

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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TO THE COMRADES OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SWP: -- By the European
Secretariat of the Fourth International

The E.S. is following with the greatest attention the development of the internal situation in your organization. We have the impression that the ideological struggle between the majority and the minority, envenomed by ineptness, personal incidents, etc., has attained a dangerous sharpness and can lead to subsequent developments which in our opinion are neither inevitable nor desirable.

We have the firm conviction that there is not at the present time any valid political reason to hang the threat of a split over the American party and thereby over the International as well.

The latter can only aid the enemies of our movement and compromise the process of regroupment which is now taking place on an international scale.

You know that we are on the eve of the ** and that a discussion of all policy, past and present, not only of the American organization but of the entire International, will necessarily take place.

On our part we maintain that this discussion should be conducted within the framework of democratic centralism. That means that while being for the widest possible democracy, we do not desire to see this democracy degenerate into an attitude which ignores national and international discipline.

The E.S. for sometime has taken the initiative in bringing the essential documents of the discussion in the American party to the attention of all the European sections.

No one has the right to misconstrue this attachment of the International to the healthy principles of democratic centralism which fully guarantee the rights of minorities and to violate disciplinary rules.

We are making an appeal, convinced that we express the views of all the European sections, as much to the majority as to the minority of the leadership to safeguard the unity of the party, to abstain from any measure which might appear bureaucratic, from any threat of expulsion, as well as from any abuse of national and international discipline.

The Fourth International, we are certain, is capable of discussing all ideological differences democratically and of reaching, through its normal functioning, political solutions which are acceptable to all those who believe in its program, in the historic justification of its existence, in its future.

With our Communist greetings,

The E.S.

December 28, 1945. (European Secretariat of the Fourth International)

LETTER OF THE MINORITY FACTION

January 26, 1946

Political Committee Majority

Dear Comrades:

It is nearly four months since the October Plenum's refusal to accept unity with the Workers Party. At that time you asserted you were still leaving the door open to unity, once you had "probed the differences to the bottom." In the intervening months, however, it has become plain how right we were when we said that the Plenum decision was designed to prevent unity.

You have not probed the differences. The two or three attacks on the Workers Party in editorials in Fourth International have not analysed the Workers Party's position on the questions referred to, but have merely hurled false and slanderous charges, such as the accusation that the Workers Party has abandoned the perspective of proletarian revolution which, if you seriously believed it, you need only prove by documentary evidence and no one would dream of unity. Instead of being attempts to analyze the Workers Party's position, your sideswipes at the Workers Party constitute proof of our Plenum statement that your aim was and remains to prevent unity.

You have refused to consider as a step toward unity the Workers Party's abandonment of its demand for a tendency bulletin in the united party. Instead you have condemned the exchange of correspondence between the Workers Party and ourselves which secured this step toward unity, and have served warning upon us that any further steps by us of the same kind would be met with disciplinary action. You have sought thus to place us in the impossible dilemma of abandoning relations with the Workers Party or being expelled.

Likewise you have filed charges against our members for having held socials with the comrades of the Workers Party in New York and Chicago. So that we are to be prohibited not only from maintaining political relations with the Workers Party but also social relations.

You have thus created an atmosphere around us of violators of party discipline because of our political and social fraternization with the comrades of the Workers Party. And then you have used this atmosphere as a further argument against unity, pretending that to permit the Workers Party comrades to enter the party would merely extend further a breakdown of party discipline. You have misled the party members so that they greet with raucous laughter the simple truth that unity would solve the whole problem.

Far more important is the catastrophic situation you have created by insisting on the existence side by side of two Trotskyist parties fighting each other when all the

political premises exist for unity. You try to cover up this fact by claiming that the Socialist Workers Party has far outstripped the Workers Party in membership and influence. Even if your claim were true, it is no argument against unity. But it is not true. The indubitable fact is that the 1200 members of the Socialist Workers Party and the 600 members of the Workers Party must compete with each other: duplicating efforts in issuing and distributing an agitation paper and a theoretical organ; duplicating branches in the principal cities; countering each others efforts in the trade unions, in recruiting, etc.

You insist on presenting the advanced workers with this spectacle of disunity among comrades of obviously similar program and agitation. To justify the disunity you are compelled to miseducate both party members and advanced workers concerning the program of the Workers Party and the correct attitude toward political differences among comrades.

Both the internal and external situations which you have thus created, if continued, would deprive of all meaning and value our remaining in the Socialist Workers Party. The internal situation has destroyed quite completely, certainly for a whole period, the possibility of our contributing to the education of the party membership; the hostile atmosphere with which you have surrounded us makes it well-nigh impossible for us to function effectively in the party. The external situation confronts us with the fact that, no matter how we might strive to subordinate ourselves in action to the will of the majority, it would be impossible for us to carry out your line of non-fraternization and war to the death against the Workers Party.

Like ourselves the Workers Party is for unity and the kind of party which unity means. If you persist in your stand against unity it is obvious that we shall be able to work more fruitfully in the Workers Party. To go to the Workers Party would not be a split, certainly not in the usual sense of the term. The Workers Party is a Trotskyist party, just as much so as the Socialist Workers Party. To go to the Workers Party would simply mean to unite the Trotskyist forces which favor unity and which would continue afterward as before the struggle for unity of all the Trotskyists in the United States.

But before we take that step, we want to be sure, not only in our own minds but also before the eyes of all Trotskyists, that we have completely exhausted the possibilities for unity in this period. We therefore address ourselves to you to urge you to reconsider your stand against unity which, if you persist in it, will be a terrible obstacle to the development of the Trotskyist movement in the United States.

If in the coming weeks we can see any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on your part toward resumption of negotiations for unity with the Workers Party, we shall remain in the Socialist Workers Party in order to work for the cause of unity. If, on the other hand, you give no sign of a desire to reconsider your stand against unity, then our place will be with the Workers Party.

Comradely yours,

Lydia Bennett
Albert Goldman
Felix Morrow
Oscar Williams
For the Minority

RESOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT

Having taken under consideration the exchange of documents between the SWP and the WP with a view to their eventual unification, the E.S. on the whole approves the position adopted by the Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP, October 1945.

The E.S. takes note of the fact that since the 1940 split and throughout the war the WP has been consolidated on such political positions as the question of the USSR, the defense of China and India, the national question in Europe, the existence and role of the Fourth International during the war, as well as the conception of the internal regime and of the functioning of the revolutionary party -- political positions which can very well be considered as programmatic differences that may render problematic the possibility of these two tendencies coexisting and working efficiently in common within the same organization.

The argument that the termination of the war has acted by and large to diminish the practical importance of most of these differences can acquire any weight only after the two organizations have engaged in a deep-going discussion on their respective concrete conceptions of the actual national and international policy as well as the regime and the internal functioning of the party in the United States and the International.

The European Secretariat recommends to the leadership of the SWP that it elaborate jointly with the WP leadership a list of questions to be discussed; that it organize and pursue this discussion in order to make clear just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations. It is after such an examination that the question of the possible unification of the two organizations can be re-examined anew.

Resolution unanimously approved by the E.S.

January, 1946.

A REPLY TO COMRADE MORROW

By the European Secretariat of the Fourth International

We are more and more under the impression that the differences on the perspectives of the European revolution which broke out in 1943 among the leadership of the American party are not limited to disagreements on the tempo of events, but go beyond this question and involve the nature of the period into which we have entered. The two documents of Comrade Morrow -- his July 10, 1945 letter addressed to the European Secretariat and his Open Letter, November 15, 1945, addressed to all sections of the Fourth International -- together with the position held by the minority of the American party on the question of unification with the Shachtmanites, enable us today to state that serious and singular modifications have meanwhile been introduced into the political orientation of the American minority; or rather, that certain germs, hardly perceptible in its original position, have so grown with time as to confront us today with a tendency which, while it criticized with some justifications the weak points in the majority's orientation, has today crystallized on a platform dangerously different from ours insofar as concerns the general character of the present period, and the perspectives, and above all, the tasks which flow from it.

Conditions in wartime prevented us from closely following the discussion in the SWP. After a considerable delay we have familiarized ourselves with this discussion but we still cannot say that we are fully informed concerning all the various ramifications of this ideological struggle. Nevertheless we do appreciate all its importance for the future development of our International.

Throughout the war we have been obliged to elaborate our political line in the absence of any ideological contact with our comrades outside of Europe and we were pleasantly surprised to discover that despite this forced isolation, the ideas, particularly those of our American comrades and our own, have followed virtually the same lines.

Today we observe the formation of conflicting tendencies within the International and we see as unavoidable an ideological struggle which must be conducted to the end and which in our opinion puts at stake the very existence of the International.

It is obvious and to a certain extent inevitable that a certain unrest should arise in our ranks because the war did not give rise to revolution in Europe either during its course nor immediately following its termination; because the German revolution has not taken place; because reformist organizations, first and foremost, the Stalinists, have experienced a new and powerful growth and because our organizations have up to now been able to record only a slow growth.

This unrest has manifested itself inside the International in the formation of tendencies which have in one manner or another placed under discussion essential sections of our program; tendencies which seek to revise our perspectives and to modify our tasks, in particular, the ways and means of tackling the problem of building the party.

The road recently taken by the American minority and by Comrade Morrow in particular, imbues us with the greatest reservations towards this tendency and arouses in us the greatest concern about its further evolution.

* * *

We received the July 10, 1945 letter of Comrade Morrow long after the adoption and the publication of the June 1945 resolution of the EEC with which Comrade Morrow declared himself to be in agreement, while expressing his regrets over its lack of self-criticism of our earlier position. Unfortunately, we, for our part, find it extremely difficult to declare ourselves in agreement with the content of his letter, that is to say, while there is room for self-criticism it is assuredly not in the sense indicated by Comrade Morrow.

We do not at all find it difficult to state openly and frankly just wherein we were wrong in the past. In part we have already done so during the June 1945 session of the EEC and in the above-mentioned resolution which declares:

"Contrary to our optimistic prognosis -- issued on the eve and at the beginning of the new imperialist carnage -- relative to the latter's probable duration which we deemed would be brief, and the reaction of the masses which we deemed would be far more rapid and far more efficacious, this war, despite the colossal havoc it caused and despite the unprecedented sufferings it inflicted upon the masses, lasted much longer than the war of 1914-18 and terminated in Europe only in the total military destruction of one of the belligerent camps. . . .

"Another important factor which has conditioned the development of the revolutionary crisis in Europe, its scope and its tempo, is the partial destruction of the material and human premises for the German revolution.

"The war in Europe especially during its last few months brought about the sudden and almost complete destruction of the industrial backbone of Germany, laying waste her cities, her ports, her means of transportation.

"The human material suffered no less grave blows. Germany has lost an enormous proportion of her male population on the battlefields and another enormous percentage finds itself in captivity.

"One cannot count on the revolutionary action of the German proletariat until material life is reorganized in Germany and until several million German prisoners are able to find their place in the country's economic life."

Comrade Morrow is not satisfied with this self-criticism. He desires a precise condemnation of the errors committed in the "earlier documents," that is to say, the February 1944 theses of the European Conference and the January 1945 resolution of the EEC.

It is difficult to understand exactly what "errors" are referred to here. The elucidations provided by Comrade Morrow up to now

are not sufficiently clear to us. On the other hand, his manner of conceiving the relationship between the objective and subjective premises of the revolution renders spurious, in our opinion, his criticism as a whole.

Before we pass on to a general self-criticism of the documents mentioned by Comrade Morrow, it is first necessary to get complete clarity on this ground.

* * *

The conception of an objectively revolutionary situation -- independently of whether the revolutionary party exists or not and independently of its role -- is a Leninist conception which guided Lenin's entire policy in building the Bolshevik party, from the very outset to the day of his death.

This conception acquired particular importance for the elaboration of Lenin's perspectives in the course of the war of 1914-18.

By an objectively revolutionary situation Lenin understood a situation in which the ruling class, passing through a profound crisis, reveals itself to be disoriented and indecisive, while the exploited classes including the petty-bourgeoisie aspire, in their discontent, for a decisive change and prepare for revolutionary action. Such situations are not only possible but inevitable within the framework of the objectively revolutionary period into which the capitalist world has entered with the opening of its imperialist phase and above all with the war of 1914-1918.

Generally speaking, in our epoch wars as well as economic crises create "objectively revolutionary situations" which are linked "objectively with the revolution," according to Lenin. Throughout the war of 1914-1919 Lenin repeated that the latter had created "the objective conditions for the revolution." "Now we are faced with this alternative," these are Lenin's literal words, "Either we are really and firmly convinced that the war is creating a revolutionary situation in Europe, that all the economic and socio-political circumstances of the imperialist epoch lead up to a revolution of the proletariat. . . or we are not convinced that the situation is revolutionary, then there is no reason why we should use the words 'war against war' in vain, etc." (Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference, September 6-8, 1915. Collected Works, vol. XVIII, p 347.)

Comrade Morrow expresses astonishment that the February 1944 theses speak of the inevitable transformation of the Second World War into civil war. "Here Lenin's exhortation to turn the imperialist war into civil war becomes, instead, an objective function of the social process independently of the intervention of the revolutionary party," writes Comrade Morrow.

Comrade Morrow identifies anew the class struggle during the war, which is an objective process, with the conscious activity of the revolutionary vanguard whose aim is to organize the struggle, guide it and lead it to victory, that is to say, to the seizure of power.

"By the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war we mean to say the same thing that was recognized hundreds of times by all the leaders of the Second International during all the years preceeding the war," wrote Zinoviev in 1916. "It is the knowledge that the objective conditions of our epoch create a connection between war and revolution. Nothing more." And he then goes on to add, "The class struggle during the war, above all during such a war as the current one, leads necessarily to civil war, it cannot mean anything else except civil war. The actions of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat during the war have exactly the same significance as the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war."

For Lenin the success of the subjective effort, of the conscious vanguard of the proletariat, of its slogans, including the slogan of turning the imperialist war into civil war, depended on the fact that an objective revolutionary process existed in reality, a current, as he said, determined by the objective conditions created by the war.

"Revolutions such as Turati and Kautsky are 'ready' to recognize, i.e. revolutions for which the date and chances can be told in advance, never happen. The revolutionary situation in Europe is a fact. The extreme discontent, the unrest and anger of the masses are facts. It is on strengthening this torrent that revolutionary Social Democrats must concentrate all their efforts. (A Turn in World Politics, January 1917. Collected Works, vol. XIX, pp 430-1.)

Lenin heaped scorn upon those who refused to recognize the revolution, that is to say, the objectively revolutionary action of the masses aspiring for a profound change before its actual accomplishment. "When the revolution has begun the liberals together with all other enemies recognize it; they often recognize it only in order to deceive and to betray. The revolutionists foresee it in advance before it has commenced, understand its inevitability, teach the masses its necessity and show the masses its road and its meaning."

In his article The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up (October 1916) Lenin sketched out an admirable picture of the objective revolutionary process in our epoch:

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without the movement of non-class conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the foreign nations, etc. -- to imagine this means repudiating social revolution. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, 'we are for socialism,' and in another place another army will say, 'we are for imperialism,' and that this will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion could vilify the Irish Rebellion by calling it a 'putsch.'

"Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. . . .

"The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything else than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it -- without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible -- and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts (hated by all, though for different reasons) and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately 'purge' itself of petty-bourgeois slag." (Lenin's Collected Works, vol. XIX, pp 301-2.)

Objectively revolutionary situations have existed, do exist and will continue to exist independently of whether a revolutionary party is present on the scene or not.

To confine ourselves only to current instances, the situation became objectively revolutionary during the last war in more than one country in Europe and throughout the world.

It is a fact that the situation in Italy after the downfall of Mussolini and after the German debacle was revolutionary. It is a fact that the situation in Greece was objectively revolutionary at least after the liberation of the country, reaching its apogee in December 1944.

It is a fact that the situation was objectively revolutionary in almost all the European countries during the period which elapsed between the debacle and the departure of the German troops and the arrival of Anglo-American and Russian troops.

It is a fact that the situation is at present objectively revolutionary in the majority of the colonial countries and particularly in Indo-China and Indonesia.

Comrade Morrow does not seem to attach any great interest to this aspect of the question. For him,

"The absence of the revolutionary party -- and it is absent -- changes the whole situation. Instead of saying, 'Only the revolutionary party is lacking,' we must instead say, at least to ourselves, 'The absence of the revolutionary party transforms the conditions which otherwise would be revolutionary into conditions in which one must fight, so far as agitation is concerned, for the most elementary demands.'"

The paramount importance of the role of the party has not escaped our attention and it seems to us puerile to repeat that the Fourth International proposes to solve the crisis of mankind which coincides in our epoch with the crisis of the revolutionary leadership, precisely by building such a leadership. But on the other hand

it is stated in the transitional program:

"The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social-betrayers differ. . . they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."

Comrade Morrow will therefore not find it so secondary a matter that we, having understood once and for all that our principal task is to build genuine revolutionary parties, seek to discern in the objective development of the situation factors favorable to the accomplishment of this task.

The rapid building of the Fourth International is inconceivable except on the basis of a perspective of an objectively revolutionary period and of objectively revolutionary situations, only within the framework of the latter will the masses be enabled through their own experience to learn about the treacherous leaderships and the correctness of our program. On the other hand, the objective character of the situation determines not only our possibilities but also the program of our demands and the tactic of building the party.

In our opinion the chief merit of the American minority lay in its drawing attention to the importance of democratic slogans. But it is also necessary not to exaggerate the importance of these slogans and above all to know how to tie them up with transitional slogans, each time placing the emphasis on those slogans which correspond to the living conditions of the masses, to the development of their struggles and to the degree to which their consciousness matures. For example, it is incontestable that the struggle for the abolition of the monarchy, for elections, for the constituent assembly in Belgium, in Italy and in Greece must be inscribed in our program and must be conducted with vigor.

But it is equally incontestable that other slogans of a transitional character touch the masses in these countries (as in the rest of Europe) even more directly and contribute to their mobilization still more definitively than do the foregoing democratic slogans, namely such slogans as: the sliding scale of wages and of working hours, workers' control of production, nationalization without compensation, Workers' and Peasants' Government concretized in the formula: Workers Parties to Power, independence of the colonies. Our sections in Europe have gained successes in France, in Belgium, in Holland and England and elsewhere above all thanks to the struggle conducted by them for these slogans which correspond more than ever to the objective situation, to the needs of the masses, to their own demands.

Comrade Morrow who counsels us in his letter of July 10, 1945: "not to be afraid of making Verite appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than a real democracy(?). That is fighting for

a great deal today!" will perhaps be astonished to learn that the party in the course of the last few months has gained influence above all thanks to its campaign for the CP-SP-CGT government, for the sliding scale of wages, and for the independence of Indo-China.

The transitional program, particularly in Europe, is today more actuel (timely) than ever and our parties are acquiring their own revolutionary physiognomy by placing emphasis first and foremost on the transitional demands, as distinct from the reformist and Stalinist parties which present themselves as ardent defenders of the slogans and institutions of the democratic parliamentary bourgeoisie.

And here we come to what in our opinion is a false conclusion drawn from Comrade Morrow's false evaluation of the present period and its perspectives.

Comrade Morrow advises us to reconsider the question of building the revolutionary party; he advises us not to proceed directly but once again merely apply a total "entrism" policy with respect to reformist parties. This is the tactical conclusion which flows from his analysis of the general situation and of the character of the period into which we have entered.

Comrade Morrow's principal argument is that we once again face (after the liquidation of the war) mass reformist parties, that our own cadres are few and that we cannot hope -- as was the case after the first imperialist world war and the Russian revolution -- to establish "very quickly, although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc."

Comrade Morrow proposes that we immediately adopt as the solution entry "into one of the reformist parties, constitute a fraction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party."

In view of the difficulties of working inside the Communist parties, Comrade Morrow is in favor of entry into the Socialist parties (he cites the Italian, German and Belgian Socialist parties) or other centrist formations, as for example. . . the MLN in France "through an understanding with Malraux' wing."

We found ourselves on many occasions plunged into consternation upon reading in the press of the American comrades information concerning Europe which at times revealed an almost complete ignorance of the actual state of affairs, among other things the character of the "national" movement during the German occupation, its importance in the various European countries, as well as the composition and importance of "resistance organizations."

Comrade Morrow is no exception to this rule when he attempts to judge the existing situation among the reformist parties in Europe and when he cites with a serious air "Malraux' wing of the MLN," into which our party, in his opinion, ought to dissolve itself. Comrade Morrow is in all likelihood a victim of journalistic and irresponsible dispatches which have led him to believe that there exists a centrist

organization which has a certain importance among the French masses. But let us continue.

The new "entrism" policy proposed by Comrade Morrow is motivated by the very same considerations which we advanced for its adoption before the last war.

"If the cost of entry in some cases," writes Comrade Morrow, "is the temporary loss of a public faction organ and/or no guarantee of the right of constituting a faction, that is no argument against entry. . . . Two or three good pamphlets can serve as a substitute for a public faction organ for a while. It might be very advantageous to live for a while in one of the 'left' factions instead of openly having one of your own."

It is clear that if Comrade Morrow goes so far it is because he is very much impressed by certain external and superficial traits of resemblance between the present period and the period prior to the last war (the importance of the reformist parties, the limited forces of our sections, etc.) and because he ignores entirely all the essential differences between these two periods.

Trotsky advocated the "entrism" policy with respect to the Social Democracy in a period of the general ebb of the labor movement following a long series of defeats and on the day after the victory of German fascism which sounded the tocsin for world reaction and accelerated the outbreak of the war.

Social Democracy which had still retained considerable influence among working class circles, was capable under the menace of fascism of again passing through a healthy reaction and of permitting, thanks to a more or less democratic internal atmosphere, the development of revolutionary tendencies (and this was only a hypothesis to be verified)

Today it is first of all a question of a period entirely different in character.

The war has destroyed the equilibrium in international and social relations and as a consequence of the economic, social and political dislocation provoked by it, has ushered in a lengthy revolutionary period and a lengthy revolutionary perspective. We were mistaken about the tempo of events during the closing phases of the war; we overestimated the rapidity and scope of the reaction of the masses. On the other hand, it was impossible for us to have foreseen in 1944 the consequences of the havoc caused by the war (greatly speeded up in the course of the last few months) in a highly developed country like Germany where a part of the material and human premises for all large-scale mass actions have been eliminated. Nor could we have foreseen the far-reaching extent and consequences of military occupation of Europe by the imperialists and the Red Army. All these factors have introduced important corrections into our short-term perspectives and this is, to a certain degree, inevitable for all Marxist perspectives.

"Every historical prediction is necessarily conditional," wrote Trotsky, and the more concrete a prediction, the more conditional

it is. "A prognosis is not a promissory note which can be cashed on a given date. Prognosis outlines only the definite trends of a development. But along with these trends a different order of forces and tendencies operate which at a certain moment begin to predominate. All those who seek exact predictions of concrete events should consult the astrologists, Marxist prognosis aids only in orientation."

But the general perspective of "a whole revolutionary epoch" (Manifesto of the 1940 Emergency Conference) emerging out of the imperialist war still remains valid.

The reformist parties have emerged from the war strengthened but this strengthening in reality reflects the first stage of the radicalization of the masses. On the other hand, these parties have been placed, both by their reformist policies as well as by the objective situation, under conditions which render more and more precarious the continued adherence of the masses to their banners.

In many countries in Europe we are already witnessing signs which indicate that the phase of discontent has commenced and that important layers of the most militant elements of the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie are in process of breaking more or less openly with these parties.

But how to win over these elements? A total "entrism" policy with respect to the Social Democracy is at the present hour equivalent to sure political suicide. These elements are moving away from the reformist parties because they want to struggle and because they are suspicious of and discontented and angered by reformist politics which run directly counter to all the existing possibilities of European capitalism to grant reforms or to proceed to its reconstruction otherwise than by super-exploitation of the toiling masses under a discipline of blood and iron.

These elements are seeking a different banner for revolutionary regroupment and struggle and it is our duty to show them this banner.

The day-to-day work of all our European sections demonstrates graphically what great chances exist for building the revolutionary party provided we are capable of appearing before the masses, participating in their struggles and inspiring confidence in them by the seriousness of our organization and our activity.

On the other hand, we will not be able to accomplish really effective fractional work within these reformist organizations (work which we consider very important and which we have never ceased advocating) except by maintaining an independent organization which develops in complete liberty its entire program and which polarizes around it the elements and the revolutionary currents which are detaching themselves from the reformist organizations. Variants of this general tactic might be envisaged in certain countries where exceptional conditions prevail as for example in England in the case of the Labor Party. In a period such as we are now actually passing through in Europe and with the reformist parties practicing policies which run so directly counter to the needs of the masses and to the possibilities of capitalism, it is fatal, at a time when more and more important layers are splitting away from these parties and in the absence of any

other pole of regroupment, to seek refuge either in the movements of the right or in demoralization and apathy.

Contrary to the opinions of Comrade Morrow, it is our own subjective weaknesses and not the objective conditions which are actually blocking in Europe the attraction and organization of all elements in search of a new revolutionary orientation.

So far as the Socialist parties on the European continent in particular are concerned, Comrade Morrow has perhaps failed to take into account the modification of their social basis which has occurred during the war.

In speaking of reformist parties which have emerged strengthened from the war, it is necessary to draw a distinction between the Socialist parties which have lost a great deal of their influence among working-class circles, and which have gained among petty-bourgeois circles (assembled before the war in bourgeois parties of the center) and the Stalinist parties which have grown at the expense of the working class following of the Socialist parties.

Furthermore, the internal atmosphere of the European Social-Democracy has likewise been greatly modified in a bureaucratic and anti-democratic sense, which restricts the possibilities for the development of revolutionary tendencies.

The "entrist" tactic with respect to the Social-Democratic parties can, on the other hand, be envisaged for certain countries which are occupied by the USSR where the Soviet bureaucracy is obliged to support the legality of these parties and where the brutality of Stalinist reaction renders extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, independent activity for a revolutionary tendency in the labor movement.

* * *

Surely we are not mistaken in accusing Comrade Morrow of having been carried away by his reaction to the revolutionary optimism expressed by the American majority which has at times distorted the reality of the European situation; he has swung far away from his own basis as we are acquainted with it through the documents criticizing the 1943 Plenum resolution of the National Committee of the SWP and he has made dangerous concessions to opportunist and right-wing currents.

For example he speaks of the "terrible" defeat in Greece which has proved "a very strong deterrent on the workers of all of Europe, weighing them down with the thought that their struggles might meet the same fate." This does not at all correspond to the reality of the situation in the country and of the European working class.

The Greek proletariat, despite its defeat, does not think itself beaten and has demonstrated this by incessant struggles since December 1944, struggles which have unfolded up to the level of a general strike.

Even the Stalinist influence, despite all the past experience, remains, while somewhat diminished, still extremely powerful. The

trade union elections conducted under the Voulgaris regime have once again brought the Stalinists triumphantly to the leadership and the public meetings of the EAM have experienced genuine successes. As paradoxical as this seems, it is first of all the result of the internal situation which has undergone no improvement, but on the contrary, has even become aggravated and, on the other hand, it is the result of the general situation now existing in Europe and which the great mass of the workers, who follow the Stalinist party and who believe in the revolutionary role of the USSR, have not interpreted as demoralizing.

While reaction still keeps scoring gains, while it is beginning to regain confidence in itself, while it is utilizing the Socialist and Stalinist parties for its own aims and while it is organizing under their cover its offensive of tomorrow, this process is still passing unperceived by the great masses who are interpreting the electoral success of the traditional parties as so many defeats for reaction.

It is in this, among other things, that the difference consists between the pre-war period and the current one.

The proletariat was dragooned into the war, demoralized by a long series of previous defeats, having exhausted a large part of its revolutionary potential. The war and all the more so its consequences, as has already and correctly been stated by the 1940 Emergency Conference, have acted to regenerate this potential. What is actually involved today is the prelude to a lengthy revolutionary period in which the Fourth International will have the greatest possible chances to build its mass parties.

But in order to achieve this the Fourth International must vanquish defeatism under whatever form it manifests itself, within its own ranks.

January, 1946.

The text unanimously adopted by the European Secretariat.

STATEMENT OF BAYONNE BRANCH

We wish to clarify the relationship of the Bayonne comrades to the minority faction and clearly state our perspective for the immediate future.

We joined and still belong to the minority faction led by Comrades Goldman and Morrow because we were in favor of unifying the two revolutionary Marxist tendencies of the 4th International in the U.S., the S.W.P. and the W.P. We were also in favor of eliminating the bad organizational practices as developed and defended by the present P.C. majority.

We have agreed with the political criticism by Morrow of the majority on its lack of understanding the necessity of democratic demands and the danger of Stalinism as stated in the 1943 Plenum resolution on Europe. After one year of attacking these differences as irreconcilable and opportunist the majority behind a lot of bombast accepted the basic conclusions of Morrow, Goldman and Logan officially at the November 1944 convention, while unofficially never really believing or teaching the new orientation or admitting its previous errors.

To err is human, but one must admit these errors in order that one can benefit from one's mistakes.

The question of the slogan of the republic in Italy and Belgium is an example of what we mean. While ostensibly for it, the majority unofficially through its spokesmen attacks this correct slogan as opportunist thus miseducating the party on democratic demands.

We are in agreement with the essentials of Goldman's criticisms of the regime. That is, that any criticism is received in a hostile manner and a war to the death organized against it and that a tendency to leadership worship was developing in the party as typified by Hansen's now "famous" description of how Comrade Cannon went to jail. We believe that such organizational handling of the party stifles any constructive criticism and tends to build a monolithic party.

We have not agreed with Goldman when he characterizes these bureaucratic methods as Stalinist germs. While many of these actions resemble those of the Stalinists they could also resemble the actions of trade union bureaucrats or even a bureaucracy of a social club. When Goldman continually uses the term Stalinist and fights Cannon as such, then he becomes a prisoner of his own phrases. While Goldman has never called the Cannon regime a Stalinist bureaucracy, although Cannon says he does since it makes his subsequent defense easier, nevertheless Goldman and many with him in the S.W.P. minority wage war in effect, as if Cannon were a Stalin.

Cannon of course is not another Stalin. Cannon is not based on a degenerated workers state but on an isolated revolutionary party.

This hatred of Cannon as if he were a Stalinist bureaucrat has led Goldman and Morrow today to a position where they are seriously contemplating a split and the joining of the W.P. if and when Cannon succeeds in stalling off unity for the present period. Cannon of course is doing everything in his power to frustrate unity as he does not want 400 possible oppositionists inside the S.W.P. This is his primary consideration. The control of the party regime comes first; political consideration second.

Another method of achieving split is the utilization of a situation whereby Cannon can bureaucratically expel them. This appears to be the course upon which Goldman and Morrow are now embarked on. If Cannon and the majority deliberately utilize these provocations then they will have simply given themselves a seemingly good excuse for what will be essentially a bureaucratic solution.

"We are infinitely closer to the WP than Cannon's S.W.P.", in effect say Goldman and Morrow, and they list the issues.

1. On the question of unity.
2. On the kind of a party.
3. On democratic demands in Europe.
4. And the past differences on the USSR are now disappearing. So if we can't get unity soon our place is in the W.P.

We have fought this justification for split from within the faction since October and have held up the contemplated split until now. This is admitted by Morrow who has a position now of giving himself a little more time to fight for a unity.

We are against split even if unity is not achieved for the present for the following political and tactical reasons:

1. The political differences between Cannon and Goldman are compatible within one revolutionary organization, just as the differences between Cannon and Shachtman are also compatible within one revolutionary organization.

2. Although numerically the ratio of the S.W.P. and the W.P. is 3 to 1, in basic proletarian cadre the proportion is probably greater.

To give up the S.W.P. as hopelessly lost to the revolutionary movement, which it decidedly is not, is to in effect give up any serious anti-capitalist attempt in the U.S. for the next historical period.

It took 15 years to develop whatever cadre the S.W.P. has today. Cadres are not found on trees. They are the product of years of struggle and testing and must never be given up lightmindedly as hopeless. Particularly if no attempt to this day has ever been made to personally contact over one-half of the party membership! And this membership still devotes its energies to further what is basically a revolutionary program.

This split may isolate the minority from the 4th International, despite the fact that many sections of the 4th International have

indicated their political agreement with the minority ideas.

The International in the past condemned Shachtman for splitting, when it was politically possible to live in one party.

The Belgian comrades have already indicated this in a letter to the American comrades.

A split now will mean the death of unity in the U.S. for at least the next period. One doesn't heal old wounds by making new ones.

It will indirectly prove Cannon's fallacious argument that every faction organized against him organizes for split.

Cannon can best be fought within the S.W.P. A split in effect means capitulation to Cannon in order to avoid the soul-searing but necessary fight against him. Even when Goldman and Morrow and Williams are in the W.P. they will still have the task of winning away from Cannon his basic cadre elements. If it was difficult inside the S.W.P., how much harder it will be outside with Shachtman.

We are not closer to the W.P. for the following reasons:

While Shachtman has not been a renegade in the sense that he went over to the class enemy, nevertheless he has been and still remains a renegade from a theory. His position that the Soviet Union is neither a workers' state or capitalist, but a collectivist state is nothing but the theory of the out and out renegade from Marxism Burnham with whom Shachtman in 1940 made a bloc with against the proletarian majority, while yielding to petty-bourgeois pressure. On top of this Shachtman refused to submit to majority rule and split the party because he wasn't allowed a public organ of his own while inside the party; now Shachtman has progressively given up his demand for a public organ and is for unity. But we do not embrace him as yet. Despite the fact that Shachtman's W.P. inside the S.W.P. can be a tremendous aid to the revolutionary movement, nevertheless, we have a right to suspect that Shachtman's whole proposal may be a maneuver designed to chop off a few more members for the W.P. We demand of the majority that Shachtman be given the chance of proving otherwise but that is another thing than desiring the victory of the Shachtman tendency over the Cannon tendency. Shachtman by the mere fact of his five years' existence in the W.P. has proved himself capable of consistent, bitter, subjective politics.

Let us first, at the least, observe his actions in the future united party, before we desire his victory over any tendency. At the present we desire the victory of the Goldman and Morrow tendency over Cannon and Shachtman.

However, we are forced to admit that many in our faction are politically already conscious W.P.ers. They constitute the left-wing of our faction and have constantly exerted pressure against Goldman and particularly Morrow for immediate split. This group is led by Williams and A. Stein.

Another problem, while secondary, would still create important

differences between us and the Shachtmanites in the trade unions where we have some contact with them. They appear to almost automatically line up against the Stalinist forces. They seem to treat the Stalinist workers as the main enemy, even though programmatically it may be possible to make a bloc with them. At the recent CIO Shipworkers convention they followed this line. We were able with some help of some W.P.ers to change this line as against their top leadership's advice.

We cite all these arguments to prove that there are real differences with Shachtman which while compatible within one organization do not make it politically worthwhile to split from the mainstream in order to live in the heaven on earth called the W.P.

At present there is a "disciplinary" crisis in the party. The minority has exercised what should be its democratic right of fraternizing with revolutionary Marxists, members of the W.P. They may have stretched this point a bit by inviting close sympathizers to its socials and discussions, but fraternization should be our right.

The majority has retaliated by threatening disciplinary action. This might mean suspension or expulsion.

The Bayonne comrades while defending the right of their minority comrades to fraternize with Shachtmanites, nevertheless recommend that many of these activities be given up as a retreat in the face of the threatened bureaucratic expulsion.

We believe expulsions must not come because of secondary questions. We believe the majority is now seriously thinking of such actions.

When the minority comrades however persist in these actions despite the risks then we are forced to admit that they may be deliberately picking the expulsion route out of the party.

For Cannon and the majority it will also be the desirable and "traditional" thing for them to legally get rid of an uncomfortable minority.

Expulsion may now come because of a contemplated joint statement to the International by the minority and the W.P. on the question of unity and the S.W.P. regime.

While it is the minority's right to appeal to the International, nevertheless its insistence now at the time Cannon threatens expulsion can only mean that it wants the majority to do what it has always wanted to do, namely get rid of an opposition which has done damage to its international political reputation.

The minority can accomplish the same political effect by it and the W.P. issuing the same appeal separately and not violate formal party discipline. We appeal to them not to provoke the majority into expelling them.

In summary, as long as unity is possible, as long as the minority stays in the party we will support them.

When it leaves on this issue we will not go with them.

As long as we have the democratic right of discussion and written criticism and as long as we are in basic political agreement with the comrades of the majority, our perspective is to remain in and to build the S.W.P. We are also aware that the majority has maneuvered these democratic rights for its own benefit, but a minority can with some obstacles thrown in its way, present its position to the party.

We intend to continue the fight for unity regardless of what the small majority inside our faction does. We hope our comrades in the minority faction stay and fight together with us in the best possible arena they have today, for the victory of their political ideas.

January 10, 1946.

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