

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

VOL. VI; No. 4

September, 1944

Issued by  
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
116 University Place  
New York City

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## THE FIRST PHASES OF THE COMING EUROPEAN REVOLUTION

### A Criticism of the International Resolution of the Fifteenth Anniversary Plenum

By Felix Morrow

#### What Was the Plenum Decision?

Comrade E. R. Frank, as reporter on the plenum to the New York membership meeting, stated (comrades inform me) that the plenum arrived at unanimous agreement on the international question. He referred once to the "even heated manner" of the plenum discussion, but left unspecified what the political questions were in dispute, and indicated that whatever differences there had been, they were finally resolved in unanimous agreement.

This was not Morrison's or my understanding of the plenum decision. It becomes necessary to establish precisely what happened in the plenum.

In the course of the discussion it became clear (1) that the plenum did not accept the contention of comrades Warde, Frank and others that the difference between the subcommittee resolution and the Morrow resolution was no less than programmatic; (2) that some of the points in the Morrow resolution were acceptable to comrade Cannon; (3) that other comrades (Thomas, Russell) wished to see various paragraphs of the Morrow resolution incorporated in the final plenum resolution.

To facilitate this, and to arrive at a maximum possible agreement, I withdrew my resolution, joined with Morrison (who had supported my resolution) in rewriting some of its paragraphs to meet various objections, and my re-written document was offered as a series of amendments to the resolution.

However, after a protracted discussion, the lack of time and other considerations made it impossible to consider the Morrow-Morrison amendments individually.

In my summation speech, I stated that the essential differences between the Morrow-Morrison amendments and the draft resolution could be summed up in two propositions. If these two propositions were accepted by the resolution subcommittee, there could be substantial agreement between us on the international resolution as finally edited. These two propositions were as follows:

(1) That the draft resolution erred in excluding the possibility of the use of bourgeois-democratic methods by the European bourgeoisie and its American imperialist masters;

they would in all probability attempt to stem the European revolution not only by the use of military and fascist dictatorships but also where necessary by the use of bourgeois democracy.

(2) That the draft resolution erred in minimizing the Stalinist danger; we must recognize that the victories of the Red Army have temporarily strengthened the prestige of Stalinism; and we must, therefore, include in the resolution a warning of the very real danger of Stalinism to the European revolution.

Speaking after me in his summary speech, comrade Cannon indicated that these two propositions would be acceptable to the authors of the draft resolution. This was my impression and that of Morrison and of other members of the plenum. It is true that comrade Cannon also added that the amendments which formulated these propositions would be accepted only insofar as they fitted into the framework of the draft resolution. This statement of comrade Cannon did not, however, appear to modify vitally his statement that the two propositions were acceptable to the authors of the draft resolution.

On the basis of comrade Cannon's indication of the extent of our agreement, comrade Morrison and I accepted the final decision of the plenum as follows: to adopt the subcommittee's resolution in principle and to submit to the subcommittee the Morrow-Morrison amendments, the subcommittee to incorporate into the resolution those of the amendments which it considered compatible with the resolution, and Morrison and Morrow to be consulted in the writing of the final resolution. If important amendments were not incorporated by the subcommittee, Morrison and I stated, they would be discussed in the party by us in various articles in internal bulletins.

Thus, when the plenum closed, one could not really speak of unanimous or almost unanimous agreement. It was still to be seen which of the Morrow-Morrison amendments would be incorporated by the subcommittee in the final resolution, and which of them would be the subject of an educational discussion.

In preparing the final text of the resolution, the subcommittee was undoubtedly ready to consult me to the fullest extent. Unfortunately, however, I was stricken ill and the final resolution had to be drafted without such consultation. The subcommittee sought my views at the last possible moment before the resolution was sent to press, when I was still in the hospital, but my condition made it impossible for me to read it and offer further suggestions.

Had we been able to collaborate in the final editing, perhaps the area of agreement would be larger than it now is. As I shall indicate below, the subcommittee incorporated into the final resolution several sentences from the Morrow-Morrison amendments while at the same time retaining formulations of the original draft resolution which are in crying contradiction to the incorporated amendments. Perhaps in discussion with the subcommittee I

would have been able to demonstrate these contradictions and persuade the subcommittee to remove them.

As the resolution stands, however, were the National Committee given the opportunity to vote on its final text, I would find it impossible to vote for it. Neither of the two propositions which I considered essential to an agreement appear in the final resolution in reasonably satisfactory form, as I shall show in some detail. Though there are no fundamental, programmatic differences, the disputed questions are important and deserve the study of the party as a whole.

After comrade Frank and others have reported unanimous agreement, it might have come as an unpleasant surprise to the party to learn that differences remain. This could have been in large part avoided if the reporters at the membership meetings had told the membership -- which had a right to know -- what the plenum discussion consisted of. There was no political or organizational reason why the reporters could not have stated the nature of the political questions which were in dispute, the precise details of the final decision of the plenum, and the stated intention of Morrow and Morrison to discuss in subsequent articles those important amendments not accepted by the resolution subcommittee.

It would aid the education of the party to make a practice of publishing in the internal bulletin the important material rejected or modified by a plenum. The membership would thus be able better to understand how the plenum arrived at its decisions and whether these decisions were the best possible under the circumstances. For this reason alone it was necessary to publish the Morrow-Morrison amendments. It was an error on my part not to have proposed this at the plenum.

In the following pages I have attempted as far as possible not to repeat the points made in the Morrow-Morrison amendments or in my plenum speeches. The plenum material is taken for granted, since this is written only for N.C. members, most of whom were present.

### The Danger of Ultra-Leftism

The Morrow-Morrison amendments were written from the standpoint that a plenum resolution adopted by us today must primarily occupy itself with the present and immediate future -- the first phases of the European revolution. On the other hand, the subcommittee resolution obviously proceeded from the point of view that its task was primarily the reiteration of programmatic fundamentals. This difference was especially apparent in the fact that the Morrow-Morrison amendments dealt in some detail with the problem of democratic demands while the subcommittee resolution ignored them entirely in its original draft.

Some of the comrades supporting the subcommittee apparently thought they had a crushing answer to the Morrow-Morrison amendments when they triumphantly quoted from the 1938 Founding Program the idea that democratic slogans are "only incidental and episodic slogans." And this thought appears in the final resolution, which speaks of "the limitations and subordinate character of democratic slogans as a means of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary action."

"Episodic," "incidental," "subordinate" -- with these adjectives comrades Warde, Frank and Cannon sought to minimize the importance of democratic slogans in the coming revolution.

The absurdity of their position should become clear when we answer the question: what are democratic slogans "incidental" or "subordinate" to? Democratic slogans are subordinate to transitional slogans and to programmatic fundamentals; democratic slogans must be constantly connected, in our agitation, to transitional slogans and programmatic fundamentals. That is all that is meant by "incidental" and "subordinate." Obviously, then, it follows that at any time this side of the successful insurrection democratic slogans still have an important place in our agitation. The fact that tactics (democratic slogans) are subordinated to strategy (dictatorship of the proletariat) does not absolve us from the responsibility of outlining the character of the tactics necessary for the coming period in Europe. The fact that democratic slogans are "incidental" and "episodic" does not do away with the fact that more than one revolutionary party has broken its neck by its failure to understand the crucial role of democratic slogans -- that before it could make the revolution it first had to win a majority of the proletariat, and that this majority could be won in part only through a phase, "episodic" but indispensable, of democratic demands. That was the terrible lesson we should have learned for all time from the abortive Spartacist uprising of January 1919.

In a revolutionary situation, a democratic demand may be of enormous importance -- the way to win the masses to the revolutionary party. To name but one example -- the demand for the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly, which played such an enormous role in the Russian revolution and is certain to play an equally important role in one or more of the European revolutions. Let me remind the comrades that the Bolshevik withdrawal from and boycott of the Pre-Parliament, which was the curtain-raiser to the insurrection, was carried out under the slogan of immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly. One has only to cite such a concrete example of a democratic demand to indicate the empty -- ultra-leftist -- radicalism of the resolution's emphasis on "the limitations and subordinate character of democratic slogans as a means of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary action."

In the plenum discussion, a number of supporters of the draft resolution justified its passing over the problem of democratic demands and its preoccupation with reiterating programmatic fundamentals, by referring to the danger within the Fourth International of opportunism and revisionism. The one item of evidence

to which these comrades referred were the "Three Theses" of a small group of European comrades (published in the Dec. 1942 F.I.).

Comrade Loris answered this argument irrefutably. He agreed, as we all agree, that the "Three Theses" constitute a revisionist and opportunist tendency. But he insisted that we should make a systematic investigation of and give the correct weight to all the existing tendencies in the international. In actual fact, the authors of the "Three Theses" represent no one but themselves, are simply an aberration of the emigration. Far more significant than the "Three Theses" has been the consistently ultra-leftist course of our official British section and its consequent deterioration. And this ultra-left deviation took place in a whole section and one which was operating in its own country under conditions of legality and with many possibilities of a healthy development. Thus the present evidence is that within the International the danger of ultra-leftism is far more likely than the danger of opportunism.

To Loris' argument one can add the rich lessons of the first years after the last war. The young parties of the Comintern suffered primarily not from opportunism but from ultra-leftism. It was against this tendency that Lenin in 1920 wrote "Left Wing Communism-- An Infantile Disorder." If, despite the tremendous prestige of the victorious Bolsheviks, the Comintern was so pervaded by ultra-leftist deviations, the same phenomenon is far more likely to confront the Fourth International at the end of this war.

If the leadership of the American party feels it necessary in an international resolution today to remind our European comrades that democratic slogans are "incidental" and "subordinated" to the grand strategy (dictatorship of the proletariat) of the revolution, then at the very least we should simultaneously and with equal emphasis warn our European comrades that the best strategic line may lead to ruin if it is not coupled with the timely raising of tactical slogans, i.e., those democratic and transitional demands which are appropriate to the consciousness of the masses at the given moment.

Isolation, such as the Fourth International parties have always had to endure, can be weathered only by the utmost programmatic intransigence. But to live in isolation with one's programmatic banner nailed to the mast tends to breed an inflexibility unfavorable to an intelligent understanding of the use of democratic and transitional demands when the opportunity arises to launch them in a revolutionary situation. Certainly this has been the experience of our European sections. I have already referred to the British experience; the same is true of our Spanish comrades during the revolutionary period of the civil war.

I repeat: the main danger within the Fourth International appears to me to lie in the direction of ultra-leftism. It is necessary, as we approach the first period of the European revolution, to emphasize and underline the role of democratic demands.

Finally, it must be noted that even if comrade Cannon were correct in assuming that the main danger within the International was in the direction of opportunism, the subcommittee resolution was scarcely the way to combat that danger. The European comrades might well retort to the resolution: "Thank you, comrades, for repeating the programmatic fundamentals, but we also have a copy of the 1938 Founding Program and we have copies of our other programmatic documents. And we study the program as well as you do. What we want to know from you is what you think we should do in the next immediate period, what are the first problems we face, what obstacles we must overcome." The answer to opportunist tactics is correct tactics, not merely reiterations of the elementary principles of Marxism.

### The Tempo of the Coming Revolution

It was perhaps inevitable that, in our attempt to keep the hope of revolution alive during the years of isolation since September 1939, we over-simplified the picture of what is coming. I know that more than one inexperienced comrade drew from our press a picture of the war coming toward its close, the masses rising in all countries of Europe, success crowning their efforts, meaning by success the irrevocable establishment of the soviet power, and that all this would take place within two or three years after the closing period of the war.

Not that our most authoritative documents were based on such a conception. To mention only one, let us turn to the Manifesto of the Fourth International on "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution". In rejecting a pessimistic outlook for the future, it equally rejected a Pollyana optimism. It posed the correct outlook in the following manner:

"Will not the revolution be betrayed this time too, inasmuch as there are two Internationals in the service of imperialism while the genuine revolutionary elements constitute a tiny minority? In other words: shall we succeed in preparing in time a party capable of leading the proletarian revolution? In order to answer this question correctly it is necessary to pose it correctly. Naturally, this or that uprising may end and surely will end in defeat owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. But it is not a question of a single uprising. It is a question of an entire revolutionary epoch.

"The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered. It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars and new uprisings.

A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective. History will provide it with enough opportunities and possibilities to test itself, to accumulate experience and to mature. The swifter the ranks of the vanguard are fused the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened, the less destruction will our planet suffer. But the great historical problem will not be solved in any case until a revolutionary party stands at the head of the proletariat." (Pages 40-41, *my italics.*)

Let us underline the words: "It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades..." Trotsky in these words sought to prepare us for the probability that the achievement of the Socialist United States of Europe would take decades rather than the few years immediately following the closing period of the war.

Trotsky was certain, and so are we, that successful socialist revolutions would issue out of the war. That is to say, that in one European state or another the workers would, after the maturing of their revolutionary party, successfully overthrow capitalism and establish the soviet power. But Trotsky also wrote scores, and perhaps hundreds, of articles explaining the crucial importance of democratic demands in a revolutionary situation, i.e., he expected that after the revolutions began in Europe there would be a more or less protracted period in which the masses would follow the reformist parties.

Having at last won the masses, the revolutionary party would lead them to the establishment of the soviet power. But the young workers' state -- or two or even more -- would face world capitalist intervention. Foreign capitalist intervention, in turn, would lead internally in the proletarian states to a revival of civil war, much as it happened in the young Soviet Russian Republic.

As this conflict deepens, we are confident, the proletarian power will extend to other European states, and lead in the end to the Socialist United States of Europe. But the whole process will in all likelihood not be telescoped into a few supreme, intense and swift efforts of the European proletariat. No, more likely is a perspective of decades of struggle.

This, then, is the conception of the coming revolution which should now be explained to our party. In essence, of course, this conception of the coming revolution is in no way less optimistic than the oversimplified picture which many of them undoubtedly have in their minds. In any event, it has the decisive merit of being the true picture. Moreover, those who firmly grasp it will not have their hopes dashed to the ground in the coming years. They will remain firm revolutionists no matter what obstacles arise in our path.



Let us not only praise Trotsky, but let us also try to learn from him how to deal with political problems. One could cite dozens of examples from his writings of how, on the eve of great events or in their first days, Trotsky considered it politically necessary to estimate the probable tempo of what was to come. Almost at random, I cite a typical example -- how Trotsky wrote, on May 28, 1931, under the heading "The Problems of the Tempos of the Spanish Revolution":

"A correct determination of the tempo of development of the revolution is of tremendous significance -- if not for the determination of the basic strategic line then for the determination of the tactics. And without correct tactics, the best strategic line may lead to ruin. It is understood that to guess the tempos in advance for a prolonged period is impossible. The tempo has to be examined in the course of the struggle, making use of the most varied indicators. Moreover, in the course of events the tempo may change very abruptly. But we must nevertheless keep before our eyes a definite perspective in order to introduce the necessary correctives into it in the process of experience." (The Spanish Revolution in Danger, page 30, My italics.)

Having thus enunciated why it was politically necessary to attempt to estimate the tempo of the development of the revolution, Trotsky then went on to indicate the concrete factors which led him to expect a slow development of the revolution in Spain. Such was the method which Trotsky taught us. One seeks in vain for this method in the plenum resolution.

The Morrow-Morrison amendments do attempt to estimate the tempo of the coming revolution. The amendments do not exclude the possibility of the transfer of power to the workers immediately following the fall of Nazism. And from this possibility the amendments draw the conclusion that it is necessary, as soon as the masses begin to move against the Nazi regime or any regime which may follow as a result of a coup d'etat such as occurred in Italy, to put forward the slogans of creation of workers' councils and All Power to the Workers' Councils.

But, the amendments then go on to state, "we must also recognize the probability that the bourgeoisie will make a serious attempt to save its rule by means of bourgeois democracy and the temporary success of such an attempt..." Why must we recognize the probability of such a temporary success? Because of a number of crucial factors, which are then outlined in the amendments.

Among these factors which will slow the tempo of the European revolution are the revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses as a result of the fact that in Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc., new generations have grown up without any experience of bourgeois democracy and without active participation in political life. After the collapse of fascism, these masses may well have to go through a certain body of experiences before they will understand that their needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the democratic republic. Another factor making for revival of democratic illusions is the intensification of national feeling in Europe as a result of Nazi

occupation; the masses in the "liberated" countries may well feel for a time that such government as that of De Gaulle are "our own."

Central to a proper estimate of the tempo of the revolution is a clear understanding of the fact that the principal parties which emerged in Italy after the fall of Mussolini, were the Communist, Socialist and Action (liberal) parties. This fact shows that the traditional workers' parties and the party of the petty-bourgeoisie were not held responsible by the masses for the decades of fascist rule. Nor could the masses test the programs of these parties under the conditions of totalitarian oppression, for programs can be tested only in the course of mass activity. We must conclude from the Italian experience that the traditional workers' parties, as well as centrist and liberal-democratic parties, will emerge throughout Europe as the principal parties of the first period after the collapse of the Nazis and their collaborators.

These factors slowing the tempo of the coming revolution can only be overcome by the growth of revolutionary Marxist parties; and such parties do not yet exist in Europe. That is why we must emphasize to our European comrades that the problem of building the party is still before them as their main task.

Amid the gigantic convulsions which will follow the collapse of fascism, we are confident that our European comrades can and may accomplish that main task in a short period. Nevertheless, it is clear that this period will be one of a series of phases of the European revolution in which the bourgeoisie will have a temporary success in saving its rule by resorting to bourgeois democracy, that is, manipulating the democratic illusions of the masses.

Thus the Morrow-Morrison amendments attempt to estimate the tempo of the revolution. One can disagree with the estimate, but at least the amendments constitute an attempt at such a politically necessary estimate.

One cannot say as much for the plenum resolution. It accepts some of the Morrow-Morrison amendments in truncated form, but evades the problem of tempo posed by the amendments as a whole.

Will the European bourgeoisie and its Anglo-American imperialist masters resort to bourgeois democracy as a means to stem the revolution? A clear answer to this question is basic to an estimate of the tempo of the revolution. For it is obvious that, if the bourgeoisie would not resort to democracy, then the democratic illusions of the masses could be dispelled by the Fourth International far more quickly. It would be relatively easy to mobilize the masses against capitalism if the capitalist class as a whole openly and unyieldingly supported dictatorship and opposed democracy. Hence, the importance of an unambiguous answer to this question. The Morrow-Morrison amendments give such an unambiguous answer, stating that: "The bourgeoisie is prepared to evolve in the direction of a bourgeois democratic government in order to prevent the socialist revolution."

On the other hand, the plenum resolution evades the question of the attitude of the bourgeoisie as a class toward bourgeois democracy. Note, for example, the following sentence in the plenum resolution which at first glance appears to have been taken bodily from the Morrow-Morrison amendments: "The fact that the economic preconditions for an extended period of bourgeois democracy in Europe have disappeared does not, however, put an end to the role that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democrats can play to stem the advance of proletarian revolution." This sentence provides us with nothing more significant than the obvious fact that bourgeois democrats like Sforza and petty-bourgeois democrats like the socialists will play a role against the proletarian revolution. It evades taking a position on the proposition of the Morrow-Morrison amendments that the bourgeoisie, i.e., not only the Sforzas but also European capitalism as a class, is prepared to evolve in the direction of a democratic government in order to stem the European revolution.

Two or three sentences further on in the plenum resolution, the same crucial question is again evaded by a similar process of incorporating a sentence from the amendments but changing it so that it loses its precise meaning. The amendments state: "When no other shield can protect them, the forces of capitalism may seek to retreat behind the protection of the democratic republic." In the plenum resolution this is changed to: "When all other defenses crumble, the forces of capitalism will strive to preserve their dictatorship behind the facade of democratic forms, even to the extent of a democratic republic." What does it mean to say that the bourgeoisie will "preserve their dictatorship behind the facade of democratic forms"? If all that is meant by this is the Marxist theory of the state that a democratic republic is also in the last analysis a form of the rule (i.e. dictatorship) of the bourgeoisie, then that should be stated and no room left for ambiguity as to what is meant by dictatorship. But as the sentence stands, it implies something more; it implies that the bourgeoisie will strive to preserve not only their class rule, but also to preserve their class rule in the form of a dictatorship, dictatorship meaning what it popularly means, namely not a democratic government in the ordinary sense of the term.

Thus the ambiguities and evasions of the plenum resolution straddle between (1) maintaining the false conception of the original draft resolution of the subcommittee which explicitly denied the possibility that the bourgeoisie would resort to democratic governments and (2) making verbal but not real concessions to the Morrow-Morrison amendments which insist that the bourgeoisie will probably resort to democratic governments.

One final example of how the plenum resolution "accepts" one of the Morrow-Morrison amendments. The following paragraph was not in the original draft resolution but was "accepted" from the amendments:

"The revolutionary wave may be so overwhelming as to enable the workers to take power immediately following the collapse of the fascist dictatorship. Hence it is necessary to put forward the

slogans of Workers Councils (Soviets) and All Power to the Workers Councils, as soon as the masses begin to move against the fascist regime or any makeshift substitute."

Contrast this with the paragraph in the amendments from which it was "accepted.":

"We do not exclude the possibility of the transfer of power to the workers immediately following the fall of fascist dictatorships. It is necessary for our comrades to take this possibility into consideration at all times and hence to put forward the slogans of Creation of Workers Councils and All Power to these Councils as soon as the masses begin to move against the fascist regime or any regime which may follow as a result of a coup d'etat such as occurred in Italy. But we must also recognize the probability that the bourgeoisie will make a serious attempt to save its rule by means of bourgeois democracy and the temporary success of such an attempt because of the treachery of the social reformists and Stalinists, the lack of a revolutionary party, and the insufficient political development of the working class."

To summarize on the question of the tempo of the coming European revolution. The Morrow-Morrison amendments estimate the tempo as we have outlined above. The plenum resolution, on the other hand, evades taking a position on the question and simultaneously attempts to convey the impression of a speedy success for the Socialist United States of Europe.

One's estimate of the tempo of development of the revolution, Trotsky pointed out, "is of tremendous significance for the determination of tactics." Determined to convey the impression of a speedy success for the Socialist United States of Europe, the authors of the draft resolution quite logically minimize the role of democratic demands. But if one recognizes the probability of a slower tempo for the development of the European revolution, and in it a period of bourgeois-democratic regimes -- unstable, short-lived, but existing nevertheless for a period -- then the importance of the role of democratic and transitional demands becomes obvious. For the revolutionary answer to bourgeois-democracy in the first instance is more democracy -- the demand for real democracy as against the pseudo-democracy of the bourgeoisie. For bourgeois-democracy can exist only thanks to the democratic illusions of the masses; and those can be dispelled first of all only by mobilizing the masses for the democracy they want and need. In this connection it would be worth-while for all N.C. members to read again the Program of Action of the Communist League of France (1934), largely written by Trotsky, which we correctly recommended as "the model of its type for young parties approaching a pre-revolutionary situation." (Fourth International, October 1942.)

#### The Methods of American Imperialism in Europe

Some comrades, reading my criticisms of the resolution's formulations on the role of bourgeois democracy, may consider that I am refusing to give the resolution the benefit of the doubt:

if one only would read the formulations of the resolution with a little sympathetic understanding, one could really find agreement with them. After all, the sub-section of the resolution entitled "Bourgeois Democracy" does provide a certain amount of common ground between us on the question of the role of bourgeois democracy in Europe.

Such a criticism of my approach to the resolution would be justified, if the sub-section on "Bourgeois Democracy", in large part consisting of modified sentences from the Morrow-Morrison amendments, were the only section in the resolution where the question of bourgeois democracy is involved.

However, if one interprets this first section of the resolution as meaning the same thing as the Morrow-Morrison amendments, then there is a flagrant contradiction between that first section and the second section of the resolution, "The Counter-Revolutionary role of American Capitalism". For then the one predicts that the European bourgeoisie and its American imperialist masters will use bourgeois democracy while the second rules out the use of bourgeois democracy in Europe by U.S. imperialism.

Perhaps no question is more important today for the European revolution than an analysis of the methods which American imperialism is employing and will employ for its attempted subjugation of Europe. For it is already clear that the European bourgeoisie cannot even hope to survive the coming revolutionary wave without the most direct backing from American imperialism. Already in Italy one can see that the Italian bourgeoisie can rule only as junior partners of American imperialism.

But the Italian experience has also taught us that U.S. imperialist support of the Italian bourgeoisie is not merely a matter of supporting Italian capitalism on American bayonets. The bayonets are there, of course, but at least equally important are American food and the illusion that the United States will solve Italy's economic problems. We must give due weight to the undeniable fact that considerable sections of the Italian masses enthusiastically welcomed the American troops. The illusions of the masses will, of course, collide with reality more and more in the coming period, but we must recognize that for a time the covert blackmail of food and the promises of American economic aid will play a major role in shaping the Italian events. And this process will be repeated elsewhere in Europe.

In the long run, of course, U.S. imperialism can solve none of Europe's economic problems and will inevitably reveal itself as the ruthless exploiter which prevents European recovery. It is not enough, however, to state this long-term perspective. We must also estimate accurately the short-term perspective.

The short-term perspective is that American imperialism will provide food and economic aid to Europe and will thus for a time appear before the European masses in a very different guise than German imperialism. This difference between the two great imperialisms aspiring to subjugate Europe is based on the difference in the economic resources of the two. The Nazis had nothing

to offer to Europe; they had to subjugate Europe purely by means of military force, and after conquering each country, they had to plunder it of its food and other materials. The United States, on the other hand, will in the first instance enter the occupied countries of Europe ostensibly not as their conqueror but in the course of driving out the Nazis. Unlike Nazi occupation, American occupation will be followed by improvement in food supplies and in the economic situation generally. Where the Nazis removed factory machinery and transportation equipment, the Americans will bring them in. These economic contrasts, which of course flow entirely from the contrast between the limited resources of German capitalism and the far more ample resources still possessed by American capitalism, cannot fail for a time to have political consequences.

Hence, it is quite false when the plenum resolution, without distinguishing between the long-term and short-term perspectives, says (December F.I., p. 331): "Europe, today enslaved by the Nazis, will tomorrow be overrun by equally predatory Anglo-American imperialism." Equally imperialist, yes, but not "equally predatory." One could perhaps, permit oneself such language loosely in an agitation-al speech; but it has no place in a plenum resolution, which should provide a coldly precise estimate of the different methods which are being employed by different imperialisms.

Nazi imperialism could give its domination of the occupied countries only the facade of native rule. That is why the term Quislings became so appropriate. American imperialism too has sought to operate through Quislings; Darlan was little more than that; Badoglio similarly. But it should already be clear that U.S. imperialist penetration of the occupied countries is not going to be limited to the use of Quisling regimes, i.e., regimes which rule entirely by means of force and terror and which have no support in the masses. It is true, of course, that a bourgeois-democratic regime in Italy, for example, would also be a Quisling regime in the sense that it would be dominated by American imperialism. But it may very well differ from the Nazi-dominated Quisling regimes in the sense that, through the medium of the Stalinist, social-democratic and bourgeois democratic parties, it could muster a majority in an election as free as Italian elections prior to 1921.

The plenum resolution appears to agree with this conception of the variant methods available to American capitalism when it says, in its sub-section on "Bourgeois Democracy" that "when this device (of military force) proves powerless to control the insurgent masses, the native capitalists, allied with the invading imperialists, will push forward their treacherous democratic, social reformist and Stalinist agents in an effort to strangle the revolution in a 'democratic' noose." However, the thought of this sentence, incorporated in the resolution from the Morrow-Morrison amendments, appears nowhere in the section of the resolution on the "Counter-Revolutionary Role of American Capitalism". On the contrary, in that section, the authors of the resolution visualize only one method to be employed by American imperialism: "military monarchists-clerical dictatorships under the tutelage and hegemony of Anglo-American big business." And again: "The choice, from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view, is a Franco-type government or the specter of the socialist revolution." The resolution thus

rules out the third "choice," the use of bourgeois-democratic regimes.

Incidentally, the article on "The World Role of U.S. Capitalism," by comrade William Simmons, published in the same issue of the F.I. as the plenum resolution, takes the position of the Morrow-Morrison amendments and not that of the plenum resolution. Comrade Simmons writes:

"Is a restoration of bourgeois democracy on the European continent -- a 'democratic' regime -- possible? For a limited time, yes -- as an interim regime, because of the absence of an experienced, decisive, proletarian, revolutionary leadership -- as an attempt to dam up the floodgates of revolution. Such a restoration may be imposed and supported from abroad; but it can never be invested with any degree of stability." (December FI, p. 336)

I agree completely with Comrade Simmons concerning the instability of bourgeois-democracy, and made this clear with wearisome repetition at the plenum. But this was not the question at issue: the issue was whether or not American imperialism might back bourgeois-democratic regimes in Europe as a way to stem the revolution. Both Comrade Simmons and I answer this question in the affirmative, the resolution answers it falsely in the negative.

#### The Function of the Slogan on the Socialist United States of Europe

In clarifying our conception of the coming European revolution, it is necessary now to define more precisely the place of the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. During the plenum discussion comrades Warde and Frank stated that there was quite a difference between them and me on this question; they said, indeed, that the difference was no less than programmatic. The final resolution has few references to the slogan, which are mutually satisfactory, but which nevertheless leave unsettled the differences which were adumbrated in the plenum. Perhaps some of the statements of comrades Warde and Frank in the discussion may reflect merely misunderstandings on this question which deserve clarification.

To such misunderstandings I must admit that I myself have contributed. In a discussion article\*, I criticized those who define the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe "as a propaganda slogan, i.e. not at present suitable for immediate agitation." The essential criticism I sought to make I still think correct: it was aimed against those who do not accept the slogan of a Socialist United States of Europe as the central slogan of the European movement. However, I did not serve to clarify the question when I indicated that the only correct estimate is that it is an agitation slogan and not a propaganda slogan. In making this distinction, I was defining a propaganda slogan as one which has a purely educational role for the present period and that when it becomes actual it will then cease to be a propaganda slogan and

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\*"Our Differences with the Three Theses" by Felix Morrow, Fourth International, December, 1942.

become an agitation slogan. I was thinking of the way in which Plekhanov defined propaganda as the dissemination of many ideas to a small group, and agitation as the dissemination of one main idea to great masses.

However, this otherwise useful distinction between propaganda and agitation does not serve to clarify the role of the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. This will readily become apparent from the following considerations. We all agree, and correctly, that the Socialist United States of Europe is the central slogan for Europe. What, however, do we mean precisely by a central slogan? Some comrades appear to think it means that it is the slogan by which we shall rally the great masses for the overthrow of European capitalism. That is, that the slogan will play the same role in the coming revolution that the slogan All Power to the Soviets played in the October revolution.

But the central slogan of an epoch is not at all the same thing as the slogan or slogans under which the party leads the masses to make the revolution. The classical example of a central slogan -- the slogan which determines the whole course of the revolutionary party in a period -- is the slogan raised by Lenin, "Turn the Imperialist War Into Civil War." This was the central slogan without, however, being a slogan for the masses. This central slogan was a party, a cadre slogan. That is, it served to educate the party but did not show how to win the masses to the proletarian revolution. Trotsky once characterized "Turn the Imperialist War into Civil War" as an algebraic formula whose concrete content was yet to be found, as it was found, in "All power to the Soviets" and other slogans.

That did not mean that the Bolsheviks did not publicize "Turn the Imperialist war into Civil War" in their literature. But the place where it is found most often is in the Bolshevik literature and documents of September 1914 to February 1917, i.e. the literature written in isolation and directed to party members and small circles of sympathizing workers. Once the Russian revolution broke out, the slogan receded into the background and seldom appears in the Bolshevik press and speeches of February to October. Thus it was not one of the principal slogans around which the Bolsheviks rallied the masses. Yet anyone who has the slightest understanding of the Bolshevik strategy knows that it remained the central slogan in the sense that it was the basic motivation of Bolshevik agitation and action.

In his last unfinished article, Trotsky refers to the limited role of the central slogan, "Turn the Imperialist War into Civil War" as follows:

"The attention of the revolutionary wing was centered on the question of the defense of the capitalist fatherland. The revolutionists naturally replied to this question in the negative. This was entirely correct. But this purely negative answer served as the basis for propaganda and for training the cadres, but it could not win the masses who did not want a foreign conquerer... True enough,



the Bolsheviks in the space of eight months conquered the overwhelming majority of the workers. But the decisive role in this conquest was played not by the refusal to defend the bourgeois fatherland but by the slogan: 'All Power to the Soviets!' And only by this revolutionary slogan! The criticism of imperialism, its militarism, the renunciation of the defense of bourgeois democracy and so on could have never conquered the overwhelming majority of the people to the side of the Bolsheviks."

There has been much misunderstanding of this distinction between the central slogan which served to train the cadres and the slogan under which the Bolsheviks overthrew capitalism. One could document this with numerous references to the literature produced by the infant communist parties after 1919, in which they used the slogan "Turn the Imperialist War into Civil War" as if it were a magic key which would bring the masses to them. Nor did this ultra-leftist nonsense cease with the early years of the communist movement. As late as 1935 the ultra-leftists in our party, the Oehlerites, accused us of reducing Lenin's central slogan of the last war to "merely a party slogan."

It is my contention that the Socialist United States of Europe is the central slogan of our epoch for Europe but that it is unlikely to be the slogan under which the masses will be rallied for the direct struggle for power. This does not mean that the place of the slogan Socialist United States of Europe is precisely the same as that of "Turn the Imperialist War into Civil War." Obviously, the Socialist United States of Europe is capable of moving larger masses than Lenin's central slogan. Equally obviously, however, the Socialist United States of Europe is not a mass slogan in the sense of the slogan All Power to the Soviets; it is an algebraic formula whose concrete content will be found by us in appropriate mass slogans during the revolution similar to those the Bolsheviks employed between February-October 1917.

The best and most thoughtful of the European workers -- and this means not merely cadres but hundreds of thousands and even millions -- will understand that the Socialist unification of Europe is the only way out. But the best and most thoughtful workers will not be enough to make the revolution by themselves. They will succeed only by rallying behind them not merely millions but tens and hundreds of millions. And these will not be rallied by the relatively abstract conception of the Socialist United States of Europe.

The direct struggle for power will in all probability arise out of the question of which institutions shall have the authority to rule the country or the army at a given moment -- bourgeois institutions like a provisional government and perhaps a revived parliament, or the representative bodies thrown up by the workers, peasants and soldiers, which will be essentially Soviets, whatever their actual name: city, regional, district or factory committees directly elected by the workers, peasants and soldiers.

These alternatives will be stark enough to compel the masses to choose one or the other. That does not mean, however, that the masses will be choosing consciously between the continuation of capitalism and the Socialist United States of Europe. It will not even mean that in Germany, for example, the masses will be choosing between socialism or capitalism for that country. Both capitalism and socialism are abstractions to the great masses even when they are making the proletarian revolution. The masses will be giving their mandate to the revolutionary institutions which are expressing their concrete life-needs -- for bread, land and freedom -- and the determination to achieve them. But it will not be a conscious mandate for socialism or the Socialist United States of Europe.

### The Stalinist Danger to the European Revolution

Comrade Wright has written more than once in recent months in our press that the Red Army and Soviet industry have revealed fighting power beyond anything we had dreamed they were capable of. That is correct; and of course we all agree that this power expresses the prodigious vitality of the October revolution despite Stalin's strangulation of the revolution. But, from a short-term perspective, we must also realize that this Soviet industry and this Red Army are, and are quite likely to remain for a time, in the hands of Stalin. That means that he will throw this power--which is greater than we had dreamed of -- on the side of the European counter-revolution.

The Morrow-Morrison amendments attempted to indicate this Stalinist danger but they received short shrift in the final resolution. As in the draft resolution, the section entitled, "Significance of the Soviet Victories" consists merely of reiteration of programmatic fundamentals and of one reassuring repetition after another that Stalinism will not succeed in its counter-revolutionary plans. Even the absurd sentence in the draft resolution "explaining" the failure of the Spanish revolution was stubbornly retained: "A pre-war revolution in the corner of Europe could be isolated, strangled and sold out as part of the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers." I shall not repeat here the analysis I made in my plenum speech of this sentence and the paragraph it appears in, except to recall again that, far from being isolated in a "corner of Europe", the Spanish revolution was simultaneous with the revolutionary situation in France which Trotsky had correctly hailed with an article entitled "The French Revolution Has Begun."

The two-sided character of the Soviet victories. At one point or another the Fourth International will be compelled to say frankly to the workers what I said in my plenum report, that the Soviet victories are not a one-sided matter of progressive consequences, even though we give the main weight to the progressive consequences.

The Morrow-Morrison amendments put the second side of the Soviet victories as follows:

"At present because of the victories of the Red Army the prestige of the Soviet Union has grown tremendously but unfortunately it has been misappropriated by the parasitic bureaucracy. The

power and ideological influence of Stalinism has been strengthened temporarily. As a result, we must recognize a serious danger to the coming European revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy will either help the capitalist democracies in the attempt to crush the revolution by force or, if the revolution assumes too great a sweep to be crushed, it will attempt to gain control of it in order to save its own rule. What Stalin has done in Spain he will try to repeat in other countries of Europe. The continental European revolution will surely offer stronger resistance than the Spanish proletariat, but the danger to the revolution from the Stalinist bureaucracy is very great and we must constantly warn the masses to struggle against this danger."

This amendment was rejected by the resolution sub-committee. In its place the sub-committee only added to the draft resolution the sentence that: "Stalin, exploiting the enhanced prestige of the Soviet Union as a result of the red army victories, seeks to gain control of the popular movements in Europe..." And this sentence is larded in between many paragraphs of reassurances that Stalinism will fail, so that the whole effect is precisely the opposite of that sought by the Morrow-Morrison amendments: we wanted to warn and arouse against the danger from Stalinism, and the plenum resolution provides merely reassuring anodynes. By all means let us voice our confidence in the revolutionary future. But that does not suffice. We must also say what is.

I said at the plenum that the prestige of the Soviet victories has resulted in the fact that Stalinism is the principal organized force in the European working class today and that this situation will not disappear before the first stages of the European revolution. The resolution sub-committee agreed with me to the extent that it included, in its subsection on bourgeois democracy, the idea from the Morrow-Morrison amendments that: "It is possible and even probable that the treacherous parties of social reformism and Stalinism can play the leading role in the first stages of the revolution." Similarly in its section on the "End of the Comintern", the sub-committee included from the Morrow-Morrison amendments the idea that "the Italian events have shown the capacity of the Stalinists for perverting the struggle of the workers." But these two sentences, in the contexts in which they appear, are merely passing observations and do not convey the conception of the great danger to the revolution from Stalinism. The place where Stalinism is treated systematically in the resolution is in the section entitled, "Significance of the Soviet Victories", and there the danger from Stalinism is in effect denied.

The refusal to distinguish between short-term perspective and long-term perspective, which we have noted in other parts of the resolution, is perhaps even more evident in the sections on Stalinism. They "ignore" the short-term perspective, that is, they fail to describe the real situation of the present and the immediate future. As a result they can have but a purely ritualistic character, convincing only those already convinced. (Let us hope that no one will repeat the slander voiced at the plenum, that I called the program of the Fourth International ritualistic; what I said and repeat is that the resolution sub-committee employed the program in a ritualistic manner.)

On "Pessimism" and "Optimism"

A large amount of the time of the plenum was taken up with charges hurled at me that I was a pessimist. Had I desired to reply in kind, there was a suitable handle available. During the first weeks after the fall of Mussolini, the comrades who wrote the draft resolution were undoubtedly much more "optimistic" than I concerning the Italian revolution; but in their draft resolution, lo and behold, they were already speaking of the "temporarily defeated Italian revolution". I, on the other hand, saw no defeated revolution precisely because I had not seen a revolution, but only a revolutionary situation. Who, then, are the optimists: those who say the Italian revolution was defeated or those who do not? This incident alone should indicate that charges of pessimism and boasts of optimism have no place in discussions in our leadership.

December, 1943.

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REPORT TO PLENUM (October, 1943)

By Felix Morrow

I. ON WHAT PLANE ARE THE DIFFERENCES?  
ARE THEY PROGRAMMATIC?

The subcommittee -- Cannon, Frank, Warde -- claimed that the differences between the two resolutions are no less than programmatic. Such was the announcement made to us by Comrade Frank on behalf of the subcommittee, when he explained to the P.C. Wednesday night why the subcommittee believed it impossible to reconcile their resolution with mine in a single resolution.

As his proof that the resolutions follow "diametrically different programs" -- those are Frank's words -- he cited two main points.

The Character of the Epoch

As proof, Frank cited paragraph 21 of the subcommittee's resolution. That is the paragraph which states that "another extended period of bourgeois democracy" is made impossible by the decay of capitalism and the acuteness of class conflicts, and that such democratic republics as arise "must by their very nature prove short-lived." That idea, declared Frank, is the "very heart" of the subcommittee's resolution and differentiates it from my resolution.

One's estimate of the epoch in which we live is certainly a programmatic question. If I claimed that we are in for another extended period of bourgeois democracy, then I certainly would be likely to draw from that perspective programmatic conclusions differing from those of the subcommittee's resolution.

But is there the slightest iota of evidence in my resolution that it is based on a perspective of an extended period of bourgeois democracy for Europe? There is no such evidence, nor did Frank even pretend to cite such evidence. Actually, that very paragraph 21 which Frank says is the heart of their resolution, is also verbatim in my resolution where it is the foundation-stone of my whole section on problems of the European revolution.

Since 1930 -- when the collapse of the Weimar republic became certain -- I have written at least hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of words proving from the events since 1918 that an extended period of bourgeois democracy is impossible in Europe. For 13 years I have been doing what I can to prove the thesis of paragraph 21 of the subcommittee's resolution -- only to be told, now, that I deny that thesis.

What is more, nothing in my resolution implies that I think that bourgeois democracy will have even such an unstable period of existence as it had between the two wars. If this is the bone of contention, then I am ready to sit down with the comrades of the subcommittee and jointly draft a paragraph stating that it is extremely unlikely that bourgeois democracy will last this time as long as it did after World War I.

The programmatic question of the character of the epoch in which we live is NCF, then, a point of difference between the two resolutions. The accusation on this score must be called light-minded and irresponsible because there is not the faintest evidence for it and there is overwhelming evidence in my resolution against it.

The Programmatic question of the  
Socialist United States of Europe

According to Frank's report for the subcommittee, the Socialist United States of Europe "is the central programmatic point at issue." Morrow, said Frank, "has an entirely different conception of the Socialist United States of Europe" than that of the subcommittee. And as proof he referred to paragraph 31 of my resolution, where I state in the first sentence that "In general, only cadre elements will be directly recruited by our program and central slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe."

Can it be, as Frank claims, that at this late stage in the hammering out of the program of the Fourth International, there can arise within the leadership of the American party a basic difference about such a fundamental programmatic point as the Socialist United States of Europe? Please note that in the very sentence quoted by Frank as proof of my heresy I call the Socialist United States of Europe our "central slogan" for Europe. Where, then, is the difference?

If the comrades will go on reading paragraph 31 of my resolution after the first sentence at which Frank stops, the meaning of the paragraph will become quite clear to them. I make in that paragraph the familiar and obvious-enough distinction between the fundamental program and central slogan on the one hand, and on the other hand the proposition that "to win the masses" "the Trotskyists must appear as the most resolute fighters for democratic demands" and for "our transitional demands" which "are certain to play a major role." Is there anybody here who would seriously deny this distinction between fundamental program on the one hand and democratic and transitional demands on the other hand?

Frank, explaining the difference between his conception and my conception of the Socialist United States of Europe, actually used the phrase that "Morrow makes of it merely a party slogan." I carefully noted down his words; "Morrow makes of it merely a party slogan." What is that phrase doing in our leadership? I have heard that phrase before, but that was from the Oehlerites and other ultra-lefts, who condemned the Trotskyists because we made

Lenin's central slogan of the last war, "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war," into "merely" a party slogan.

Actually, of course, "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" is the classical example of a central slogan -- that is a slogan which determines the whole course of the party in a given period-- without being a slogan for the masses. This central slogan was a party, a cadre slogan. That didn't mean that the Bolsheviks did not publicize it in their literature. But it was not one of the principal slogans around which they rallied the masses. When the Oehlerites condemned us for not going to the masses with that slogan, they showed that they failed to understand the familiar distinction between fundamental program on the one hand, and democratic and transitional slogans on the other hand.

When Frank condemns me for making the Socialist United States of Europe into "merely a party slogan," I can explain his behavior logically only by one of two things. Either there is a misunderstanding between us, or he is making the same mistake as the Oehlerites.

If there is a misunderstanding, I hasten to clear it up. I am ready to sit down with the comrades of the subcommittee and jointly draft a new paragraph 31 which will leave out the phrase about the Socialist United States of Europe as a slogan which recruits primarily cadre elements, and to replace it with a formulation which more clearly enunciates the Bolshevik distinction between fundamental program and mass demands. As a matter of fact, as Morrison can testify, I had already agreed to precisely such a reformulation some time before Frank stated the subcommittee's objections to my paragraph. Morrison himself did not like my original formulation, pointing out that, if one takes "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" as the classical type of cadre slogan, then the Socialist United States of Europe is more than a cadre slogan although it is equally certainly less than a mass slogan such as "All power to the Soviets." Hence Morrison and I, before the last P.C. meeting, were already agreed on a reformulation which would, however, preserve the necessary distinction between fundamental program and mass slogans.

So, no more than the question of the character of our epoch, is the question of the Socialist United States of Europe a programmatic point in dispute between the two resolutions. Since these two were the only programmatic points which Frank claimed to be in dispute, it should be clear that, whatever our differences, they are not differences on program.

## II. ARE OUR DIFFERENCES STRATEGIC OR TACTICAL?

It would follow that where there are programmatic differences, strategic and tactical consequences follow. The Subcommittee has made no attempt to demonstrate such differences. As a matter of fact, there are no such differences. The reason should be obvious. Suppose I say there will be a Fourth French Republic and it will last three years, and Comrade Cannon says there won't be a Fourth French Republic at all. No difference in strategy and tactics follows. My proposition about the French Republic belongs to what is

called the if-then type. If there is a French republic lasting three years, then our strategy and tactics during that period will be such and such. Cannon, who believes that democratic republics may arise in the course of uncompleted revolutions, and that these democratic republics would be short-lived, would certainly agree that if a French republic arises for a period then our strategy and tactics during that period will be such and such. We would hardly have any differences concerning the content of such and such, certainly no differences which could be called programmatic or fundamental, since we both agree on the basic program.

The propositions in my resolution which the subcommittee finds objectionable belong to this if-then type. If the subcommittee claims otherwise, I shall be glad to take the time to demonstrate this elementary fact, and to show in each specific instance that no strategical or tactical differences follow from these propositions.

As a matter of fact, Frank's report for the subcommittee Wednesday night at the P.C. meeting tacitly admitted that we have no strategic or tactical differences. He admitted this when he characterized my points on democratic demands as being a "blueprint." By a blueprint is meant an unwarranted attempt to anticipate what concrete situations our European comrades will be faced with, which democratic demands our European comrades should raise at various conjunctures, and in what sequence they should raise them. We shall see in a moment whether my resolution is a blueprint. First, however, let me underline the fact that to accuse me of drawing a blueprint is hardly compatible with accusing me of programmatic deviations, unless the subcommittee is prepared to prove that my blueprint makes heretical strategical and tactical proposals. In reality the accusation that I draw a blueprint is an implicit admission by Frank that if such and such situations occurred he would have no differences with me on what to do in those situations but that he thinks it unwarranted to anticipate the situations. That is, there are neither programmatic nor strategical or tactical differences.

### III. THE REAL PLANE OF THE DIFFERENCES; THE NATURE OF A PLENUM RESOLUTION

Where, then, are the differences, for differences there certainly are. I believe that they can be analyzed under two headings, 1. The nature of a plenum resolution, and 2. How Marxists flexibly describe the present and immediate future.

What should a plenum resolution be like? What should it include and what should it exclude? I don't recall a discussion on this question in recent years, yet it is a key to the present dispute.

Frank said for the subcommittee that they don't want a blueprint. Neither do I. Their objection is not well taken. Frank said, what is true enough, that the sequence and formulation of democratic demands are things which will have to be left to our European comrades to work out in the heat of battle as they sense the mood of the



masses. True enough, but irrelevant to my points on democratic demands. For my points do not at all attempt to anticipate which democratic demands our European comrades should raise at various conjunctures and in what sequence they should raise them, but I simply indicate why the METHOD of democratic and transitional demands will have to be employed under the general conditions which are likely to prevail in Europe in the next immediate period.

To affirm that the method of democratic and transitional demands will play a major role in the next immediate period in Europe appears to me obvious. I shall shortly demonstrate this fact.

First, however, let me contrast my affirmations about this method of democratic demands with the references to democratic and transitional demands which appear in the subcommittee's resolution. They appear in the additional paragraphs which the subcommittee introduced at the P.C. meeting Wednesday night.

What does the subcommittee tell us on this question? It gives us a quotation from the 1938 program of the Fourth International -- a quotation with which I certainly agree. But is the quotation relevant for the purposes of a plenum resolution? It tells us the relation of democratic slogans to our fundamental program, a point very well in place in the Founding Program of the Fourth International. It tells us that democratic slogans at certain moments can play a serious role, but are "only incidental and episodic slogans." When the movement assumes something of a mass character, it goes on to point out, "the democratic slogans will be intertwined with the transitional ones." Of course, of course, and I say as much in my resolution when, after referring to the use of democratic slogans I go on to say that our transitional slogans "will play a major role."

If the comrades insist on reprinting from our 1938 program the paragraph they quote on the relation of democratic slogans to our fundamental program, I shall vote for it. But only on condition that they do not stop there. For if all that is needed is to keep on quoting our fundamental documents in our plenum resolutions, then why write plenum resolutions? Let us simply each year reprint the Founding Program of the Fourth International with a new date.

Something more is needed for a plenum resolution than reiteration of our fundamental program. And something more, too, than paragraphs which tell us that the Italian events or the Eastern front or American diplomacy confirms our fundamental program.

A plenum resolution should be more than a reiteration of fundamentals or, what is the same thing, a recital of recent events and the affirmation that the events confirm our program.

I know that the comrades of the subcommittee don't agree with me on this. That is indicated by the last sentence of their additional paragraphs (21 B) which states; "In all the developments of the military struggle and the shifts on the war fronts, in all the twists and turns of imperialist and Stalinist diplomacy, the revolutionary militants need not the search for 'new formulas' and improvisations

but to resolutely adhere to their program which was written not for a day but for this whole epoch of wars and revolutions." If all you need is your program, then why bother writing plenum resolutions? As for the snide reference to the "search for 'new formulas' and improvisations," snide because its reference is anonymous but obviously directed at my resolution, I challenge the comrades of the subcommittee to demonstrate what "new formulas" and "improvisations" I have introduced as a substitute for the program.

A plenum resolution should be neither a mere reiteration of program nor a blueprint. The international resolution of this plenum doesn't have to say everything but only what is relevant at this time; it can even, I dare to assert, not outline our whole program for Europe but only indicate in introductory form those programmatic points which are relevant today -- not in 1938, which the Founding Program takes care of, but in 1943 -- and then go on to describe the present situation in Europe and our views concerning the tasks of our European comrades in the next period.

The purpose of writing an international resolution at this time should be clearly held in mind. We are living under extraordinarily favorable conditions at this moment in contrast to the situation of our European comrades. We are a legal party, we have access to broad areas of information denied to our comrades in the underground, we have a measure of leisure for thought without the terribly harassing conditions which dog our European comrades. Thanks to our good fortune we have been placed in the position of being in essence the trustees of the Fourth International. Let us hope that we will execute our trusteeship with all the moral and political responsibility which we owe to it.

Were the parties of our European comrades functioning, and in communication with each other and with us, our international resolution would be merely one among many contributions to a resolution of the Fourth International. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Our resolution must serve, in reality, as the determining resolution of the Fourth International.

We owe it as a duty to our European comrades to SAY WHAT IS and to indicate their tasks in the next period. In my opinion this is not the conception of the subcommittee's resolution which merely reiterates some programmatic points, affirms their confirmation by events, and lards this with ritualistic consolations that all will be well.

IV. HOW MARXISTS SAY WHAT IS; i.e., HOW MARXISTS  
FLEXIBLY DESCRIBE AND ANALYZE THE PRESENT  
AND IMMEDIATE FUTURE

That to agree on fundamentals is not enough is to be seen when one examines what the subcommittee has done with the fundamentals of our program. Those fundamentals are not in dispute. The comrades will notice that in my resolution each of the three sections begins with the same programmatic propositions verbatim with which

the subcommittee's resolution begins.

I shall now, very briefly, contrast what the subcommittee does with those fundamental programmatic points and how they serve in my resolution.

It is my contention that in the three fields with which the three sections of my resolution deals, the subcommittee resolution has, from programmatic points on which we all agree, drawn false inferences or failed to go beyond programmatic points to deal with the present and immediate future.

First on the present situation in Europe. We all agree on the programmatic point that the economic preconditions for an extended period of bourgeois democracy do not exist in Europe. But the subcommittee resolution goes on to draw the false inference that bourgeois democracy will not play a role in Europe in the next immediate period.

Examples in the subcommittee resolution of this false inference are the following:

Paragraph 31: "The Allies cannot afford to sanction the slightest democracy in Europe."

Paragraph 42: "But Stalin cannot turn back the wheel of history. It is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar republics in Europe."

Another example of such false inference is to be found in last week's issue of The Militant, where Frank predicts that if elections are held in Italy they will be no more democratic than a Hitler plebiscite.

The same comrades, however, also write in their resolution in paragraph 21 that "interim regimes modeled after the Weimar Republic may be set up here and there as by-products of uncompleted revolutionary movements," and will be "short-lived." Need I point out, comrades, that "short lived" Weimar republics are still Weimar republics, and that one cannot assert that Weimar republics are impossible and also assert that there may be Weimar republics? Both these propositions cannot be true; one or the other must be false. The subcommittee must take one or the other of these propositions out of their resolution.

In its attempt to deny a role to bourgeois democracy in Europe in the next period, the subcommittee declares flatly in paragraph 31: "The Allies cannot afford to sanction the slightest democracy in Europe." If this is true of the allies, it must certainly also be true of their puppets and subordinate allies in the European bourgeoisie, such as Badoglio, etc.

Whether for the Allies or their European subordinates, this proposition seems to me preposterous, false both in theory and in fact.

What does it mean to say that the bourgeoisie "cannot afford to sanction the slightest democracy" in Europe. Sanction is a word which has a very precise meaning. Webster's dictionary defines it as meaning: "to ratify; to confirm; to authorize; to approve; to countenance; to abet; to allow."

If this is what sanction means, isn't it a fact that Badoglio because he couldn't help himself, had to formally recognize, to concede, to ratify, i.e., to SANCTION the election of factory committees, i.e., to sanction the "slightest democracy," an act which the subcommittee asserts couldn't and can't happen? Tomorrow, in the same way, if he has to, Badoglio will sanction democratic elections, i.e., bourgeois-democratic, i.e., pseudo-democratic elections which will be something quite different than the equivalent of a Hitler plebiscite which Frank insists is the only variant possible in Italy.

Perhaps I am being unfair to the subcommittee. Maybe they would place the emphasis in their sentence as follows: "The bourgeoisie cannot afford to sanction the slightest democracy in Europe." But in that case the proposition becomes absurd, because you will have to say that the bourgeoisie cannot afford to sanction democratic rights but will do it even though they can't afford it.

One clue to the reasons why the comrades of the subcommittee got themselves into such difficulties is to be found upon a closer examination of the following words in their paragraph 42: "But Stalin cannot turn back the wheel of history. It is impossible to set up a new series of Weimar republics in Europe."

What can be in their minds when they talk thus about "the wheel of history." Let us try to see.

What is true, and we all agree on it, is that the further unfolding of capitalism has caused the disappearance of certain economic preconditions on which bourgeois democracy was based during the Nineteenth Century.

But the disappearance of certain economic preconditions does not also mean the disappearance of political preconditions. The existence of workers' parties leading great masses is a precondition of bourgeois democracy in our epoch, and is a precondition which does not disappear because economic preconditions of bourgeois democracy have disappeared.

In other words, the "wheel of history" cannot be turned back in economics, but it can be "turned back" in politics. True, only for a time, only under conditions of instability, etc. But we are Marxists and not Hegelians, and where Hegel was only interested in epochs and types and could dismiss a period of bourgeois democracy of short duration as being "unreal" and hence non-existent, we Marxists should know that our understanding of the reality and existence and importance of a three-months' duration of a democratic republic may well be decisive for the future of the revolution.

"There is always a way out for the bourgeoisie," Lenin taught us, in criticising those who attempted to predict the end of capitalism as a function of the economic process. The bourgeoisie will today, just as in 1918 use bourgeois democracy with equal facility with other methods.

So much for my section on the problems of the European revolution. I now turn to my section on the role of the U.S. in Europe.

I had to reject entirely the section of the subcommittee's resolution entitled "The Counter-Revolutionary Role of American Capitalism." It must be rejected because it is shot through and through with the same false conception with which I have already dealt, namely the denial of a role to bourgeois democracy in Europe in the coming period.

We all agree that the U.S. imperialists are capable of anything, that they will lean on the most ultra-reactionary elements in Europe, that they do not want to give the European masses the relatively more-favorable arena of the democratic republic, etc. All this, however, constitutes only one tendency of U.S. imperialism. Another tendency is also indicated when the European masses begin to move; for U.S. imperialism to lean on the Social Democrats and perhaps also the Stalinists, i.e., to use bourgeois-democratic methods.

This second tendency will be enhanced by the pressure of the American masses at home.

Let me show you that this second tendency follows even from the analysis made by the writers of the original resolution. They write;

"(33) The greatest contribution American revolutionists can make to the fight for socialism in Europe is to expose these counter-revolutionary aims (of U.S. imperialism); struggle relentlessly against them; arouse the American workers against the reactionary program of Big Business and awaken sentiments of solidarity with their hard-pressed class brothers in Europe and all other parts of the world."

The language of this paragraph is too vague, vague precisely because it seeks to avoid precisely stating that we are going to arouse the American workers to defend in Europe, in the first instance, not socialism but democratic rights.

Nevertheless, even from the language of this paragraph, the process is clear; we arouse the American workers to help their class brothers in Europe; if we arouse them successfully and sufficiently their opposition to U.S. imperialist aims in Europe will have an effect; that is, Washington will be compelled to change its policy in Europe; change from what to what? From supporting Franco-type governments to keeping hands off socialist governments? Yes, let us hope so, in the end we shall even be able to create such a force in the American working class that we shall even prevent U.S.

intervention against socialist governments. But in all likelihood that will not be the type of our first successes. More likely, forced to desist from supporting Franco-type governments, U.S. imperialism will make a partial retreat, to supporting bourgeois-democratic government against the workers' movement. I say, even from the formulations of the writers of the original resolution it should follow that the pressure of the American workers will be countered by a change in maneuvers of U.S. imperialism, changing from leaning on the Francos to leaning on the Social Democrats and other reformist parties, i.e., leaning on bourgeois-democracy.

Hence it is a half-truth when the resolution states; "31... Given free scope, given their democratic rights, the European working class will not require overly much time to organize its revolutionary party, and to overthrow all of its capitalist oppressors." And this half-truth becomes a falsehood when the sentence immediately following it states; "The choice, from the Roosevelt-Churchill point of view, is a Franco-type government or the spectre of the socialist revolution." False because the two choices are not the only ones to which capitalist strategy is limited; Roosevelt-Churchill are unfortunately much more flexible than are the writers of the subcommittee resolution; the imperialists even at this moment are keeping Franco's democratic opponents on the leash for use tomorrow.

The writers of the resolution appear to forget the two-sided character of bourgeois democracy. One of its sides is that which they state in rather glowing terms when they say in paragraph 31 that the democratic republic means for the workers that they are "given free scope, given their democratic rights..." But there is the other side of bourgeois democracy; the way in which it can for a time breed illusions that the democratic republic is a sufficient framework in which to achieve the demands of the masses and even to achieve socialism -- illusions which unfortunately will be fostered by the fact that the principal parties of the masses in the immediate future will be reformist parties and the further fact that these masses in most cases have had little or no experience with bourgeois democracy during the past generation or two.

Under the conditions we have indicated, U.S. imperialism will proceed to make use in Europe of this second side of bourgeois democracy and in spite of the fact that bourgeois democracy also has the other side which favors the masses.

The writers of the resolution ignore all this. Characteristic is the fact that they devote paragraph 27 to the Darlan deal -- but say nothing about the debacle of the Darlan policy and the consequent shift forced upon Washington whereby it has had to arrive at an unstable agreement with the Gaullists, i.e., with the bourgeois-democratic tendency within French imperialism. Equally characteristic, the resolution mentions the wooing of Otto of Habsburg, but not the debacle of the attempt to put him at the head of a unit of the U.S. army. Nor does the resolution say anything about the way in which the Badoglio deal is being dressed up with bourgeois-democratic forms.

Typical of the slipshod character of the resolution is the listing of Batista among the "despotic governments" in the United Nations coalition; the name of Batista appeared ten years ago among a list of despotic governments, and by inertia continues to appear in the present list. In actual fact, to put the Batista government in a list of "despotic governments" renders that category politically meaningless, for then there is no longer left any distinction between "despotic governments" and other bourgeois governments. In recent years the Cuban regime permits elections which are certainly as free as those of Mexico, trade unions legally exist and conduct strikes, political parties are legal and function, and the government cabinet includes labor leaders and a Communist party leader. In other words, Cuba is a bourgeois democracy. Far from verifying the theory of the writers of the resolution, the evolution of the Batista government shows how Washington knows how to utilize bourgeois-democratic methods in its imperialist domains. The authors of the resolution write; "Today the deals with Darlan and Badoglio outline in precise terms the counter-revolutionary policies and imperialist aims of Anglo-American capitalism." One could write with at least equal certainty and with much more timeliness; "Today the deals with DeGaulle and Batista show how U.S. imperialism will employ bourgeois-democratic methods for its imperialist aims."

It should be clear from the foregoing that we must reject the resolution's unilateral view of U.S. imperialist methods and adopt my section on the U.S. in Europe which allows for both variants.

#### The Soviet Victories and their Aftermath

We now come to the question of the Soviet Union and Stalinism. My section on this subject begins with the first three paragraphs of the original resolution, except for the last sentence of paragraph 56. These paragraphs state fundamentals on which we are all agreed.

I delete the last sentence of paragraph 36 which, following a sentence about the growing breach between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-U.S. bloc, states; "Despite Stalin's subservience, the subsequent development of this division can and must lead to an open break, and eventually to armed conflict, between the USSR and the Anglo-American imperialists."

The clear implication of this sentence is that the break between the USSR and the Anglo-U.S. imperialists will be a "subsequent development" from the present situation in the sense that it will directly follow the present situation. This idea leaves no room for the possibility of a new and more thoroughgoing agreement for the next period as an aftermath of the Moscow Conference. To exclude the possibility of such an agreement seems to me to be a false estimate of the present situation and of Stalin's policy.

To allow for the variant of such an agreement is the purpose of paragraphs 45-48 of my amendments. I find it hard to understand how the writers of the resolution excluded such a variant and expect that we shall come to speedy agreement on this point.

Paragraph '50 of my amendments gives a more precise formulation of Stalin's relations to the Benes and Gaullist governments than is to be found in the resolution. It also avoids lumping this question with the question of Stalin's relations to the partisans -- two very different questions -- in the way that the resolution does.

Now I come to the heart of the difference between my section on the Soviet Union and that which appears in the resolution. My section insists on recognizing the two-sided character of the consequences of the Soviet victories. One side consists of the progressive consequences which we are all agreed upon and which determine our attitude toward the Soviet war; a victory of the workers' state is progressive in itself because it maintains the remaining achievements of the October revolution; the prestige arising from Soviet victory makes it more difficult for the imperialists to isolate the Soviet Union, and the admiring peoples tend to emulate the Soviet overthrow of private property. On all this we are agreed.

But there is also another side to the Soviet victories; the unparalleled prestige of the Soviet Union is appropriated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and therefore we must face the fact that the power and ideological influence of Stalinism will not wane quickly under these conditions. We must recognize the fact, that Stalinism is the principal organized force today in the European working class.

Unfortunately the resolution refuses to recognize this second side of the Soviet situation. It says nothing indicating the power of Stalinism today. Instead of doing what is politically indicated -- say what is and warn against the terrible dangers yet to come from Stalinism -- the resolution avoids indicating the strength of Stalinism at this juncture and devotes several paragraphs to scolding "professional defeatists" -- unnamed and unidentified in any other way, a kind of anonymous attack which does not belong in a Bolshevik resolution -- who dare to think that Stalin can repeat elsewhere what he did in Spain.

We are told that to foresee a repetition is to "ignore the vast difference in conditions between the Spanish revolution and the coming European revolution." The next two sentences presumably indicate this vast difference, as follows:

"A pre-war revolution in the corner of Europe (Spain) could be isolated, strangled and sold out as part of the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers. A continental revolution cannot be harnessed by any bureaucracy, including the Stalinist."

Consider, first, the astonishing description of Spain as being a "corner of Europe" and hence capable of being isolated and strangled. It is true that geographically Spain is in one corner of Europe. But so are the British isles, the Scandinavian countries, Italy, the Balkans. Did Spain's geographical position perhaps isolate it from Europe during the Spanish civil war? No, Spain's border was contiguous with that of France, and the flames of civil war blew over that border and into the hearts of the French Proletariat -- and at a time when there was a revolutionary situation in



France too! The occupation of the factories in France occurred in June, 1936, the civil war began in Spain on July 16. Neither geographically was Spain isolated from the rest of the European proletariat, nor emotionally was it isolated; all the masses of Europe were heart and soul with their Spanish brothers. Spain was isolated POLITICALLY, in a way which could have happened in the heart of Europe just as well as in a corner.

In order to conjure into existence a "vast difference" between the situation of the Spanish civil war and the situation of revolutions at the end of this war, the writers of the resolution contrast the revolution in a "corner of Europe" with a "continental revolution." We can all agree that Stalin could not do to a continental revolution what he did to the Spanish revolution. But, unfortunately, it is quite likely that Stalin will not be dealing with a continental revolution, i.e., a revolution already sweeping through many countries. More likely, the revolution will not begin simultaneously in several countries, but only in one or two -- in other words, the situation may be not unlike that in which Stalin crushed the Spanish revolution. And Stalin will approach that revolution (or two) with more prestige than he had in 1936.

For example, is there anyone here who would seriously argue that the revolution in the Balkans does not run the same risk as the Spanish revolution? My amendments include an entire section on the partisan movements in the Balkans, an extremely important aspect of the European situation which does not receive a single sentence in the resolution. Was the omission perhaps an inevitable result of the attempt to minimize the power of Stalinism? As to our political estimate of the partisan movement, there is of course no disagreement among us.

In my section, I do not state that Stalin will crush other revolutions as he did in Spain. It is not our business to make such unwarranted anticipations. What is our elementary duty is to warn the workers against the danger -- something which can be done only if we indicate the present power of Stalinism.

My proposals for modifying secondary items in the first 1-19 paragraphs of the resolution can be postponed until we settle the much more important issues raised in my resolution.

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