

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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NOTE ON THE INTERNAL BULLETIN

By M. Stein

This issue of the Internal Bulletin is the first in a new series. We are planning to issue this Bulletin monthly provided sufficient material is submitted. We invite all party members to submit for publication whatever contributions to the discussion they may wish to make.

This Bulletin is issued at the request of the National Committee minority, which submitted a motion to this effect in the P.C., reading as follows: "That an internal bulletin be issued every month, provided sufficient material is available for approximately 20 mimeographed pages."

The P.C. accepted this motion by unanimous vote since it is in line with the authorization voted by the national convention in the following motion:

"(1) The political resolution of the National Committee having been adopted by the convention by a vote of 51 to 5 after free democratic discussion in the party ranks, the press and all public activities of the party must strictly conform to the convention decisions.

"(2) The discussion may in the discretion of the National Committee be continued in the internal bulletin."

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ON THE QUESTION OF THE SLOGAN "FOR A DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLIC"

By Albert Goldman

Note: The following article was written while I was away from New York and presented for publication in the F.I. in the early part of January. It was written immediately after the convention when I received a report that one or two comrades of the majority, in the course of the discussion on the European resolution, indicated their opposition to the slogan, "For a Republic" (for Italy).

Publication in the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL was refused by the Political Committee. Three reasons were presented by Comrade Frank, during the discussion on the question, justifying the refusal. (1) That the article assumes that someone at the convention spoke against the slogan, whereas no one spoke against it. (2) That the article does not definitely propose that we adopt the slogan. (3) That the article simply states that the slogan would be good if the conditions were proper.

Since the reasons were not presented in writing I cannot quote them exactly. I did not think they were serious enough to justify a reply. I simply stated that either a note could be written by the editors to the effect that they think I was not correctly informed when I was told that someone opposed the slogan at the convention, or that an article could be written in reply to mine. This was ridiculed.

I presented this article for the purpose of discussion in the F.I. Had there been a serious desire to discuss the main question raised in the article, minor questions could easily have been settled. A motion made to have the article published with all reference to the convention deleted was ruled out of order.

There was nothing to do but to have the article published in the Internal Bulletin. The question raised by the refusal of the P.C. to have it published in the F.I. is an exceedingly important one. In reality the refusal is only evidence that the majority of the P.C. wants a monolithic press. I intend to discuss this question from the point of view of its fundamental aspect of the relationship of a Bolshevik party to the masses. It is my contention that the majority tends to look upon the party as a sort of Masonic Lodge with its secrets and ritual, and consequently permits only the initiated party members the privilege of considering and discussing political and organizational questions. But I shall deal with that question more fully at a later date.

## Notes on the Slogan of a Republic for Italy

1. I am informed that at the convention, in the course of the argument on the European resolution, the question of the slogan in favor of a republic in Italy was raised. It seems that some of the proponents of the majority resolution or, better, some of those who opposed the Logan amendments, came out in opposition to that slogan. As far as I know, the resolution that was adopted does not reject the slogan. Had it contained any statement which could be interpreted as being opposed to the slogan of a republic in Italy I would have, had I been present, voted against the resolution. I would have concentrated all my efforts to convince the comrades that not only are they wrong in opposing such a slogan but that they are advising the Italian comrades to follow a course exceedingly dangerous to the Fourth International. Opposition to such a slogan, based on the general premise that what we want is a Socialist United States of Europe, constitutes such a gross deviation from the tactical approach of Lenin and Trotsky as to endanger the possibility of our gaining a majority of the masses in Europe and hence endanger the European revolution.

It is essential, because of the opposition of some of the majority delegates to the slogan of republic, that we examine this question very thoroughly. In the course of this examination and discussion we shall see whether or not our difference on the question of democratic demands really involves a fundamental difference of approach to the problem of gaining a majority of the masses to follow our leadership. The discussion of the question of democratic demands in general brought out some differences, but it was impossible to say that these differences constituted anything more than differences involving merely questions of emphasis. A discussion on a concrete question, especially such an important one as the slogan of a republic in Italy, may show, far more clearly, that a fundamental difference of approach actually exists.

It is easily possible to differ on the question of any particular slogan on the basis of the same fundamental approach. If, for instance, one is opposed to the slogan of republic on the basis of an analysis of the specific conditions prevailing in Italy and another is in favor of the slogan because his analysis of those conditions leads him to a different conclusion, then such a disagreement may not at all indicate a difference in tactical approach. But if the opposition to the slogan of a republic in Italy stems from a general analysis of the character of the epoch we live in and from the general conclusion that such a slogan contradicts the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe, then there can be no question but that we are confronted with a fundamental difference in tactical approach.

The question whether or not we should favor or oppose the idea of a republic in Italy is important for our party as well as for our comrades in Italy. For the latter it is of course a question of the most pressing moment. The difference between a correct and incorrect solution may conceivably be the difference between a very rapid growth and a comparatively slow growth of the Trotskyist party. In a

revolutionary situation a marxist party can grow tremendously in a very short period, provided its position on all questions that absorb the interest of the masses is correct. Although the question is not so important for the American party, it cannot be ignored. When so much is written about the support given to the Italian monarchy by the British and American governments, it would be ridiculous for us to be silent. The worker reading our press ought to know our position on the question of the Italian monarchy, that is, our position on the question of republic for Italy.

2. Let us be very specific on what is meant, at the present moment, by the slogan of a republic in Italy. Nothing more than the removal of every vestige of monarchy in Italy. The slogan "Down with the monarchy" is equivalent to the slogan "For a republic". Does not that slogan mean then, that I am in favor of a bourgeois-democratic republic as against the monarchy? Yes, it means exactly that, provided one understands that I do not favor the existence of a bourgeois-democratic republic as a solution for the ills of the Italian masses. Provided one understands that I favor the slogan of republic as a means of setting the masses into motion against every group and party that directly or indirectly supports the monarchy.

I feel certain that those who, at the convention, spoke against the slogan of a republic for Italy will say; Of course we are against the monarchy; but we are for a Soviet Republic and not a bourgeois republic. This brings us to the specific question that we are dealing with. Should our party struggle for a republic as one of our democratic demands or should it tell the workers that the only alternative is; Soviet Republic or monarchy. In discussing this question it is essential that everyone should know exactly what the disagreement is and the basis for the disagreement. Bolshevism demands the most scrupulous honesty in political discussion; it demands that the position of the opponent should be given exactly. It is of course permissible to draw inferences, but they should be presented as inferences and not as statements by the opponent.

Let it be understood that in these notes I am not attributing any concepts to anyone other than opposition to the slogan of a republic in Italy. I hope that those who oppose the slogan will put down in writing the exact basis of their opposition. When I refer to any arguments in opposition to the slogan I do not mean to indicate that these arguments have actually been made. They may have been made; they, perhaps, will be made. I am making these notes on the basis of a general summary of the arguments made at the convention. Further discussion will develop our positions more exactly and definitely.

3. We all agree on the question of the character of the epoch we live in. Over and over again we have indicated our acceptance of the programmatic idea that capitalism and, together with it, bourgeois democracy, have outlived their usefulness. On the basis of this analysis we have stated our general strategic aim to be the winning of the majority to our banner so that the masses will take power and begin the building of a socialist society. Many times have we reiterated our perspective of revolutionary upheavals following the war

and the necessity of a Socialist United States of Europe for the solution of the problems confronting the European masses. Those who attribute to anyone in our party who has expressed himself on these fundamental questions a difference of opinion does so either out of ignorance or with an intention to confuse.

But to state our fundamental programmatic concepts does not solve the problem of all problems; the winning of a majority to our banner. The masses do not take the trouble to study the fundamental programmatic ideas of the various parties and follow that party which appears to them to have the historically correct program. Only the most advanced section acts in that manner. It is only in the course of a struggle for all of their immediate demands and wants that the masses come to see the necessity of following that party which wants to lead them to power. It is only if we participate in all of the struggles of the masses, if we show them that we are interested not only in the ultimate goal but in all of their immediate needs, that we can gain the confidence of the masses and win them over to our basic program. I am certain that no one in our party will disagree with the simple truths stated above, truths which not even a casual reading of Lenin and Trotsky can fail to reveal.

Our hopes, desires and efforts will bring no great results unless we study the actual developments of life and adopt tactics demanded by these developments. And no document, no matter how brilliant and detailed, can possibly furnish us with all the slogans that developing conditions may require.

There is, by the way, no guide-book to tell us what particular slogan should be used for a particular occasion. We must be ready to formulate such slogans as will best serve the purpose of setting the masses into motion against the capitalist class and all its defenders. We must be ready to add new slogans and drop old ones as conditions require. This is the approach of Lenin and Trotsky; it is the only correct approach. The correctness or incorrectness of the slogan of a republic in Italy or a struggle against the monarchy must be judged by that criterion only.

4. What we need is a soviet republic and not a bourgeois republic, say (or may say) those opposed to the slogan of republic in Italy. Correct. That is what we need; that is what we want; that is what we should struggle for. But this does not solve the problem of how to get the masses to struggle for a soviet republic. If there were soviets and if we had the majority behind us anyone who would suggest that we concentrate or even put out great efforts on behalf of the struggle against the monarchy and for a republic, other than for a soviet republic, could hardly be considered fit to be a member of the party. The slogan for a republic is valid for the present. When conditions change it may recede into the background. The slogan "All power to the soviets" obviously would do away with, or shove into the background, the slogan for a republic. Marxists must know how to study changing conditions and formulate slogans to apply to prevailing conditions.

In Italy we do not have a majority of the masses behind us. There is no evidence that soviets or workers' councils are functioning on any considerable scale. The most important section of Italy has not yet had a chance to say its piece. The industrial centers of North Italy are still under the control of Hitler's army. The situation may change once the industrial workers begin to act. But right now, in that section of Italy where the masses have some freedom, the situation has not yet reached the point where the question of a soviet republic is so immediate that we need not consider the elimination of the monarchy as an important slogan for getting the masses to struggle. Here I must remark that the struggle for the abolition of the monarchy can very well be one of the demands rallying the masses to the slogan of "All power to the soviets".

Are not the masses of Italy interested in the elimination of the monarchy? I would not believe anyone who asserts that, even though I am far from Italy. Every bit of news indicates that the Italian masses are bitterly hostile to the monarchy.

To be against the monarchy and for a republic means not only to get the masses to struggle against the king but against the capitalists, against the foreign rulers (Roosevelt and Churchill) who support the monarchy, as well as against the two parties that have the majority of the masses behind them at the present time -- the socialist and Stalinist parties. Is it not evident that these parties have been compelled to give lip-service to opposition to the monarchy because the masses hate that institution? What a wonderful opportunity to unmask these hypocrites! They claim to be for socialism but are not even willing to put their foot down on the monarchy, the collaborator of Mussolini, the representative of everything reactionary.

Is there any contradiction between accepting the slogan of a Socialist United States of Europe and a republic in Italy? Only to those who do not use the dialectic method. After April 1917 the Bolsheviks steered their course in favor of power to the Soviets. But they were in a minority and their problem was to get a majority of the masses to follow them. The Provisional Government was in existence. Did the Bolsheviks ignore that government? It consisted of socialist and capitalist ministers. The Bolsheviks issued the slogan; "Down with the ten capitalist ministers". To doctrinaires that would appear to be a contradiction. Since you are not supporting the Provisional Government, since you want a Soviet Republic, why do you bother about capitalist ministers? These doctrinaires fail to understand that one must take the masses as they are and expect experience to teach them. And it must be remembered that when the Bolsheviks used that slogan there were powerful soviets. The Bolsheviks, however, were not in the majority and they utilized every slogan that would set the masses into motion.

Let us assume for a moment that the February revolution had not eliminated the Russian monarchy. He who would contend that Lenin would not have fought against the monarchy and for a republic has not the slightest conception of Lenin's tactical approach.

It is clear that in Italy, as in France, one of our main tasks is to get the workers to organize workers' councils and to unite them on a national scale. But workers' councils are organized by workers for the purpose of struggle; and to ignore the actual government -- its nature and functioning -- is to deprive ourselves of important issues around which the masses can be mobilized for struggle.

5. Apparently an argument used to justify opposition to the slogan of a republic is that it would be contrary to our fundamental position to the effect that bourgeois democracy has outlived itself and to struggle for a republic is to struggle for bourgeois democracy. This argument can be expected from principled ultra-leftists. I don't think there are many principled ultra-leftists in our party. They who utilize such an argument, however, like ultra-leftists, fail to grasp the role of democratic demands from the point of view of setting the masses into motion in the struggle to achieve a workers' regime.

It may be said that the struggle against the monarchy is not, strictly speaking, a democratic demand. Bourgeois democracy can and does exist under a monarchy -- witness Great Britain. The struggle against kings and princes is a tradition in the revolutionary socialist movement -- a tradition to be proud of and not to be surrendered. The capitalists and all their supporters can and do adapt themselves to this relic of feudalism but not the revolutionary proletariat. The very idea of a king is anathema to us and in every country where there is one we must agitate against the monarchy and for a republic.

In Italy we are confronted with a special situation. The existence of the monarchy has become one of the key political questions. Because of the role the monarchy played in supporting the fascist regime, the Italian masses are bitterly hostile to it. In favor of the monarchy are the capitalists and the foreign masters. A clear division exists between the masses and the rulers on this question. The reformist parties are playing a double game. In such a situation our opposition to the monarchy is not merely a question of being opposed in principle to kings and princes but an exceedingly important issue for the development of the class struggle, for the unmasking of the reformist parties, for the gaining of power to the workers.

In reality, however, the slogan "Down with the monarchy" or "For a republic" constitutes a democratic demand. Democracy in any form demands the elimination of kings. Considering the slogan as a democratic demand, opponents to such a slogan may (and do) raise the objection, mechanical and formal through and through, that democratic demands conflict with our theory that bourgeois democracy is outlived. It must be clearly understood that to fight for democratic demands does not mean to fight for bourgeois democracy as a system capable of solving the problems confronting the masses. To fight for democracy for the masses does not mean to stop when the democratic demands are achieved (if they should be achieved).

During the Civil War in Spain we favored material support to the Loyalist government fighting for bourgeois democracy. At that time bourgeois democracy was also outlived and could not solve the problems confronting the masses. But we were perfectly willing to



fight on the side of the Loyalists (ready to overthrow them whenever the majority of the people would rally behind our banner) because bourgeois democracy offers the masses a better chance than fascism to organize and struggle against the capitalists. The ultra-left took issue with our position on the ground that bourgeois democracy is bad. We also recognized that it is not sufficient but we took a position not on the basis of abstract principles but of actual conditions.

6. It seems that the question whether or not bourgeois-democratic regimes will arise in the various European countries, subsequent to the war, and how long they will last, has been permitted to becloud the issue of a slogan such as republic for Italy. Naturally on the basis of our fundamental analysis we must say that bourgeois-democratic regimes for a long period is excluded. Whether such regimes will arise or how long they will last if and when they do arise are concrete facts which those who understand Marxism will not attempt to predict with exactness. All that we can predict is the general direction of events and not concrete events.

If there is anyone in our ranks who, on the basis of the general proposition that capitalism is outlived, contends that bourgeois-democratic regimes can not come into existence or will exist only a few months if they do arise, then he makes the mistake of thinking that politics automatically reflects economics. This is a formal and mechanical type of Marxism.

But even if we grant that the alternative, from a short term viewpoint, is dictatorship or workers' power, does that mean that we should not struggle for democratic demands, including the struggle against the monarchy? The fact that certain demands cannot or may not be achieved does not mean that the masses should not struggle for them, especially such demands as do not appear to the masses to be unachievable. We must not permit, what is essentially a prediction of a concrete fact, to determine our attitude on the question of slogans that have, for their purpose, the mobilization of the masses for struggle.

7. Have the masses any illusions about bourgeois democracy? Somehow or other this question has been brought into the argument. Let us look at the facts and see whether or not we agree on the facts even though we do not agree on the meaning of words or phrases. The masses in Italy do not at present follow us; they follow the reformist Socialists and the Stalinists. Some among the opponents of the Logan amendments to the European resolution contend that this does not mean that the masses have democratic illusions. But no one can deny that the masses have illusions about the Socialists and Stalinists. These parties support the capitalist regime. The problem is to destroy the illusions of the masses with reference to parties that support the capitalist regime and foster democratic illusions. How can that best be accomplished? Simply by stating that capitalism and capitalist democracy are outlived; simply by repeating our fundamental slogan of Socialist United States of Europe? We must do that, of course. But we must also present such immediate demands which the masses need and want and which the Socialists and Stalinists are unwilling to struggle for.

He who opposes democratic demands, unless he is an ultra-leftist, must do so on the premise that the masses are not interested in them. All theory, all experience prove that such is not the case.

More than a year has passed since Mussolini was thrown out of power. Since then the reformist parties have not taken a clear fighting position on the question of the monarchy. I do not know what position our comrades in Italy took with reference to this question and other democratic demands. If they took the position that some in the majority accept they missed a wonderful opportunity. We in the United States can "afford" the luxury of making a mistake on a tactical orientation. Not the Italian comrades. In the heated revolutionary atmosphere that prevails in Italy and in the European countries in general a mistake in tactics cannot be corrected so readily. There isn't sufficient time. All comrades, here and in Italy, who hesitate about adopting democratic slogans, should read and re-read the history of the activities of the Bolsheviks between April and October 1917. The tactic of Lenin and Trotsky prior to the October Revolution will forever remain the classic example of ability to maneuver on the basis of a fundamental theory plus a close study of actual conditions in the process of development.

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MINORITY REPORT TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION  
(November, 1944)

Note: I wish to submit the speech I made on behalf of the minority at the convention for publication. As it stands, only those corrections have been made to suit it for publication. It has not been altered in content in any way.

February 20, 1945

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The first point I must make at the beginning of the discussion of the European problem is that there is no disagreement between us and the majority of the P.C. on any basic principled question. Bourgeois Europe has been decaying since 1914. The present war has further increased this decay. European capitalism cannot start a new life, either by its own forces or through American intervention. The continent has no chance of salvation, except as the proletarian revolution opens up a socialist future. We all agree on that.

I must state this because in the pre-convention discussion and also here, a little while ago, majority spokesmen have attempted to draw two different principled lines. They falsely constructed a "basic line" of the opposition and demolished it with great furor. An easy task indeed, but not very fruitful.

On the other hand, some majority comrades speak of the "un-principled" character of our position. They reproach us because we do not have a well-rounded, fundamental difference with the majority. Do they mean that nobody is allowed to raise his voice in a pre-convention discussion until he has some principled difference? That would be quite an innovation in our party.

The present dispute does not stand where it did when it broke out at the October 1943 plenum. The majority, we are glad to say, has adopted most of our criticisms and incorporated them into its own amendments issued just two or three days before the convention. But it is still necessary to trace the dispute to its original sources. We must do that in order to understand any remaining differences and, above all, to guard against the repetition of these errors in the future. We must trace the line of retreat of the majority from the first draft of the plenum resolution through the final plenum resolution, through the present draft resolution and the last retreat of the majority, its last-minute amendments, based on our criticisms.

That is the reason for all the fury about two lines. It is a smokescreen to cover a hasty retreat; an operation familiar in military strategy.

If we go back to the discussion at the October 1943 plenum and examine the majority's draft resolution, we shall see what the original line of the N.C. majority was. That draft resolution denied the possibility that, in the first phase of the European revolution, the European bourgeoisie aided by the allied imperialists would try to stem the tide of revolution by the use of bourgeois democracy. The draft resolution's immediate perspective for Europe is stated in paragraph 31, it says:

"The choice from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view is a Franco-type government or the spectre of socialist revolution."

Again in paragraph 42 we find this statement:

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

This idea is the main theme of the Plenum draft resolution. One final quotation on this point from paragraph 30:

"They (meaning the allied imperialists) propose to crush all manifestations for revolutionary independence by the European workers and to set up military-monarchist-clerical dictatorships."

The authors of the draft resolution give their motivation for this perspective. Economically the United States can no longer underwrite bourgeois democratic regimes and give them any stability as it did after the last war. And politically, paragraph 30 tells us that --

"Given their free scope, given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require much time to organize its revolutionary party and to overthrow all of its capitalist oppressors"

With such a speedy success in the offing for the European revolution (I repeat paragraph 30: "The European working class will not require much time"), it is only natural that the authors of the resolution ignored the real problems of the European revolution and offered only one slogan as necessary for the attraction of the masses to the revolution -- the United States of Socialist Europe.

With this perspective, it is no accident, therefore, that the authors of the draft resolution omitted completely -- yes completely -- any mention of democratic and transitional demands. The masses, they said, have no democratic illusions. There will be no need, no process of dispelling illusions about bourgeois democracy. For the majority of the N.C. there was only the leap from the allied military dictatorship (a "Franco-type dictatorship") to the proletarian revolution under the auspices of revolutionary slogans.

It is obvious that such a one-sided perspective was in serious error. Comrade Morrow, supported by Morrison, contended that the resolution must contain in unambiguous fashion the proposition that the bourgeoisie would, if necessary, evolve in the direction of bourgeois democratic regimes and that such regimes do not rest on

force alone but find support, through the mechanism of the mass parties, in the illusions of the masses. From this premise, Morrow and Morrison insisted, followed the necessity of including a section which outlined the importance of the method of democratic and transitional demands. They insisted that through the use of democratic and transitional demands our parties in Europe could dispel the illusions of the workers about the bourgeois democratic regimes, the reformist parties and their leaders. At the same time democratic and transitional demands would be a means of building the revolutionary class organizations of the workers, the soviets.

Upon what did Morrow and Morrison base their contention? First, that it was preposterous to say the allies would not use bourgeois democracy. Secondly, the economics of imperialist decay did not immediately and directly determine its political forms. Third, the very first events in Italy showed that the masses flocked primarily to the reformist parties. The workers did not hold them responsible for the victory of fascism. The masses had not had a chance to test either these parties or their programs. After twenty years under fascism they would have illusions about bourgeois democracy, and the reformist parties would feed on these illusions. The workers would also have illusions about what the allies would do for them. And, finally, the Nazi oppression had strengthened and fostered nationalist illusions. The conclusions which Morrow and Morrison drew was this -- that in all probability the masses of Europe would have to go through a certain body of experiences before they would learn that their needs could not be satisfied within the framework of a bourgeois democratic republic. To all these factors we can add the final point that in the initial explosion against the Nazis the parties of the Fourth International would be small or cadre groupings and that before them still lay the task of building the party and winning the masses.

For this Morrow and Morrison were denounced as pessimists. How did the writers of the original draft resolution answer Morrow and Morrison? They added to the resolution a quotation from the 1938 Founding Program of the Fourth International on the limited and episodic importance of democratic demands -- and that's all!

It should be plain that not only was the question of possible variants in Europe involved, but also the question of how you write a resolution. The authors of the Plenum draft were content to repeat fundamentals, with which Morrow, Morrison, Logan and their supporters agreed then and agree now. Morrow and Morrison insisted that a resolution must outline the variants for the coming period in Europe and outline the tactics flowing from the different variants.

The Plenum did not accept the contention of Frank and Warde, that Morrow had a principled difference. The Plenum accepted some of the Morrow-Morrison amendments.

Let us examine the final plenum resolution. When we look at the section on bourgeois democracy, we see what seems to be a concession to Morrow and Morrison. Paragraph 1 of that section states:

"Interim bourgeois-democratic regimes may be set up here and there as by-products of uncompleted revolutionary movements."

And the next paragraph tells us:

"With the collapse of fascism, capitalism will attempt to rule by means of naked military force, as already demonstrated in Italy. When this device proves powerless to control the insurgent masses, the native capitalists allied with the invading imperialists will push forward their treacherous democratic and social-reformist and Stalinist agents in an effort to strangle the revolution in a 'democratic noose'. When all other defenses crumble, the forces of capitalism will strive to preserve their dictatorship behind the facade of democratic forms even to the extent of a democratic republic."

What is the meaning of the last sentence "preserve their dictatorship behind the facade of democratic forms even to the extent of a democratic republic." What is plain is that the authors of the resolution were striving to save their formula of the "Franco-type" of government. Only this makes plain their deliberate confusion of the meaning of dictatorship. This is made evident when we turn to the section on the "counter-revolutionary Role of American Capitalism".

In the section of the "Counter-revolutionary Role of American Capitalism", again the authors of the resolution predict that the allied imperialists will use only one method to crush the revolution:

"Military-monarchist clerical dictatorships under the tutelage and hegemony of Anglo-American big business."

And then still again a formula of the original draft:

"The choice from a Roosevelt-Churchill point of view is a Franco-type government or the spectre of socialist revolution."

In this fashion the final plenum resolution rules out the third "choice" for the bourgeoisie in the present and immediate period ahead in Europe -- namely bourgeois democratic regimes that seek support in the masses.

As to the question of democratic demands, the Plenum resolution apparently incorporated the criticisms and ideas of Morrison and Morrow. In the original draft we find only one slogan with which to rally the masses -- the slogan of the United States of Socialist Europe. The final Plenum resolution is improved -- it says, following Morrow:

"To win the masses will require linking ourselves with them as we find them with all their illusions. Our task is rendered all the easier by the fact that democratic demands have revolutionary implications in Europe today if seriously fought for because the bourgeois governments cannot satisfy them."

An acceptance of the Morrow-Morrison idea. Nevertheless, the writers of the resolution insisted on covering their retreat by inserting a paragraph which insists that democratic slogans have a limited and subordinate role in mobilizing the masses for action.

We may ask, what are democratic slogans subordinate to? They are subordinate to transitional slogans and programmatic fundamentals. They must be connected with these in our agitation. But who will deny that any time up to a successful insurrection democratic slogans have an important place in our agitation and may play a central role? At certain times a revolutionary party may break its neck in its failure to understand the role of democratic demands as a means of winning a majority of the working class. That happened to be the case with the Spartacus group in 1919. A successful use of a democratic demand is the Bolshevik agitation for the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly, in 1917. Are the comrades of the majority willing to state here and now that this demand will not play a role in one or more of the European revolutions? It is hardly an accident, we may add, considering the approach of the majority, that this slogan, and others of a similar nature were not incorporated in the Plenum resolution.

To a certain extent then the majority was compelled to retreat. Where it had originally omitted the mention of democratic demands altogether, it was now compelled to admit their importance in winning the masses. But it was necessary to throw up a smokescreen to hide the retreat. This explains the dishonest attribution by Wargo and Frank to Morrow of a theory of the flowering of bourgeois democracy. Likewise they distorted Morrow's distinction between American and German imperialism. The German imperialists were compelled to rob Europe of its food, its gold, its machinery, its labor power; more than ten million workers imported into the Reich. Morrow pointed out that the European masses had illusions about the allies and that the allies would use food and economic aid to stave off the revolution. And I quote from Morrow's post-Plenum document;

"These economic contrasts between the limited resources of German capitalism and the far more ample resources of American imperialism cannot fail for a time to have political consequences." From this the majority has constructed a non-existent Morrow theory of a flowering of bourgeois democracy.

If we examine the draft convention resolution now before us, leaving aside for a moment the belated N.C. amendments, we find a futile attempt to perpetuate the theory of the "Franco-type dictatorship". Turn to paragraph 73 and read this surprising statement;

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

But, under the fire of our criticism the writers of the resolution have abandoned this impossible formula. The last-minute amendments drop it altogether.

But how did it arrive there in the first place? We must say it was no accident. The majority had a line about the political means the allies would use to crush the revolution. Did the facts do violence to the theory? That hardly mattered. The P.C. majority had a line to carry through.

Let us grant for the moment that the P.C. majority has come to its senses and dropped the absurd characterization of the Bonomi and De Gaulle regimes as naked military police dictatorships -- as a pattern the allies intend for Europe. After all they cannot quarrel with reality forever. But they still fail to draw the proper conclusions. It should have meant that they must abandon their line -- that the masses have no illusions and that there will be the leap from oppression under allied naked military dictatorship to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It means that between the fall of fascism and the establishment of the workers' power lies a transition period of bourgeois democracy as well as military dictatorship.

It is for this reason that we correctly called attention to the transitional character of the Bonomi and De Gaulle regimes -- towards bourgeois democracy. But the P.C. majority abandons its political line with reluctance. It grows indignant when we point out this tendency, this direction. They resist the idea that it represents a stage in the transition from fascism to bourgeois democracy. In his speech before the New York membership, Comrade Frank labeled such analyses "idle speculation." He does not speculate. He knows that the De Gaulle regime does not follow the norm of a bourgeois democracy. It lacks national sovereignty. It lacks a parliament. And that exhausts the problem for Comrade Frank. In that same speech he tells us:

"Only when there is an economic foundation that provides some stability, a rising standard of living that softens the class struggle temporarily, only then does bourgeois democracy take on reality. Then the class struggle is refracted primarily through the parliamentary struggle."

Let us examine Frank's criteria of bourgeois democracy. In Russia between February and October 1917 there was no parliament and the struggle was not primarily refracted through parliamentary channels. However, this period has always been characterized as a bourgeois democratic interlude. Or does Comrade Frank disagree with this characterization and propose to revise altogether the scientific terminology of Marxism?

We will not follow Frank in his quest for an ideal bourgeois democracy. Instead we will try to see what the tendency of development in Europe is in actuality. For that we must consider the problem of the existing regimes in Europe today; that is the problem of Bonapartism in Europe today.



The various fascist regimes were preceded by what we called Bonapartist governments. In Italy there were Giolitti and other governments. In Germany, Von Papen and Schleicher. Before Von Papen the Bruening cabinet, defined by Trotsky as a semi-Bonapartist regime, had already proceeded a long way from bourgeois democracy to dictatorship. What are the features of this pre-fascist Bonapartism? A greater and greater independence from parliament. A stifling of political life, with the arbiter rising above the contending political parties, a government becoming more and more independent of any political party and resting more and more exclusively on the personal authority of the chief of state. In a word a shrinking of the basis of the government. This process took place until finally fascism came to power. This phenomenon which we may call pre-fascist Bonapartism, distinguishing it thereby from other forms of Bonapartism, has been repeatedly and carefully examined by our movement in the past.

Now the fall of fascism, first in Italy, has brought about the formation of a new political phenomenon, the post-fascist Bonapartism which forms a transition from fascism to bourgeois democracy, as the pre-fascist Bonapartism formed a transition from bourgeois democracy to fascism. When we presented this idea some comrades interrupted us with a feigned horror. What! Does that mean that we will necessarily go everywhere through bourgeois democracy? We can reassure those comrades very easily. The analysis of a tendency should be made not in a fatalist but in a Marxist way. When in 1932 we defined pre-fascist Bonapartism as a bridge between bourgeois democracy and fascism and we characterized, let us say, the Von Papen government as Bonapartist, did we mean to say that fascism would necessarily come? Not in the least. We were not fatalists, but Marxists. A tendency can be crossed by another. In France, for instance, the pre-fascist Bonapartist cabinet of Doumergue was not followed by fascism, instead the pendulum swung back to the left. When we speak of post-fascist Bonapartism as a bridge between fascism and bourgeois democracy, we still have not said anything about the length or the stability of the democratic regime. The horrified comrades may save their emotion for a more suitable occasion.

What are the features of the post-fascist Bonapartism? While the base of the pre-fascist Bonapartism was shrinking, that of the post-fascist Bonapartism is expanding. The clearest example is Italy. We had the first Badoglio regime the basis of which was the marshall alone. Later we had the second Badoglio government with the participation of the six-party coalition, then the Bonomi regime with the same six party coalition. Now this coalition is about to break up. While in the pre-fascist Bonapartism the political life is more and more stifled, in the post-fascist Bonapartism there is a gradual revival of political struggles. The film is unrolled in reverse.

In France the movement has at once gone much further than in Italy. The regimes we now have in Italy and in France are transitory regimes with a mixture of Bonapartist and democratic features. What is the proportion of the mixture? When are they to be called Bonapartist or no longer Bonapartist? These are important questions that have to be examined and answered. But to undertake this task here and now would lead us too far from the questions under discussion.

The point I want to make clear is the tendency of the development, the broadening of the basis of these regimes, the reappearance of political parties, the revival of political struggles, etc.

Comrade Frank has made the existence of parliament the criterion of bourgeois democracy. We have seen by the example of Russia how inadequate this criticism is. Without looking for a definition, what should be the most important criterion from the point of view of revolutionary action?

It is that during a democratic interlude the proletariat has the opportunity to gather its forces, to test the various parties and programs. This is the most important fact for the future of the revolution.

To those who deny the probability of democratic periods or minimize their importance, we must again, again and again ask the question -- will we jump from a military dictatorship directly into the dictatorship of the proletariat under the leadership of the Fourth International? As long as the question is not answered clearly, that is, not by ballyhoo and false accusations, the most important problems of the present period are evaded.

Some comrades seem irritated at us because we speak of the possibility and in most cases the necessity of democratic interludes. They talk as if we were desiring such periods and somewhat responsible for them. They resemble the ignorant farmer who is angry at the physician who has diagnosed some illness. If these comrades want to be irritated they should not be irritated at us, but at reality. It is regrettable that in 1944 we have no socialism yet. However, it is quite bad to be irritated at reality. It does not lead very far.

Our criterion of a democratic interlude from the viewpoint of revolutionary action also helps us to establish the role of democratic and transitional demands. For the majority, it suffices to say that the coming bourgeois democratic interludes will be brief episodes in the class struggle. They fare no better with regard to democratic demands. First they told us that democratic demands are episodic and partial; secondly, that there are no blueprints on how to make a revolution, and finally they tell us that the masses in Europe really want socialism and have no democratic illusions.

Let us see. The masses want socialism. That is true. But to reduce everything to this plane is to reduce the question to the plane of enlightenment and conviction and not to pose it on the plane of action. The question is not simply that the masses want socialism but what steps they are ready to undertake now to bring about socialism.

The importance of a democratic interlude resides in the fact that it gives the workers a chance to gather its forces to test various parties and their programs. With the aid of democratic and transitional demands, a revolutionary party helps the masses discard their illusions -- illusions about regimes -- illusions about false leaders in whom they have put their confidence.

How absurd are the comrades who claim that we desire a blueprint for the revolution. They are right. There is no blueprint. But there is a method which we should and must embody in this resolution. We affirm there is the method of democratic and transitional demands. We say in our amendment 33 that the revolutionary party must appear ready to fight for all democratic rights, the right of assembly, freedom of speech, of the press, the freedom of association, especially regarding trade unions. The revolutionary party must appear ready to clear the country of all reactionary filth (the king, the upper house, the privileges of the church).

In Italy the slogan of the immediate arrest of the royal family and the proclamation of the republic must be raised by the revolutionary party.

The slogan of the election of all officials in the villages, towns and cities by the people should be raised in opposition to the "purge" of fascists from the administration, falsely promised by the allies. If the bourgeoisie delays elections for a national assembly, the revolutionary party will call for immediate elections. If, when workers' committees have appeared, the bourgeoisie precipitates the elections in order to undermine the power of such committees, the revolutionary party must denounce such reactionary plans and call upon the committees to take power in order to organize real free elections.

And when the revolutionary tide is high enough, the revolutionary party will call for the expulsion from the government of the representatives of bourgeois parties. It will call upon the opportunist leaders to take power if they enjoy the confidence of the majority of the workers.

This, comrades, is how we understand the method of democratic and transitional demands. Let us compare our amendment with section 33 of the resolution. It states:

"To rally the masses for the revolutionary struggle, the revolutionary Marxist party will elaborate a bold program of transitional and democratic demands corresponding to the consciousness of the masses and the tempo of development. Free elections of all officials, freedom of the press, workers' militia, nationalization of industry under workers' control, etc."

What do we have here? A ritualistic recognition of the value of democratic demands. Why, we ask, did the writers of the draft choose free elections of all officials and freedom of the press. What logic dictated their choice? Everything else is included, we suppose, in the "etc."

What about the whole problem of the parliament and of democratic representation. More than thirteen years ago Trotsky raised in a hypothetical form the slogan of the Constituent Assembly for Italy after fascism would fall. But for the N.C. majority such questions do not exist.

Our suspicion that the N.C. majority has only made a verbal concession on the role of democratic demands is confirmed when we turn to the section devoted to Italy. This section is indeed instructive. Just as real life has demonstrated the falsity of the formula of the "naked military dictatorship" as the immediate allied pattern for Europe, so today real life is demonstrating the meaningless assertions of the resolution that the masses of Europe have no democratic illusions.

Let us quote section 13:

"Even the capitalist correspondents report that the political temper of the Italian masses is white hot, that the masses are turning to communism."

Section 16:

"They (the masses) give their backing to the parties that in their minds stand for socialism and communism."

If someone raises the objection that we cannot dictate slogans to the European parties because everything can change overnight, we can say that for many months now the political development in Italy has been very slow. Sixteen months have gone by since the fall of Mussolini without the growth of soviets, and in the revolutionary calendar months are equivalent to years. We were permitted to see the different parties take their places on the political stage and see how the masses reacted to their programs. Months ago it became evident that every force of reaction was rallying to the monarchy. It also became plain by the entry of the reformist parties into the cabinet that by their presence they were supporting the institution of the monarchy.

Plainly, the way to build workers' committees was through a program of democratic demands; committees on food prices, committees to prepare for local elections and for the Constituent Assembly. And then the problem of exposing the reformist parties. Let us see how the resolution deals with this question. Section 23 says:

"Masses learn very rapidly in revolutionary periods. In Italy they have seen several changes of ministries; they have even seen the representatives of the supposed working class parties enter the capitalist government."

What is the conclusion to draw from this? Events automatically will teach the masses.

At this point, we must reject the objection that we are writing irrelevant "blueprints". Frank declared that Comrade Logan came forward with a full-fledged program of action for France, Italy, Germany and other countries in his criticism of the draft resolution. This, of course, is not correct. Comrade Logan did not propose a program of action for all these countries; as a matter of fact, he did not propose a program of action for any country. He put forward one, exactly one, concrete slogan, against the king and for the

republic in Italy. Even on that point, he made perfectly clear that the final word on that question belongs to our Italian comrades. Quite far from a blueprint!

In fact, it is the draft resolution, with its sweeping affirmations, which very often looks like a blueprint. As for instance, when it gives as a definite perspective for Germany a Badoglio-like government, while it is only a possible variant among two or three others.

If Comrade Frank insists that to speak of a republic for Italy is blueprint-making and should not have been brought into the pre-convention discussion, we suggest he seek an agreement with the Acting National Secretary of the party. Comrade Logan raised this question for the first time in a signed article dated July 9th. Publication of this article in Fourth International was refused and its publication in an internal bulletin was postponed because, according to the Acting National Secretary, the matter would have to be examined and decided upon by the coming convention. Now, Frank publicly reproaches Logan with introducing the question into the pre-convention discussion. Isn't there any inter-office telephone between Frank's office and the Secretariat of the party? Or have we here a small example of methods about which we have to speak later?

The accusation of blueprint-making has, thus, no foundation, and we can easily brush it aside. However, we can and must for a while look at the problem itself; that is, the existence of the monarchy in Italy,

When the Allies entered Rome last June, the question of the further existence of the monarchy was in the center of discussion. Comrade Logan waited a few weeks to see what would be the direction of our press, which was to be silence, and on July 9th wrote an article in which he indicated as proper slogans for our Italian section, the immediate Proclamation of the Republic and the Arrest of the King. As we have seen before, the article was not published. Although the majority of the P.C. has never discussed the proposal, many arguments have been circulated here and there against it. We want to dismiss the first argument that the slogan is absolutely unacceptable for programmatic reasons. It will be sufficient to recall to those who have a short political memory the example of Spain in 1931. In 1935, Trotsky insisted that the Republic be included in the program of action of our Belgian comrades in the country, and at a time when the question had ten times, no one hundred times, less importance that it has today in Italy. Similarly for France, he advocated the use of slogans such as the abolition of the Senate and the presidency of the Republic. Of course, we can and must examine the slogan to see whether it is appropriate under present conditions. What does the experience show us on that side of the question? We are clearly going toward a sharp revival of political strife in Italy. The six-party coalition is manifestly at the end of its rope and is already showing signs of disintegration. In the last week events have shown how its revival of political life, at its first stage, precisely, goes through the channel of the elimination of the monarchy. The news of the last few days is known to everybody. Let us

recall them rapidly. On Tuesday of last week a young communist was killed in Rome by a policeman while painting anti-monarchist slogans on the walls. This fact alone should indicate to us that the issue is quite burning. On the following day his comrades put flowers at the place where he had been killed, wrote on the walls: "Down with bloody monarchy; down with that little pig of a king," and forced every passerby to raise his hat or to give the clenched-fist salute. The question of the monarchy has become so acute that the publication in the United States of an interview with the crown prince by a Times correspondent, Matthews, on that question almost provoked the fall of the Bonomi government. Last Sunday the greatest political manifestation since the fall of Mussolini took place in Rome. The socialist leader Nenni made a very strong speech against the monarchy and called for a Republic. Is it that the question of the monarchy is raised by the leaders on a background of indifference of the masses on that question? Not at all. The Stalinist, Togliotti, who cannot move so quickly as Nenni, refrained from speaking of the monarchy, but according to the Times, "whenever possible the crowd shouted; 'Down with the monarchy!'" Every possible reference to the monarchy, however indirect, was greeted with tremendous hoots, whistles and boos." I must confess that I never expected such a timely confirmation of our position. If by some kind of magic we could have engineered events in Italy in order to convince the convention of the SWP of the correctness of our position, we could not have done better. Marxism has its advantages after all! It has enabled us to indicate four months in advance, slogans very appropriate to the first revival of political strife in Italy. I don't know if the slogan has been used by our Italian comrades.\* If they did, they are, in the present weeks, harvesting its fruit and increasing our authority among the masses. On the one hand, we have seen how the majority of the P.C. has taken about one-half of our amendments. On the other hand, events have brought a great political triumph for our position in Italy. Yes, we can be fully confident of the correctness of our position!

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\*Yes. It is one of the first points in their program.

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AN EXCERPT FROM THE SUMMARY

Comrades, let me begin my summary by quoting the majority amendment 78:

"The European revolution is not to be viewed as one gigantic apocalyptic event which with one smashing blow will finish with capitalism. The European revolution will probably be a more or less drawn out process with initial setbacks, retreats, and even defeats."

Comrades, where did that perspective originate? It is certainly not the perspective which the majority laid down at the Plenum. Turn back to the original draft and read again, section 30:

"Given their democratic rights the European working class will not require overly much time to organize its revolutionary party and to overthrow all its capitalist oppressors."

That is what the majority said at the beginning. Optimists that they were. It was Comrade Morrow who insisted at the Plenum on the proper perspective which the majority's last-minute amendment now accepts. And so it is, comrades, on many other questions. The majority has dropped section 73 on the "naked military dictatorship", under the fire of our criticism. There still remains the task of incorporating more fully the method of democratic demands into the resolution. There still remains the task of stating correctly how we view democratic interludes from the viewpoint of revolutionary action. We hope that the majority, having accepted so much from the Morrison-Morrow point of view, having abandoned its line, will not insist that the convention vote its false motion on two political lines, two principled tendencies.

For then the question will be posed: How could you adopt so much from a point of view that is in programmatic disagreement with yours? So far as the party is concerned, we think that it has learned much from this discussion; that it proves the necessity of discussion when important differences arise, secondary though they be.

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Note: In view of the fact that Comrade Frank's convention speech is being published in the Fourth International, a motion was made in the Polcom that my convention speech -- an answer to Frank on behalf of the minority -- be published in the Fourth International. The motion was denied. For that reason the speech is appearing in the internal bulletin.

A. Stein

IT IS NEW BUT NOT TRUE

By Albert Goldman

Comrade Martin's contribution (see Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI. No. 10, November, 1944) to the question raised by me with reference to the censure of four comrades for discussing the Russian question with members of the Shachtmanite group, runs true to the method followed by Stein and Hansen. That method consists of the following: blithely ignore the real issues; raise general principles which may be entirely correct but which have nothing to do with the question under discussion; bury the issue beneath these general propositions and accuse me, and all those who think as I do with reference to the particular question, of anti-Bolshevik and anti-Trotskyist tendencies, not on the basis of our position on a certain issue, but on the general premise that somehow or other to oppose an organizational procedure favored by Martin constitutes anti-Bolshevism.

Read Martin's article carefully. Does he make any attempt to formulate, in exact terms, what Morrison's position is on the question of the censure? Not the slightest attempt! All that one can get out of his article is that Morrison is opposed to Bolshevik organizational principles. If an intelligent reader were to ask: exactly what does Morrison propose or state, and what, in that proposal or statement, is contrary to Bolshevik organizational principles, he would find absolutely no answer to his question. The quality of that article can be judged by that fact alone.

But if Martin and his followers have not attempted to state the exact issues and have not succeeded in clarifying the questions that were raised, they have undoubtedly said enough to indicate the existence of two tendencies in the party. It is because Martin's article against Morrison apparently presents us with a unique contribution to the theory of Bolshevism and thus lays a "theoretical" basis for the attitude of the majority that it deserves a reply.

Martin's article justifies raising the question: are we here confronted with an attempt to develop a movement which can be characterized as Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon? (Martin merely repeats Comrade Cannon's ideas). At present it is not necessary to answer the question either way. Enough has been written to justify an affirmative answer but we can afford, in the interests of peace and harmony, to permit the continuation of the discussion plus events to furnish us with a definitive answer.

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Before dealing with Martin's "contribution" to Bolshevism, I must once more state what I thought was the basic issue in the discussion on the question of the censure of the four comrades. That issue was not; should a member defend party policy. It was not; should the party direct the work of our members in opponent organizations. It was not; should or should we not have democratic centralism. Nor was it any of a half-dozen or more other general propositions.



The issue was this: Is there any principle of Bolshevism which demands that the party, directly or indirectly, prohibit its members from talking to opponents or discussing political questions with them? One must apologize to all intelligent members of the party and the Fourth International for raising such an absurd question but the censure plus previous occurrences compelled me to raise it. I answered the question that I raised with a flat negative and asserted that for the party to pass any rule based on such a principle, or for the party to censure comrades for violating such an alleged principle, would be doing something contrary to the traditions of Bolshevism; that only in the Stalinist movement do we find rules prohibiting their members from talking to Trotskyists.

Should Martin or anybody else contend that the issue as I have presented it, is too narrow in scope, then let him state what he thinks the issue is. Let him admit that there is no rule of Bolshevism prohibiting a member from discussing with an opponent and I shall drop the whole discussion.

It is clear that Martin, in his article against Morrison, tries to insinuate into the mind of the reader that Bolshevism stands for the rule that party members must not discuss questions with opponents, by stating general Bolshevik organizational principles and by making general observations about Lenin and Trotsky. But I for one subscribe whole-heartedly to these general Bolshevik organizational principles and I grant the truth of the statements made with reference to Lenin and Trotsky. The trouble with Martin's article is that he does not make the slightest attempt to show how the organizational ideas of Lenin and Trotsky have anything whatever to do with his position, or apparent position, that the party should prohibit its members from discussing with opponents.

Who among us will deny that the party must be "a combat organization destined to lead the revolution; that it is not a free-thinkers' discussion club . . ." etc.? But how does that dictate the necessity for the party to prohibit its members from discussing with opponents? On the contrary, to be an effective combat organization, our members should study, learn, act in a disciplined manner and seek out all worth-while opponents in order to discuss with and convince them that we are correct,

Who will deny that the party has a "right to control and direct the political activity of each and every member. . . and to demand one-hundred percent loyalty to the party"? But what has that to do with the question? Suppose that by chance I meet a political opponent and try to convince him that his party is wrong and ours is correct on a certain political issue, does that constitute disloyalty if I do not first ask permission of the party to discuss? Martin did not take the trouble to analyze under what conditions discussion with an opponent would be disloyal to the party and when it is not only loyal but necessary. (I shall do so further on.) Therein lies the whole trouble, Martin did not take the trouble to analyze anything. He simply hurled general principles at us -- good and correct when they were taken from the arsenal of Lenin and Trotsky but incorrect and absurd when taken from Cannon's own new type of Bolshevism.

"Lenin", Martin tells us with a serious air, as if propounding something new, "really aimed to build a party to lead the revolution". It would have been a really new proposition and one relevant to the discussion if Martin had shown where Lenin had said that, in order to build a party to lead the revolution, a member of such a party should not be permitted to talk to or discuss with an opponent. Lenin, of course, could not possibly have stooped to such a low level as even to hint at such an absurdity. His aim was to educate the members of his party in such a way that they could discuss with any opponent and be certain that the opponent would come out second best in the discussion. That is what I meant when I wrote that the Bolsheviks had too much pride, too much confidence in their own theories and program to prohibit their members from discussing with opponents. On the contrary, it is the opponent who should feel the necessity of avoiding discussion.

We are also informed by Martin that Lenin had a "hard" approach to the question of organization whereas the Menshevik approach was "soft". In what the "hardness" of Lenin consisted we are not told. Of course Lenin had a "hard" approach but did this "hardness" express itself in prohibiting members from discussing with opponents? It can be taken absolutely for granted that Lenin taught us "unity on the basis of a principled program; all devotion, all loyalty to one party; strict responsibility and accountability of every member to the party; professional leadership, democratic centralism". He taught us all these and many more things that are necessary for a revolutionary party to follow. But where did Lenin teach us that the party should directly or indirectly instruct its members not to talk to opponents?

One must yield to the temptation to paraphrase Heine; In Martin's article there is something that is new and there is much that is true. But, unfortunately, what is true is not new and what is new is not true.

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Let us now proceed to analyze that aspect of Martin's article which can be said to be Cannon's new idea of what Bolshevism means on the organizational plane, an aspect which can not be traced to Lenin and Trotsky but which must be recognized as Cannon's unique contribution to the theory of Bolshevism. It is in this portion of his article that Martin comes somewhat close to dealing with the specific question under discussion.

"Morrison", says Martin, "rejects the idea that the party has the right and the duty to be informed about, and to regulate and control, any and all relations which party members may have with political opponents". This sentence, together with expressions found elsewhere in his article, indicate that Martin wants our party to begin regulating all relationships, including personal, of our members with opponents. In the last analysis that means with everybody because workers and others who vote for the Republican or Democratic parties are also, in a sense, political opponents. I shall assume, however, that by 'political opponents' Martin refers to those who are members of parties that claim to represent the interests of the working masses as against the capitalists and compete with us in the

working-class movement.

So all-embracing is Martin's formulation that it would be unfair to draw definite conclusions from it. It will be necessary, therefore, to pose specific questions, and if Martin chooses to reply, we shall be in a better position to say exactly what he means.

In the first instance one must note that the expression "the party has a right" to do anything, affords us no aid whatever in helping to solve a particular problem such as we are discussing. One can say that the party has a right to do anything and everything and not get very far in answering the question what the party should do at a certain time, under certain conditions. In that respect Martin's formulation does not advance us one inch as far as settling any immediate issue is concerned.

But Martin also adds that the party has a duty to regulate and control all relationships of its members. I must therefore ask the specific question; do you mean that the party must adopt some motion or resolution regulating the private life of the members, their marital affairs, for instance. (It is a fair inference from some of the remarks made by Martin that even marital relations should be regulated by the party). Once more I must express my embarrassment at the low level of discussion to which Martin's all-inclusive formulation has dragged us. But it must be done until it becomes clear what exactly Martin means.

I must ask of Martin; do you mean that it is your personal advice, based on your personal observations and experience, that party members should not marry members of opponent organizations? Or do you mean that in the constitution of the party or in some resolution or in a formal instruction to branches, it should be made clear that marriage by a party member to a political opponent is forbidden, unless permission is first obtained from some proper party body?

If it is your personal advice I would be inclined to join you in giving the same fatherly advice. It is in all probability safer to marry someone who is a member of the party or, at least, a sympathizer (if that is possible), although the possibility of a sharp dispute in the party constitutes a hazard. If, on the other hand, you really think that the party should declare, in some formal manner, that members must first get permission in order to marry a political opponent, will you kindly show us where, in the writings of Lenin or Trotsky or in the records of any congresses or conferences of Bolshevik parties, anywhere in the world, any such question was proposed, considered and adopted?

If you think that the Bolshevik movement has, in the past, failed to act on this question, either because of neglect or because conditions were different will you kindly point out to us what change in conditions has occurred justifying the adoption of such a startling innovation.

To avoid any possible misunderstanding it may be necessary to state that the party certainly has a duty to object to anything that any member does in private life, if his conduct is such as to bring the party into disrespect and thus harm the party. But such a simple and necessary principle has nothing to do with the all-embracing formulation of Martin, a formulation which, under the circumstances, can be interpreted only as a means to prevent the party members from having friendly relationships with political opponents.

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Even if Martin's formulation should be given the benefit of the doubt and be interpreted to mean that he only wants the party to prohibit its members from discussing political questions with opponents, it would still be necessary to pose some questions in order to ascertain what type of discussion our members are permitted to carry on and what type they are prohibited from carrying on with political opponents. Only if Martin wants the party to pass a simple rule -- that no party member is allowed to say anything whatever to a political opponent -- would there be no necessity of any rules and regulations. All this seems absurd but what is one to do if the most responsible leader of the party presents us with a proposition that the party has the duty to regulate and control "any and all relations" of its members. Either this is a careless formulation in which case the whole question can be dismissed -- as it should be. Or it is meant seriously, in which case Martin should present a resolution for adoption by the party containing a sufficient number of rules so that a member is thereby enabled to guide himself in his relations with opponents.

It is hardly fair for the Political Committee to call a membership meeting to pass a vote of censure for something that some member did, unless there is a party rule telling him that such a thing should not be done. Were a new party member to ask me (because he has heard that I have spent a considerable number of years in the Bolshevik movement) what is proper with reference to a member's relationship to an opponent, I would not hesitate to tell him; study the Marxist classics and our program, learn to understand them, gain confidence in yourself, then find any opponent who is good material for our party and try, through discussion, to win him over. As for your personal relationships, that is your own business so long as you do nothing to bring discredit on the party. If that new member tells me that Comrade Cannon told him otherwise, I would have to tell him that Comrade Cannon's personal views are not binding on him. He can decide for himself what to do.

Is it necessary to get the permission of the party to discuss a political question with an opponent, when the purpose is to win the opponent to our point of view? It should be assumed that every party member is constantly on the alert to seek and find worth-while opponents for the purpose of convincing him that we are correct.

There is only one kind of "discussion" that the party would stop immediately upon discovering that such a "discussion" is taking place -- and that is a "discussion" for the purpose of disrupting our

party. The party has the duty to expel an agent of an opponent party. But then the expulsion is not for discussing but for being an agent of another party.

How about a discussion with a political opponent when the purpose is to find out the position of the opponent? I hear some of the majority leaders say: a comrade who wants to know the position of an opponent on a certain question should come to us and we shall enlighten him. Personally I would furnish the inquisitive comrade with all of the opponent's literature on the subject together with our replies and tell him to read and make up his mind. If he wants to discuss the question with some opponent that is his privilege. To prohibit a member from discussing with an opponent for the purpose of getting an opponent's viewpoint is equivalent to prohibit a member from reading the literature of an opponent party. I have a feeling that the majority leadership has created an impression among young and new comrades that it is not proper to read the literature of the Workers' Party.

To depend on rules to keep our party members loyal to our ideas is utterly futile and completely alien to Bolshevism. If any such attempt is made it will have to be designated as Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon. For that is the tendency that can be discerned in Martin's article and Martin expresses the views of Cannon.

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The intention of those who arranged the meeting at which four comrades who discussed the Russian question with members of the Workers' Party were censured, was to create an atmosphere in the party where the members would feel that it is wrong to hold discussions with the Shachtmanites. When I objected to the creation of such an atmosphere, the leaders of the majority, unwilling to appear altogether ridiculous by confining the issue to a prohibition to discuss with members of the Workers' Party, formulated the general principle of no discussion with political opponents without the permission of the party.

It is in that general principle that the danger lies. Had the leaders of the majority confined themselves to their insistence that party members should not discuss with Shachtmanites, it would have been absurd and contrary to Bolshevik tradition. But when, to justify their attitude to the Workers' Party, they included, in their prohibition to discuss, all political opponents, it becomes not only absurd but harmful to the party.

At present, when our party is very small and other working class parties and groups are just as small and even smaller in size, the adoption of an attitude suggested by Martin's article may not do any great harm. It would only make us look absurd. But when our party becomes a mass party and other large parties appear on the scene, any rules preventing our comrades from discussing freely all questions with members of opponent parties, would constitute a serious handicap. It may be that Martin will forget all about his present approach, under conditions where our party is one of two or

more large parties active in the working class movement. His formulation, however, is so all-inclusive that, theoretically, at least, they are applicable to all conditions.

All that one has to do to realize that harmful consequences must result to the party from the principle apparently enunciated by Martin, that a member must get permission from the party before discussing any question with an opponent, is to imagine such a principle being followed by the Trotskyists in England. They are there confronted by a mass Labor Party. Undoubtedly their fraction work (opponent's work) in the Labor Party is under the direct control of the party, as it should be. At the same time, however, I am certain that every Trotskyist tries his best to be on friendly social terms with workers who follow and are members of the Labor Party. Would it not be ridiculous if a Trotskyist, upon meeting a Labor Party member on the street, would refrain from discussing with him on the ground that he has no special permission from the party?

In this country we shall, in all probability, also have a Labor Party and it may well be that our party will not be part of the Labor Party. Should Martin's principle be adopted as a party rule our members would have to be running to the party office to get permission to talk to Labor Party members. Am I reducing Martin's principle to an absurdity? Of course I am, but then it is the kind of principle that must be reduced to an absurdity to show that it is not only absurd but harmful to our future growth.

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As an argument in favor of his position Martin presents us with a picture of the conditions that prevailed in the socialist movement of this country before the ideas of Lenin about the nature of a party had begun to influence the revolutionary movement. This picture, essentially accurate, is presumed by Martin to represent my idea as to the kind of labor movement I envisage and the role of our party in that movement. I stand for the proposition that the party must inculcate into its members such a knowledge and thorough understanding of its principles and program that there can be no possible reason for prohibiting a member from discussing with an opponent. The party has such confidence in its theories that its duty is only to educate the membership to understand them and then it can feel certain that the members will not be won over by opponent parties. The regulation and control necessary is limited to the organized activities of our party members in an opponent party.

Because, so runs the gist of Martin's argument, there was a terrible looseness in the socialist movement of the days prior to World War I, because this looseness resulted from the lack of understanding of the nature of a revolutionary party, from the failure to realize that firmness of principle and discipline and loyalty were essential, therefore we must now have a party where all relations of party members are controlled by the party and where no party members are allowed to discuss with political opponents without first receiving permission from the party. Martin correctly shows that the members of the Socialist Party, prior to 1918, wandered aimlessly

from meeting to meeting, from group to group, discussed here and discussed there without any guiding purpose. That of course is inconceivable with members of a Bolshevik party.

But what makes it inconceivable is not that we pass rules and regulations prohibiting such aimless conduct but the education of the membership as to the nature and character of the party. Martin fails to see that what was wrong in the old Socialist Party was not the discussion per se but that the members did not understand the nature of a revolutionary party. Their mistake was not in discussing but in not knowing why and how to discuss, in not making the discussion serve the interests of the party. Obviously that mistake was a result of the fact that the Socialist Party was not a Bolshevik party.

As against the Socialist Party of old with its loose radicalism and the purposeless wanderings and discussions of its members, Martin offers us a party where members discuss only when they are given permission. Martin does not present us with a picture of a real Bolshevik party because a real Bolshevik party is composed of members who understand the nature of such a party, are disciplined, loyal and devoted to the party, know its principles, and are constant agitators on behalf of those principles. They go anywhere and everywhere, where there is possible to meet worth-while opponents to discuss with them and win them over.

If one should argue that the censure of the four comrades who participated in a discussion with members of the Workers' Party does not imply prohibiting the kind of relationship and discussion that I picture as necessary, then I can only say; let Martin clarify his principle about the duty of the party to control any and all relations with opponents in a way that it is understood that discussion with opponents is not prohibited, that the party must control only organized opponents' work, and there will be no difficulty in ending a discussion which is a disgrace to the party.

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The fact that the controversy has arisen as a result of the censure of four comrades for discussing with members of the Workers' Party, has led to a not-so-very-subtle attempt to connect the present minority with the minority of 1939-1940. To be able to judge whether there is the slightest justification for this attempt, a new member who did not participate in the struggle against the minority of 1939-1940 should read all of the documents of that controversy very carefully. What were the specific questions involved in that controversy and what lessons should new members draw from it?

The convention of the party, held in 1940, had to take a position on three fundamental problems that were involved in the controversy with the minority. The first and most important was the question of the "defense of the Soviet Union". It is not necessary here to repeat the arguments of the minority as against ours. Suffice it to say that the position of the minority constituted in our opinion, a revision of Marx on the nature of the state. In spite

of that, it is now necessary to emphasize because new members may get a totally wrong impression, the majority did everything in its power to keep the minority within the party. The majority demanded only discipline in action; it did not demand that the minority change its viewpoint on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union or of the necessity for its defense.

In a recent letter by Martin (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 9, October, 1944) in which he supported Natalia in her insistence on a change of emphasis with reference to the slogan of "Defense of the Soviet Union", he makes the statement that "when the Nazi military machine threatened the destruction of the Soviet Union every communist had to put the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union in first place. Those who denied this defense were no longer comrades having a different opinion on a theoretical question, as Morrison still wants to treat them, as if nothing had happened, but people on the other side of the barricades. . . ". The most charitable statement one can make about Martin's allegation is that he did not think when he wrote it.

Suppose the minority had remained in the party and accepted discipline in action would we have expelled them because they "denied this defense"? How did it happen that we offered the minority all the rights of a faction, with a factional bulletin in which they could write articles against the policy of defense of the Soviet Union? At that time we all had the perspective of an attack on the Soviet Union, either by the Allies or by Hitler. The Soviet Union was, in fact, at war with Finland when the minority denied the necessity of defending it.

All I can say to the new members is that Martin is presenting you with an attitude totally different from the one Trotsky and all of us had at the time of our struggle with the minority of 1939-1940. Read carefully all of Trotsky's proposals with reference to keeping the minority in the party, and see if there is the slightest hint that we would have considered the minority "on the opposite side of the barricades" because they denied the necessity of defending the Soviet Union. How could we urge them to remain in the party if we considered them to be on the opposite side of the barricades. An expression by Trotsky, similar to the one used by Martin but obviously used in a figurative sense becomes the basis of a grotesquely inaccurate statement.

It is significant and interesting to note that Martin's harsh words occur in a letter in which he supports Natalia's urgent suggestion that instead of harping mechanically on the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, we turn our guns mainly against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Had not Comrade Roland written the article "We Arrive at a Line" (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 12, December, 1944) we would never have known that Martin, prior to writing the letter in which he supports Natalia, had sent two letters to the Political Committee, proposing a line exactly contrary to that of Natalia.



On August 16th and August 23rd, Martin wrote letters criticizing the line of Militant editorials dealing with the Warsaw uprising. The criticism was from the point of view that the editorials were a departure from the line of defense of the Soviet Union. In the letter of August 23rd Martin made the astounding suggestion that we should advise the Polish guerrillas to subordinate themselves to the High Command of the Red Army -- that is, to subordinate themselves to their executioners. (The letters of August 16th and 23rd were signed by F.D. but they are Martin's letters).

How did it happen that Martin changed his line? The answer can be only that Natalia had written two letters, one on August 16th, and the other on September 23rd, in which she criticized the line of The Militant on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union from a point of view exactly contrary to that of Martin. These letters were forwarded to Martin and he changed his line. Is there anything wrong with making a mistake and thereafter correcting it? Obviously not. What is wrong is that in his letter seconding Natalia's proposal, Martin writes as if he never had written any letters some weeks before in which he took an exactly contrary line. (The letter in which he supported Natalia is undated in the Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI. No. 9, October, 1944).

There is nothing wrong in making a mistake, even such a terrible mistake as the suggestion about the Polish guerrillas subordinating themselves to the Red Army High Command, but there is everything wrong in the attempt of a responsible leader to cover up his mistake or to change his line because someone who has authority has a different line. It is the duty of a Bolshevik to defend his line or to recognize his mistake and change it.

What Martin did with reference to Natalia, Cannon's followers on the P.C. do with reference to him. They too change their line if it does not agree with Cannon's. This practice does not belong to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky. It belongs to Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon. It was indeed fortunate that Natalia decided to send her letter of criticism of the line of THE MILITANT and that it was received about the same time that Martin's letters criticising the line from an exactly contrary viewpoint. Had Natalia not sent her letters, THE MILITANT, would have changed its line and would now be following Martin's line and be advocating that all guerrilla forces should subordinate themselves to Stalin's generals.

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The second problem raised by the minority of 1939-1940 was the organizational question. The minority hurled the general charge of "bureaucratic conservatism" at the majority. In the present controversy, the majority tries its utmost to utilize Trotsky's arguments against the petty-bourgeois opposition, on the organizational question. In doing so the representatives of the majority actually make a caricature of Trotsky's position against the minority of 1939-1940. That his polemic against that minority has absolutely no applicability to the present minority should be clear to anyone who can read and intelligently analyze Trotsky's arguments.

In effect Trotsky said to the minority; "If you charge the leadership with constituting a conservative bureaucracy, you must show its social roots. I do not deny that individuals in a revolutionary party are capable of having bureaucratic tendencies and committing bureaucratic acts. Show me any specific bureaucratic act and I shall join you in struggling against it."

A fair inference from the articles of the representatives of the present majority is that the fact that our party has a revolutionary program practically guarantees that the leadership can do nothing wrong on the organizational field. The minority says that such and such an act of an individual comrade or of the majority of the Political Committee is wrong; it is against the tradition of Bolshevism; it constitutes a Stalinist germ in the sense that it is peculiar to Stalinism. The majority sticks its chest out and answers; we have a revolutionary program, we have fought Stalinism, we can never, therefore, have a single idea or commit a single act that is Stalinist in character. A very smug and comforting attitude but without a grain of truth in it.

Trotsky's approach to the question would have been, and the approach of any intelligent Bolshevik using his intelligence must be; you charge that such and such a procedure is wrong and Stalinist in character. It is necessary to analyze the particular procedure and determine whether it is wrong and, if wrong, whether it is Stalinist in character. I am convinced that were he alive, Trotsky's judgment on the particular questions raised by the minority would have deflated the smugness of the majority representatives. I am convinced, as a matter of fact, that the majority would never have done the things they did and written the nonsense they wrote, were Trotsky alive.

Conscious of the fact that an unearthly howl will be raised by the majority representatives at the following statement, I must nevertheless make it. Just as the Stalinists felt free, immediately after Lenin's death to accuse the Trotskyist Opposition of being anti-Bolshevik, so Cannon and his followers feel free to accuse the present minority of being anti-Trotskyist. The above statement is made, as Trotsky would say, "with all due proportions guarded".

Let it be remembered that Trotsky offered to join with Shachtman in any struggle against any particular acts of a bureaucratic nature, if the minority took the trouble to specify such acts. This is conclusive proof that Trotsky could not possibly have taken the position that a leader or leaders of a revolutionary party can not, on the organizational field, be guilty of acts that are not in harmony with Bolshevik traditions.

Whereas the minority of 1939-40 made the general charge of bureaucratic conservatism, the present minority has specified what acts are Stalinist in character, that is, acts that can be expected particularly in a Stalinist party. What are some outstanding characteristics of a Stalinist party on the organizational level? Blind obedience of the ranks to the party leaders; a total absence of critical thinking and therefore of real discussion; hostility to any one who raises objections to party policy; build-up of leaders; exaggerated emphasis on activity as against discussion; blind and unreasoning animosity to conscious political opponents. When such

characteristics manifest themselves in our party, it is not only correct but necessary to say that they are Stalinist in character.

If one wants "social roots" let him consider the political backwardness of the American workers, a backwardness that naturally tends to cross party borders and penetrate into our ranks. Our duty is not to be smug but constantly to fight every manifestation of this backwardness as reflected in our ranks.

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The third important point involved in the struggle between us and the minority of 1939-1940, a point which was settled by the convention, was the right demanded by the minority to publish a public organ agitating against the party policy of defense of the Soviet Union. Those of the present minority who were then in the party were just as adamant in the refusal to grant the minority such a right as those of the majority who were members of the party at that time. A revolutionary party could not function if it permitted a minority to ask the masses to follow a policy contrary to party policy. We all voted for the expulsion of the minority when it violated the specific motion of the convention prohibiting the publication of public organs without the consent of the party.

The minority was expelled not for its views on the question of the Soviet Union but for violating a convention decision against publication of public organs. Let every new member understand that had the minority not violated the convention decision it would not have been expelled. The majority conceded the right of the minority to publish its own internal factional organ but would under no circumstances permit the publication of a public organ.

We did not fight against the minority of 1939-1940 on the organizational question only to fall victim to Cannon's desire or apparent desire to have the party prohibit members from discussing questions with political opponents.

We did not fight against the minority only to grant Hansen the right to publish a sickening leader-worship article in the press and to refuse Morrison the right to defend Bolshevism against MacDonald, because he, at the same time, mildly criticized Hansen.

We fought the minority because we insisted on a Bolshevik party and we did not fight it to permit Cannon to introduce his Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon.

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In a sense it can be said that the minority of 1939-1940 betrayed the principles of the Fourth International. Anyone breaking away from the International when complete freedom is granted him to win over a majority harms and betrays the interests of the Fourth International.

But why this insistence, almost psychopathic, on characterizing the members of the Workers' Party as renegades? That term should be applied to anyone who was at one time for the proletarian revolution and then turned against it. Is that true of the former minorityites? The answer must be that it is not.

I have read the W.P. press and see no evidence whatever that it is against the proletarian revolution. On the contrary, all the evidence is the other way. It is against the defense of the Soviet Union and on this question we clash very sharply -- not so much now since the question of defending the European Revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy has become more important than the military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

Throughout the period during which American imperialism has been at war, the Workers' Party, in its attitude towards its own bourgeoisie, has taken a Trotskyist position. Is that a minor thing? In judging the character of a party that factor must be considered exceedingly important. We must not hesitate to give the W.P. credit for the stand it has taken.

Bolshevism has no need of exaggeration. The greatest exactness with reference to facts and characterizations is a Bolshevik tradition to which we should by all means strictly adhere. To struggle fiercely for principle requires no exaggeration.

The mechanical crudeness of the majority representatives in accusing the minority of conciliationism is typical of their method of thinking. Lenin condemned conciliationism, a tendency which stood for the unification of the Bolshevik and Menshevik groups. He opposed it on the basis that a revolutionary party should not include opportunists. For the leaders of the majority it is not necessary to analyze all the conditions which led Lenin to oppose conciliationism. It is enough for them to use that term against the present minority in order to confuse the members of the party who are not well acquainted with the history and method of Bolshevism.

Conciliationism to Martin and his followers means a willingness to discuss questions with the members of the W.P., a refusal to consider them renegades. In other words any attitude which insists on an exact political analysis of the W.P. and the refusal to take a purely personal attitude towards the former minorityites is conciliationism. What utter nonsense! Of course to justify the attitude of personal hostility, the profound "theory" is enunciated that such an attitude is highly political.

No one in the minority is advocating fusion with the Workers' Party. But I do not hesitate to say for myself, if that question should come up, I, for one, shall refuse to take a stand simply on the basis of what happened in 1939-1940.. I shall determine my position on all the factors prevailing at the time the question arises. I shall take into consideration not only the ideas of the W.P. on the Soviet Union and its defense, not only the criminal act of those who split the party when they were given every opportunity to convince a majority that their viewpoint is correct. But I shall

also take into consideration the fact that the W.P. has been loyal to the proletarian revolution and has refused to support its own imperialism in the imperialist war.

What possible reasons can there be for the leaders of the majority to create an attitude of personal hostility to the W.P. members? Off-hand I can see no reasons other than an inability to answer Shachtman politically and to create an atmosphere so that if, at any time, the Shachtmanites offer to return to the party, the question should not be dealt with on a political plane but on the basis of a grotesquely-bitter personal hostility,

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Had the discussion on the censure of the four comrades brought out that I was mistaken in my interpretation of the motives of those who organized the meeting at which the censure was voted, I would have quickly and gladly apologized. Alas, the subsequent discussion has confirmed my interpretation that the censure was for the purpose of creating the impression that it is impermissible to discuss with Shachtmanites.

The incident of the discussion of some comrades with the Shachtmanites could have been utilized to educate our members on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union and the necessity for its defense and thus to prepare them to meet any opponent, including the Shachtmanites, in discussion or argument. To arm our members with knowledge and understanding of our position so that they can meet any opponent in argument is a thousand times more effective, more correct and more important than to scare them into believing that it is impermissible for a member to talk to Shachtmanites.

Loyalty, devotion and discipline must come from a knowledge and understanding of Marxist principles and party program. They must come from correct policies pursued by the party. They can not be brought into existence by party rules and regulations. An attitude to an opponent must be based on an exact analysis of all the political factors and not on personal dislike and hatred.

The minority wants the kind of loyalty and devotion and discipline that existed in the Bolshevik party under Lenin and Trotsky. The minority wants an attitude to political opponents that the Bolsheviks had under Lenin and Trotsky. We do not want the attitude which Martin and his followers in the P.C. seem to favor, an attitude which can best be described as Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon.

March 1, 1945.

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LETTER TO F.I.

Editor, F.I.:

The editorial introduction to the Logan article in the January issue declares, "The convention adopted the resolution in its amended form by the vote of 51 to 5." This statement is erroneous. The facts of the matter are as follows:

1. It is not true that the Convention Minority voted against "the resolution in its amended form." The Minority voted for the resolution in its amended form.

2. The Minority did so, because as its convention reporter stated, the last-minute amendments introduced by the Majority, far from being merely "clarifying amendments and literary corrections", embodied most of the ideas contained in the Minority amendments.

3. The only motion which the Minority voted against was one in which the majority insisted on including the proposition that the Minority amendments constituted a principled difference in line.

A. Stein  
O. Williams  
A. Russell  
A. Winters

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A MINOR ACT ON THE SHADY SIDE

By Albert Goldman

In the January issue of the Fourth International, immediately preceding the article "On The European Situation And Our Tasks", by Daniel Logan, there is an editorial note which asserts that "the convention adopted the resolution in its amended form by the vote of 51 to 5". In the editorial in the December issue of the F.I. the same statement is made. Minority representatives who participated at the convention insisted that the minority delegates voted for the resolution. They sent a note to the F.I. asking for a correction of the error, to show that the resolution was in fact adopted unanimously. The majority of the Political Committee refused to have the note published in the F.I. contending that the statements made in the editorial of December and in the editorial note of January were correct.

The minutes of the convention show that the minority introduced and voted for a motion which contained two parts; one to support the Logan amendments and two, to vote for the resolution.

It must be remembered that the majority refused to grant the minority the right of a preliminary vote on the amendments and a subsequent vote on the resolution. Parliamentary procedure requires that, in case of amendments to a motion, a vote is first taken on the amendments and then, if the amendments are rejected, the supporters of the amendments have an opportunity to vote on the original motion (in this case the resolution). One need not be in favor of following parliamentary procedure in a strict manner to see that this general rule coincides with the requirements of common sense. The majority refused to follow this procedure. It wanted to trumpet to the world that the minority was opposed to the resolution.

To show that the minority was willing to vote for the resolution, even if the Logan amendments were not accepted, the minority delegates specifically made the acceptance of the resolution part of their motion. That it was the desire of the minority delegates to vote for the resolution is admitted by the majority. But the leaders of the majority contend that for the sake of "political clarity" it was necessary to formulate the motion of the majority in such a way as not to give the minority a chance to vote for the resolution.

It is difficult to conceive why a majority should under any circumstances refuse a minority the right to vote for the majority resolution. If, as the majority claims in this case, the minority is "trying to put something over on the membership" then it becomes a question for the majority to show the malevolent schemes of the minority. The members of the minority assume the risk of being designated as schemers. But the majority should under no conditions refuse a minority the right to vote for a majority resolution. If the minority thereby places itself in a contradictory position that is too bad for the minority.

A glance at the record in this case conclusively proves that the claim of the majority of a fundamental difference in political line between those who supported the amendments and those who opposed the amendments is completely false. The convention resolution was avowedly based on the resolution adopted at the Plenum held in October 1943. Basing himself on the Morrow amendments, Morrison offered a series of amendments which came to be known as the Morrison-Morrow amendments. A few of them were accepted by the majority at the Plenum and made part of the resolution finally adopted. Thereupon I accepted the resolution.

In July 1944, I wrote to the P.C. that the Plenum resolution was acceptable to me, as a resolution for the convention, if no better resolution were offered. Does that not indicate that I, at least, did not consider the resolution against my political line?

Amendments were offered to the resolution by Comrade Logan. I was of the opinion that they strengthened the resolution and therefore supported them. The resolution as finally presented to the convention embodied still more of the points fought for by the minority and therefore the "line" came still closer to the "line" of the minority. Although the Logan amendments were rejected the resolution as finally presented was better than I hoped. Is there any

political inconsistency in my supporting a resolution which adopted the basic ideas which I presented in the form of amendments? If I voted for the resolution as finally accepted by the Plenum, why can I not vote for it as improved before being presented to the convention without being guilty of political inconsistency?

The minority delegates took the same view of the situation that I did. They voted for the resolution and this fact should be recognized. If there is any inconsistency let the minority explain it. The record proves that there is no inconsistency whatever in the minority's support of the resolution.

Our judgment must be that the action on the part of the majority of the P.C. in refusing a correction in the F.I. is petty. It is dangerous because it is on the shady side.

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