

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNAL SITUATION

(Answer to the January 26 Letter of the Minority)

Under date of January 26 the minority faction in the National Committee presented the majority with the demand that it change its position "in the coming weeks" on the question of fusion with the Shachtmanites under penalty of withdrawal from the party by the minority. Specifically, they stated: "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."

The only answer the Political Committee can make to this ultimatum is the following:

1. The course of the Political Committee on the question in dispute is determined by the Resolution of the October Plenum. The Political Committee has neither the desire nor the authority to change the line of this Plenum Resolution. Under date of January 1946 the European Secretariat adopted a resolution on the question of fusion between the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party, endorsing the general line of our Plenum Resolution and making specific recommendations for the further consideration and discussion of this question. The Political Committee is in full agreement with the resolution of the European Secretariat and intends to proceed along the line indicated therein.
2. Under date of December 28 the European Secretariat addressed a letter to the party leadership declaring 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 letter of the European Secretariat further appealed to both factions in 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."
3. The Political Committee fully agrees with the position taken by the European Secretariat in this matter and assures the minority that its democratic rights of free expression will be safeguarded and guaranteed in the future as in the past, and that all their party rights will be respected in the further course of the discussion. At the same time we insist that the minority respect the discipline of the party.
4. We strongly urge the minority to reconsider the position stated in their letter of January 26, to avail themselves of the opportunity to continue the discussion on the question of fusion with the Shachtmanites and other important questions in dispute, and at the same time to respect the principles of democratic centralism and refrain from any further violations of party discipline.

Adopted by the Political Committee, February 12, 1946.

THE RUSSIAN QUESTION AND THE DISPUTE IN THE S.W.P.

By Nol Bos (Holland)

Because our party was able to emerge from illegality only after the final capitulation of the German army, and because all attempts to contact the International during that period proved unsuccessful, we remained unfamiliar with the situation in the International -- the practical and theoretical relationships. In these circumstances we have to make up a great deal. Even now after half a year of legality we are only partially caught up. We haven't enough translators to make available the mass of material reaching us at present. Most of us able to undertake this work are taken up with other party work.

Nevertheless some of our comrades have been able to acquaint themselves with what is going on in the International. It was gratifying to learn that problems which arose in our party were also placed on the agenda in other sections, as, for example, the Question of the Defense of the Soviet Union, and that the conclusions reached were the same as those we found necessary to draw.

Before we succeeded in reestablishing contact with the International, comrades and other workers began returning to Holland from sections of Germany under Red Army occupation. The reports they brought coupled with the information we were able to glean from the press, etc., forced us to recognize that it would be incorrect now to keep advancing the slogan: Defense of the Soviet Union. Before the German capitulation many German workers welcomed the approach of the Red Army. After its arrival, however, it was cursed and misery and horror reigned in its zones.

The reports of responsible party comrades leave no doubt of this. One of them on the basis of his experiences declared himself against the slogan of the Defense of the Soviet Union.\* His conclusions were approximately as follows: "It would be pure mockery of the German proletariat to now advance the slogan of the Defense of the Soviet Union. The German proletariat is threatened on every side by the Stalinist bureaucracy (and much worse, also by the rank and file soldier of the Red Army)." Our answer was, in brief, the following:

"Our position on the Soviet Union was never based on any illusions about the Stalinist bureaucracy, but on the fact that the most important conquest of the October Revolution, the socialization of the means of production, still exists, though threatened on the one hand by world imperialism and on the other by counter-revolutionary forces in Russia (in the first place, the Stalinist bureaucracy). If we discover in practice that Stalin is even a greater danger to the proletariat than we thought and that his chauvinist policies, which are completely alien to the working class, have had a catastrophic effect on the moral fiber of the Red soldiers, then this renders it a thousand times more obligatory to struggle against Stalinism and for the brotherhood of all the exploited. For this reason we have to

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\*He has since corrected his position.

defend the German proletariat against Stalin too. But. . ." and then follow considerations why the defense of the Soviet Union still remains the duty of the world proletariat.

However, we felt the necessity of adjusting our slogans to the existing situation. For that reason, shortly afterwards we unanimously and without much discussion decided to accept the position which most of the sections of the International had already taken (as we only later found out) namely: that the slogan "Defense of the Soviet Union" recedes and gives way to the slogan: "The Defense of the European revolution against world imperialism and against the Stalin bureaucracy," but with the understanding naturally that we still see the necessity of defending the Soviet Union.

Afterwards we found out that the American party, the SWP, did the same. However, we asked ourselves: was the SWP under the same compulsion as we were? The American working class -- if we leave out the subjective factors of ideological influences which were present before too -- was not immediately threatened by the Stalinist bureaucracy. And there is the added fact that with the end of World War II the contradictions between American imperialism and Russia became much sharper. More precisely, should the coming crisis between capital and the working class end in defeat for the proletariat (which we neither hope nor expect) then a war between America (in the first place) and the Soviet Union would be inevitable. Tendencies in that direction can already be seen by everybody.

If in the United States one still continues to point out to the workers the necessity of defending the Soviet Union (alongside, of course, the defense of the European revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy) then this would mean standing in the way of the plans of American imperialism. If in today's situation in America one allows the slogan of defense of the Soviet Union to recede to the background this could mean a concession to chauvinism. Only the world proletariat can save the Soviet Union from destruction. The American proletariat in the first place. Right now we should be revolutionary defeatists: In America to be for the Soviet Union means, right now, to begin the fight against World War III.

In my opinion the International made a mistake by generalizing this question too much. We must understand that this concerns not a theoretical change of our views but merely a temporary tactical shift. For us European parties this shift was a necessity, although tendencies in our party indicate that we must be very alert in this question.

Because of our situation at that time it was not possible for us to participate in the international discussion on this question. I should like to suggest now to the American comrades: Withdraw the decision of the last convention. Defend the Soviet Union now too; the question of the Soviet Union for America is no secondary matter.

The Workers Party, the Majority and the Minority in the SWP

The overwhelming amount of discussion material which we have received from the SWP makes it rather difficult for us to take a

position immediately on today's differences, all the more since the development of the SWP in recent years is largely unfamiliar to us. We had to recognize before long, however, that formally the minority is correct. If the differences between the SWP and the Workers Party are not so big as to justify maintaining a split and the WP claims it is now ready to abide by discipline, then formally there can be no rational arguments against fusion.

Because of lack of material and information, it was particularly hard for us to decide whether the WP has really been developing in the direction of Trotskyism and whether it has lost many of its petty-bourgeois characteristics as the minority claims. Meanwhile we observed Shachtman's position on the "Three Theses," a tendency that completely contradicts the principles of the Fourth International. Experience taught us that in Holland all those (including old Trotskyists) who in recent years regarded the national resistance movement as progressive and revolutionary ended in the camp of the bourgeoisie and became nationalists. (Some have corrected themselves since the end of the war, that however does not change the facts). Even though I have every admiration for those in America who remained internationalists during the war, I believe that in Europe it was more difficult to remain an internationalist. The position taken by those who promulgated the "Three Theses" could in no case have resisted the pressure in the difficult situation in Europe. Should one then be surprised if in the November number of the Internal Bulletin one reads Shachtman's words:

"During the war, the Fourth International simply ceased to exist as any kind of real movement: It is amazing, but a fact that for five or six years the International had nothing to say (or was prevented from saying anything) on a dozen of the most important problems of world politics. There was no international leadership; and that which arrogated this role to itself was far worse than bad: it was arrogantly bureaucratic, theoretically sterile or psittacotic, politically a thousand times wrong or impotent. In a word: the International failed completely during the war, failed in every respect, failed inexcusably. If we do not start by establishing this fact, we will not make the progress that must be made."

I should like to spare you the scorn with which these words were received here. (Shachtman would do well to examine sometime why the large centrist parties on the European continent disappeared and the parties of the Fourth International, despite their numerical weakness, became the most important revolutionary parties.) However, we did ask ourselves: "What can have led Shachtman with these ideas to suggest a fusion of the WP with the SWP?"

We believe that the unity proposals are most closely connected with the decision of the SWP to relegate the slogan of Defense of the Soviet Union to the background. SHACHTMAN IS NOW READY TO ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SWP BECAUSE THE DISCIPLINE IS NOT THE SAME AS IN

1940: THE DISCIPLINE NOW DOES NOT BIND HIM TO DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION. What was a tactical measure for the SWP -- the subsiding of the defense of the Soviet Union, is for Shachtman, colla sinistra, a concession in principle. In his opinion the decision of the SWP is a first step toward his position.

This opinion of mine was strengthened when I recently read the December number of the Internal Bulletin in which appears Comrade Morrow's attack on Cannon's speech of November 7 in relation to the Soviet Union. Comrade Morrow may not accept responsibility for the theoretical absurdities of Comrade Shachtman on the Russian question, but in practice nevertheless he stands closer to Shachtman than to the SWP when he expresses himself in the minority report of the Plenum to the New York membership meeting as follows:

"Cannon was playing on the prejudices of those of you who don't know that the whole Russian question is up for reevaluation in our party and in the International. Some of you laugh, because you don't know. But Cannon knows -- maybe Warde and E. R. Frank don't know, but Cannon knows. As a matter of fact, there isn't a majority leader ready to swear today that a year from now the party will still have its present position on the Russian question."

I can assure Comrade Morrow that the vast majority of the Dutch Party, as can be seen, in this question support Cannon.

In the discussion which is now taking place in the SWP, there is much talk about formalities and secondary matters. Our party is still young, as is the age and experience of its members, nevertheless we believe that we know from our own experience that such a sharp factional struggle as is now taking place in the SWP goes deeper than the question whether or when unity with the WP will take place. There can be no factional fight over the Majority accusing the Minority of being undisciplined or the Minority accusing the Majority of being bureaucratic. We cannot (and will not) make up our minds for the present on these mutual accusations. What interests us much more are the political causes of today's differences. AND, in my opinion, IT IS A DIFFERENCE IN THE EVALUATION OF THE SOVIET UNION WHICH IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DIFFERENCES EXACTLY AS IN 1940.

As I have already tried to point out, putting the Defense of the Soviet Union in the background was not the correct thing for the American party. The Workers Party has exploited this mistake in its own interests. The Minority which, as we have already shown, will fight the hardest against correcting this mistake has received support in the Workers Party and vice versa.

I repeat: formally the Minority is correct. If the International had to express itself eventually on this question the Majority would undoubtedly be defeated. It is not a matter of formalities however, the political questions are the most important.

At the next convention of the SWP the unity question will

undoubtedly be on the agenda. I should like to suggest: correct your decision concerning the Russian question. GIVE THE SLOGAN OF THE DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION ITS OLD PLACE. Give the Workers Party a chance to participate in this discussion with you. IF IT IS WILLING, EVEN IF DEFEATED, TO ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PARTY, THEN IT HAS REALLY CORRECTED ITS POSITION OF 1940. THEN IT BELONGS IN THE RANKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

The coming period will be a revolutionary one. We have great confidence in the future. A counter-offensive of the imperialists however will not be lacking. Their "friendship" with the Soviet Union will not last long. The Stalinists then will likewise disclose themselves as lackies of the imperialists. Only we will remain to defend the Soviet Union. The Stalinist workers, who in their loyalty to the Soviet Union have remained loyal to their parties, will find their way to the Fourth International. If the American proletariat sees the necessity of defending the Soviet Union it will be much harder for the imperialists to prepare the war against the USSR. The fight for the Soviet Union is in the coming phase most closely united with the fight for the revolution in America. Should the proletariat, despite our expectations, suffer a defeat and a new war break out, then the refusal of the American workers to fight against the Soviet Union will place civil war on the agenda and keep open the possibility that World War III will not end in the total destruction of human culture.

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RESOLUTION IN BEHALF OF THE MINORITY REMAINING IN THE SWP

By Millner

I.

Beginning with the Plenum of December 1943, the minority undertook a political struggle which has not ceased to grow and extend on the international plane, both in the questions dealt with and in the goals pursued.

In reality, what is the question? The political re-armament of the Fourth International, that is to say, to define a correct international perspective (dealing with the revolution in Western Europe and with Stalinism), to defend the correct conception of the revolutionary party against the bureaucratic danger, and finally, as a result of the last, to restore the unity of the American section.

II.

The future evolution of this discussion as a whole and the solution of the crisis which it has engendered depends on the development of the Fourth International and is subordinated to it.

The discussion began by the expression of differences on the perspectives of the European revolution. It reached an impasse because: 1) the leadership of the SWP demonstrated its bureaucratic-monolithic tendency by smothering first, then systematically distorting the political struggle, and by calling the minority a formation alien to the traditions of Bolshevism with the aim of artificially aligning against the minority the rank-and-file of the SWP and the international sections; 2) and because the discussion, carried over into the international arena, developed there but slowly because of the political confusion and profound disorganization that were a result of the war; 3) and lastly, because the minority was not able to expand its original nucleus of adherents and thus break into the rank-and-file of the SWP.

III.

Faced by this situation and the bureaucratic maneuvers of the SWP leadership, the minority thought it would be possible to by-pass the impasse by posing, correctly, the question of unity whose solution had meanwhile ripened and was in reality posed by the facts themselves.

The discussion of the problem of unity led very quickly to a crisis without an immediate way out. Threatened in its bureaucratic positions, the leadership of the SWP opposed to the realization of unity a categorical refusal to deal with the problem, and to the attempts of the minority to free the road toward unification it presented a purely strict disciplinary attitude. The majority had purposely, and from the very beginning, oriented the discussion on unification into an impasse, instead of being willing to resolve the problem and actually strive for a positive solution. By its politically irresponsible and organizationally bureaucratic attitude, the majority bears the undisputed responsibility for the present crisis and for an eventual split.



The minority attempted to further the solution of the problem by carrying the debate into the international arena. But the international sections which are just coming out of the difficulties of reorganization following the war and which are battling in an extremely difficult situation, have not yet fully understood the great importance of the problems posed by the American crisis, and are orienting themselves but slowly toward a decision.

The minority, considering its numerical weakness and the relatively backward political consciousness of the rank-and-file of the SWP, and fearing, on the other hand, that the hesitations of the international sections threaten to prolong the discussion for a long time yet and to place off into an uncertain future the realization of unity, the minority then reacted against the bureaucratic-monolithic attitude of the leadership of the SWP by orienting itself into the road of split and of entry into the WP in order, from there, to continue its political struggle.

#### IV.

What were the consequences of this new orientation?

The struggle led by the minority for a correct political perspective -- a struggle which constitutes its essential raison-d'etre and its most precious political capital -- has been beclouded not only in the eyes of the rank-and-file of the SWP but also before a section of the minority itself and, what is more important, in the eyes of the international sections. The function of the minority as a factor for political orientation in the re-armament of the Fourth International has, because of this, receded into the background.

Immediately the leadership of the SWP made use of this to brandish against the minority the accusation of split (in which road the provocations of the majority had driven them). This maneuver has for its aim the rejection into the background of the political platform of the minority, and the obscuring of the struggle that it leads against the bureaucratic-monolithic tendency of the majority itself and for unification.

Attention being exclusively focussed, during all this period of development, on the problem of unification, a process of disintegration has been provoked in the minority, which has been divided into three currents: one which favors an immediate split, another which refuses to split, and a third which continues hesitating to take a decision. (What is important here is not the respective strength of the three currents, but the fact of their existence).

Finally, the position of the minority has clearly deteriorated in the International.

#### V.

What would be the consequences of a split for the minority?

It would signify, very exactly, not only a break with the rank-and-file of the SWP, but also with the Fourth International, where there can be no doubt that the sections would at this time follow the leadership of the SWP.

It would pose, for the minority, a problem very different from that of unification. The minority would no longer have to work in the midst of one and the same organization and on the basis of the recognition of democratic-centralism for the clarification of political divergencies with the members, re-unified, of the SWP and WP.

It would then be necessary, as a tendency of the WP, where the minority would enter with her numbers lessened and her contacts with the international sections weakened, for the minority to win to its own platform the WP. It would then be a question of a process of political clarification on a relatively long-term perspective and in conditions of isolation from the International and of violent hostility on the part of the SWP.

On the other hand, the split would, for the present, reinforce the leadership of the SWP and its bureaucratic-monolithic tendency, and at the same time its position in the International, and would lead to a close-knit association with its sectarian and ultra-leftist tendencies, which would place a burdensome mortgage on the future development of the Fourth International.

On the other hand, the development of the minority as a tendency within the WP would not easily permit it, in any case, to appear before the International clearly as a distinct political entity.

Finally, the split, even if it would grant to the WP a successful maneuver, would, in reality, not strengthen its position. Its isolation from the International would be augmented for the time because of the negative reaction of the international sections and by the violent barrage of hostility that the leadership of the SWP would immediately unleash against the WP joined by the minority.

## VI.

Because of the perspective opened by a decision to split, it is necessary to understand fully that the subjective intentions of the minority do not constitute a single guarantee, for, at this time, they will not convince those who disapprove of the split, and in the future they will find themselves determined by the situation created as result of the split more than they will determine it themselves. The political activity of the minority belongs in the cadre of the Fourth International. An entry into the WP would change none of the problems that are posed for it now, but would make their solution more difficult in less favorable conditions. In connection with this the experience of the WP is highly instructive. In spite of the favorable evolution it has followed since 1940 (contrary to the fears correctly expressed at that time) and the strengthening of its revolutionary positions and its loyalty toward the Fourth International, it still remains outside of the International.

We must pose the question clearly. Where would the decision to enter the WP lead? To accept, in reality, a very precise perspective of development. To consider that the political crisis of the Fourth International cannot be surmounted and resolved except by a greatly protracted process of political clarification. To consciously adopt such a perspective, that would be to consider that, according

to all probability, the ripening of the revolutionary situation in Western Europe would occur before the Fourth International would be able to play a decisive role in it. To be opposed to the entry into the WP, is precisely to be opposed to this perspective; it is to consider, on the contrary, that the rhythm of development of the revolutionary situation in Western Europe imposes as a task on the minority a re-arming of the Fourth International and a regrouping to that end of the other international sections on the basis of its political platform in a short time; it is to estimate that a formal rupture would only lead to strengthen the bureaucratic-monolithic tendencies in the midst of the Fourth International, and to accentuate in it the danger of degeneration. The minority reacts against the difficulties of the present struggle by a decision to enter the WP, which means that it does not solve the problem posed by the SWP and the bureaucratic-monolithic tendency of its leadership, but gets rid of it by a surgical operation. It ought, on the contrary, discarding all equivocation about split, continue its struggle in the cadres of the SWP and of the international. Such is the advice given to the minority by all the international sections which support its struggle. It would be disastrous to openly flaunt this advice (not to mention the fact that the minority wouldn't even wait for the decisions of the European pre-conference to do it), this at the very moment when it claims to win for itself the international sections. Above all, it is necessary to emphasize that this is the quickest way to insure within the Fourth International the progress of the positions of the minority and the isolation of the bureaucratic-monolithic and politically zig-zagging tendency of the Cannon group.

## VII.

This struggle, that is to say the re-arming of the International, will surely not be the work of one day. But that does not mean that it is an indefinitely drawn out process. In any case, it would be quicker than that which would develop in the situation of isolation created by the entry of the minority into the WP. If the minority takes this road, clearly and without equivocation, some decisive steps could be taken on its initiative in the near future. The struggle to reach this and the role that the minority will play in it will demonstrate clearly its weight on the political plane and will draw close to it, on the basis of a community of political ties, important sections of the International. In the same way it would reduce the real weight, at present all out of proportion, that the leadership of the SWP enjoys thanks to its apparatus, and will isolate the majority in the International, where it could sustain itself only on the most backward and least mature sections. There is involved here an operation of greatest importance, in which the minority has everything to gain and nothing to lose. Eliminating the equivocation created during this last period by the orientation of split, and joining its work of political clarification to its insistence on the importance of the American unification, the minority would only have greater strength to pose anew the problem in the foreground and to demand its quick solution. If, in such a conjuncture, where the minority would have clarified its position and strengthened its bonds with the international sections, the Cannon group continues to oppose unification as sternly as before, it would then be it, and not the minority, that would find itself isolated in the International. Then, and only then, the minority could convince the International of the correctness of its position and demand of it, in case the

leadership of the SWP refuses any compromise on unification, the recognition by it of two sections in America. In any case, the minority would then be able to take a decision, without finding itself, because of this, isolated from the International. Such is the only valid course of action if the minority does not wish to weaken itself and to condemn itself to isolation. Such is the only course which would reinforce the position of the WP in regard to the Fourth International, and would assure it of the existence of a tendency which would direct all its forces to convince the International of the revolutionary character of the WP and of the urgent necessity to reintegrate it, despite the split of 1940, in the cadres of the Fourth International by the unification of the Trotskyist forces of the United States.

#### Conclusion

What was the principal mistake of the minority? It was to pose the problem of unification, assigning arbitrary limits to its solution, without considering the present situation of the Fourth International, without subordinating this solution to that situation, and without continually linking, with sufficient force, this solution to the elaboration of its political platform. It is this that should be well understood now, in order to continue the struggle for unification in a position more favorable to the progress of the minority.

January 18, 1946.

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## A NEW STAGE IN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

By Dave Jeffries

The decline of capitalism has posed anew for solution a whole host of the problems that had once been solved progressively by bourgeois society in the period of its rise. This can be seen most clearly when it is recalled that the most important accomplishments of progressive capitalism were the establishment of national independent states, the proclamation of basic democratic liberties and the steady expansion of the productive forces. Decaying capitalism, however, along the highway to self-destruction, must destroy the products of its own growth. It prepares to hurl society into a barbaric abyss by a wholesale destruction of the productive forces, the abolition of every democratic liberty and the enslavement of entire nations.

Only yesterday almost all the peoples of Europe were engaged in a struggle to prevent the stripping of their industries and the deportation of their labor, to regain national independence and the most elementary democratic liberties. Today, despite the partial victory of the masses, as in the Greek, North Italian and French uprisings, more than half of Europe is still faced with these problems as Number One on the political agenda.

To say that problems once solved by the bourgeoisie must be solved again is, of course, not to say that they can be solved in the same way or by the same means. In the epoch of nascent capitalism the young bourgeoisie took upon its shoulders the progressive solution of these tasks, since they were a pre-condition for its own healthy existence. Today the bourgeoisie has turned into its opposite -- in its frenzied attempt to preserve a doomed life it is itself destroying every achievement that once justified its existence and presenting humanity with new horrors that make the Spanish Inquisition and the Dark Ages look like periods of enlightened humanism.

The old tasks must be solved again -- but they can only be solved this time by the working class. The bourgeoisie today is the avowed enemy of national independence and every democratic liberty. But it is more than just a threatening opponent of these rights. By virtue of having defeated the proletariat in the first prolonged struggle for power (1917-1933) it has set civilization a good step back along the road to barbarism and has succeeded in destroying throughout much of the world those democratic rights against which it has arrayed itself. The fact that the labor movement suffered a defeat in its first decisive battle with capital means that it must take up battle now from new and weaker positions. Throughout much of the world it is faced with the problem of regaining the territory it has lost -- national independence and the other democratic rights. The struggle for these national and democratic rights lies directly along the road to social revolution, and this section of the road cannot be by-passed. That it is a longer and harder road than was faced in 1918 is the penalty the proletariat must suffer for its failure to solve the social problem in its first attempt.

But if the existence of national oppression is a penalty for the proletariat, it also offers it new and unprecedented opportunities. National oppression has the tendency of galvanizing the nethermost and least politically active layers of the masses into action

and uniting them, if the leadership is adequate, behind the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and for a socialist society. For while ordinary capitalist oppression makes life hard for the masses, national oppression added to it makes life intolerable. It poses the alternative to the broadest section of the masses, to the most reactionary petty-bourgeois and the most backward worker -- "Struggle or perish!" Imperialism thus calls up against itself the greatest mass resistance yet encountered, and if the revolutionary leadership proves capable of putting itself at the head of this resistance the socialist victory is assured.

The movement in occupied Europe showed that there is no short cut around the national and democratic problems. In each country the masses rose up with their primary aim to drive the national oppressor out and regain their necessary democratic rights. But more than this, the experience of the Resistance showed that in no case could the movement stop after solving its immediate problems, but every time proceeded forward in the direction of a decisive solution of the social question. The dual power in Europe came out of the national movement in every instance -- those who were spending their time vainly scanning the horizon for bodies labelled "soviets" missed the reality right under their noses. In Greece, especially, the masses in the national movement showed that they knew how to take up arms against their own bourgeoisie also, not to mention the not-so-democratic liberators whom so many feared the masses were helping by their national struggle against the Nazis. France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, etc., showed similar features, to different degrees. He who failed to recognize the crucial importance of the national struggle in Europe during the past period was lost on a by-road of history -- and he had no one to blame but himself if the masses did not find despite his certificate of bon fide proletarian revolutionist.

It must be clearly recognized -- the whole revolutionary potential to emerge out of World War II came from the national movement. That the potential remained no more than that was due to the fact that the Fourth International failed to put itself at the head of this movement, and under the bourgeois influence of the Socialist and Stalinist parties it could but dissipate its revolutionary energies.

But that is water under the bridge. The important thing now is to recognize the significance of the national question for the period of declining capitalism and to draw appropriate conclusions for the European struggle at the present time.

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The term "national question" is really but a convenient label for designating the whole problem of the struggle for democratic rights and complete self-determination posed by decaying capitalism. Many countries of which we may speak do not suffer from national oppression to the same degree as others, and these varying degrees of oppression can have important consequences as far as the consciousness of the masses is concerned. For instance, in Greece the anger of the masses was directed against the British only secondarily and because they supported the domestic reaction, whereas in France the direct opposite was the case -- the people's ire was directed against Vichy

because it collaborated with the invader. Therefore, although national oppression may vary in degree or form, national freedom does not exist until self-determination is complete. The struggle against the monarchy in Greece, although formally a struggle for an internal democratic demand, is as much a struggle against British imperialism as if the king were George VI. In this sense, of the entire interconnected national and democratic struggle, is our designation of the "national question" to be understood.

This article makes no attempt to deal with every facet of the national problem in Europe at the present time. It will confine itself to those two areas in which national oppression is practiced with the heaviest hand -- Germany and Eastern Europe. It goes without saying that a rule but little less severe is the lot of such countries as Italy and Greece. In the broadest sense, even such nations as France, Belgium and Holland, which for many reasons, one being the semi-victorious struggle for freedom already conducted by the masses, do not suffer direct national oppression, cannot be considered immune from the tendency which is transforming formerly independent and even imperialist nations into dependents of the giant powers. These countries are directly dependent upon Wall Street for the barest necessities essential to a minimum functioning of their economies. If Uncle Sam shakes his head Western Europe does not eat. It is as simple as that.

However, while these countries show very well the tendency of declining capitalism, they are at a different stage and cannot be the subject of this article. If Italy and Greece are not dealt with, it is, as we have said, because the severest examples of national oppression lie elsewhere. For this reason, and because so little has been said about those countries about which it is necessary to say so much, we take up the problems of Germany and Eastern Europe.

### The Problem of Germany

Foremost of all the countries of Europe suffering from acute national oppression stands Germany. The beginning of wisdom, although of a rather negative kind, has begun to dawn in our movement on this question, but it has not gone very far. The F.I. has finally gotten around to seeing that "the German proletariat -- whatever contrary hopes we may have cherished" is not, in the words of the slightly etherial E.E.C. resolution "stronger than ever in numbers, more concentrated than ever" and "the backbone of the European revolution." Having recognized that its "hopes" have not been fulfilled -- without stating that these hopes were based on nothing but empty air -- the F.I. takes leave of the German problem right where it begins.

Today the German masses still suffer the penalty for failing to prevent Fascism's rise to power. They face such utter ruin and desolation that the prospective execution of Goering and Co. at Nuremberg takes on the appearance of a mercy-killing. They are faced with the cheerful prospect of being turned into a nation of small farmers -- farmers who will not have to worry about the high price of agricultural equipment because there will not be any, nor about the low price of farm commodities because after the benevolent conquerors take their share there will be nothing left to sell. Completely at the mercy of their oppressors, without the most elementary democratic or human

rights, the German people must start at the lowest political level if they are to enter upon the long road to their political and social liberation.

This national oppression of the German people cannot fail to produce its opposite -- a national consciousness on the part of the German masses. The beginnings of this consciousness are described very well by an observer who reports the reaction to the wholesale looting of Berlin by the Russian Army in the January 1946 issue of "Politics":

"All those who had waited for the occasion to revenge themselves on the Nazis were now as if paralyzed. All Germans and foreigners were treated equally badly. The Russian idiots succeeded in a tour de force that the Nazis never were capable of: to create a sort of national solidarity among the Germans. (my emphasis--D.J.) Everybody tried to find a way out for himself. The Nazis were thus hardly bothered and succeeded in escaping. A Communist told me: "When the S.S.-men saw that everything was lost, they put on regular army uniforms -- they already had false papers. I haven't denounced them. You'll understand why."

There could be no clearer description of the way in which class antagonisms are blunted by national oppression.

With what demands must the German proletariat (and all the German masses) begin their struggle? As we have said, with the most elementary, and they are manifold. Complete freedom of the press, of trade union organization and political parties. In its present partitioned state the demand for free and unfettered municipal elections<sup>1</sup> becomes a burning "must" for Germany if the masses are to re-occupy the political arena. At the following stage the struggle for a sovereign Constituent Assembly for the entire Reich will be the key question -- for with such a struggle is tied the whole question of an end to the dismemberment of the country. In this way, in the form of the concrete struggle for simple democratic rights, will the struggle of the German masses take shape and pass over to higher levels. The Allied conquerors will be informed -- and not gently -- that they are not at all welcome and that their departure is requested. They must be told to withdraw their troops, and this means -- that which the Fourth International has not explicitly stated as yet -- Stalin's army, as well as Truman's and Attlee's. All these struggles are summed up in the slogan "National freedom for Germany!" and this is a cry that must be inscribed boldly<sup>2</sup> on the escutcheon of Trotskyism as a precondition for the emancipation of the German proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup>Elections without freedom of propaganda, like those beginning to be held, can be nothing but travesties on the real thing.

<sup>2</sup>Boldly means not timidly and in an embarrassed subdued voice, uttered in the hope that it will not be noticed, in the fashion of the manifesto of the European parties which whispers "we are for self-determination of the German people."



Let he who is worried that such a struggle may be a detour from the fight for socialism be informed: far from being a detour, it is the high road to socialism, around which there is no detour. From such a victorious national struggle (which above all means a death fight against Stalinism) the German proletariat would emerge with new vigor and confidence, as unready to subordinate themselves to their own bourgeoisie as were the masses of Greece and France after their national struggle. At any rate, it must be understood: There is no other way for the German proletariat to re-constitute itself.

The International must become the foremost partisan of this struggle from the beginning -- to hang back would be fatal. To discredit the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties will be easy in Germany of all countries if only the masses are offered a real political road to travel. The alternative to revolutionary leadership of the movement is the leadership of a neo-fascism that would not find it at all contradictory to become the champion of democratic demands when a struggle against foreign imperialism is concerned. If this were to happen, the whole outcome of the national movement would be similar to the result in France, where the French bourgeoisie was able to achieve independence of the Anglo-American imperialists through the vehicle of the Resistance movement, despite the fact that this movement constituted a danger to its own interests which had to be destroyed.

Failure to become the champion of a German national-democratic movement does not even have the excuse that such a failure had in the case of the Resistance movement against Nazism. Then the argument was advanced that it was impermissible to support these movements or to raise the slogan of national liberation because they were tied up with one side in the imperialist war (See M. Morrison's "The Central Slogan for Occupied Europe" in the February 1943 F.I.). Fallacious as this argument was (as the Greek events, above all, bear witness) even it is entirely inapplicable to such a struggle in Germany at the present time. In this situation, failure to become the champion of national liberation will reveal the ultra-left in all his nudity.

Revolutionists cannot dictate the course which the struggle must take. All they can do is inject themselves into the actual -- as opposed to the imaginary -- struggle (which in every case is the necessary one) and attempt to give it the right direction. A failure to do this means impotence for Trotskyism.

### The Struggle Against Stalin in Eastern Europe

If the "Militant" would take its eyes off the "antagonism" that is as "profound as ever" between the Soviet Union and Anglo-American imperialism for a second, it might discover that there is also a considerable "antagonism" between the Stalinist regime and the masses throughout Eastern Europe. One almost feels it necessary to proclaim this as a startling truth, for although the "Militant" has printed reams of copy in the last six months devoted to explaining all about the terrible danger to the Soviet Union stemming from Anglo-American imperialism, it is necessary to look with a high-powered microscope in order to find anything about the totalitarian oppression practiced by Stalin in Eastern Europe. But the bashfulness of the "Militant" to the contrary, this oppression exists, it is fearful, and it has its political consequences.

The Stalinist marauders have swept through the occupied countries like a swarm of locusts. The economies of nations like Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc. have been swept bare of almost every kind of industry that Stalin could make use of, and Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other beloved allies have fared little better. In Vienna, the "Red Army", not content with the seizure of such baubles as industrial equipment and the sewer pipes of the city, has made off with the very household furniture of the workers, and usually with the workers' wives as well. Large estates have been divided up to destroy the power of the landlords, the easier to rob agricultural produce from the helpless peasants. If the living standards of the Russian masses improve this year, it will be entirely at the expense of the people of Eastern Europe.

Accompanying this economic devastation is the inevitable totalitarian terror of the GPU. Political opposition is driven underground -- the only oppositional forces that have even a minimum of formal legality are those who can cling to the apron-strings of the American and British embassies. Every voice of protest by the embittered masses is labeled "Fascist" and ruthlessly suppressed. When, for example, 50,000 Rumanians seized the occasion and the cover of King Michael's birthday to stage an anti-Stalinist demonstration, the gathering was fired upon and broken up.

Prevented from expressing itself in the normal way by the totalitarian oppression, the discontent of the masses flows with crushing force into the only available channel of protest in each situation. The lid of complete totalitarian oppression over Eastern Europe is kept open a narrow gap by the wedge of Anglo-American diplomacy which Stalin cannot yet flout completely. In the elbow-room provided by this gap the conservative bourgeois parties have maintained to one degree or another the formal legality referred to previously, while prevented, of course, from exercising any real power.<sup>3</sup> It is through the channel provided by these bourgeois parties that the ever-ingenuous protest of the masses has expressed itself. The tens of thousands in Bucharest who demonstrated before the royal palace on the king's birthday can no more be considered devoted worshippers of King Michael than the hundreds of thousands of Austrian workers, with a half-century of Socialist tradition, who voted for the People's Party<sup>4</sup> can be called conservative bourgeois, or than the Budapest workers who voted in such tremendous numbers for the Small Landholders' Party can be considered peasant proprietors.

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<sup>3</sup>Where some representatives of these parties have been taken into the government, as in Rumania and Poland, they are truly "captives", and in a much more literal sense than the traditional "labor" representatives in bourgeois governments ever were.

<sup>4</sup>The only significance that the "Militant" could find in this was that it revealed the results of Stalin's policy of alienating "friends" of the Soviet Union. This reminds one of nothing so much as the protests of the liberals against American policy in Italy, China, etc., on the main ground that it will lose "friends" for the United States. This "slightly patriotic defensism" as it is called by the Spanish comrades, will certainly be appreciated by the Austrian workers.

In these countries, the so-called "progressive steps" have been frauds, and for revolutionaries not to brand them as such would be criminal. In the same way that land has been divided in order to pave the way for Stalinist seizure of agricultural produce, industry has been nationalized the better to be looted, and at the same time to destroy the power of the oppositional bourgeoisie. With industry administered by one central body and all data on production gathered together by the Quisling government, deciding just what plants to strip and carrying out the process is all the easier for Stalin's regime. Nationalization without workers' control has never benefited the exploited; in this case it strikes them a body blow by taking from them their means of livelihood for the greater benefit of the Soviet rulers.

By stripping industry in this way, Stalinist despotism strikes the greatest blow imaginable at socialism -- and this is doubly true for Germany, where the Allies and Stalin have elevated industrial destruction to a proclaimed policy. For the stripping of industry means the atomization and decimation of the proletariat as an economic class. When the worker is deprived of his industrial plant he loses not only his job and his skill, but also his class consciousness -- he becomes a lumpen element. All the hopes of revolutionary socialism ride on the ability of the industrial proletariat, concentrated in great industrial centers, to achieve sufficient consciousness and cohesion to overthrow capitalist society. In this sense, the right to be exploited in the factory becomes a basic right of the working class and a prerequisite to socialism. By destroying this right, the Stalinists, together with the Allies in Germany and all by their arrogant selves in Eastern Europe, commit the penultimate crime against socialism.

In depriving the workers of the Eastern European countries of the right to be exploited, the Russian oppression also deprives them of that other right which is the prerequisite for victorious socialism, the right of national self-determination. There is not the same almost chemically pure national oppression in the East as there is in Germany, but the difference is one of degree, not of kind. What little of democratic or national rights exists does so, as has been pointed out, by virtue of the intervention of Anglo-American imperialism, which has its own interests in these countries. The fact that the masses are forced to flock to the bourgeois parties as the only available form of protest is the clearest illustration of the barrier to socialism that national oppression is.<sup>5</sup> Here, as in Germany, there is no detour around this barrier -- it must be removed.

The Stalinist oppression will inevitably generate a great movement of resistance, which will have as one of its primary aims the restoration of democratic rights and national freedom. The Stalinist invaders will have to be expelled -- that is the precondition for

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<sup>5</sup>Notice -- it is national oppression that is the barrier, not the national struggle. Many noted dialecticians cannot detect the distinction between the barrier and that which is aimed at removing the barrier -- and which is therefore already well along the road to socialism.

progress in these countries. It is now high time that the International took up the struggle for the rights of the masses under the Stalinist yoke instead of ignoring the entire problem.

"Every 'Red Army' soldier out!" -- that is the most pressing demand that must be made, and it must be made immediately. It would not be amiss to bring this cry to the attention of the Western European workers either, as an effective method of opposing Stalinism. Many workers in Northern Italy have already been repelled from Stalinism by the stories of Russian looting in next-door Austria. It is as essential that Russian troops be told to get out of the countries they occupy as it is that the Anglo-Americans be driven off the preserves where they have no business.

"For unrestricted freedom of the press, assembly and political parties! Out with the GPU! An end to the enforced 'Fatherland Front' and other electoral combinations that stifle the aspirations of the masses!" Parliaments are a joke so long as the different parties are not permitted to oppose one another, either before the elections or after, or carry on unrestricted agitation.

"Workers democratic control of industry! An end to the stripping of factories, reparations and slave labor!" If the Stalinist looting is allowed to continue much longer these countries will suffer an economic catastrophe from which it may take decades to recover.

Here, as in Germany, these democratic demands and others are the concretization of the struggle for national freedom. In the Balkans and Germany, due principally to the inner conflict among the Allied oppressors, the lid of national oppression is not so tight as under the Nazi heel (countries like Latvia, Lithuania, etc., are of course excepted). In the countries occupied by Hitler it was almost impossible to conceive of a single democratic right of the people being granted without first expelling the Nazis. Hence the abstract slogan of national liberation became the primary demand in which were embodied all the democratic desires of the masses. In those countries occupied by Stalin and the imperialists, the situation is the reverse. Since the arena for struggle is wider, for the reasons we have adduced, the desire for national freedom is embodied in the struggle for each concrete democratic demand. Needless to say, this fact does not enjoin us from becoming the clear protagonists of the slogan which sums up all these desires of the masses; "For complete national self-determination of all nations under the Stalinist boot!"

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For those who only have eyes to see, there is no lack of encouraging signs that these political problems (and others) are receiving serious and unprejudiced consideration. For example, in the January F.I., E. R. Frank has come out with the slogan "Back to Lenin!" For our part, we are in hearty agreement. For those who think that the whole national question is but an invention of the devil, designed to taint their souls with opportunism, a drastic cure is needed. There can be no better one than that recommended in such timely fashion by Frank, to delve into the writings of Lenin -- and learn there what a malignant disease is ultra-leftism, dangerous enough for a large party, but absolutely fatal for a small one. For the present this statement

of the master revolutionary tactician should be chewed and digested:

"Only those who are incapable of thinking, or those who are entirely unfamiliar with Marxism, will conclude that, therefore, a republic is of no use, that freedom of divorce is of no use, that democracy is of no use, that self-determination is of no use! Marxists know that democracy does not abolish class oppression but only makes the class struggle clearer, broader, more open, and sharper; and that is what we want. . . the more democratic the system of government is the clearer it will be to the workers that the root of the evil is not the lack of rights but capitalism. . . 'Democracy' is nothing but the proclaiming and exercising of rights that are very little and very conventionally exercised under capitalism. . . But unless these rights are proclaimed, unless a struggle for immediate rights is waged, unless the masses are educated in the spirit of such a struggle, socialism is IMPOSSIBLE."  
(Lenin's emphasis).

Note carefully (Lenin was never one to mince words):  
". . . socialism is IMPOSSIBLE." It is no trifling phrase, and it is as true today as when Lenin wrote it.

Let us go back to Lenin in deed, and let us also learn from the experience of the European parties, who came out of the period of national struggle against the Nazis without a mass party anywhere. If we do not, scientific socialism will go down with the inevitable defeat of the labor movement, and upon ourselves alone will lie the responsibility for that "impossibility" of which Lenin speaks.

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### A CRITICISM OF THE MILITANT

By Dave Jeffries

(The following letter was submitted for publication in the "Workers' Forum" column of the "Militant" and rejected by the editors).

February 12, 1946

Dear Comrades,

It seems to me that the "Militant" is at fault in its treatment of the settlements at Ford and Chrysler and of the Meat Packers' decision to return to work.

Let us deal first with the article on the agreements in auto. Nowhere in the course of a lengthy article is there any clear condemnation of the union leaders for this shabby settlement, despite the fact

that these contracts provided for a wage increase far below the original 30% demand, and even below the figure recommended by Truman's fact-finding scholars in the GM case. Instead the article inferentially approves the agreements, by constantly emphasizing how Big Business has been forced to "yield". It even goes to the length of quoting, again with seeming approval, Reuther's statement that, despite the Ford and Chrysler agreements, the GM workers would not settle for less than the 19½% figure suggested by the government. This heroic statement came before the echos of Reuther's previous cry that he was returning to the original 30% figure had died out, and showed to what degree the Ford and Chrysler settlements have undermined the GM workers' position. Nowhere did the "Militant" article point out that these agreements were particularly unjustified in view of the fact that the union had not even attempted to use the strike weapon to win its original demand.

Comrade Birchman, dealing with the Meat Packers' return, does not handle this very significant development any more credibly. Truman's seizure of the Meat plants was in the nature of a "test case", since similar action is projected for steel and perhaps other industries. Hence the reaction of the Packers Union is important in setting the pattern for workers in other industries. When Clark orders the union members to return on the mere promise that whatever increase the fact-finding board decides on will be retroactive to the date of return, he is taking a big step towards tying the labor movement to the chariot of semi-arbitration and neo-wage-freezing represented by Truman's fact-finders. What if the "fact-finders'" decision is not satisfactory (and it isn't)? Will the miserable increase be retroactive if the union decides not to accept it? To pose these questions is to show how the return to work under these conditions already exerts a compulsion on the union to accept whatever increase is offered. If despite this compulsion, the union rejects the offer and decides to walk out again, it will simply mean that the workers have slaved for a few more weeks at the old rate. Their morale will be considerably lower for a resumption of the struggle.

All these considerations might have been over-ridden if the relation of forces had been unfavorable to the union, but this was not the case. A small group of isolated tug-boat workers in a reactionary craft-union have shown that it is possible to defy government seizure despite the crucial nature of their occupation. Circumstances were far more favorable for the Meat Packers. They had the potential support of over a million other CIO workers out on strike concurrently, who faced the same threat of ultimate government seizure. The government, despite the use of naval personnel, has not found it possible to recruit a mere handful of workers to handle the struck tug-boats; certainly it would have found it impossible to find 200,000 scabs in order to operate the slaughter-houses.

None of these points is made in Comrade Birchman's article. Instead he also inferentially approves of the return to work by quoting without any criticism the statements made by Clark. Where Birchman does not want to take responsibility himself for the step, he practices a shame-faced evasion by writing that the union returned to work after receiving "what it (my emphasis) considered sufficient assurance that the government would institute wage increases," Who

does "it" mean? The union bureaucrats? The workers? Or are they perhaps equated? And what does Birchman think of the whole proposition? Such diplomacy may be proper in "PM" and the "New Republic", but it is not at home in a revolutionary newspaper.

It is of course understood that even in the best-conducted struggles the unions cannot expect to win their full demands without compromising. But here it is not a question either of a decisive victory overshadowing a few concessions or of a poor settlement forced upon the workers after an exhausting struggle has left them in an unfavorable position. The auto and meatpacking leaders simply made a shameful and unnecessary retreat.

Neither do I desire to put the main emphasis upon the desirability of negative criticism. This is necessary, but only to pave the way for the positive lessons that we want to drive home to the workers as a result of their strike experiences. The main purpose of a revolutionary paper is to raise the level of consciousness of those workers that it reaches. For this there has been material galore,

The article on auto, for instance, could have gone into the question of why the UAW leaders abandoned the demand to "open the books". In writing on the meat strike, Comrade Birchman should at least have pointed out the necessity of the workers in all industries uniting their struggles in a General Strike Committee and counterposing their own political power (a Labor Party) to that of the government. The important thing is not to let the workers think even for a second that their struggle, as conducted by the union leadership, is in safe hands. It isn't! As long as the fight remains on the narrow trade-union level it is doomed, no matter whether the wage increase won is 15% or 30%. This is becoming increasingly easy to demonstrate, if only by pointing to the huge price increases Big Business is receiving in compensation for the wage raises being granted.

Today, as a result of many political and economic factors, the workers are permeated by a great self-confidence and will-to-fight. If in this period they can be lulled into believing that they have won a satisfactory victory by the gain of a few cents an hour when much greater things are within their grasp, then Big Business will have won the day.

The "Militant" must become the conscience of the labor movement. If labor has won a victory (and in auto and meat it has not), revolutionists must say "Yes, today we have won a victory, but tomorrow unless we go to higher levels, we will lose the fruits". If the workers have been hoodwinked into a retreat, then the "Militant" must say "Yes, we have retreated, but if it had not been for thus-and-so, if we had followed the other path, we could have won." In other words, our paper must act always as a stimulant and never (no matter how slightly) as a sedative. If it does this it will fulfill its obligations as the paper of the American working class.

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LETTER TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE

By Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow

To the Delegates:

Dear Comrades:

We hope that our representative will have arrived in time to take part in your deliberations. In any event, however, we want you to have before you in writing our answer to the ES resolution of January 1946 on SWP-WP unity.

First of all it is astonishing to note that the ES resolution, without any attempt to answer the arguments of the various sections in favor of unity, merely proclaims in Olympian fashion its solidarity with the SWP Plenum resolution which evaded answering the question of unity. If the ES represented the unanimous or well-nigh unanimous sentiment of the International it might be justified in passing over the arguments of those who favor unity. But we do not know of a single section which has adopted the same position as the SWP, much less a single section which has decided against unity. On the other hand, in addition to the voluminous writings of the SWP minority there are the pro-unity resolutions of the RCP of Britain, the RSP of Ireland, the Spanish Group in Mexico, the letter of Comrade N., the letter of the National Secretary of the POC of Italy, the well-known pro-unity views of the leadership of the BLP of India. In the face of this situation the ES was obligated to indicate at least briefly its answers to the arguments of those who favor unity, but instead it has simply taken sides in a resolution of four short paragraphs.

The ES resolution is absurdly in error when it states that the differences between the SWP and the WP "can very well be considered as programmatic differences." Only the Russian question can at all justly be termed a programmatic difference. But in any event the readiness of the ES to so characterize the differences indicates that it presumably knows quite well what the differences are. But then it goes on to repeat the SWP Plenum resolution's formula that the two parties must go through "a deepgoing discussion on their respective concrete conceptions of the actual national and international policy" etc., before it can be decided if unity is possible. To any thinking person it should be obvious that there is a crying contradiction between (1) the ES statements indicating it knows what the differences are and (2) the ES statement that the question of unity cannot be decided until after a "deepgoing discussion" of the differences. What has happened is that in adopting Comrade Cannon's line on unity, the ES has had to adopt this absurd contradiction as part of it.

We remind you that when we first introduced our resolution for unity and proposed to send a negotiating committee to discuss unity with the WP, Comrade Cannon answered: "We don't need to send a committee to meet them in order to find the answer to these questions. . . . As to their policy in general and their attitude toward us in particular, we don't need to inquire about that either. It is clearly revealed in their press for anyone who is interested to read." Our answer



to Comrade Cannon was that we were not proposing to discuss theoretical, political, tactical questions with the WP since we could favor unity precisely because we, like everyone in the leading cadres of the Fourth, already knew the position of the WP on these questions. But it was necessary then to determine whether the WP would accept unity and subordinate itself to the majority in the united party. Once the WP did so -- as it did -- there was no further need for discussion with the WP before taking a position on unity.

The first attitude of the majority leaders was, then, opposition to unity precisely on the basis of their knowledge of the WP. At that point they rightly took the position that any leader of a party should take, namely, that he has been following the press of the WP and knows its position on various questions and can determine his attitude to the WP on the basis of this knowledge.

But at the October Plenum the majority made a sudden, unexplained shift. From knowing everything about the WP and therefore not seeing any use in discussion, the majority switched to asserting that the unity question could only be answered "after the most thoroughgoing discussion and probing of all differences to the bottom." We of the minority branded this shift as a fraud designed to prevent unity; a fraud necessitated by the fact that the majority leaders could not openly admit that their opposition to unity flows from their unwillingness to unite with Trotskyists who have differences with them. Wittingly or not, the ES has become a party to this fraud by its endorsement of the SWP Plenum resolution which perpetrated it.

Four months have now passed since the October Plenum. What has the majority done about "probing all differences to the bottom"? It has held no meetings with the WP leaders nor written any letters to the WP to organize the discussion. Precisely in opposition to the idea of organizing the discussion jointly with the WP, the Political Committee at its October 16 meeting adopted the following motion of Comrade Cannon: "Implementation of Plenum resolution. That we begin the discussion by a series of articles in the magazine outlining our position on all the questions in dispute between us and the WP, together with our criticism of their position on the points of difference." This motion has remained a dead letter. Not a single article has appeared in the magazine which could conceivably be described as "probing the differences to the bottom." All you will find in Fourth International are two or three sideswipes at the WP at the tail end of some editorial. And these, both in letter and spirit, violate the majority's pretense that it is still weighing the question of unity; they speak of the WP in terms applicable only to an enemy and anti-Trotskyist party. In short, there has been no discussion of the differences between the WP and the SWP.

Despite our disagreement with the whole concept of a discussion of the differences prior to a decision in favor of unity, we were ready to abide by the majority decision if the discussion should actually take place. Hence, as against Comrade Cannon's motion of October 16, we really sought to implement the Plenum resolution, by the following counter-motions at that same Political Committee meeting:

1. That the Political Committee prepare a list of the questions to be discussed and the order in which they were to be dealt with in the magazine. Without such a plan of work, obviously the so-called "probing" might drag on endlessly. But the Political Committee voted down our motion for such a plan of work.

2. The Plenum had voted down our proposal for a joint discussion bulletin with the WP. The majority said it would write in Fourth International and the WP could answer in the New International. However, it was obvious that not one SWP member in ten would see the articles in the New International. We therefore made a motion that the Political Committee make available to SWP members through party channels those issues of New International containing replies to the SWP articles. This motion too the Political Committee voted down.

3. The Plenum had rejected our proposal for joint SWP-WP membership meetings as part of the discussion. We therefore proposed an alternative: that as each subject is scheduled for "probing" we invite a representative of the WP to address our membership on it, and vice-versa. This motion too the Political Committee voted down.

4. A large part of the majority argument for its Plenum decision had been based on the alleged non-Bolshevik ideas of the WP on the organization question. We therefore made a motion to publish in the Internal Bulletin the principal organizational documents of the WP referred to in the majority arguments. This motion too the Political Committee voted down.

This left the ostensibly projected discussion between the parties without any joint arrangements for the discussion, without a list of questions to be discussed, without a schedule of the order in which they were to be discussed, without putting into the hands of the SWP membership materials indispensable to the discussion. So what was left of the discussion? Nothing.

Had the majority leaders openly opposed unity, we could have had an honest and profitable discussion which would have served to educate the whole movement. Had the majority leaders undertaken in good faith a discussion with the WP, it could have served to educate the movement. The majority, however, did neither of these things, so that it became impossible either to discuss the merits of unity or the differences with the WP.

This impasse compelled us to the decision to leave the party unless in the coming weeks we can see any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on the part of the majority toward resuming unity negotiations. We communicated this decision to the majority in a letter dated January 26, a copy of which we enclose.

Since then we have received the ES resolution and have been informed by the majority leaders that they accept "the specific recommendations" of that resolution. We have given careful consideration to the one aspect in which the ES resolution does appear to differ from the SWP Plenum resolution. The latter, as we have already explained, rejected all our proposals for approaching the WP to organize the discussion -- joint discussion, joint discussion bulletins, joint membership meetings, etc. On the other hand the ES resolution recommends

to the SWP "that it elaborate jointly with the WP leadership a programme of questions to discuss; that it organize and pursue this discussion in order to make clear just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations."

We take it that the ES means that the SWP and WP leadership jointly prepare the questions to discuss, jointly organize jointly pursue the discussion. If so, the ES is now proposing essentially the same types of joint agreements for expediting the discussion that we proposed four months ago.

If the SWP majority leaders were to agree to such a plan of work, we would consider it a step toward unity. For we are confident that any real discussion of the differences between the two parties would only serve to demonstrate the correctness of unity. On one decisive condition: that the SWP majority leadership, in its meetings and arrangements with the WP, show serious signs of a desire to "organize and pursue this discussion." In a word, that the SWP majority does not merely send a representative to go through the formal motions of negotiating for a joint list of the questions to be discussed. The distinction between sending a negotiator and actually negotiating such a list is a very familiar one to all of us, and we are sure that there will be no difference of opinion between most of you and ourselves concerning whether or not the SWP majority is actually negotiating or not.

We shall therefore await the results of the negotiations between the SWP and the WP for organizing the discussion. If, however, the SWP majority leaders fail actually to carry out the ES resolution's proposal that the SWP leadership "elaborate jointly with the WP leadership" the questions to be discussed, we shall carry out our decision to leave the party and join the WP.

We know that the WP, which favors unity, will make every effort to expedite the discussion. It cannot succeed in doing so, however, unless the SWP majority leaders make clear, as they have not yet done, what they mean by the formulas of their Plenum resolution, particularly:

1. "Probing the differences to the bottom." Does this mean that there are differences or aspects of differences which are unclear to them? In that case they must specify what is clear to them and what is not. For example on the Russian question: what is it they do not know about the WP position? Merely to put down on a piece of paper, "The Russian Question," may seem to be literally complying with the ES proposal to prepare a list of questions to be discussed, but obviously serves no serious purpose of clarification.

2. "Programmatic agreement. . . It is clear that such a basis for unification does not exist in the present instance." Does this mean that there can be no unity unless during the discussion the WP abandons one or more of its so-called programmatic differences? In that case there is no point to discussing at all, since everyone knows the WP will maintain its political positions. But if the SWP majority does not require the WP to abandon any of its political positions as a precondition for unity, then they should be ready to state in advance

that the political differences are compatible with membership in one party. The political differences would still have to be discussed but only to educate the membership after a decision for unity. The discussion preceding a decision on unity should, in all logic, be limited to the only questions which remain relevant to unity, namely the specific organizational guarantees demanded by the SWP majority to assure the unity of the united party. Until the SWP majority leaders answer the question whether the political differences are compatible with membership in one party, and until they answer it in the affirmative, it is pointless to ask the WP leaders for organizational guarantees that they will abide by party discipline.

We hope that the SWP majority leaders, in formally accepting the ES proposal for organizing the discussion jointly with the WP, will employ it for actually proceeding to a reconsideration of their previous course. Their past conduct permits us no optimism in this question, but we are ready to exhaust every last possibility for unity.

We ask you to give to the arguments for unity the consideration which the ES, if we are to judge from its resolution, did not give. Your decision in this instance will inevitably constitute a major precedent for the future. On every continent today the question of uniting Trotskyist groups into a single section in one country is posed. As we have stated in our previous letters, we do not ask you to order the SWP to unite with the WP. It would not be desirable to force unity. Without wholehearted acceptance by a majority of the party membership, the unity would not be long-lasting. What we ask is that you recommend and urge unity. Such an expression of the public opinion of the International may go far to open the eyes of the best elements who have blindly accepted the SWP Plenum resolution.

With our warmest comradely greetings,

Albert Goldman  
Felix Morrow  
For the SWP Minority

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IT IS TIME TO GROW UP

The Infantile Sickness of the European Secretariat

By Felix Morrow

The "Reply to Comrade Morrow by the European Secretariat of the Fourth International" (March 1946 Fourth International) is only a small chip from the workshop of its authors. Its full implications will not be readily apparent to readers until they study the two main recent products of its political line: the European Secretariat's "Report for an International Discussion" and the "Majority Report on the Political Situation" to the French party congress. After they are published here, I shall attempt a comprehensive analysis. Here I can only as yet deal with the "Reply".

The appearance of the latest documents confirms many times over, alas, the fears I expressed last year concerning the disorientation of the French majority and the European Secretariat. In the intervening year I was led to hope, by letters from Comrade Patrice, Secretary of the European Secretariat, that the comrades were re-orienting themselves; as late as a letter of October 27, 1945 -- long after receipt of my letter of July 10, 1945 to which the "Reply" is an answer -- he was still assuring me that the European Secretariat and the SWP minority were in "75 percent agreement" and that the European Secretariat was in "100 percent disagreement" with the SWP majority. Now, however, it turns out that the European Secretariat is 100 percent in disagreement with the SWP minority and 100 percent in agreement with the SWP majority.

I think that, basically, the present line-up is not the result of maneuvers, though maneuvers have played their part, but accurately represents the difference in tendencies in the world Trotskyist movement. The previous opinions of the European Secretariat concerning the majority and minority in the SWP were the results of a misunderstanding. Traces of this misunderstanding still remain in its "Reply." Thus it writes: "In our opinion the chief merit of the American minority lay in its drawing attention to the importance of democratic slogans." But in the very next sentences it shows that it has not the faintest understanding of the importance of democratic slogans. Much more consistent has been the attitude of its present ally, the SWP majority, which has never conceded to the minority this "chief merit" or any other merit. Another remaining trace of past misunderstandings is the statement in the "Reply" that the SWP majority "has at times distorted the reality of the European situation." The SWP majority can with justice claim that in endorsing the latest documents of the European Secretariat it remains essentially true to the line which it has followed since the October 1943 Plenum. No, the European Secretariat and the SWP majority belong on the same side in the great cleavage of political lines which is developing in the Fourth International.

This is not to say that the French majority and the SWP majority are political groupings of the same type. On another occasion I shall explain in detail how different are their physiognomies and why they must eventually part company. For the moment it is enough to

point out that the European Secretariat is sectarian in theory and in practice. Whereas the SWP majority is sectarian in its propaganda about the rest of the world and especially for Europe but in actual practice in the United States scarcely rises above the level of trade unionism.

The first thing to call attention to in the "Reply" is that it fails to answer most of the points of criticism contained in the letters to which it states it is an answer. One, my "Letter to All the Sections of the Fourth International" of November 15, 1945, it does not answer at all. Of the other, my letter to the European Secretariat of July 10, 1945, it answers arbitrarily what it chooses. One has the right to expect that a "Reply" will reply. It is high time to call a halt to such polemics which do not come to grips with the opponent. Otherwise the discussion in the Fourth International will educate nobody.

Below are listed some 12 points raised in my letter of July 10, 1945 and entirely ignored by the "Reply." I repeat them not merely to indicate the character of the "Reply" but in the hope of eliciting an answer to these very important issues.

1. The European Secretariat declared that "the large scale use of the Red Army as a counter-revolutionary force is excluded." This was a mistake, was it not? Where are the theoretical roots of this error?

2. The European Secretariat said the Soviet bureaucracy will be unable "to control the revolutionary movements which the occupation and even the approach of the Red Army will unfurl in the countries of Central and Western Europe." I made the same error earlier but began to correct it at the October 1943 Plenum. One source of this error, as I explained in my letter of November 15, 1945, was our erroneous perspective that the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided in the war -- either regeneration or capitalism; another source was our mistaken idea, derived from the 1939-40 events in Poland, that Red Army occupation and nationalization of industry necessarily requires a rising of the masses in the occupied countries. This certainly didn't happen in Eastern Europe. Even more certainly it didn't get out of the control of the Soviet bureaucracy.

3. I wrote: "We are not repeating 1917-1923. We are in a far more backward situation. At that time the October revolution made all the difference. . . It meant that under the inspiration of the example of the Russian Bolshevik Party, there could be established very quickly although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc. Now, however, we cannot expect such a process." Correct or not?

4. I wrote: "I am positive that in Italy, where the Socialist party disposes of considerable masses, our comrades should never have formed a party but should have gone into (in the case of most of them it would have simply meant, I believe, to remain in) the Socialist party." Correct or not?

5. I wrote: "I am also positive that it would be a terrible

error if our German comrades attempted immediately to form a party of their own in Germany; their place is in the Socialist party." Correct or not?

6. I wrote: "In Belgium, the Labor Party is still the party of the masses. I am sure that in the rosy hue of the days of liberation, our Belgian comrades could have gotten in and established themselves as a faction, with their own paper, etc." Correct or not?

7. I wrote: "I would like to know why the Belgian party's program of action was silent on the monarchy." No answer.

8. I wrote: "The European Secretariat's theses went on at great length about Italy but neither there nor in the resolution is there any reference to the demand for a democratic republic." Why?

9. I wrote: "But even the democratic demands which you do mention, you do so in such a way that I cannot help but consider perfunctory. For example, you mention the demand for the constituent assembly but hasten to add: 'On the other hand, to launch such demands in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, when there are actually in existence elements of dual power, would be the most unpardonable of errors.'"

10. I wrote: "In another paragraph you say 'that in the present period the economic and democratic 'minimum' program is very rapidly out-distanced by the very logic of the mass struggle itself.' I will venture a prediction, dear comrades: that the 'minimum' program will not be outdistanced in France until you have won the status of a legal party and La Verite is a legal newspaper." Was I right or wrong?

11. My letter dealt at some length with ways and means of fighting for legality. "Neither from La Verite or other sources do I get an impression that the French party is making a really systematic fight for legality," I wrote (July 1945). The "Reply" says not a word.

12. "Instead of continuing, let me refer you to the Program of Action of 1934 for France, practically all of which is apropos today." Is it apropos, yes or no? No answer.

Had the European Secretariat replied to these criticisms and questions, the issues would have been greatly clarified. Let us take but one of them -- No. 11 -- and see what the "Reply" failed to tell.

### The Struggle for Legality in France

In words, sectarian propaganda appears to be an impatient eagerness to push forward to revolutionary struggle; in actual practice, it invariably leads to passivity in which radical talk is a substitute for serious action. This is the charge made against the European Secretariat by the minority of the Central Committee of the French party and proved to the hilt, as comrades will see for themselves when the French minority theses are published.

The terrible tragedy in France, as in most other European countries, is that the older Trotskyist cadres were destroyed in large part

during the war. The Gestapo caught up with Marcel Hic and his associates in the leadership in France in October 1943. The substitute leadership was composed of young inexperienced comrades and emigres isolated from French life. Physically courageous, it played safe politically, retreating into abstentionism and abstract propaganda. It abandoned the previous leadership's policy of integration into the national resistance movement and isolated itself from the rising of the masses. And it insisted on staying underground when the Allied armies arrived.

Mistakes are inevitable in the movement, and especially in the terrible conditions in Europe; what I condemn the European Secretariat for is its evading facing up to its errors, as in its failure to answer me on the question of the struggle for legality. In France, where the facts are well-known, it has to say something in answer, but its answer is less than altogether honest. In the French majority theses it says: "It is beyond doubt that the leadership didn't know how to move rapidly to the question of the legalisation and the building of a press, but this is a matter of tactical faults of a sectarian character and not of political errors flowing from an erroneous political orientation."

This Pickwickian distinction between tactical faults and erroneous political orientation may seem plausible until one learns the actual facts. The European Secretariat, on the eve of the arrival of the Allies, expected a speedy development of the organs of dual power -- factory committees, worker-militias, etc. When instead things went the other way, it took the position that, fascism being near, it is useless and even dangerous to try to emerge out of illegality; the period of bourgeois democracy being of very short duration, to utilize all the legal possibilities of expression would only be a waste of time. Not until nine months after liberation, after the French minority leaders -- who are the public leaders of the party because of their moral authority -- returned from the concentration camps, in May 1945, not until then was a turn toward legality made.

Those who will recall the SWP minority's struggle against the theory of the impossibility of bourgeois democracy in Europe will now perhaps realize the tremendous practical significance of that issue. But the European Secretariat learns nothing from its past mistakes and hence adds new ones. To these we shall now turn.

#### The Nature of this Period

"More and more" the European Secretariat says it has come to realize that the difference between us is not limited to the question of the tempo of events -- on which it concedes we were right -- but to "the nature of the period into which we have entered." As to the European Secretariat's own conception of the nature of the period, its "Reply" apparently explains it: "What is actually involved today is the prelude to a lengthy revolutionary period. . ." etc. etc. But as to what it thinks the SWP minority stands for concerning the nature of the period, the ES doesn't tell, so that its fears about us remain nameless on this question.

I shall therefore make one more effort (without any illusions



matter of profiting from the profound but confused revolutionary aspirations of the masses in order to call into question -- on the electoral terrain which remains for the moment the only terrain on which the masses understand these problems -- all the fundamental bases of the bourgeois state and private property." (L'Avant-Garde, December 1945).

The European Secretariat and the SWP majority, in denying or evading this decisive fact about the present "prelude" in Europe, are thereby launched on sectarian policy which is wreaking havoc in the International. The masses want socialism, they say, pointing to the dominance of the Communist and Socialist parties. They leave out the detail that today, disoriented and worn out by the terrible ordeals since 1939, the masses hope to get their socialism through parliamentarism.

### The Importance of Democratic Demands

Once one understands the attitude of the west European masses toward parliamentarism, it becomes possible to understand the extraordinary importance today of democratic demands. But only then. If one does not understand that the masses want a parliament which will be absolutely free to do the bidding of the masses, it is impossible to understand the profound depth of the desire of the masses to rid themselves of the kings who directly or potentially bridle parliament. It is impossible then to understand that great masses can be brought out of the factories into the streets, into mass demonstrations, into general strikes, into insurrections, under the slogan of the republic in Belgium, Italy and Greece. It is impossible then to understand that the workers' militias and committees of action may well arise in Italy this Spring in answer to a reactionary attempt to postpone the convening of the Constituent Assembly.

Under the pressure of the French minority which understands this question, the French majority has been compelled to attempt to link its political slogans to the masses' support of the Constituent Assembly. It has therefore advanced as one of its principal slogans the call for Committees of Defense of the Constituent Assembly. Under actual French conditions the slogan is not a little absurd since nobody is assaulting the Constituent at this stage; nevertheless the slogan is an implicit admission of the real situation today,

But that the slogan is advanced without any comprehension is clear when its authors, in the "Reply" of the European Secretariat, write:

"Comrade Morrow who counsels us in his letter of July 10 1945: 'not to be afraid of making La Verite appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than 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."

that many more will not have to be made) to explain that our differences concern not the lengthy revolutionary period ahead but the present "prelude."

There is no difference between us as to the economic and other objective factors in this "prelude." The difference is concerning the state of political consciousness of the proletariat.

On this question there is a clear-cut difference between the Belgian, Dutch, Italian, British parties and the French and American minorities on one side, and on the other the SWP majority, the French majority and the European Secretariat.

The SWP majority has denied again and again that there has been a revival of democratic illusions in Western Europe. Less categorical because too close to the scene, the European Secretariat has at times evaded the question, at others stated that at any given moment whatever democratic illusions there are will disappear. Thus for example in one and the same breath in its January 1945 theses it accepted the slogan of constituent assembly but warned that it would be the most unpardonable of errors to use the slogan "in the midst of a revolutionary crisis" -- a warning presumably necessary because such a revolutionary crisis could arise before the next year's theses.

There is certainly a possibility of a crisis soon which might well be termed revolutionary. Before this winter is over there may well be profound political crises in France and Italy over the lack of food. The European Secretariat is wrong, however, in thinking that such crises will do away with the slogan of the constituent assembly or the republic, etc.

If there is a struggle in France this winter against the policy of the present Constituent Assembly, and if this struggle rises to a high-enough political plane, it will be in the name of a more radical Constituent Assembly. For (as the French minority says) the French masses today accept parliamentarism more than they did 25 years ago. For a whole period -- the "prelude" -- the struggle of the European proletariat is destined to remain within the framework of parliamentary democracy, even though the masses are already demanding of that parliament essentially socialist tasks such as nationalization of industry. Our task is to shorten that "prelude" by arousing the masses to demand everything from the parliament.

As our Belgian comrades write:

"Correctly understood, the basis of the problem is simple. In the face of the general crisis of the bourgeois regime, large working masses and petty-bourgeois aspire to profound political and social transformations. But at the same time, the regime of Nazi occupation in Europe, and the long years of open dictatorship have developed again in the masses a powerful current in favor of parliamentarism. It is a case of having the masses make again their own experience with the treacherous character of parliamentary democracy. But at the same time it is a

Why should I be astonished? My letter gave, immediately after the sentence about fighting for nothing more than real democracy, two examples of what I meant:

(1) "Call upon the workers' organizations to inspire the workers to rally to the polls in the elections, by an agreement among the workers' organizations that they will elect a workers' representative as Provisional President of France." What was this but the best way of raising the slogan of a CP-SP-CGT government, best because it was on the plane on which the workers would see it as realizable today, i.e., on the parliamentary plane. I was trying to end the incomprehension of La Verite which was then raising the slogan of a CP-SP-CGT government without linking it to the elections for the Constituent.

(2) "Take up the resistance's perfunctory demand for democratization of the army, and really explain its profound necessity, the lesson in this connection of Petainism, gather together all the horror tales about Petainists still leading the army, royalists, etc. etc. Explain the urgent need for political meetings of the soldiers, their need to protect themselves by having delegates. Give it a legal handle, by urging that the workers' delegates in the coming Assembly include it in the new constitution."

Soldiers' delegates, political meetings of the soldiers -- isn't this, though still nothing more than real democracy, at least as radical as the sliding scale of wages? Isn't the European Secretariat a little less than conscientious when it quotes to horrify the inexperienced comrades the sentence about fighting for nothing more than real democracy but fails to admit that the content I put into fighting for democracy is at least as radical as any of its own slogans?

And finally, the "Reply" crushes me and my preoccupation with democratic demands by telling me the French party has gained by demanding independence for Indo-China. I rub my eyes and read it again. Don't the comrades of the European Secretariat, not the oldest comrades in the movement but still, don't they know that the demand for independence of Indo-China is a classical example of a democratic demand?

They have not taken up my proposal to demand that the new French constitution provide for election of soldiers' delegates. They have not made, indeed, a single proposal of any kind for inclusion in the constitution. All France, first of all the proletariat, has its eyes fixed on the Constituent Assembly, which they look upon as their own because it has a workers' majority, and the business of the Constituent is to draw up a constitution. But the one party in France which has not presented a draft of a constitution to the masses is our French party. Isn't that one fact enough to show the political bankruptcy of the French majority (European Secretariat)?

### Democratic Demands ARE Transitional

A monumental blunder has taken root in the movement, repeated so often by the SWP majority that it has been absorbed by the all-too-willing European Secretariat: that democratic demands are less radical than "transitional demands." Thus the "Reply" says:

"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. . . .

". . . slogans of a transitional character touch the masses. . . even more directly and contribute to their mobilization still more definitively than do the 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. . . ."

It would be impossible to dig the European Secretariat out of this swamp of its own making in short order. Here one can only indicate a few points:

1. Vital democratic slogans, i.e., those imperative for revolutionists to advance, are themselves transitional slogans. Not all transitional slogans are democratic ones, but all correct democratic slogans become transitional ones. The Transitional Program of 1938 says this plainly: "Insofar as the old, partial 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism -- and this occurs at each step -- the Fourth International advances a system of transitional demands, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime." The most that one can say, therefore, is that some transitional slogans are in their implications more destructive of capitalism than some other transitional slogans. But this division is not one between democratic slogans on the one hand and the rest on the other. Democratization of the army would at the least be no less destructive of capitalism than the sliding scale of hours. Independence of the colonies would at the least be no less destructive of capitalism than the unfreezing of wages.

2. Even more important, the radical consequences of a slogan are not to be derived from its logical implications but from (a) its effect on the bourgeois state and (b) the extent to which it mobilizes the masses for struggle against the bourgeoisie. Abstractly abolition of the monarchy is compatible with the bourgeois state. Actually, in

Belgium, Greece and Italy proclamation of the republic would immediately shake the bourgeois state to its foundations, and create the most favorable opportunity for proletarian revolution. That is why, for example, Trotsky was so sure as late as January 1931 that the Spanish bourgeoisie would never permit the abolition of the monarchy but would prefer to hold on to it until both together were overthrown by the socialist revolution. Two months later, however, the monarchy was overthrown. Trotsky's error in calculation was nevertheless not a great one: it is an indubitable fact that the overthrow of the Spanish monarchy left the state power literally lying in the streets. The same thing would happen with the end of the monarchy now in Belgium, Greece or Italy.

3. Less than accurate is the claim of successes in Europe "above all thanks to the struggle conducted by them for these slogans" other than democratic ones. The Belgian party itself testifies that its greatest successes came from the slogan of the republic, and its entire attitude to democratic slogans, now embodied in a thesis which deserves speedy publication here, is completely in agreement with the SWP minority. The same is true of the Italian party. In Holland, the principal slogans of De Rode October (viz. the January 1946 Fourth International) have been the democratic slogans of independence for Indonesia, immediate elections and against annexation of German territory. In France, despite the false policy of the leadership, the party finally began to revive only thanks to the struggle for legality, the demand for the Constituent and participation in the elections; above I have already indicated the democratic character of the French party's own slogans.

4. The accusation that we of the minority advance democratic slogans at the expense of other slogans is an artificial one, invented by the SWP majority to cover up the glaring fact that this dispute began because they failed to advance any democratic slogans. We of the minority in no way counterpose democratic slogans to other slogans. We advance those slogans which are necessary, in whatever combination of democratic and other slogans which is indicated. That's all there is to this question.

### Democracy and Socialism

At bottom, however, there is nothing artificial about this dispute. The European Secretariat and the SWP majority do not understand that Marxism has always insisted that the struggle for socialism is the struggle for democracy. They do not understand a point especially emphasized by our Italian comrades -- in the first program of the new party, which they wrote in the Isoli isolator -- that we must never permit the reformists to appear as better defenders of democracy than we. This point is especially important today.

In 1917-1923 the European proletariat had seen with its own eyes the way in which the proletarian revolution had been prevented by bourgeois democracy. But today nobody can seriously say that bourgeois democracy has prevented the imminent proletarian revolution in the sense of 1917-1923. On the contrary -- as the Belgian party says very well -- whereas in 1917-1923 bourgeois democracy was imposed by the bourgeoisie on the proletariat which was fighting for sovietisation, today bourgeois democracy has been imposed by the proletariat on

the bourgeoisie which seeks dictatorship. Under these real, existing conditions, more than ever before the struggle for socialism must take the form of the struggle for more democracy, for real democracy.

But isn't this democratic charlatanism? It would be easy enough for comrades to continue the game of that ardent supporter of the SWP majority, Pierre Frank (January 1946 Fourth International), who finds a quotation in which Trotsky condemns as democratic charlatanism any mixing of the forms of bourgeois power with the forms of proletarian power. Frank has the effrontery to use the quotation to condemn the slogan of the republic which Trotsky himself advocated before and after the quotation.

Real democracy is unattainable under capitalism. Precisely for that reason we ask the workers to fight for it. If Frank's charges were true that "the republic" impermissibly blurs the line between bourgeois and proletarian state power, it is even more true of what Trotsky wrote in the Program of Action for France:

" . . . we demand from our class brothers who adhere to 'democratic' socialism that they be faithful to their ideas, that they draw inspiration from the ideas and methods, not of the Third Republic, but of the Convention of 1793.

" . . . Deputies would be elected on the basis of local assemblies, constantly revocable by their constituents, and would receive the salary of a skilled worker.

"This is the only measure that would lead the masses forward instead of pushing them backward. A more generous democracy would facilitate the struggle for workers' power." (October 1942 Fourth International, p. 318).

Deputies elected by local assemblies, recalled at will, receiving wages of a skilled worker -- these provisions are very familiar to us, for they are those we propose for soviets. Yet Trotsky advanced them for a bourgeois Assembly. He did so precisely in order to teach reformist workers what they need so that, when they find it impossible to attain within bourgeois democracy, they will seek workers' democracy.

#### The Relation of Objective and Subjective Factors

The "Reply" concentrates mainly on this question, finding it unnecessary to answer most of my points because "Morrow's manner of conceiving the relationship between the objective and subjective premises of the revolution renders spurious, in our opinion, his criticism as a whole."

I said the "Reply" concentrates mainly on this question. More accurately, it devotes its space to a yard of quotations from Lenin. Please note that the quotations are from 1915 and 1916. They have nothing to do with the relationship between the objective and subjective premises of the revolution, for the good and sufficient reason

that the subjective premises for revolution didn't exist in 1915 and 1916: the masses were still submerged in chauvinism. What Lenin was saying was then something very new in the world, namely that the world war had created "the objective conditions for the revolution," i.e., that with 1914 the world entered the epoch of wars and revolutions. Perhaps our clearest expression for this -- it is in the Transitional Program -- is that the objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have matured. But Lenin was saying something very new, and new things are not immediately said in the best and most precise way. In the quotations in the "Reply" and much of Lenin's other work of that period he seemed to be insisting that war and its consequences "lead up to a revolution of the proletariat." Even more crassly, Zinoviev wrote that war "leads necessarily to civil war, it cannot mean anything else except civil war." As we all know, however, revolution did not follow the war in most countries, not to speak of successful revolution. The question was so troubling to the minds of many Communists that, at the third Congress of the Comintern (and elsewhere) Lenin and Trotsky were compelled to explain. Trotsky restated more precisely the essential meaning of the previous formulations:

"When we spoke of the revolution resulting from the World War, it meant that we were and are striving to utilize the consequences of the World War in order to speed the revolution in every way possible." (p. 179).

And he also made clear the source of the original error:

"In 1918-19 it seemed to us (and there was some historical justification for it) that in the period when the bourgeoisie was disorganized this assault could mount in ever-rising waves, that in this process the consciousness of the leading layers of the working class would become clarified, and that in this way the proletariat would attain state power in the course of one or two years. . . . But the revolution is not so docile, nor so domesticated as to be led on a leash, as we once imagined. . . .

". . . . Class maneuvering was far from always skillful on our part. The reason for it is twofold: In the first place, the weakness of the Communist parties, which arose only after the war, which lacked the necessary experience and the necessary apparatus, which were without sufficient influence and -- what is the most important -- didn't know how to pay sufficient attention to the working masses." (First Five Years of the Comintern, pp. 219 - 21).

Presumably the Fourth International stands or should stand on the shoulders of Lenin and Trotsky. Their mistakes had the justification of being the inevitable overhead of path-breaking. The European Secretariat did not have this justification when, in February 1944 and again in January 1945 and even later, it repeated the crassest formula of Zinoviev: "With an inexorable necessity, the imperialist war is developing toward its inevitable transformation into civil war."

Now it insists on continuing to defend this formula by . . . 1915 and 1916 quotations from Lenin! It is time to grow up, comrades.

Bewitched by its theory of "inexorable necessity" of the war being transformed into revolution, the European Secretariat in January 1945 and even later confirmed its earlier prediction about Germany: "The German proletariat, stronger than ever in numbers, more concentrated than ever, will from the first play a decisive role. Soldiers' committees in the army and workers' and peasants' councils in the rear will rise to oppose to the bourgeois power the power of the proletariat. The revolutionary crisis, more profound than that of 1919. . . ." Then and much later the SWP majority wrote in the same vein, and an article to the contrary by Albert Goldman, explaining the obstacles to the German revolution, looked strange indeed in that setting.

It was necessary openly and honestly to correct the error. The sources were clear; as I wrote to the European Secretariat: "You wrote all this without a single reference to the fact that the German proletariat would begin its life after Nazi defeat under military occupation and without a revolutionary party; and without the slightest attempt at appraising the state of class-consciousness of the German proletariat after eleven years of Nazism. Is this not a clear example of assuming a revolutionary development purely on the basis of objective factors without any regard for the subjective factors? And even then you did so by leaving out the objective factor of military occupation."

The "Reply" refuses to acknowledge the real source of the errors. Hence the yard of quotations from Lenin, and a few perfunctory phrases about the fact that exact predictions must inevitably be corrected afterward: ". . . 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." To savor the full absurdity of these sentences one must add one from the previous page: "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 seems, then, that the European Secretariat's assurance about the German and other revolutions was due to its lack of knowledge concerning the speediness of the tanks and jeeps of the victors. In its refusal to face the real source of the errors it made the European Secretariat get itself into an even worse absurdity.

The real source of the errors was its failure to consider not only the consequences of military occupation -- which were easily to be foreseen in advance -- but, still more important, its failure to consider at all, much less to estimate correctly, the state of class-consciousness of the German proletariat and the absence of a revolutionary party. The European Secretariat was too small to say what Trotsky, with infinitely less reason to say it, had said in 1921: "We didn't know how to pay sufficient attention to the working masses." To put it bluntly: all the phrases in its prediction about the German



revolution -- that the proletariat would from the first play a decisive role, soldiers committees, workers' and peasants' soviets, etc. -- were copied down once again in January 1945 by the European Secretariat from the 1938 program of the Fourth International. Seven years, and such, years, had passed by but the European Secretariat did not change a comma. Exactly the same piece of copying had been done by the SWP majority in its October 1943 Plenum resolution in spite of the criticisms of the minority.

That one could do better if one looked instead at the reality was shown also to the European Secretariat in the days when it was still repeating this nonsense. A German comrade wrote in the March 1945 Quatrieme Internationale: "It is certain that, tomorrow in Germany, after such a bloodletting, profound apathy and equally great fatigue will reign. . . If we seriously reflect on all this, one cannot have a short perspective so far as Germany is concerned. . . After the fascist dictatorship the masses in Germany are looking for a democratic way out. The question is to help them overcome as quickly as possible certain vague illusions about the possibility of creating under the imperialist yoke something that would be a true democracy." Typical of the confusionism of the European Secretariat is that it prints this refutation of its resolution without in any way trying to relate the one document to the other; the SWP majority does likewise, reprinting the German comrade's article in the November 1945 Fourth International merely with the comment: "It is interesting to note how accurately the author predicts the ensuing events. His broad outline of the tasks facing the German proletariat retains all of its importance today." But as to the profound difference in political method which enabled the German comrade and the SWP minority to predict more accurately while the European Secretariat and the SWP majority wrote nonsense -- of this not a word.

Such, then, were the real issues which I raised in my letter. The "Reply" instead pretends we have a big difference as to whether or not this is the epoch of wars and revolutions and whether or not within it there can be objectively revolutionary situations independently of the existence of the revolutionary party. I grant all that the ES restates from Lenin on these questions, they were not what we were disputing.

The European Secretariat condemns the following proposition, written by me in my letter of July 10, 1945 which was not written as a public polemic but in an attempt to get my comrades to see a point. I wrote: "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.'" At least to ourselves. In other words, condemn as much as you please the Stalinists and Social-Democrats for not making the revolution when it could be made. But do not let that blind you yourselves to the fact that what they could do you cannot do. Instead of summoning the masses to take the power, get down to the serious business of winning legality for the party and press.

The ES does not like my formulation? It considers it a false way of describing "the relationship between the objective and subjective premises of the revolution"? I withdraw it and put in its place the same thought said better by Trotsky: "But as soon as the objective prerequisites have grown to maturity the key to the whole historic process is handed to the subjective factor, that is, the party and its revolutionary leadership. . . In all these cases, as well as in others of lesser importance, the opportunistic tendency expressed itself in the fact that it relied solely upon the masses and completely neglected the question of a revolutionary leadership. Such an attitude, which is false in general, operates with positively annihilating effect in this epoch."

### Entrism: Is It Now Excluded?

I stated positively that before or at the time of the liberation the comrades could have and should have entered or remained in the reformist parties in Italy, Belgium and Germany. About France I was not at all sure but asked whether the Malraux wing of the Mouvement de Liberation Nationale -- which published Franc-Tireur with a larger circulation than the Stalinist L'Humanite -- did not offer an entrism tactic possibility. I regretted raising the question in July 1945 -- two years too late. As for the present, I wrote: "I don't claim that entry is imperative and can be achieved in every single country I have named. Investigation by you and those in each country will have to determine the facts. But what I demand is a real recognition of the problem and a serious investigation without reservations in advance. . . I leave further comment until I can grapple concretely with your objections, if any."

Instead of practical objections, the European Secretariat answers with a full-blown theory that the nature of this period excludes entry as a general tactic. In its International Report it goes further, branding such "liquidationism" as the main danger to the building of the Fourth International! To buttress this typically ultra-leftist theory it has to do violence to our past, dealing terrible blows to what one had hoped were the most secure foundation-stones of our rich theoretical heritage.

Thus it dares to write: "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."

This one awful sentence is enough to dictate reprinting for the new generation of Trotskyist the principal documents written by Trotsky explaining the reasons for entry in France and elsewhere.

He called for entry first of all because there was a powerful current in the Social-Democracy moving sharply to the left precisely because it was seeking to learn the lessons of the defeat in Germany. This left turn in the Social-Democracy was one of the principal factors which made possible instead of the victory of fascism in France the June 1936 seizure of the factories and in Spain the long civil war. In America we entered the Socialist party amid the rising wave of the CIO. Trotsky, in a letter to the Spanish comrades dated April 12, 1936, begins: "The situation in Spain is again revolutionary" and

therefore proposes. . . entry. This is the process which the European Secretariat profoundly describes as entry "in a period of the general ebb of the labor movement."

Let the European Secretariat re-read (or read) the old documents. It will find all its arguments there, in the documents of the anti-entrists. The European Secretariat writes: "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. . . These elements are seeking a different banner for revolutionary regroupment and struggle and it is our duty to show them this banner." Not very original: Naville in France, Nin in Spain, Vereecken in Belgium, all said it first and it hasn't improved with age. Trotsky answered them: Why can't we show these moving Social-Democratic workers our banner inside their own party?

Why was it necessary to show them our banner inside their own party? Because our forces were too small to show it to them from outside. When workers did come outside, it was usually to leave the workers' movement altogether; hence we had to go in to win them before they were lost. The European Secretariat tells us that "more and more important layers are splitting away from these reformist parties. . ." To do what? To "seek refuge either in the movements of the right or in demoralization and apathy, in the absence of any other pole of regroupment." The italics are mine, to underline the question, why these masses don't consider us a pole of regroupment, since we are where the ES wants us to be, outside, independent, with our own banner, etc. The very facts adduced by the European Secretariat mutely but eloquently indicate that there is a problem here. Discontented workers are leaving the traditional workers' parties and passing us by. Doesn't that pose sharply to us the question of entering the mass reformist party to win such workers while there is yet time to save them?

The question concerns above all France, key to the European continent today. (In England nobody would dream of talking such nonsense; well-nigh everybody understands that our party must enter the Labor Party at the next opportunity.) One is happy to see signs that the French party is not stagnating today as it was a year ago, but it is still a tiny organization which gives no real indications of growing appreciably in the next period -- especially with its present leadership. The opportunity of growth through integration in the national resistance movement was missed, likewise the opportunity to fuse with, enter or win some of the centrist elements -- such as the group around Franc-Tireur -- in the fluid situation of August 1944. These centrist elements have meanwhile in large part disintegrated -- as in America the American Workers Party and the left wing in the Socialist Party would have speedily disintegrated if we had not grabbed hold of them in time. One cannot at will make new opportunity for entry. None appears to exist at present in France. But La Verite reports significant indications of workers in the Paris region and the industrial North turning back from the Stalinists to the Socialist party; a serious increase of the proletarian composition can well soon lead to opportunities within. First of all, however, it is necessary to get rid of the millstone put around our necks by this new version of the theory that entry into the Social Democracy is political suicide.

As Trotsky wrote on November 18, 1935 to the ultra-leftist Vereecken:

"Organizational tactics, turns and maneuvers -- there are still many of them before us, in case of war as well. It is not at all excluded that precisely during the war the Bolshvik-Leninists of this or that country will find themselves obliged to temporarily enter a reformist party. Must we every time, in illegality, renew the arch-abstract discussion on 'capitulation to the Second International'? We do not want to do this. It is time to grow up."

February 24, 1946.

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LETTER FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY  
(British Section of the Fourth International)

London, England  
19th February 1946

To the S.W.P.  
Dear Comrades:

Having studied the recent discussion documents of the SWP on the proposals for fusion with the WP, we are alarmed to note that what commenced as a discussion proposal for unification of the SWP and the WP, has now degenerated to the point where the SWP is faced with the danger of a split.

Such a split would constitute the greatest blow against the Fourth International since the split of the Shachtmanites from the SWP, aiding the splintering tendencies within our movement. Such a split would be contrary to the best interests of the world revolution.

If the split of the Shachtmanites -- despite their revision of fundamental conceptions of the Fourth International on the Russian and other questions, was a crime, then the split of the Morrow-Morrison Minority would be an even greater crime, there being even less political justification for a split. Should such a split take place it would be condemned throughout the parties of the Fourth International.

Comrades of the Minority: however incorrect and bureaucratic you might consider the organisational methods of the Majority, and however erroneous you consider the demands that there must be no fraternisation, no joint internal discussion bulletin or form of collaboration with the WP during the discussions for unification, we urge you to accept (under protest if you wish) these restrictions imposed upon you by the Majority.

We appeal to you to consider your obligations to the other sections of the Fourth International, which place upon your shoulders the responsibility to fight within the international Trotskyist organisation for the unification proposals which you have presented to the SWP. Even if you believe that you have exhausted all possibility for a correct solution within the ranks of the SWP it would be a grave blunder and desertion of duty to forget your obligations to the International.

Comrades of the Majority: you have the principal responsibility to ease the present tension within the Party and end the embittered nature of the discussion, thus making every effort to assist the Minority to live inside the one Party with you. We appeal to you to withdraw all threats of disciplinary action against the Minority limiting its collaboration with members of the WP, and allow a free inter-change of opinion and collaboration in day to day political life between the members of both organisations. If Comrade Trotsky was prepared to go to great lengths to save Shachtman, we believe the Majority should go to even greater lengths to prevent Comrades Morrow and Goldman from breaking with the SWP and the Fourth International.

For the Central Committee, RCP  
J. Haston

ANSWER TO THE BRITISH R.C.P.

By the Political Committee of the S.W.P.

To the RCP, London

New York, N. Y.  
March 19, 1946

(Copies to the IEC and to all  
sections of the Fourth International)

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of February 19.

You are quite justified in your concern about the danger of a split in the SWP. As a matter of fact this split has already been three-fourths accomplished by the actions of the Goldman-Morrow faction. Months ago, to all intents and purposes, they ceased to function as an integral part of the SWP in all its public and internal activities, except for their contributions to the Internal Bulletins. They have been carrying on public activities independently of SWP control and in conjunction with the WP. If this irresponsible and disloyal conduct has not disrupted or even hindered the work of the party it is only because, by their actions as well as by the falsity of their positions, Goldman and Morrow discredited themselves in the eyes of the party members, split their own ranks and united the party against them.

In their ultimatum of January 26 they posed the question of formalizing the split in a matter of weeks. How are we to combat this threat? You advise us in your letter "to withdraw all threats of disciplinary action against the Minority limiting its collaboration with members of the WP., and allow a free interchange of opinion and collaboration in day to day political life between members of both organizations."

This proposal is somewhat astonishing. Our party constitution provides that all political activity, including collaboration with members of other parties, must be conducted under party supervision and control. Up to now, we never heard anyone in our international movement challenge the correctness of this provision. It is an elementary principle of Leninist organization. Your proposal to "allow free collaboration" between our party members and the Shachtmanites, if we understand it correctly, could only result in a breakdown of the centralized functioning of the party. It would transform the SWP into a party of "free spirits" who act as they please. This is alien to all our concepts of a Bolshevik party. Democracy within the party, freedom of expression for minority opinions, must go hand in hand with unity in action and strict discipline. This must apply not only to the party rank and file, but especially to party leaders.

You say: "If Comrade Trotsky was prepared to go to great lengths to save Shachtman, we believe the Majority should go to even greater lengths to prevent Comrades Morrow and Goldman from breaking from the SWP and the Fourth International."

In our opinion, this reference is not applicable to the present situation. It is quite true that Trotsky -- and we with him -- went to great lengths to prevent the split in 1940. We have gone to even greater lengths in the present dispute. But we -- and Trotsky with us -- drew the line at the demand of the minority of that time for the right to conduct public political activity independently of the party and outside its supervision and control. We draw the same line today. There is no other way to maintain the integrity of the party.

In your letter you appeal to the comrades of the minority as follows: "However incorrect and bureaucratic you might consider the organisational methods of the majority, and however erroneous you consider the demands that there must be no fraternisation, no joint internal discussion bulletin or form of collaboration with the W.P. during the discussions for unification, we urge you to accept (under protest if you wish) these restrictions imposed upon you by the majority."

In this admonition to the minority, it appears, you try to give the impression of impartiality and you refrain from expressing your opinion on the merits of the minority complaints about the "bureaucratic. . . organisational methods of the majority." Yet the dispute inside the SWP has been of sufficient duration to permit you to familiarize yourself with the facts and to form an opinion on this matter. It should be comparatively easy to draw conclusions on this question after the experiences of the last two years, not on the basis of an isolated incident here or there, but on the basis of the general trend.

Aren't you aware that for the past two years the minority has been given more than equal space in the Internal Bulletins to state its point of view? That it has been given equal time at membership meetings in debates between representatives of the majority and the minority? That it has been represented on all the leading bodies of the party? They have been granted every right a minority can demand, except the "right" to collaborate with political opponents of the party behind the back of the party. That "right" will never be recognized in the SWP.

What characterizes bureaucrats, first and foremost, is lack of faith in the democratic process, lack of faith in the democratic judgment of the membership and unwillingness to submit to it. Who has expressed this lack of faith and this disregard for the judgment of the party membership? The majority who gave the minority a chance to appeal to the membership in an unrestricted manner? Or the minority which has been circumventing the judgment of the membership and is now threatening a formal split? All we demand of the minority is that they abide by the discipline of the party. On that condition, we will guarantee them freedom of discussion. The minority, on the other hand, confronted us with an ultimatum, demanding what? Demanding that we change our course on the question of unification with the Shachtmanites as the sole condition on which they are willing to remain in our party. From this it ought to be clear to anybody that it is not the majority which is using organizational measures for achieving its ends, but the minority. The real bureaucratic mentality, today as in the 1939-40 struggle, is shown by the intellectual anarchists who shout loudest against "bureaucratism."

This is an old story. Trotsky wrote in 1940: "What is party democracy in the eyes of an 'educated' petty bourgeois? A regime which permits him to say and write whatever he pleases. What is 'bureaucratism' in the eyes of an 'educated' petty bourgeois? A regime in which the proletarian majority enforces by democratic methods its decisions and discipline. Workers, bear this firmly in mind!" (In Defense of Marxism, page 167).

"Neutrality" is hardly the method by which a split can be prevented. One must take sides and isolate the splitters. The SWP has to all intents and purposes already defeated the split designs of the minority faction. The most that Morrow and Goldman can do, if they carry out their ultimatum threat, is to take out a mere handful, the majority of whom long ago ceased to do any party work in the SWP. What is decisive is that the party is united in its rejection of the splitters, in its condemnation of their reckless course. This fact puts the problem now squarely up to Morrow and Goldman for decision whether they are to remain with us or go their way. If they wish to remain in our ranks they must retrace their steps, reintegrate themselves in the party and submit to its discipline. For our part, we would welcome and facilitate a turn of the minority on this road. But there is no other road.

The experience with the Shachtmanites in 1959-40 immunized the proletarian cadres of our party against petty-bourgeois politics and taught them in life and struggle how to guard the unity of the party against disrupters. The pathetic fiasco of the Goldman-Morrow faction testifies to the thoroughness with which this experience was assimilated. We are firmly convinced that this experience has likewise been absorbed by the world movement of Trotskyism. That gives us confidence that the great majority of all sections of the Fourth International will know how to form a correct judgment of the present dispute in the SWP which is now coming to a show-down decision.

Yours fraternally,

Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party



LETTER TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MAJORITY

By Felix Morrow

March 1, 1946

To the Political Committee Majority:

Dear Comrades:

Your resolution "on the internal situation" dated February 12 is in large part answered in advance by our letter of the same date to the delegates of the pre-conference. In order to assure complete clarity, however, we are answering your resolution directly.

First of all it is necessary to note the difference between the content and tone of your resolution and the very different tone and content of Comrade Cannon's verbal report of February 20 -- ostensibly reporting the resolution's contents -- to the New York membership meeting. It was a further demonstration that the majority leaders have two lines, one for the written record and another in the membership meetings. What stands out in the written resolution is the promise of the Political Committee to carry out the "specific recommendations" of the European Secretariat for pursuing a discussion with the Workers Party and the Political Committee's appeal to us to remain in the party. What stood out in the verbal report was the truculent declaration that the Political Committee would do nothing more with the Workers Party than it has done before and the boast that it had been useful so far not to throw the minority out because it had served as a horrible example of disloyalty. No one who heard the verbal report could believe for a moment that you want us in the party.

If you had the slightest desire to keep us in the party you would seek a progressive solution. The European Secretariat's proposals, if actually carried out, make possible such a progressive solution. If language means anything, your acceptance of those proposals would introduce something new in your position: establishing in common with the WP a programme of questions for discussion, organizing and pursuing the discussion, i.e., with dispatch to a conclusion.

Your resolution, however, makes no attempt to find common ground with us. Instead it pretends that we demanded that you adopt our position on unity "in the coming weeks." We did not make that demand. All we demanded was "any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on your part toward resumption of negotiations for unity with the WP." Please note, we said resumption of negotiations. You have never been willing to admit that your two meetings with the WP negotiating committee prior to the October Plenum were negotiations. We called them negotiations and you called them discussions. Very well, then, in order to make the situation absolutely clear, we shall also call them discussions. So that what we were asking was that you take up where you left off five months ago.

There is nothing in your Plenum resolution which prohibits you from resuming the discussions with the WP. Therefore it is not correct when you say in Point 1 of your resolution that you do not have the authority to do what we are asking you to do.

In any event your resolution bases itself not only on the Plenum decision but also on the January 1946 resolution of the European Secretariat. We refer you to our letter of February 12 to the pre-conference delegates for our elucidation of the meaning of the specific recommendations of the European Secretariat. If you agree with us as to what it means, please say so. If you challenge our interpretation, please say so. If our statement of the situation is erroneous, please tell us where and in what our error consists.

It would be easy enough for you to reduce your acceptance of the European Secretariat's recommendations to a pure formality which would render farcical any discussions you might have with the WP. If you do that for the purpose of fooling the gullible, we shall not aid and abet you. As we stated in our letter of January 26, we shall join the WP if there is no unity.

The second point of your resolution calls upon us to "respect the principles of democratic centralism." Here too you are pretending not to understand our position. We do not require your lectures on the necessity of belief in and observance of democratic centralism. We consider that principle as vital to the building of the revolutionary party.

Can you point to a single instance of our disrespecting democratic centralism in the struggle against the capitalists and the social patriots? Assuredly you cannot. You are less than honest when you refrain from stating specifically that what you mean is that you want us to abide by your idea that the members of the WP are renegades and should be treated as such. Your charge that our refusal to do so is disloyalty is simply a cover for your own terrible disloyalty to the revolutionary movement in refusing a place in the party to the hundreds of devoted revolutionists who constitute the membership of the WP. We are loyal to democratic centralism and we shall not let you cover up your crime against unity by references to democratic centralism.

You charged that we were violating discipline in order to get ourselves expelled. That was never true. What was true is that we were ready to risk expulsion for the sake of the struggle for unity. The principal instance is our exchange of letters with the WP which secured the withdrawal of its proposal to exercise the right of an internal bulletin of its own in the united party. In the same way we were ready to issue a joint statement with the WP to the International on the situation.

We considered such a step entirely within our rights. But we had to recognize that many comrades failed to understand our motivation. We therefore decided not to issue the joint statement. If we did not make it clear in our letter of January 26 we tell you now that so long as we are in the party we shall not issue joint statements or do anything else which can be reasonably construed as a violation of discipline.

It is impossible, however, for us to carry out your line of non-fraternisation and war to the death against the WP. No revolutionist has a right to demand this of us in the name of democratic centralism.

If as we fear, you do not want to proceed toward unity, we intend to choose, as we have every right to do, which one of the two Trotskyist parties we shall function in pending unity. It would indeed be helpful, not only to us but to the whole party and to all other sections, for you to tell us openly that you do not intend to have unity. We would then immediately leave the party and avoid all unnecessary conflict. We would then continue the discussion of unity as part of the WP.

Comradely,

Felix Morrow  
For the Minority

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LETTER TO THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE R.C.P.

By Felix Morrow

March 4, 1946

To the Political Bureau of the RCP:

Dear Comrades:

The CC minutes of February 9-10 record your continued refusal to grant minority representation on the PB. In previous letters to PB members I have expressed the disagreement of the SWP Minority with your decision. We would like the membership of the RCP to know our views and therefore ask you to publish this letter in the party bulletin.

You refer to the authority of the Third Congress theses; but it is an indubitable fact that the point about a "homogeneous PB" became a dead letter. Indeed it was never practiced in the Russian and other parties. The very next Comintern Congress authorized proportional representation on the French PB, "as an exception, under the circumstances of the acute crisis" in the party, but this became the rule, certainly so in the Trotskyist movement.

In any event the Third Congress had in mind big mass parties in which CC members usually were full-time functionaries residing at the party center so that CC meetings could be arranged overnight. Under these conditions of close supervision by the CC, the PB could safely be limited to members of the CC majority. This is scarcely the situation in the RCP or any other party of the Fourth. Long ago Lydia Bennett pointed out that the CC's infrequent meetings means that it has no effective control over the functioning of the SWP PB. In the small parties of the Fourth the PB is in actuality what the Third Congress thought of as the CC in which minorities should be represented.

To continue to keep the Healy group out of the PB is not only wrong in itself, it also makes for a twofold obstacle to the proper unfolding of the political dispute in the RCP: (1) in the PB the Healy group would have to record itself week by week, issue by issue,

so that the two policies would thus be counterposed as a continuous record; (2) inevitably much time of the party is taken up with arguing over the composition of the PB which would infinitely more fruitfully be devoted to the real political questions at issue.

We believe that the RCP is a healthy, democratic party. The majority leadership conscientiously conducts the discussion with the minority, seeking to come to grips with the questions at issue. Your discussion is thus at the opposite pole from that in the SWP, where the attitude openly prevailing in the majority is that they have to publish the minority documents but don't have to read them, much less answer them. For our part we would rather live in the regime of the RCP without PB representation than with it in the SWP where our representation was long ago reduced to an empty formality. Comrade Cannon recently had the effrontery to adduce Healy's function as Treasurer of the RCP fund campaign as proof of the "loyalty" of your minority in contrast to the "disloyalty" of the SWP minority. In reality the fact is proof that the RCP leadership makes possible fruitful work for the Healy minority whereas the SWP minority was long ago cut off from fruitful work: it suffices to recall that immediately upon my return from prison I was removed from the editorship of Fourth International, at a time when Cannon himself claimed our political differences were secondary and undeveloped.

But the fact that the RCP is far more democratic than the SWP does not do away with your error; indeed, the comparison should be odious to you who understand the deepgoing degeneration of the SWP. The RCP cannot permit the slightest tendency to limit its internal democracy; hence the urgent necessity to open the PB to minority representation.

Comradely,

Felix Morrow

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