his military tools around which the most reactionary forces and cliques have clustered, command no support among the Yugoslav peoples. The firm refusal of these insurgent workers and peasants to follow anyone associated with the monarchy and the reactionary ruling classes has frustrated for the time being the Anglo-American conspiracy to resaddle the old discredited monarchy upon the backs of the Yugoslav peoples."

Warde then recites the epic tale of struggle and the search for the revolutionary way out by the Balkan people. Then he adds;

"This struggle of the masses for national liberation was from the outset fused with the class struggle against the native landlords and capitalists who for generations have savagely oppressed and exploited them... Although the principal organizers and official heads of the movement are either Stalinists or under Stalinist influence, it is by no means an artificial or bureaucratic creation of the Kremlin. It is rather an authentic movement of the workers and peasants

emerging out of their armed uprising, although dominated at the present time by the Stalinists."

Warde evidently supposes that the Partisan movement may yet throw off the yoke of Stalinism. It was already far too late. And how had the editors prepared for such an eventuality? By announcing that the Stalinists were Sovietizing Yugoslavia in revolutionary fashion despite themselves? Warde is constrained to warn however:

"The acknowledged predominance of the Stalinists within the Partisan movement presents, of course, (of course!) the greatest internal danger to its success... For Stalin the Partisan movement is only a pawn in his maneuvers with the imperialists. To promote his reactionary nationalist policy Stalin is capable of selling out this revolutionary mass movement and attempting to restrict it within limits imposed by the Anglo-American capitalists."

Warde was warning as though it lay ahead, but the betrayal had already occurred. In fact the basis for the betrayal stemmed from the very moment the Stalinists built up the Partisan movement, stemmed from the very moment they set in motion their program in Yugoslavia.

Churchill courteously assisted our press to change its tune. The editorial on his speech (March 4, 1944) says nothing on the "objective logic" that was driving Stalin in desperation to revolutionary methods. Instead it states really forthrightly:

"The counter-revolutionary policies and reactionary aims of the Kremlin ruling clique are of the greatest service to the Anglo-American partners in promoting their sinister designs. To crush Germany and Japan, and even more in order to obtain Stalin's aid in crushing the European Revolutions, they must come to terms with the Kremlin and give certain concessions to Stalin... That is why Churchill tacitly acquiesces to the incorporation of the Baltic countries into the USSR; agrees to surrender part of old Poland, and switches military support from Mikhailovich to Tito."

What! Has the nationalized property of Poland turned to ashes? Perhaps we should count it a gain that the editors came to my standpoint of one year earlier.

Apparently Wright also began to doubt that the Red Army victories were automatically "immeasurably strengthening" the USSR and reviving the October spirit. He writes in "Kravchenko's Break with the Kremlin" (April 15, 1944): "The elements of capitalist restoration in the USSR have grown uninterruptedly. They were greatly strengthened by the Moscow frameups and the purges. Stalin's wartime policies have acted to strengthen them still further." (Is it permitted to say that this was the time that Wright received his behind-the-scenes calling-down from the "inner Committee", without any correction of the previous line of the press?)

The April 22, 1944 editorial on the "Balkan Federation" again puts the matter not too well. "Smoljaka's proposal is still another proof that Tito and the Stalinists seek to betray (Note: why not "have betrayed"?) the revolutionary movement of the Yugoslav peasants and workers." The word "obviously" in another section of this

editorial deserves high-lighting also in view of the policies previously pursued. "What is now obviously in progress (we had to wait for it to become quite obvious) is that Tito and his clique are working under the guidance of the Kremlin toward the establishment in the Balkans not of a genuine Federation, but the creation in alliance with the old ruling groups, of a South Slav entente, within the Kremlin's sphere of influence."

Wright and Warde were, of course, aware of the leadership of the Partisan movement right from its inception (as we shall quote). But it took them more than a year-and-a-half to reach the conclusion contained in the little word "soon" in the article on Yugoslavia in the July 8, 1944 issue of The Militant.

"The recent agreement of the Tito regime in Yugoslavia with the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile highlights the sinister aims and reactionary role of the Stalinists. The Yugoslav liberation movement originated as a revolutionary movement of the masses, who aspired not only to drive the Nazi conquerors out of their country, but to abolish forever the rule of the rapacious and reactionary landlord and capitalist clique represented by King Peter and his government-in-exile... The Stalinists headed by Tito took the leadership of this mass movement and soon began bending it to their own reactionary aims... Stalin is attempting to put through his hopelessly Utopian and thoroughly reactionary program of reconstituting capitalist regimes in Eastern Europe 'friendly' to the Soviet Union and under its sphere of influence. Such is the meaning of his maneuvers and policies in Yugoslavia, in Western Poland, in Rumania, etc."

Such is the outcome of a policy imposed upon the party, without real discussion in the Committee, let alone in the party. Can one possibly avoid irony in quoting the next sentence? "The advanced workers and peasants of Yugoslavia must draw the final lessons from the latest Stalinist betrayal. The Yugoslav masses can fight for these aims not in alliance with the Anglo-American imperialists who come to displace the Nazi tyranny, only to substitute it with their own, nor in alliance with the Stalinist traitors, who would deliver them again into the hands of their oppressors."

No one could have been more surprised at the denouement in Yugoslavia than Wright and Warde. Our Resolution on the European Revolution contains an excellent old truism: "To be forewarned is to be forearmed. The advanced workers of Europe must sound the alarm! They have the clear duty of warning the working class of the counter-revolutionary schemes of Stalin and his native henchmen. The working class must be prepared to combat Stalinist treachery and sell-outs." How could our editors forewarn, or our Committee? In fact, how did they act when a forewarning was attempted (by myself)? Let us see.

The name Tito Broz was given wide publicity from the very first in connection with the Partisan movement. We traced this name back in the literature on the Yugoslav workers' movement. It appeared in no less a place than The Militant itself, in the articles by Ciliga (1936). Those articles referred to the double-dealing Stalinist agent and police spy Brezovich. It was only a short time later (this occurred in December 1943) that positive proof was obtained that Tito Broz and Brezovich were one and the same. I requested that at least

the information contained in The Militant be reprinted, first under the title "Is this Tito?". Later in the early part of January, 1944 an article was presented exposing Tito completely as a GPU agent of Stalin. This news was in its way sensational, but our purpose was hardly mere sensationalism. To us it was self-understood that a GPU agent could only act to betray the movement led by him in the interests of his boss in the Kremlin. The manner in which this material was handled was shameful. The editors took literally months to "verify" what was stated. A motion was finally adopted to publish the material. But Martin wrote that "we are not social democrats" (meaning I presume that it is not germane or material that the head of a movement we were supporting in our press was a GPU agent.) The editors finally sabotaged the whole issue by reprinting (two months later!) a garbled account on the back cover of the F.I. in small print. Nobody understood what was involved. And, of course, this was the intention in so printing the material.

Why was this done in such fashion? The role of Tito became increasingly clear during the time the editors (and the Committee) were pondering on how to avoid printing the exposé. If at the start their line prevented the Committee from printing material that could only appear counterposed to this line (as indeed was my intention), later, after matters began to clarify "obviously", the Committee played the politics of prestige. It wished to cover up its previous line and give itself time to switch over to new rails. Had the material appeared in time, the later events in Yugoslavia would have been well prepared for in advance. Workers would indeed have been forewarned. Was not Martin, in his way, shielding Tito from exposure by calling the attitude of denouncing a GPU agent in our press social-democratic? What is social-democratic about it? The real trouble was that Comrade Martin was apparently still holding to Wright's line on Yugoslavia and the Stalinist role there.

Comrade Martin was present in the Committee when the Yugoslav line was first broached by Wright. His failure to carry through a thorough and earnest discussion not only on that question but on the matter of Poland and the Stalinist grabs of territory, made him a "victim" when the Committee later changed its line without having as yet convinced him.

We are far from having exhausted the Yugoslav issue. There is no worse politics than that which gives its support to a movement (in this case the Partisans) which later turns out to be reactionary due to its leadership, without having warned in time against that leadership. Tito duped the workers and peasants. Wright gave approval, unwittingly, during the process. To yell "Betrayal!" afterwards against the betrayer hardly puts one in position to give advice to the masses. "To support the hangman in every action directed against the workers is a crime, if not treachery."

The attempt to cover up the line later without criticism and discussion not only does not educate anybody -- it miseducates -- but only leads to the same or to new errors. Warde, in the process of correcting the line of uncritical support to Tito's movement, repeats the very error which caused the trouble in the first instance. He wishes us to understand that the Partisan movement was a real mass movement. Wright and Warde are virtually hypnotized when it comes to mass movements. The question is what kind of mass movement, what

program does it follow, who leads it? Warde denounces Tito as having betrayed a revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants who combined the struggle for national liberation with their class struggle against the landlords and capitalists. Let us grant, for the moment, that this was the case. Our whole theory should have indicated to us the danger of such a combined movement. It contains an innate contradiction that can only be an obstacle to the workers who may strive for social revolution. The movements for national liberation in capitalist countries places the interests of the nation above those of the classes, more properly and actually, the interests of the ruling class above those of the exploited. The Stalinists can make full use of such movements in their politics of prevention of the proletarian revolution. Their object is to subordinate the workers and peasants to the capitalists in the lands freed from the yoke of the Nazis by the advance of the Red Army. (We omit here the question of the border territories desired as direct acquisitions by Stalin, although we recognize that the internal policy cannot but be affected by the external). The appeal for national liberation is made to all classes, exclusive of collaborationists. That is why it is so much easier to constitute such a movement, a People's Front movement fighting for People's Democracy, than an independent revolutionary workers' movement.

It is perfectly true that workers and peasants will join such a movement which always offers them some class concessions. "Land to the landless! Higher wages! A democratic government!" But if rebellious workers and peasants are to be led to take the road to the struggle for power, they must be set in opposition to the capitalist and landlord class, they must become an independent force with a clear program of their own. It is our function to aid them to bring about this cleavage, to liberate the advanced workers from the people's front, to show them the way out from under the bourgeois leaders of the movement for national liberation, so that they may in turn liberate the masses from capitalist slavery. There is nothing automatic about this process.

We have granted the idea in our reasoning thus far, that the movement for national liberation was "fused" with the class struggle. The whole history of People's Front movements, above all the example of the Spanish Revolution, should have served to warn against the danger of betrayal of the workers and peasants -- particularly in view of the Stalinist leadership! There are surely distinct analogies with Spain. The Stalinists built up a guerrilla movement, mostly of peasants in Yugoslavia, based on a People's Front. They established a Stalinist-dominated Vece or Popular Assembly. This word is mistranslated by both Wright and Warde as Soviet. It could be termed at best a pseudo-Soviet. The Soviet tends to unite the workers and the exploited in a struggle for their own aims, whereas the Vece disunites them by immersing them in the general organ of class collaboration. The Vece (in the form in which it existed among the Partisans) was not the instrument of dual power.

The Stalinist GPU, with Tito at their head, acted in the Vece or People's Assembly, exactly as in Spain, to minimize the social demands of the peasants and workers and to keep the movement solely on the plane of the struggle against the Nazis for national liberation. Wright hails many of the traditional measures of all

guerrilla warfare in the Balkans as though they were far-reaching revolutionary measures. It is true that the Stalinists put forward many democratic demands in order to build the Partisans as a mass movement. The larger the movement became, the more Tito watered down the social demands, kept anyhow, as Browder kept assuring Wright, within the confines of private property, although some land was seized by the peasants from reactionary landlords. More and more Tito channeled the movement as a purely military struggle to drive out the invader. The same idea of military victory before "reforms" in order not to disrupt the People's Front, was followed in Yugoslavia as in Spain. "Freedom for all peoples, death for fascism!" That was the rallying cry of the Partisans. But that is what kept the movement on a bourgeois-democratic plane.

Wright, under the concept that the Vece was a Soviet of workers and peasants, is taken completely by surprise when in December 1943, this Vece becomes (to him it is "transformed") the national bourgeois-democratic government. So he says that "whatever its content" it has certainly taken on bourgeois-democratic forms. Ivan Ribar, the Croat Catholic lawyer and member of the Serbo-Croat Democratic Party, did not become the nominal head out of thin air without having been a member previously. Ribar was the son of the first president of the National Constitutional Assembly which met in 1918 to organize the state which became Yugoslavia.

But Tito controlled the real power, the Army of National Liberation. This force had started much as had the Spanish Militias, with officers elected by the soldiers. But the officers had no particular rank. Tito worked cautiously to reorganize this militia of peasants and workers and petty-bourgeois elements, as an obedient, disciplined force under his dictatorial control, much as did Miaja in Spain. By August 1943 this was completely accomplished (not without the terroristic aid of the GPU and its Spanish methods). The process then culminated when officers' ranks were restored, much the same sort as had come into existence within the Red Army, and, significantly, when the clenched fist salute was abolished in favor of the traditional Yugoslav salute. There is evidence to show that thereafter the workers and peasants became apathetic and indifferent, again as in Spain. Not that they did not care about driving the Nazi invaders out, but they found less and less difference as between Tito and Mikhailovich.

Our theoretic stand on the problem of national liberation combined with the Spanish experience, and above all our knowledge that the Stalinists were in control of the movement -- these should have made interpretation of Yugoslav events relatively easy. But we have seen the line followed in our press, a line which, in the main, gave uncritical support to the Partisans; which failed to warn of the real nature of this national liberation movement in time; which spoke of the fusing of the national liberation struggle with the class struggle even after all efforts in the direction of class struggle had been suppressed; which failed to expose Tito and his real aims so that his later openly reactionary stops came as a surprise. It was a line whose tendency was to keep the workers and peasants enslaved, rather than to help free them.

We have seen what Wright and Warde said about Stalinism in Yugoslavia after its role became clear. Let us now go back to what

was said earlier in the press. The April 1943 issue of the F.I. has Wright's article on "Civil War in Yugoslavia". He says;

"Generally speaking, all movements in society and all the key problems including those of 'National Liberation' are governed by and solved through the mechanism of classes and the dynamics of the class struggle. In occupied Europe the national question is fused intimately with the social. In the case of Yugoslavia the struggle against the occupying armies could not unfold without entering immediately into a head-on collision with the Axis collaborationists headed by the native landlords and capitalists and their central and local bureaucracy. The Stalinists inside and outside the USSR have sought to hide the inspiring fact that, while ostensibly operating within the framework of 'national liberation', the guerrilla movement no sooner acquired a mass character than it inexorably proceeded to assume class struggle forms... Needless to say, Washington subscribes to the same theory. Their common aim is to defeat Hitler only on the basis of preserving capitalist property forms and relations. Whoever violates the latter in any shape or manner becomes the main enemy in place of Hitler, Washington, London and their Yugoslavian satellites (note; that is Mikhailovich) all oppose expanded guerrilla activity in Yugoslavia because it is necessarily accompanied by the extension and intensification of class warfare. Expanded guerrilla activity, which the Kremlin does require, has meant the continuation of the policy of confiscating food supplies which, when not destroyed, are distributed among the local population. (It is almost laughable to call such a guerrilla measure in itself a class measure)... The opposition of the capitalists is all the more bitter because the policy of the guerrillas even under Stalinist domination has gone far beyond partial seizures... The wording of the Stalinist dispatch is a euphemistic way of describing agrarian revolution. The Yugoslav peasantry, land hungry for centuries, have seized the opportunity to divide the landlords' estates... It is a fact that the Stalinist-controlled leadership of the Partisans has tried, if not to foster, then at least to supply a legal cover for some of these land seizures."

Wright goes on:

"The Kremlin must secure the southern Balkan flank not only against Hitler but against the present allies just as, in the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact, it was driven to protect the northern flank in Finland against its then 'ally'. Just as Leon Trotsky used the Polish experience of 1939 as the key to the Finnish events that followed, so can we use the Finnish experience as the key to the current situation in Yugoslavia... The Kremlin is seeking to exploit the civil war in Yugoslavia -- where the Communist Party still retains a mass following -- through the establishment of a central government with a program which virtually duplicates that of Kuusinen's puppet government."

There is not a single trace of any attempt to analyze or evaluate the forces involved, their leadership, their policies. Instead we have the worst kind of illusions. "Every success of the Red Army adds new explosive power to the irrepressible conflict in Yugoslavia and spreads it beyond the boundaries." The entire Wright

thesis is then transferred to Poland. There follows a kind of ritualistic phrase: "It requires a clear conception of the class nature of the Soviet Union and the parasitic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy to analyze correctly this seemingly unprecedented situation." Just how the parasitic bureaucracy fits in is most unclear, unless one is to understand that mechanically and automatically the working class nature of the Soviet Union determines the merging of the war into revolution, with the parasites (even though in control) carried along willy-nilly. And in fact this distorted concept was precisely the one held: "But the same fundamental forces arising out of the irreconcilable clash between Soviet economy and world imperialism are driving the bureaucratic caste to measures which are revolutionary in their objective consequences... The Stalinist bureaucracy depends for its own existence upon the maintenance of the workers' state created by the October Revolution. In desperation and as a last resort this bureaucracy has proved itself capable of acting in self-defense as to stimulate revolutionary developments."

The not by any means consistent line of the editors and the Committee based itself on formulas treated mechanically as fetishes as quantities fixed once for all. The world may wax, the world may wane, but the formulas are unchanging and go on forever. We shall see this best exemplified on the question of defense of the Soviet Union. It expressed itself too in the matter of the nationalized property and in the ritual formula; the irreconcilable and insuperable character of the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the imperialists. This entire question should have been the pivot of the discussion at the plenum in October 1943. But it became submerged in the heated discussion of the democratic question and, above all, the organization question. I tried to at least call attention to a different approach on the entire Russian question. The Committee made a little concession to me, and then forgot all about the matter. Remember this was still October, before events scattered to the four winds all the chaff that was the Wright and Warde thesis. The plenum Resolution refers to the Moscow Pact and states that this could not eliminate the fundamental antagonism between the economic system of the Soviet Union and the capitalist world. The Pact will prove no more enduring than that with Hitler. "Neither Stalin's subservience to imperialism, nor his counter-revolutionary aims in Europe, can abolish this basic antagonism. At a subsequent stage, the underlying antagonisms must break into the open and, unless the European Revolution intervenes or Stalin makes concessions which change the basic character of Soviet economy, will lead to armed conflict between the USSR and Anglo-American imperialism."

The reservation concerning Stalin's concessions was the little detail that was casually thrown in. Of course, this was not done merely on my own instance. The hierarchic attitude of the Committee (we shall see this demonstrated on the question of Defense of the Soviet Union) required that a quotation be shown in Trotsky's works. Very well. I brought along the Old Man's Revolution Betrayed and showed the proper sentence: "The situation would be radically different, of course, if the bourgeois allies (of the Soviet Union in a war) received material guarantees that the Moscow government stands on the same side with them, not only of the war trenches, but of the class trenches too. Availing themselves of the difficulties of the Soviet Union, which will be placed between two fires, the capitalist "friends

of peace" will, of course, take all measures to drive a breach into the monopoly of foreign trade and the Soviet laws on property"

Analysis along these lines would have indicated that it does not do merely to report a formula. The antagonism between the Soviet system and the capitalist system is not at all a fixed quantity. The evolution of the Thermidorean bureaucracy with its concessions to imperialism, we know, while visibly weakening the Soviet Union as a socialist (more properly a transitional) system, for that very reason softened the antagonism and led to the so-called Stalinist diplomatic successes. One had always to keep in mind that the stronger the bureaucracy, the weaker the strength of the Soviet Union as a socialist state. Conversely, the appearance of a revolutionary wave would revive the antagonism of imperialism to the Soviet Union at the same time that it weakened the deadly grip of Stalinism. Stalinism has created all the political prerequisites in the Soviet Union for capitalist restoration. All its institutions are bourgeoisified. The Kremlin gang would not hesitate to make economic concessions to capitalism if that became necessary to preserve its power. The economic structure of the Soviet Union has been struck a terrific blow by the war. Trotsky pointed out that a prolonged war would almost inevitably -- barring revolution -- bring about capitalist restoration. So long as the Stalinists retain their power in the Soviet Union, the capitalists watch their evolution with friendly interest (I speak now of the democracies) just because they see the distinct possibility of a change in the forms of property following on the prolonged degeneration of the October Revolution in Russia.

Stalin has meantime given material guarantees (unexpected and surprising to Wright and Warde, although they will now deny this) that he is on the same side of the class trenches as well as the military trenches. Witness Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, France and Germany. Our Resolution now speaks of the common conspiracy of Stalin and his capitalist allies against the European proletarian revolution. This position comes by an abrupt leap from the previous position of the editors, without real explanation, without a peep of criticism. Everything now depends on the course taken by the workers in Europe. The formula on antagonism is also in the melting pot of the class struggle. Is this pessimism? Any optimism based on the "objectively revolutionary role" of Stalinism, any optimism based on a mechanical and automatic revolutionary process, is illusory. Stalinism has indeed become the greatest obstacle to the Revolution. The prestige gained among workers everywhere due to Russian victories, unfortunately does enhance the position of Stalin and makes the difficulties all the greater. The uncritical hailing of Red Army victories in our press did nothing to warn workers against this aspect of the victories.

The unconditional defense of the Soviet Union -- that which differentiated us from the petty-bourgeois Shachtmanites -- at least that was handled properly in our press, was it not? This, to be frank, was if anything our weakest side. You will find in the Case of Leon Trotsky his answer to a question on this score. (Page 289);

Trotsky: It is a very complicated question. I believe that during the war the allies can impose on the Soviet Union such concessions, social and economic concessions, that the Soviet

Union can become a bourgeois state. It is, in connection with bourgeois states, all alone. At the end of the war it is possible we will have a capitalist Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union will oppose the pressure of its allies, then I believe the allies will come together with its enemies to stifle the Soviet Union at the end of the war... But in the Soviet Union, I would support the Soviet Union, the Red Army, the Soviet State against all its enemies. Because --

Finerty: One way you would try to sustain or support the Soviet Union would be by fomenting revolutions in Germany and Japan?

Trotsky: By both means. In the Soviet Union, I would try to be a good soldier, win the sympathy of the soldiers, and fight well. Then, at a good moment, when victory is assured, I would say: "Now we must finish with the bureaucracy."

Trotsky later makes the analogy between this situation and the Kerensky period of the Revolution.

Our press, up to May 1944, did not follow this line at all. We had always interpreted the unconditional defense as meaning that while the Soviet Union was in immediate danger, we would not demand as a condition for our support the removal of Stalin. Yet, in The Militant you will find things quite in reverse. During the period of defeats, we demanded the removal of Stalin, without the removal the Soviet Union was bound to be defeated. Then when Stalin began to be victorious we hailed the victories no end and, forgetting completely that we were for a political revolution against Stalin, spoke in the most glowing terms of the wonderful unity of the Russian people. Trotsky had explained so many times that our defense of the Soviet Union had nothing in common with the politics of the totalitarian regime, that "While arms in hand they deal blows to Hitler, the Bolshevik-Leninists will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage."

Did Frank make a political concession to Stalinism or not when he wrote on December 4, 1943 in "Labor's Socialist Perspectives and Tasks of the Revolutionary Struggle in Europe." ... "The next great event in the course of this world war, which has affected the whole course of the military struggle and altered the whole relationship of forces, is the amazing and unprecedented victories of the Red Army... How is anybody going to explain today that amazing unity of Soviet peoples, that unprecedented vitality and morale which exists throughout the Red Army and the peoples of the Soviet Union, except on the theory that the October Revolution, though stifled and degraded, still lives... The contradiction is there, and at a subsequent stage it must again break into the open, and unless the European Revolution intervenes, must eventually lead to armed conflict between the USSR and Anglo-American capitalism."

The complete unity of the Soviet peoples -- under the totalitarian regime of Stalin! How could one possibly call for political revolution in that case? The unity of the Soviet peoples amidst the growth of inequality and an almost complete indifference of the bureaucracy to the lot and fate of the people during the war. The unity

of the Soviet peoples -- and the imprisonment even during the war not of tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, but of millions in the concentration camps of the Kremlin! Could Stalin have wished for better propaganda in his favor? Stalin could have pointed to our press and asked what further proof was necessary that his killing off of all the oppositionists had united and strengthened the USSR.

Do you want further proof as to the attitude towards Stalinism? Martin remarks in his letter (on which more anon): "The results 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." By chance we happened to obtain the report of a doctor who had escaped into Russia from Poland when the Nazis invaded his country. He traveled to the Far North, to Moscow, to Siberia. He saw in particular the life of the refugees and of the working masses. This report was made available to The Militant editors in the form of an article reporting verbatim, questions and answers. Invaluable material! It was refused publication! On what ground, you will ask in utter astonishment? Were the facts questioned? No. Warde and Frank (the same Frank who had written on unity at exactly the same time the article was submitted) did not question the article at all. They agreed as to its complete authenticity. But "it painted too black a picture"! Too black a picture for whom, may one inquire? For the workers who believed that everything was hunky-dory in the Soviet Union? For the editors who were painting up the revolutionary consequences of the Red Army victories? This reason was later modified -- you will hardly believe it! The second reason was that the article was not political enough! It would serve to discourage workers.

Today the article on Tito, the article of the doctor too, would be printed. The false line which virtually forced the editors to exclude them has been modified enough to permit this.

The article would have shown the utter emptiness of speaking of the "unity" of the masses of Russia, suffering under the whip-lash of a criminally-hardened, utterly indifferent bureaucracy, a gang interested solely in its own future, its own power, its own privileges.

How then can we speak of having, in our press, laid the basis, when it became clear that the USSR would be victorious, for the overthrow of Stalinism? What understanding did the Committee show on the entire meaning of our defense of the Soviet Union?

The touchstone of this question came with the events in Poland, particularly in Warsaw. The line followed in our press on the entire question of Stalin's grab of the eastern part of Poland, was one of support, political support, on the ground that this would mean the nationalizing of more property and, thereby, the strengthening of the USSR. Read, if you please, the editorial on Stalin and Poland in the January 8, 1944 issue of The Militant. I have already quoted Wright's article in the January 29, 1944 issue on "Red Army Victories Alarm Stalin's Allies". These articles violated the clearly stated programmatic line of Trotsky that we take no political responsibility for Stalin's grabs of territory, that the bureaucratic extension of nationalized property to this or that bit of land is secondary to us, the

primary thing being the world revolution to which the defense of the Soviet Union is subordinated. The Moscow and Teheran agreements had, however, already raised many misgivings in the Committee. It is this that explains how my article got into the press as an editorial in the February 5, 1944 issue of The Militant. This "Program for Poland" was intended as a corrective of the line previously followed on Poland. It places reliance, not on Stalinism, not on any automatic or bureaucratic spread of the Revolution, but rather on the independent action of the Polish workers and peasants.

The role of Stalinism was being demonstrated in event after event that shattered the line the press had previously pursued. You would look in vain for any open correction there, or even any educational discussion in the party. The February 12, 1944 issue contains the editorial "Stalinism and the Danger to Europe's Coming Revolution". Here, after discussion in the Committee, we find;

"It is this haunting fear of the European Revolution, it is their common determination to crush it that brought the Anglo-American imperialists together with Stalin, first at Moscow, then at Teheran... The Stalinist bureaucracy, itself panic-stricken before the revolutionary specter, likewise wants to crush the revolution in its desperate attempt to preserve its criminal regime by maintaining the capitalist status quo in Europe."

One might suppose that the question would then arise as to the effect of this external policy on internal policy in the Soviet Union. But the Committee declined to "speculate". When I proposed that it be indicated in the editorial on the fraudulent "autonomy" granted to the Russian Republics, that Molotov had hinted that this autonomy might also apply to the economic sphere, and this might be a way of preparing on a local scale for a breach in the monopoly of foreign trade, this was called pure "speculation". Yet Trotsky had "speculated" years before on the exact method that might be used to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. Did the danger exist, and exist now, or did it not?

The Committee corrected itself, but only in part and without deigning to answer my sharp attacks on the previous line. Speaking of the Polish underground, the February 12, 1944 editorial says; "They understand that Stalin's Kremlin gang came into Poland not as liberators but as oppressors". But the Stalin gang came into Polish territory -- in the form of the Red Army! This fact did not strike the editors. Later they would have to say that the Red Army is but the instrument of Stalinist policy.

The May Day Manifesto returns to a correct line without, however, understanding its full import. "Inseparable from the real defense of the Soviet Union is the irreconcilable fight against Stalinism, its regime and its policies." It says, this time quite correctly; "Down with Stalinism!" What was not understood was that this very call meant a change of emphasis on the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. The USSR was clearly going to be victorious. Hence the danger had lessened, our unconditional defense must begin to retire to the background. But by this time the Committee was treating the formula of defense in purely fetishist fashion, as some-

thing unchanging and irrevocable.

The truly pathetic culmination on the question of defense, and on the question of national liberation, came in August 1944. The August 5th issue contained the editorial "Dangers and Tasks Facing the Workers of Poland". This declares;

"Moscow's declaration explicitly states; 'The Soviet Government declares that it does not pursue aims....of a change of social structure in Poland'. This is the identical language used by Molotov after the entry of the Red Army into Rumania. There this statement of policy has been followed by practical measures upholding the domination of the capitalist-landlord oligarchy and suppressing the most elementary rights of the masses."

What has happened to the theory that Stalin must spread the Revolution all over Europe despite himself? What has happened to the Wright-Warde theory concerning the Red Army? The editorial speaks of the Polish workers and says;

"They must seek to enlist in their common cause the rank and file soldiers of the Red Army, and forge bonds of solidarity with the millions of Soviet workers who remain true to the internationalist ideas and revolutionary traditions of 1917. Through their independent struggle the Polish workers will inspire the Soviet masses to settle accounts with the hated Stalinist bureaucracy."

Those members of the Committee who still held to the old line, who did not know what had transpired at the center, immediately recognized that there had been a change, one with which they disagreed. A collaborator of Martin's thereupon wrote a letter to the Committee in the name of Martin and his collaborators. This letter, written on August 16, 1944, and a later letter I propose to quote in full. I know that wild accusations will be hurled at me as a violator of discipline of the Committee. This too I propose to answer, and to leave to the convention and to the party who truly violate the discipline of a Trotskyist party.

Excerpt from a letter from Martin's collaborator;

"In our opinion, the editorial on Poland in the August 5 Militant falls into error through a tendency to leap over the incompleting stage of European events -- the Soviet Union's life and death struggle against the armies of Hitler. 'With their own armed forces they (the Polish workers) must continue their independent revolutionary struggle' the editorial states, and adds in a later paragraph 'against all the agents....of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy.' This sweeping statement can be understood as implying armed struggle against the Red Army, which is the effective controlling force under Stalin's command in Poland. Nothing is said elsewhere in the editorial to negate this implication. We must not forget that as long as the Red Army remains locked in combat with the armies of a capitalist Germany, our slogan 'Unconditional defense of the Soviet Union' retains its full content, regardless of Stalin's counter-revolutionary policies in occupied areas beyond the Soviet borders.

Furthermore, this slogan must at all times be emphasized, especially in editorials such as the one on Poland. We should outline a revolutionary program for Poland, as the editorial does. But we must make it explicitly clear that in the struggle for this program there is to be no sabotaging of the Soviet Union war against Hitler. A workers' revolution in Germany will drastically alter the character of the military struggle in Europe. Events will have reached a new, higher revolutionary stage. Then we will approach all questions in the light of the changed circumstances. But Hitler is still in power. Germany remains capitalist. Its imperialist assault on the Soviet Union is not yet totally defeated. We must keep our policy carefully attuned to the situation as it is right now. Because of the present dispute on the European question, we must be doubly careful in thinking these problems through to the end before writing about them. Great care should be taken in treating the Polish and similar questions in the conventions resolution. We must never forget that our party statements and editorials are now regarded as programmatic documents and taken with the greatest seriousness by the revolutionary workers of the entire world. This imposes upon us a stern responsibility to be careful what we say. This carefulness, this aversion to the practice of going off half-cocked, this habit of waiting to think things through before we speak, has been denominated 'conservatism' by light-minded feuillaten writers, who imagine themselves to be alter politicians. But it is this very 'conservatism' that has given all our previous resolutions since the death of the Old Man their thought-out character and made them stand up from year to year as supplements logically flowing from one unchanging program, and like the program itself, needing no fundamental revision."

Excerpt from a letter of Martin's collaborator:

August 23, 1944

"The August 19 Militant editorial "Warsaw Betrayed" goes even further afield than the previous editorial we wrote about, in muddling up our line of 'Unconditional Defense of the Soviet Union' in the struggle against the Nazi-imperialist invaders. To call upon the revolutionary Polish workers to 'organize fraternization' with the Red Army soldiers, as the editorial does, is to think in terms of establishing contact with the rank and file of a hostile military force. But the Polish workers must be the allies of the Red Army in its war against Hitler's armies, no matter how reactionary Stalin's policy is. Therefore, the task for the Polish revolutionaries is to organize revolutionary propoganda in the ranks of the Red Army, with which they will be in contact as allies, not to 'organize fraternization'. Secondly, the editorial adds that through this 'fraternization' the Polish workers will help the Soviet masses to 'settle accounts with the bloody Bonapartist dictatorship of Stalin.' Our program recognizes the vital necessity of overthrowing Stalinism in the Soviet Union and has always placed this task in order of importance second only to the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks. However, it is precisely the latter consideration that the editorial slurs over, thus laying itself open to the implication of war against Hitler. Finally, the editorial again fails

to put explicitly and unmistakably our slogan 'Unconditional defense of the Soviet Union' against all imperialists. The editorial also takes for granted a version of the Warsaw events about which there is little information, none of it reliable, and many uncertainties. A full-scale battle against the Nazis by the Warsaw proletariat is assumed, as is the 'order of Stalin's generals' in halting the Red Army attack on the city. The Moscow charge that the London 'Polish government-in-exile' ordered the uprising without consulting the Red Army command is brushed aside without being clearly stated, much less analyzed in the light of the current Soviet-Polish negotiations. No consideration is given to the question of whether or not the Red Army was able at the moment to launch an all-out attack on Warsaw in view of its long-sustained offensive, the Nazi defensive preparations along the vista, the necessity to regroup forces and mass for new attacks after the not inconsiderable expenditure of men and material in reaching the outskirts of Warsaw, the fact that there was a lull along virtually the entire Eastern front concurrent with the halt before Warsaw, etc. Nor does the editorial take up the question of the duty of guerrilla forces -- and in the circumstances that is what the Warsaw detachments are -- to subordinate themselves to the high command of the main army, the Red Army, in timing of such an important battle as the siege of Warsaw. On the contrary, the editorial appears to take as its point of departure the assumption that a full-scale proletarian uprising occurred in Warsaw and that Stalin deliberately maneuvered to permit Hitler to crush the revolt. A hasty, sketchy commentary on events, including the badly-limping Badoglio analogy, is then fitted into this arbitrary framework. We agree, indeed, as to Stalin's counter-revolutionary intentions. Moreover, one has the right to suspect or believe personally that the Warsaw events are just as the editorial pictures them. But we have no right to put in writing in our press, and in an editorial to boot, such sweeping assertions for which we have no proof and to draw conclusions based on such flimsy information. That is not the tradition of the Militant. We are deeply concerned about this carelessness in writing about such a crucial question and are anxious to hear the comments on our criticism."

Letter from Natalia (translation)

August 16, 1944

"Dear friend,

I do not consider myself competent in political questions to the extent of condemning this or that line of your conduct. But in the given instance your mistaken course is all too clear to me.

"Permit me a few words in this connection.

"You seem to be hypnotized by the slogan of the 'defense of the USSR' and in the meantime profound changes, political as well as moral-psychological, have taken place in its social structure. In his articles, especially the last ones, L. D. wrote of the USSR as a degenerating workers' state and in view of this outlined two possible paths of further social evolution of the first workers' state; revolutionary and reactionary. The last four

years have shown us that the reactionary landslide has assumed monstrous proportions within the USSR. I shall not recount the facts, they are known to you -- they bespeak of the complete moving away of the USSR from the principles of October. Soviet literature for the war years (Moscow magazines which I am receiving) confirm these facts; in current Moscow literature there is not the slightest echo of socialist ideology; dominant in it are petty-bourgeois, middle-class tendencies; the cult of the family and its welfare. The Red Army at the basis of whose organization were lodged the principles of the October overturn, and whose (the Red Army's) goal was the struggle for the world revolution has become transformed into a nationalist-patriotic organization, defending the fatherland, and not against its bureaucratic regime but together with its regime as it has taken shape in the last decade. Do you recall the answer of L.D. to the question put to him in the Politburo in 1928; whether the Opposition would defend the USSR in case of war? 'The socialist fatherland -- yes; Stalin's regime -- no.'

"The 'socialist' has fallen away; the 'regime' has remained. A degenerating 'workers' state' presupposes that it is moving along the path of degenerating, still preserving its basic principle -- the nationalization of private property. But just as it is impossible to build socialism in one country, so it is impossible to preserve inviolate this basic principle, if one pursues the reactionary road, destroying all the other conquests of 1917. It is necessary to explain this tirelessly day by day. It is impermissible to repeat an antiquated slogan by rote.

"At the present time there is only one danger threatening the Soviet Union -- that is the further development of black reaction, the further betrayal of the international proletariat. This is precisely the direction in which it is necessary to sound the alarm. To defend the Soviet Union against the regime of its 'master', mercilessly laying bare the policy of the master who comes to the fore on the international arena in the capacity of a conciliator with bourgeois capitalism and as a counter-revolutionist in the European countries liberated from Hitler. (As far back as 1937 L.D. wrote in the Bulletin of the Russian Opposition that not a single serious person believes any longer in the revolutionary role of Stalin).

"You are correctly criticizing the foreign policy of the Marshal, but after all, foreign policy is the continuation of the domestic policy, it is impermissible to separate the one from the other. In your position there is a crying contradiction. It is necessary to hammer away at one point; to warn against the consequences of Russian victories; to warn, to sound the alarm on the basis of the elements that have already been disclosed with complete clarity, as well as to lay bare those elements which are about to be disclosed, and at the same time to point the way out.

"Warmest regards to our friends, I warmly shake your hand,

Yours,

Natalia

"P.S. Have just received issue No. 29 of the paper. Nos. 30 and 31 have not yet arrived. Comparatively, issue No. 29 (the article on Rumania) is already a step forward (the article on Germany) in which there is talk about the possibilities of the Red Army, if it had remained as it was. It is necessary to go along further in this direction, explaining what the Red Army is now."

The Committee decided, in the light of its correction of line, to write to Martin and his collaborator, giving its views. I participated in the discussion on the letter and explained my view, which was that the time had long since come when it was necessary to shift emphasis on the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. It was now necessary to lay the political basis in the light of all the openly reactionary policies of Stalin, for speaking more and more loudly for his overthrow. It was now clear that the Soviet Union would be victorious in the war. We must now follow the line of Trotsky and counterpose the proletarian revolution to Stalinism.

There then appeared in our press the editorial on the Warsaw uprising. I protested against this editorial to the Committee. My protest -- the Committee agreed that it was correct -- was not all against that phase which called the Stalinist action a betrayal. That part was correct enough. It was rather once more on the attitude taken towards a movement for national liberation. The editorial referred to the uprising as that of the revolutionary socialist workers of Warsaw. This summed up all the previous errors made in this connection. It "fused" the class struggle with the struggle for national liberation once again. It ignored the banner under which a movement conducts its struggle. It showed the old hypnotism before a mass movement. The Warsaw uprising was clearly under the banner of the exiled London Polish Government, under the direction of General Bor. How then could one call this an uprising of the socialist workers? It was a People's Front movement, with all Polish elements represented. Without question, the revolutionary socialist workers had participated in it. Stalin betrayed it precisely in order to permit the Germans to annihilate these independent non-Stalinized workers on the one hand, and the nationalist Poles who opposed his territorial demands on the other.

The next meeting of the Committee saw a second letter of protest from Martin and his collaborator. This letter took up the "Warsaw Betrayal" also. It takes for granted the real mistake of the editorial, that on calling a People's Front movement one of the revolutionary socialist workers. It protests against calling the act of Stalin a betrayal. It calls for unchanging unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. It is truly difficult to take up all the mistakes in this lamentable letter. The Committee would like to hide this letter from the party. Again it sums up all the previous errors that had appeared in the press.

Let us look a little more closely at the letter. The character of the Warsaw uprising? Martin's collaborator says; "Nor does the editorial take up the question of the duty of guerrilla forces -- and in the circumstances that is what the Warsaw detachments are -- to subordinate themselves to the high command of the main army, the Red Army, in timing of such an important battle as the siege of Warsaw." Let us take this point of view for a moment. Suppose there

were Polish worker-guerrilla fighters alone involved. Why must they subordinate themselves to the reactionary Stalinist high command of the Red Army? Why should they not aid the Red Army but, as revolutionary Polish workers, constitute their own independent force? Actually the answer is not that there is any principle against their doing so, but on the contrary, the Red Army high command would never permit them to do so; those militant workers who are suspected of such designs are arrested and shot! As a matter of fact, Martin's collaborator took the entire matter on a purely military basis. He had a mechanical conception. Unconditional defense, that immutable formula, comes first, before everything else. Stalin uses the Red Army for his own political aims. Martin's collaborator would subordinate the Polish workers to the Red Army high command; that is, to the Stalinist aims.

You may believe personally that Stalin committed an act of betrayal. But that must not appear in the press. And it need not in the least affect your advice directed to the Polish workers. How can this be? Martin's collaborator enters into precisely the kind of defense of Stalin's act that the "friends of Stalin" gave (read Upham Pope in the Times). No. The evidence is absolutely clear; Stalin deliberately betrayed Warsaw into the hands of the Nazis. Where are the Polish workers of Warsaw who are to subordinate themselves to the high command? They are either dead, or they are imprisoned by the Nazis to whom they were handed over by Stalin. Even if we wanted to obey your advice, says the Polish socialist worker, we couldn't do it, because Stalin and his Red Army don't permit us to do so. How can this be just a matter of personal opinion? Has it no effect on the advice that you will give, say, to the German workers? Will you tell them to place themselves under that high command which will carry out the policies of Stalin and send millions of them to Russia as slave labor? Isn't it clear that your fetishist thinking gets you into an utter impasse? The conclusion is inevitable; your thinking is wrong!

You say: "But the Polish workers must be the allies of the Red Army in its war against Hitler's army, no matter how reactionary Stalin's policy is. We understand that here you base yourself on a statement of the Old Man, but let us quote him to you on this score; "It is one thing to solidarize with Stalin, defend his policy, assume responsibility for it -- as does the triply infamous Comintern -- it is another thing to explain to the world working class that no matter what crimes Stalin may be guilty of we cannot permit world imperialism to crush the Soviet Union, reestablish capitalism and convert the land of the October Revolution into a colony. This explanation likewise furnishes the basis for our defense of the Soviet Union."

All that you forgot was that this "formula" applies when the menace of imperialism stands ready to crush the Soviet Union. When the menace recedes we do not at all pursue the same policy. Our emphasis becomes different and we cannot wait till the last gasp of the war to make our position clear to the working class. That would be fatal indeed. The greatest menace today is no longer defeat by imperialism of the Red Army. It is rather that if Revolution does not appear in Europe, then the Stalinist bureaucracy will carry the down-sliding of the October to completion, and will yield to imperialist

pressure to begin the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. That means that now the European Revolution assumes first place and the defense formula recedes to the background. Events may even cause it to disappear completely, if reaction succeeds in its aims.

We listened in the Committee to Wright and Warde defend the unchanging formula of defense, now and forever, even after Natalia's first letter arrived at the same time as the second letter of Martin's collaborator. Natalia's first letter was dated August 16th. The accents of these members, these editors, who thought they were defending Martin's point of view, were clearly the accents of sectarianism and fetishism. The first letter of Natalia (with whose views I was completely in accord long before I saw her letter) contained one sentence of condemnation of the line that the Committee had pursued. That sentence read: "I do not consider myself competent in political questions to the extent of condemning this or that line of your conduct. But in the given instance your mistaken course is all too clear to me." The Committee is determined apparently -- or was -- to prevent the party from seeing this criticism. Frank put it that he did not want unnecessary polemics.

The Committee sent Natalia's letter to Martin and the others (not, however, to Morrison and Cassidy). It is here that was demonstrated the completely hierarchic attitude of the Martin group. There was nothing new in the situation. The letter of Martin's collaborator and that of Natalia's were dated the same day. The Martin group changed its mind. Martin then wrote a letter to the Committee with his new point of view, without so much as taking the trouble to officially withdraw the letter of his collaborator! I proposed that a new section be added to the Resolution on the change in emphasis on defense of the Soviet Union. To motivate this I proposed to put in the internal bulletin both Natalia's two letters and those of Martin's collaborator. I explained that evidently the letter of Martin's collaborator had been withdrawn, since these comrades had changed their point of view. This was certainly permissible, but on one condition; that we educate the party by a full criticism of the previous errors. The Committee delayed acting on this motion, and then finally decided to put over another accomplished fact. Without meeting so that I could be present, the second letter of Natalia's and Martin's letter were rushed into the Bulletin by the Committee.

Let us see what purposes the Committee is serving. Natalia's letters are not the private property of the P.C. They were written for the party and for its education. The Committee however wanted to cover up its previous course and so did not want Natalia's criticisms to appear. They adopted her political conclusions -- but rejected her criticisms. After the receipt of Natalia's first letter, Wright wrote to Natalia asking for a further clarification of her point of view. Natalia then wrote the letter which appears in the Bulletin. When I proposed that both letters appear, Stein advanced the specious argument that the first letter had been written hastily and that he wanted to save Natalia's prestige! It might be necessary, he said, to secure her permission to print the first letter! I informed Stein that this was unprecedented and would no doubt astonish Natalia, but that I would

certainly agree to have the Committee write to "request her permission". My agreement with this proposal disturbed the Committee no end. They then proposed to keep the entire matter in abeyance (that is, to caucus on the situation after the meeting!). Thereupon, for the first time in our movement, so far as I am aware, the Committee acted in the manner of the old C.P. when it used to send telegrams to Moscow -- with the object of "putting something over". Without informing me, they sent a telegram to Natalia, asking her whether her second letter did not express her views more clearly than her first. Natalia's reply must have caused a very distinct burning of the ears of the Committee. She understood very well what was involved. The Convention should demand that this telegram and the reply be produced and read! Natalia agreed that her second letter gave her entire point of view better than the first one. But she went on to remind the Committee that it was necessary for it to listen to the criticism of members with more attention. She reminded them (please tell us in what connection, Comrade Stein) of an incident way back in 1927 in which the Old Man and a Stalinist bureaucrat were involved. The Old Man was criticizing the Stalinists in the Executive Committee. One of them asked; "Where is the party?" and Trotsky replied; "You have strangled the party!" Natalia recounted this incident in a vain attempt to bring the Committee to its senses in its extremely nervous attitude towards criticism.

One must ask; if Natalia's criticisms are suppressed -- even after those who suppress them have adopted the ideas of Natalia (they were hardly prepared to do so when the same, exactly the same, criticisms emanated from me) -- what chance has the ordinary member of getting a hearing?

The letter of Martin on the question of defense of the Soviet Union that appears in the Bulletin is undated. The reason for this is quite simple. The letter of Natalia's that appears in the Bulletin is dated August 23rd, 1944. Her first letter was written August 16th. Martin's first letter in reply was written in between. To hide the fact that a first August 16th letter had been written, the editors are forced to suppress the date on the first Martin letter.

The publishing in this fashion of the Natalia and Martin letters serves, does it not, to make it appear that both together were motivating a turn in our course, with a new emphasis, a different one, on the European Revolution and the question of defense of the USSR. It is this false face before the party that makes it necessary to publish, under my name, the letters of Martin's collaborator. These letters were also the letters of Martin. They are all the more significant because they are the first documents of this kind to appear under the name of Martin and his collaborator in a period of years. We cannot quote from the articles of Martin on the tremendous political events of the past several years. Not one has appeared. Not one! We can quote only from the articles of those to whom he gave full support -- Wright, Warde, Frank. Martin never wrote to criticize the distortions of these comrades. He never cautioned them against speculations which have indeed proved to be the purest inventions of a warped point of view. Martin's first documents (the letters from his collaborator) show him lagging behind the Committee after it had already begun to correct itself. Why then should it now be attempted to make it appear that Natalia and Martin have set the

party on a new line? Natalia's letters were in actuality a polemic against Martin's and the Committee's point of view. The answer, in view of the fact that the Committee wants to hush up necessary educational criticism of its past course, not just in the letters of Martin's collaborator, but in the open press, is that the Committee is not concerned too deeply with the political questions; it is absorbed in apparatus politics, in votes that will determine the membership of the next Committee. The letters of Martin's collaborator are important, not in themselves, but precisely because they throw an illuminating light on the past course of the P.C. in the press.

Glance for a moment at the Martin letter, written without so much as mentioning the letters of his collaborator which therefore still lay on the table before the Committee. It states: "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." This sentence serves as a "bridge" from the old course to the new. It is correct only in a certain sense. If it is intended to testify to the correctness of the line previously pursued -- namely, that Stalinism, in its defense of itself, and therefore in defense of the Soviet Union with its nationalized property, was forced against its own will to use revolutionary methods which "objectively" aided the European Revolution -- then it is false. It is true in one sense only; namely, that the success of the Red Army means the defeat of the Nazi and Fascist armies, that this leaves a highly fluid situation in which the capitalist class has been critically weakened by its complete identification with Fascism. It gives rise to the Revolutionary Situation, during which, if the workers find the proper road and the proper leadership, they have the possibility to come to power.

But to point to the "objective logic" is precisely completely inadequate at such a time. Comrade Frank tells us that we have a complete and unchanging program which we present to the working class, and we leave it to those advanced militants in the European movement ("with all their stores of experience") to pick out from the program what they consider best at the given time. That attitude (the attitude of the "objective logic") means the avoidance of the entire problem, not its solution. ("Once burned, twice careful").

It is precisely in the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations that the subjective factors become far more important than the objective. Without the subjective factors, the objective situation can pass on without leading to anything. Need I quote on this score from Trotsky, who repeated it to us so many times? "But as soon as the objective prerequisites have grown to maturity the key to the whole historic process is handed to the subjective factor, that is, the party and its revolutionary leadership... In all these cases, as well as in others of lesser importance, the opportunistic tendency expressed itself in the fact that it relied solely upon the masses and completely neglected the question of a revolutionary leadership. Such an attitude, which is false in general, operates with positively annihilating effect in this epoch."

It is part of the duty of the "subjective factor" to warn the workers of the obstacles and dangers in their path. It is part

of the duty of the "subjective factor" to say what is, to characterize events correctly, to indicate the tendencies involved in every major situation so as to guide the working class along the correct road. The plenum was a small instance of making an unexpected and abrupt leap in the characterization of the Badoglio regime as a regime of prevention of the proletarian revolution. Cannon told us then that we need not "speculate" on what goes on among the "tops" -- that is, as between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin -- it was sufficient to follow the course of the masses. To keep your eyes solely on the masses, that was revolutionary optimism, to speculate on the dangers from the tops, that could lead only to pessimism. The optimistic attitude led at once to declaring the Italian Revolution "defeated" when it had hardly started. The word was deleted from the resolutions of both "majority" and "minority" at my instance. I tried to teach the Harry Frankels, the youths of our movement, that it was necessary to keep in mind all factors, all tendencies, in order to warn workers in time of the dangers in their road, in order to help them avoid those dangers and win to firm ground. Do you remember my disagreement with you on "tempo"? You had comrades believing that the Italian Revolution was two weeks, at most two months off. What could such an "incautious" attitude lead to except pessimism when it had to "let down" those comrades who had been "keyed up" by your "optimism".

The party is paying now (it will not realize it until after the convention, which will not take up the really burning issues, that I warrant) for its incredible attitude towards Stalinism. Now, mind you, we need a lengthy Resolution to persuade "ourselves" that Stalinism is a frightful menace to the world revolution. The "subjective factor" is working at extremely slow tempo in a period when it should be geared for the most flexible functioning. We are told that the party must, if anything, be more centralized. Why? In order that the Committee may become even more separated from the membership than it already is? In order that the P.C. may make its decisions (some of which we see here) completely behind the scenes, only to have them changed abruptly and then covered from the view of the party? In order to create the kind of discipline in which the editors are allowed to put over a line by "accomplished facts"? In order to build up a theory of an infallible leadership? In order to make it impossible to exercise criticism, the only form of control?

A further word on "discipline". Haven't I broken all the discipline of the decalogue in this lengthy article? No, comrades, I am only carrying on the best kind of discipline in our movement. That discipline must be based first and foremost on loyalty not to persons nor to committees nor to an apparatus, but to the basic principles of our movement. In final analysis, our kind of discipline depends on ideas, correct ideas. Before a convention, the ordinary discipline to carry out decisions of the various party bodies, relaxes and is partially dissolved so that the convention can make all its decisions on the basis of all facts, laid freely before it. But even the ordinary discipline in between conventions is being misinterpreted by some comrades. Our discipline is based on the freest possible discussion inside the movement, so as all the better to carry out our decisions in "iron discipline" in actions outside the party.

Comrade Martin speaks of "literary politics" in his letter. I urge him to turn his attention to editor Wright in this connection. Wright can tell us (and we are hardly yet in a Civil War!); "No statement on the war has been issued in the name of that party which under Lenin held congress after congress under conditions of complete democracy in the very midst of the civil war". Are we striving to emulate Lenin and the party in his time, or some more centralized party? It does not do to make a parade of democratic centralism just before and even, perhaps, during a convention, only to violate its real spirit all the year round. The attitude of the Committee towards critics (and I include here those who are right in their criticisms as well as those who are wrong) is a completely apparatus attitude. It simply will not brook the slightest criticism. Isn't there an "anxiety complex" involved here? Instead of infinite patience in order to educate members, there is utter impatience, a real "baiting" of critics, a split spirit.

Lenin gives you his views on discipline, and Trotsky quotes them with complete approval. "We have defined more than once our view in principle on the significance of discipline and on the meaning of discipline in a working class party. Unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism, that is our definition." Then he adds; "Discipline without ideas -- is an absurdity which transforms the workers in practice into miserable appendages to the bourgeoisie in power. Therefore, without freedom of discussion and criticism the proletariat does not recognize unity of action."

Trotsky explains this quotation more fully in the Case of Leon Trotsky. "Because even in the Bolshevik Party, with its very severe discipline, Lenin first emphasized that the essence is more important than the form; that the ideas are more important than the discipline; that if it is a question of fundamental importance, we can break the vows of discipline without betraying our ideas."

This is the attitude I take on discipline. I violate no statute of our party, no principle of our movement, by bringing loyalty to the convention my open criticisms of the leadership. On the contrary, I am carrying out an elementary principle of our party, to say what is, to help preserve a correct line. But, if I were violating the narrow interpretation that the Committee falsely places on its discipline, then I do it completely in the Trotskyist spirit and tradition. And I say categorically that the effort of the Committee to "put something over on the party" completely violates every concept of loyalty to principle and Bolshevik discipline. Had the Committee been willing to enter into a wee bit of self-criticism, the outcome would have been entirely different and far more beneficial. The party would have experienced a real impetus in its education.

I must repeat what Trotsky said. It cannot be stated often enough; "In politics not even the smallest mistakes pass unpunished, much less the big ones. And the greatest mistake of them all is when the mistake is veiled, when one seeks mechanically to suppress criticism and a correct Marxist estimate of the mistake." You think to correct yourselves without discussion. Enough of discussion; we are tired of it! You will accuse me of wanting interminable discussion, and no action. All I can say to you is, action based on the wrong

ideas will harm the party sooner or later. The only way to assure correctness is to listen carefully to all points of view in discussion before arriving at decisions, not to precipitate ideas into the open press as accomplished facts.

Let me return to the Martin letter. He repeats in it what has appeared in the press again and again, as a formula without analysis. This time a little analysis is added. "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 insurrection 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." Then Martin takes up the other possibility, of economic concessions opening Russia to imperialism. In that case, military intervention would hardly be necessary.

The alternatives are not posed quite in accord with the entire present situation. The Allies need Stalin to help drown the proletarian revolution in blood, or at the least to strangle it. This problem is paramount, so long as Stalin remains in power. The Allies, far from attacking the Soviet Union in that case, will do everything they can to uphold Stalin's rule, leaving it to him to bring about, under their economic pressure, the slow restoration of capitalism in Russia. It is true that tension will arise in the sphere of power politics (I wrote about this a long time ago in The Militant) when the question of the spoils in Asia arises. Martin thinks that a workers' revolution in Europe, coming to the defense of the Soviet Union before restoration can occur, will prevent another war of intervention. The "irreconcilable conflict" will result (it is "predetermined") in intervention, if the Revolution does not come about. But this should be stated the other way too. If Revolution does not break out, then economic pressure alone will probably suffice for the Allied imperialists. If the Revolution comes in one of the advanced countries of Europe, and if it brings repercussions in the Soviet Union, repercussions bound to weaken the grip of the bureaucracy, then the question of military intervention will again rise in full force. Defense of the European Revolution and Defense of the Soviet Union will then coincide and the thesis of irreconcilable conflict will become the predominant one. If we say at present in our Resolution that the defense of the Soviet Union retires to the background in view of the victories of the Red Army and the menace that Stalinism constitutes to the proletarian revolution in Europe, we are at the same time saying that so long as Stalin remains in power and carries through his policies, the "irreconcilable conflict" is also softened (it is not a fixed thing, you see) and retires to the background with the question of defense.

The exact way in which these questions arise again will depend on the ability of the "subjective factor", the revolutionary party, to lead the working class into action. If we are to participate in the class struggle in Europe, then we also must discuss their programs and tactics and not offer them our "complete and unchanging program".

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NOTE: Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI., No. 8, "On the European Situation and Our Tasks", page 6, 17th line from the bottom, The sentence should read:

"...it does not mean 'today' in a general way as being the period we entered in 1914..."

and not "1944" as typed.
