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C O N T E N T S

Two Letters by Felix Morrow --

1. TO THE EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT
2. TO ALL SECTIONS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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TO THE EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT:

I urge upon you the necessity of undertaking a new approach to the situation, quite different from that embodied in your February 1944 theses and the January 1945 resolution.

To plunge immediately to the heart of the question, what was wrong with the theses and the resolution was that their authors were bewitched by the "objectively revolutionary" situation. True, one can find a paragraph or two in which they recognize well enough that a revolutionary party is needed. But even these paragraphs are revealing of the falsity of the approach. The whole weight of the documents is given over to portraying the revolutionary nature of the situation, and then, almost buried amid the glowing picture of the coming (and already begun) revolution comes: "The only thing lacking in the principal countries of Europe is true revolutionary parties."

The inevitable result of such an approach is that your conception of the perspectives is dictated by your preoccupation with the "objectively revolutionary" situation, and is not even modified by your recognition of the need for a real revolutionary party.

To demonstrate this, let me cite a few examples from the February 1944 theses:

1. "With an inexorable necessity, the imperialist war is developing toward its inevitable transformation into civil war." Here Lenin's exhortation to turn the imperialist war into civil war becomes, instead, an objective function of the social process independently of the intervention of the revolutionary party (which in actual fact does not exist yet).

2. Extending this objectively revolutionary situation to the Soviet Union, you conclude that "the rapid development of revolutionary events and the situation in the USSR will create all the conditions for a break between the masses and the Stalinist leaders." But can this break inside the Soviet Union come without the leadership of a revolutionary party? And is there such a revolutionary party? Here you don't even mention the problem of a revolutionary party in the Soviet Union. Making revolution an objective function of the social process you end up with such fantastic ideas as that "the large scale use of the Red Army as a counter-revolutionary force is excluded", and that the Soviet bureaucracy will be unable "to control the revolutionary movements which the occupation and even the approach of the Red Army will unfurl in the countries of Central and Western Europe."

3. "The German revolution remains the backbone of the European revolution." "These masses will not stop with a few fake conquests... The German proletariat, stronger than ever in numbers, more concentrated than ever, will from the first play a decisive role. Soldiers' committees in the army and workers' and peasants' councils in the rear will rise to oppose to the bourgeois power the power of the proletariat... The most favorable conditions will exist for a victorious revolutionary movement." You wrote all this without a single reference to the fact that the German proletariat would begin its life after Nazi defeat under military occupation and without a revolutionary

party; and without the slightest attempt at appraising the state of class-consciousness of the German proletariat after eleven years of Nazism. Is this not a clear example of assuming a revolutionary development purely on the basis of objective factors without any regard for the subjective factors? (And even then you did so by leaving out the objective factor of military occupation.)

I was very much dismayed when I first saw this false approach in the theses, but consoled myself with the thought that they were written under the conditions of Nazi occupation, when so much information was lacking and the need imperious to hold out great hope for the future. But the January 1945 resolution, written under quite different conditions, begins by confirming the February 1944 perspectives, repeats the formula about the "inexorable necessity" which transforms the imperialist war into civil war, etc.

You were writing after the terrible defeat in Greece, yet you wrote: "The recent Belgian and Greek events constitute the first phase of the revolution which has effectively commenced in these countries." The defeat becomes proof of "the first wave of the revolution which has begun." This would be true enough if revolutions were an objective function of the social process. But since instead they are made by workers of flesh and blood, the Greek defeat has proved to be a very strong deterrent on the workers of all Europe, weighing them down with the thought that their struggles might meet the same fate; especially weighing them down because there is no revolutionary party (one, that is, big enough to reach them and get them to listen) to explain to them why the Greek proletariat was defeated unnecessarily thanks to Stalinism.

I hope I have proved my point that the theses and resolution were based on a false conception. I should add that the next resolution of the European Secretariat should in all honesty not pass over the mistakes of the earlier documents but should note them and explain how they came to be made.

What is urgently necessary today is to draw all the necessary consequences from the fact that our cadres everywhere are tiny and that the great masses, insofar as they are politically active, are following the Communist and Socialist parties. This approach, if systematically carried out, does not ignore the objective situation but does subordinate it to its proper place.

One of the first conclusions to be drawn from this approach -- and we must say it openly -- is that the present situation is not to be compared with the aftermath of the last war. We are not repeating 1917-1923. We are in a far more backward situation. At that time the October revolution made all the difference. It was the inspiration for the German revolution. It meant that under the inspiration of the example of the Russian Bolshevik Party, there could be established very quickly although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc.

Now, however, we cannot expect such a process. Instead of mass revolutionary parties confronting reformist parties of relatively equal size, our tiny cadres confront two mass reformist parties. In France, our few hundreds confront a Stalinist party of nearly a million!

Under these conditions, can we proceed directly to the building of a revolutionary party? Or must we enter one of the reformist parties, constitute a faction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party?

It is, unfortunately, rather late to pose this question. It should have been posed two years ago, certainly a year ago. At the October 1943 plenum it was already clear to me that the Italian events demonstrated that throughout Europe the Communists and Socialist parties would emerge as the parties of the masses, but I failed to draw then the necessary conclusions from this fact concerning the question: party or faction?

The question, of course, cannot be answered for all countries uniformly on the basis of the general situation. But I am positive that in Italy, where the Socialist party disposes of considerable masses, our comrades should never have formed a party but should have gone into (in the case of most of them it would have simply meant, I believe, to remain in) the Socialist party. I am also positive that it would be a terrible error if our German comrades attempted immediately to form a party of their own in Germany; their place is in the Socialist party.

In Belgium, the Labor Party is still the party of the masses. I am sure that in the rosy hue of the days of liberation, our Belgian comrades could have gotten in and established themselves as a faction, with their own paper, etc. Today no doubt it would be far more difficult, but I suspect that it could still be done. In any event, I propose that the question be investigated without prejudice and with a cold-blooded realism.

In France, the problem is perhaps more complicated. But instead of looking at the difficulties, look coldly at the fact that the membership of our party is pitifully small. Perhaps direct entry into the SFIO will not be possible, but there can be found another way -- for example, through an understanding with Malraux' wing of the MLN.

I don't claim a priori that entry is imperative and can be achieved in every single country I have named. Investigation by you and those in each country will have to determine the facts. But what I demand is a real recognition of the problem, and a serious investigation without reservations in advance.

If the cost of entry in some cases is the temporary loss of a public faction organ and/or no guarantee of the right of constituting a faction, that is no argument against entry. Remind the comrades that in the U.S. we entered the SP with neither an organ or an admitted faction. For a time we were in one caucus with the miserable so-called Militants who allowed us about one innocuous article per month in their weekly and monthly organs. Two or three good pamphlets can serve as a substitute for a public faction organ for a while. It might be very advantageous to live for a while in one of the "left" factions instead of openly having one of your own.

As loyal members of the Socialist party you will be able to contact Communist party workers in a direct and political way which is scarcely open to you today.

I could go on at length on this question, but I leave further comment until I can grapple concretely with your objections, if any.

Whether in the Socialist party or outside, the primary approach to Communist and Socialist party members must be geared, not to our estimate of the situation but to their consciousness. This generalization will be readily agreed to by every comrade, but perhaps not some of the examples I offer.

The question of the monarchy in Italy and Belgium is an example.

I would like to know why the Belgian party's program of action was silent on the monarchy. If I recall correctly, the demand for a democratic republic was in the 1934-36 program of action. Why isn't it in the present program? The problem of problems is to tear the masses away from the SP and CP. The way to do this is on the vital political questions which actually arise and appear vital to the masses, and not on the questions we think vital. Ever since the expulsion of the Nazis, and with Leopold out of the country, the question of his return was brewing. It seems clear the masses felt very strongly on the question. When he did attempt to return, what was our task? To condemn the SP and CP ministers for saying they would resign if he returned, and to demand instead that they remain the government, expel the bourgeois-royalist ministers, arrest the royal family and proclaim the democratic republic. In other words, transform the dispute on Leopold into a question of abolition of the monarchy. This would be in consonance with the feelings of the masses and would appear to them as a reasonable and possible demand upon their leaders.

The European Secretariat's theses went on at great length about Italy but neither there nor in the resolution is there any reference to the demand for a democratic republic in Italy. Yet there the question is even more sharply posed than in Belgium, so sharply that the CP and SP have to give lip-service to it. Fortunately, our Italian party understands this question; it has the demand for the republic in its program of action. But I fear that it is too isolated from the masses to drive home the point (and perhaps the fact that they are not encouraged by the rest of the International causes the Italian comrades to hesitate to concentrate on this demand). If we have a faction in the Socialist party, it could make great capital contrasting the actual behavior toward the monarchy of the Socialist ministers with their lip-service to the struggle against the monarchy; demand that the SP and CP press concentrate on the demand for ending the monarchy; demand demonstrations to force Umberto to abdicate, etc., etc.

The monarchical question would enable us to say to the SP and CP members: Your leaders promise to lead you eventually to socialism and meanwhile point to the difficulties which prevent going now to socialism; but those difficulties do not prevent us from finishing now with the monarchy; can leaders and a program which cannot even get rid of the monarchy, can they be trusted to lead us to socialism?

I give the example of the monarchical question only because it is glaringly absent from your documents. But even the democratic demands which you do mention, you do so in such a way that I cannot help but consider perfunctory. For example, you mention the demand for the constituent assembly but hasten to add: "On the other hand, to launch

such demands in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, when there are actually in existence elements of dual power, would be the most unpardonable of errors." Here again you are bewitched by your idea of an "objectively revolutionary" situation and without considering the effect on that situation of the fact that the revolutionary party is still only a tiny cadre. In another paragraph you say "that in the present period the economic and democratic 'minimum' program is very rapidly out-distanced by the very logic of the mass struggle itself."

I will venture a prediction, dear comrades: that the "minimum" program will not be outdistanced in France until you have won the status of a legal party and Verite is a legal newspaper.

Everything should be subordinated to the fight for legality today in France. One or two issues of Verite were very good in this connection, particularly that devoted to the letter, Liberte de la Presse. But neither from Verite or other sources do I get an impression that the French party is making a really systematic fight for legality.

Such a fight requires among other things a perfectly legal defense committee in whose name it is to be made. I think I have some understanding of the difficulties in Paris today, but I am sure that some literary people like Gide, some politico-literaries like Malraux, etc. can be gotten to sign their names as members of a defense committee or to a petition asking the legalization of Verite. With this legal cover, the party members can be mobilized to go from door to door collecting names. Verite or its successor should be filled with letters endorsing your campaign, not only from big names but also from simple workers. You should ask the British and American parties to circulate petitions getting well-known people to petition DeGaulle for the legalization of Verite, and publish this material in France. In a word, the usual techniques of defense work.

Before you can hope to succeed in such a defense campaign, however, you have to believe in it and convince the party membership that it is important and can succeed. For my part, I am certain it can succeed. There is no irremovable political obstacle to it. If you carry out the campaign wholeheartedly, you can make life sufficiently miserable for the SFIO and CGT leaders to have them bestir themselves -- and they have good reasons of their own to want to see the Trotskyists legal -- to ask somebody in the DeGaulle entourage to have it done. France is entering a period of parliamentarism, however short it may prove to be, and in such a period, you should be able, if only you do what is necessary, to win legality.

During the fight for legality, do not be afraid of making Verite appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than real democracy. That is fighting for a great deal today! It should be a period in which, instead of negative criticisms of the SFIO and the CP and CGT, you should appear instead as urging them to certain positive actions. Don't be afraid that if you don't end each article saying the leaderships won't do what you're proposing, that you will be sowing illusions. The illusions are already there and you will not be adding to them. On the contrary, if you convince a worker that something positive should be done, and then his party doesn't do it, you will be teaching him to be critical of his party.

Two examples: Call upon the workers' organizations to inspire the workers to rally to the polls in the elections, by an agreement among the workers' organizations that they will elect a workers' representative as Provisional President of France. Take up the resistance's perfunctory demand for democratization of the army, and really explain its profound necessity, the lesson in this connection of Petainism, gather together all the horror tales about Petainists still leading the army, royalists, etc., etc. Explain the urgent need for political meetings of the soldiers, their need to protect themselves by having delegates. Take nothing for granted but argue the question as if the workers had never heard of it before. Give it a legal handle, by urging that the workers' delegates in the coming Assembly include it in the new constitution.

Instead of continuing, let me refer you to the Program of Action of 1934 for France, practically all of which is apropos today. But before you can apply it, you must rid yourself of all traces of a conception of the "objectively revolutionary" situation today. The absence of the revolutionary party -- and it is absent -- changes the whole situation. Instead of saying, "Only the revolutionary party is lacking", we must instead say, at least to ourselves, "The absence of the revolutionary party transforms the conditions which otherwise would be revolutionary into conditions in which one must fight, so far as agitation is concerned, for the most elementary demands."

I must close now. But I hope to continue very soon.

With warmest greetings,

Felix Morrow

November 15, 1945

TO ALL SECTIONS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:

Dear Comrades,

The dispute in the SWP during the past two years has not been in any sense a dispute peculiar to the American party. It has been from the first a dispute over questions which are far more important to Europe in the first instance than to America. In the end the errors of the SWP majority will also have catastrophic consequences in America; but the political situation in this country moves so slowly that serious consequences of the errors (i.e., serious not merely for the internal party situation but also serious in the sense of their failure to solve the problems of the masses) may not be glaringly perceivable for a long time. In Europe, however, the questions on which we have fought have a burning importance. And Europe is the continent where the fate of mankind for a whole historical epoch will be decided in the next few years by the capacity or incapacity of the Fourth International. It is in this very direct sense that we declare that the aim of our faction is the re-arming of the Fourth International.

Although not affiliated with the Fourth International, the SWP was ideologically the political center of the Trotskyist movement during the war. Operating under incomparably more favorable conditions than our European comrades, the SWP was in a position to study and clarify the tasks of the movement. Had the SWP done this work, it might have saved the European movement years of groping, errors and painful reorientation.

Instead the SWP evaded its responsibility. Comrade Logan's attempt to involve the SWP leadership in a discussion of the tasks of the European movement under Nazi occupation were evaded and resisted.

We of the minority share the blame for this de-politicalization. We permitted this situation to develop for several years without openly and directly resisting it. In 1943, however, we did begin to resist. As a result we initiated the discussion on problems of the European movement which resulted in the dispute which still continues.

The October 1943 Plenum resolution of the SWP was a piece of ultra-leftist braggadocio which could serve only to disorient the Fourth International. It did serve to disorient it. Published in the September-November 1944 issue of Quatrieme Internationale as the views of the largest Trotskyist party on "Perspectives and Tasks of the European Revolution," it buttressed the position of the ultra-left tendencies in the European movement. This could have been alleviated had the European comrades also had the opportunity simultaneously to study the views of the SWP minority. But the SWP majority leaders not only prohibited publication of the SWP minority documents in Fourth International following the Plenum, but also prohibited their distribution to the party membership. The pretext was that since the majority and minority leaders were shortly to go to prison, the documents should not be issued until the principals to the dispute returned. The documents were finally made available to the SWP

membership on the eve of the November 1944 convention. Nor was this done because the party regime yielded to the entreaties of the minority; it was only because one of the documents had reached the Workers Party which had published it. Even then the minority documents were not sent to Europe. When I returned from prison at the end of January 1945, I found that the minority's views on the European questions were still unknown on the continent. Meanwhile, as I have said, the publication of the majority's resolution in the September-November 1944 Quatrieme Internationale had contributed to the support of the ultra-left tendencies and the disorientation of the European movement.

Nevertheless it must be emphasized that the SWP leadership's false views were not peculiar to it. Peculiar to it are its vile methods: its suppression of the minority documents, its falsification of the view of the minority, its later shifting of its position without admitting its errors, its redoubling of its abuse against the minority which had forced it to shift, its miseducation of the membership by these methods, etc. In "The Balance Sheet of the European Discussion" (May 1945), I have explained these methods of the Cannon faction.

It is extremely important, however, to understand that the political views expressed by the Cannon faction were also shared by the ultra-left tendencies in Europe. In publishing the SWP 1943 Plenum resolution in the September-November 1944 Quatrieme Internationale, the editors introduced it by a note which stated:

"The members of the European sections of the Fourth International will not fail to note the striking coincidence of the general line of this text with that of the resolutions of the European Conference of February 1944. This is a further proof of the solidity of the programme of the Fourth International and of the organic ties that unite all the sections in their thought and action."

And in the following number of Quatrieme Internationale (January-February 1945) appeared a new Resolution of the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International which declared that events had confirmed the perspectives of the February 1944 resolutions.

I shall not repeat here my criticisms of the European resolutions of February 1944 and January 1945, which I analyzed in my letter of July 10 to the European Secretariat, and copies of which I sent to the European sections. I attach herewith a copy of that letter.

The fact that the European line of the Cannon faction was shared by the European Secretariat makes even more clear that the aim of the SWP minority is nothing less than the re-arming of the Fourth International.

The "clever" polemicists of the SWP will say, (have already said it of us during the Plenum and Convention disputes, are saying it of the Workers Party and will soon enough say it again of us) that in speaking of re-arming the Fourth International we are proposing to

abandon the perspective of proletarian revolution. This is a deliberate lie.

There is no need to repeat here the views of the SWP minority on the perspective and tasks in Europe. You have them in our documents of the October 1943 Plenum; our pre-convention and convention documents of the November 1944 convention; our writings since then. From these you know that there is no basis whatever for the lie of Cannon that we are abandoning the proletarian revolution. With this brazen lie Cannon is trying to cover up his responsibility for disorienting the Fourth International.

Whence the disorientation? There is a common source for both Cannon's political (not his organizational) errors and those of the European Secretariat. That source is the clinging blindly to old prognostications long after events have demonstrated that they are no longer valid.

At the outset of the war we all held in common with Trotsky a perspective which had two principal ingredients:

1. That in the course of the war the Soviet Union would either be regenerated or would become capitalist. In either case we would be through with the problem of Stalinism.

2. That, thanks to the ravages of the war and freed of the incubus of Stalinism, the European proletariat would surge forward in a wave of proletarian revolution in the course of the war (the first revolution, Trotsky thought, would come early in the war) on a greater scale than in 1917-1921. This did not necessarily mean immediate establishment of Soviet power, but it certainly meant the emergence of great mass parties of the Fourth International. (By 1948, Trotsky was sure, the Trotskyist membership would number in the millions.)

Trotsky himself tried to teach us that it is impossible to guess in advance the tempo of development for a long period, and that in the course of events it is necessary to introduce the necessary correctives in our estimate. Trotsky himself, had he lived, would have been the first to introduce such correctives. He was never afraid to say he had been wrong. He laughed at those who turned his tentative estimates into Holy Scripture.

Just this, however, is what the Cannonites here and the European Secretariat abroad did -- they clung to Trotsky's 1940 estimates after events had made imperative correcting those estimates.

By 1943 it was clear to us that this concept of the revolutionary tempo was erroneous. Hence at the October 1943 Plenum we insisted on adjusting the movement to the existing reality: the masses in the hands of the traditional workers' parties; the bourgeois-democratic development in western Europe; the democratic illusions of the masses; the small groups of the Fourth International; the burning need to re-adjust ourselves by means of the struggle for democratic and transitional demands as the road to the masses. You have the documents which record how viciously the Cannon faction fought against this re-adjustment. You know how even such a simple Marxist idea as the

democratic demand for the republic in Italy and Belgium met with vilification and falsification.

Now Cannon would like very much to forget the intervening two years. His lieutenants write in the latest Fourth International: "But the revolutionary tempo has proven slower than Trotsky anticipated. Therefore? Therefore it is necessary for the revolutionary vanguard to adjust its sights and regulate its tactics in accordance with the facts." (November, p. 324.)

Just this is what we have proposed since 1943 -- to regulate our tactics in accordance with the facts. In order to conceal his own mistake of 1943, Cannon prefers to place the blame on Trotsky's 1940 estimate which we all shared and which was justified at that time. Cannon takes good care in the above-quoted editorial not to indicate what kind of tactics are now dictated by his belated recognition of the mistake in tempo, for they are precisely the tactics advocated by the SWP minority.

Instead Cannon proceeds to redoubled abuse of the Workers Party (which shared our views on the European tempo) and of "other disoriented ex-Trotskyists," meaning by this snide reference the SWP minority. Here again, as in the December 1944 Fourth International editorial, which we analyzed in "The Balance Sheet of the European Discussion," the Cannonites redouble their abuse against those who were right and who (but only after events made it imperative) forced the Cannonites to formally abandon their ultra-left braggadocio.

But this kind of adaptation of line without recognition of the Cannonite errors of 1943 and of why the errors were made is worse than useless. In 1944, still resisting the correction, Cannon enunciated his mad theory of the "objectively revolutionary" consequences of the Red Army's advance into eastern Europe and his proposal that the Warsaw guerillas subordinate themselves (i.e. deliver themselves) to the Red Army. Cannon wants to slide out of all this. But to permit him to do so would be to abandon the Marxist education of the membership of the Fourth International.

It is not merely a matter of acknowledging old errors, but of preventing new ones. Cannon's acknowledgment of a mistaken conception of the revolutionary tempo turns out to be a purely perfunctory gesture, while in actual fact Cannon insists on sticking to the formulas of 1940. To what fantastic lengths this leads him is now to be seen in Cannon's address on the anniversary of the October revolution, in which he says:

"Trotsky predicted that the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided in the war. That remains our firm conviction. Only we disagree with some people who carelessly think that the war is over. The war has only passed through one stage and is now in the process of regroupment and reorganization for the second. The war is not over, and the revolution which we said would issue from the war in Europe, is not taken off the agenda." (The Militant, November 17, 1945.)

Comrades, Cannon's formulas are not the exaggerations of an agitator in the heat of arousing workers to understand that war is inevitable under capitalism. No, Cannon's formulas are part of a programmatic speech, carefully designed in the light of the internal dispute in the SWP.

The formal party position is the opposite of Cannon's latest speech. The November 1944 convention resolution recognized that the war was coming to a close, that the reality for a whole historical period would be collaboration of the Big Three despite their differences, that this meant that the question of the defense of the Soviet Union recedes into the background and that the paramount task is the defense of the European proletariat against the Big Three. In line with this estimate, an editorial in the October 1945 Fourth International declares that Big Three collaboration would continue "for a whole period of time."

Still more explicitly, party policy was stated in the November 1945 Fourth International in an article by William F. Warde, "The Big Five at London":

"Nor is Washington in a mood to wage war. The tide of events is now running in the opposite direction. Reckless militarists and impatient mouthpieces for imperialism are agitating for an attack upon Russia before it acquires the secrets of atomic bomb manufacture. But the people here and throughout the world are not only sick of war but shudder at the thought of unloosing a third world war which can demolish civilization and destroy humanity. This growing revulsion against war bridles the war-mongers.

"Moreover America's capitalist rulers have their own material reasons for wishing peace. The recently concluded war was as costly as well as risky enterprise for them. They have not even begun coping with its consequences. They look forward longingly to the Pax Americana in which they can rule and exploit the world to their pocketbook's pleasure. They want now to cash in on the imperialist peace. . .

"But there exists an even stronger brake upon the war-making propensities of the powers. That is their common fear of the world revolution. The colonial slaves in Asia and Africa are rising up as an aftermath of the war. The peoples in Europe are restless and poised for revolutionary resistance. This fear of the rising revolutionary temper of the masses unites the Big Three in an unholy counter-revolutionary alliance. It restrains their representatives from accentuating differences too deeply and pushing their conflicts toward the breaking point. Stalin remains a firm ally of the Anglo-American imperialists in stamping out the revolutionary movements of the masses."

Scarcely was this in print, however, when Cannon heard that the SWP minority had opened a discussion on the Russian question. In his own inimitable way, therefore, Cannon proceeds to create an appropriate atmosphere in the party for a Russian discussion. Just as Stalin -- the analogy is inescapable -- beat the drums of the war danger whenever the Left Opposition wished to discuss, so Cannon declares in his speech:

"A tremendous wave of public sentiment against Russia, reminiscent of the early days of 1917-19, is being set into motion. The present agitation recalls again the days of the Soviet-Finnish war when every democrat, every liberal, every Russophobe, every anti-Stalinist, was waving the flag for war against the Soviet Union in the service of American imperialism. It was a little difficult, and it took some courage and independence of judgment, to stand up against that terrific anti-Russian wave of sentiment and propaganda at the time of the Soviet-Finnish war. We see the same thing developing again today. . . ."
(The Militant, November 17, 1945, p. 7)

This miserable fabrication is directly refuted by the line of the October and November issues of Fourth International, but that has not prevented the editors, including William F. Warde, from hailing Cannon's new line as a masterpiece (incidentally, it is Cannon's first political venture since his proposal to the Warsaw guerillas to subordinate themselves to the Red Army).

That the imperialists are already preparing for the next war is of course a truism, just as they began preparing World War II the day after World War I. But before a new war can take place, a whole series of economic and political pre-conditions must come into existence. I shall shortly write a separate article on this question. Here it must suffice to say that any serious Marxist knows that the preconditions for World War III have not matured, that World War II is over, that between it and the next war is the obstacle of the war-weary and politically-awakening masses of Britain and western Europe, that even the American masses cannot for a whole period be driven to war, that the next war can take place only after new crushing defeats of the European proletariat. Yet Cannon, driven by his blind factionalism, dares to say World War II isn't over, that war against the Soviet Union is imminent, that therefore the fate of the Soviet Union is still to be decided "in the war" and that "the revolution which we said would issue from the war in Europe" is yet to come in "the second stage" of World War II.

Cannon is driven by his blind factionalism but also by something which is even more important for us to struggle against: he represents today the crassest example in the Fourth International of those who cling to outworn formulas at any cost. Trotsky said the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided by the war; Cannon is determined to save that formula and in that mad venture is ready to make still greater errors, errors indeed which approach the outer

limits of sanity: "We disagree with some people who carelessly think that the war is over."

The Trotskyist movement would become a madhouse if it followed Cannon's line. The movement must reject Cannon's insane attempt to save the formulas of 1940. We must openly and explicitly correct previous errors in order the better to formulate our policy for the present and future.

And at this point we must call attention to the conduct of the European Secretariat. It shared the errors of the Cannonites, and underlined this fact by its note of September-November 1944 calling attention to their identity of views. However, in the March-June 1945 issue of Quatrieme Internationale a very different line begins to be enunciated by the European Secretariat, both in recognizing the actual tempo of events and in positively advocating the democratic and transitional demands appropriate to the actual situation in Europe. But neither in the programmatic editorial in the March-June 1945 issue nor elsewhere in Quatrieme Internationale does the European Secretariat explain that it is changing its line. Had it done so, and explained honestly why it did so, it would have contributed to the education of the membership of the international. But this unannounced shift in line can only miseducate the membership. Moreover, such an unannounced shift inevitably is accompanied by an attempt to maintain continuity with the (unadmittedly) wrong resolutions of the past, so that the March-June editorial is still permeated by much of the old nonsense.

In a private letter to me of August 8, 1945, the secretary of the European Secretariat, Patrice, writes urging me not to publish my letter of July 10 to the European Secretariat: "If it is an 'attack' I strongly urge you not to issue it until it is possible to consult upon it, and clear up any misunderstandings, since it is my impression on the spot that the European Secretariat's position and the position of the SWP minority are in about 75% agreement. In any case, it is the fact that the European Secretariat's position and that of the SWP majority are in practically total disagreement."

Where had the European Secretariat recorded the fact that it is in "practically total disagreement" with the SWP majority? The last recorded statement on its attitude toward the SWP majority's views is that of January-February 1945 when it declared the views of the SWP majority and the European Secretariat to be identical. Does not political clarity demand that a complete reversal on this question likewise be recorded, and at the earliest possible moment, in the same place -- the Quatrieme Internationale?

To this day the SWP membership believe that the position of the European Secretariat and that of the Cannon leadership is identical. And how, indeed, shall I argue the question? By waving Patrice's private letter as proof to the contrary?

The August 1945 Conference of the British party adopted a quite comprehensive resolution on the European situation. In the pre-conference discussion inside the party, the leadership verbally indicated that the resolution was in agreement with the views of the

SWP minority. But neither in the resolution itself, nor anywhere else in writing, has the leadership indicated the relation of its views to those of the SWP majority and minority or of the European Secretariat. Can such a method serve the education of the International? An SWP member reads one after another the SWP majority's views, the changing views of the European Secretariat, the contrary views of the British party -- and thinks he is reading documents all belonging to one line.

One of the brightest spots in Europe is the work of the Belgian party. At least since January 1945 (I have not seen its previous literature) it has quite sure-footedly followed a policy in realistic consonance with the situation. It was a little belated in raising the slogan of the republic, but when the Leopold crisis developed it plunged into the struggle for the republic with great success. As early as January 1945 it recognized that the scattered workers' councils which had arisen (Liege, Charleroi) had reduced themselves to trade union bodies and that the democratic illusions of the masses necessitated concentrating on the struggle for immediate elections to Parliament. The Belgian party press has been a model of revolutionary agitation under the present conditions in Belgium.

But these conditions are also the conditions of the rest of western Europe. Meanwhile, next door, in France, our comrades until the very eve of the elections to the Constituent Assembly conducted themselves very differently than the Belgian comrades. Did the Belgian leadership intervene as was their right and duty, to correct the policy in France? Did the Belgian leadership propose a new resolution of the European Executive Committee to replace the wrong ones of February 1944 and January 1945? We have heard nothing of such proposals.

Under these conditions, can one speak of the Fourth International existing as a centralized political body? Certainly it did not exist politically during the war. After the war, the European Secretariat should have become in actual fact the center.

But this has not happened.

What are the views of the International on the European situation? Those of the European Secretariat's February 1944 and January 1945 resolutions or those of the March-June 1945 editorial in Quatrieme? Those of the SWP majority or minority? Those of the British resolution? Nobody knows.

What are the views of the International on the so-called national question in Europe -- i.e. revolutionary tactics under the Nazi occupation? In passing, a signed article in Quatrieme indicates serious errors were made on this question. But what are the views of the European Secretariat? This is not a question of the dead past; it is impossible to formulate tactics for occupied eastern Europe today without a correct position on the national question.

What are the views of the International on the defense of the Soviet Union? According to the last statement of the European Secretariat, our views remain what they always were. But the SWP (under

Comrade Natalia's pressure) adopted a resolution in November 1944 saying that the question of defense of the USSR has receded into the background; something similar was adopted by the French party. Nobody challenges Comrade Natalia's declaration that the question of defense of the USSR has "fallen away." But without a fixed position of the International, Cannon bends his line to his faction needs, as we have already explained. Cannon cynically violates the majority's own resolution of November 1944 and it is true enough that he is quite capable of equally violating a resolution of the International. But if the International existed politically, it could then call a Cannon to order.

The re-arming of the Fourth International is not a simple matter of calling a World Congress. The existing disorientation necessitates a serious discussion in every section on all the questions indicated. A World Congress is urgently needed, to organize the discussion, if possible to adopt some draft resolutions on some of the questions and submit them to the sections, to accept the adhesion of the Trotskyist parties which have arisen during the war, to elect a functioning Executive Committee as broadly representative as possible, etc. But such a World Congress, urgently important as it is, will merely begin the re-arming of the Fourth International. The subsequent discussion alone can complete the re-arming.

In preparation for the World Congress, we make the following specific requests of the leadership of each section:

(1) To discuss and take a position on the line of the February 1944 and January 1945 resolutions of the European Secretariat and on the line of the SWP majority.

(2) To discuss and take a position on the line of the SWP minority documents on Europe.

(3) To endorse the position of the SWP minority documents on unity with the Workers Party; pending unity the World Congress shall accept the Workers Party as a Trotskyist Party.

Our proposal (3) explicitly means that we wish the Workers Party to participate in the task of re-arming the International. We believe that the Workers Party on its side has contributions to make to this task, contributions which, despite our disagreements with a number of its positions, including that on the Russian question, we believe will be very valuable. Cannon's opposition to unity means also of course to exclude the Workers Party from the international discussion. We cannot believe that the comrades of the International will agree with him.

Cannon denies that the Workers Party is a Trotskyist tendency. He is blind to an understanding of the fact that Trotskyism would not be a living movement if in its twenty years of existence it did not give rise to several different tendencies which, however, remain Trotskyist. Events -- and such events! -- inevitably evoke more than one answer from various comrades who, nevertheless, remain equally revolutionary. If proof were needed, Cannon provides it: he has now changed places with Shachtman on the question of unity. In 1940

Cannon was for unity when the defense of the Soviet Union was a burning question; now, when the formal position of the SWP is that the question of defense of the USSR has receded into the background, Cannon is against unity, whereas Shachtman has taken an entirely correct position for unity.

The comrades abroad must understand clearly that there are three Trotskyist tendencies in the United States: the SWP majority; the SWP minority; the Workers Party. The original ties binding together the SWP majority and minority were above all the question of unity and the defense of the Soviet Union. These ties have been dissolved. The defense of the Soviet Union has receded into the background and the whole Russian question is posed for re-evaluation by the International. On unity we are in complete agreement with the Workers Party. We are far closer to the Workers Party than to the SWP majority on the question of democratic and transitional demands and other tasks in Europe. There are other questions on which we would vote with the SWP majority against the WP tendency in a united party; perhaps indeed, numerically, these other questions are more numerous than those on which we agree with the WP. But the questions on which we agree with the WP are today of such decisive importance that they mean that our tendency is closer to that of the WP than to that of the SWP majority.

For, as we have explained in our previous documents, the question of unity has profound political and organizational implications. Unity means a democratic-centralist party as against the monolithic tendency of Cannonism. Unity means an attitude toward differences of opinion which recognizes that those who differ with us remain our comrades. Unity means to welcome attempts to go beyond what has already been said and to find what is new in the changing situation. Unity means a rejection of the notorious formula of E. R. Frank, spokesman for the SWP majority, that "we have a finished program." Unity means a living, thinking Trotskyist party which openly and honestly corrects its mistakes in order the better to avoid new ones. The refusal of the Cannonites to consummate unity is a crime against the revolutionary movement, as great if not greater than the crime of the WP comrades in splitting in 1940.

With this letter, we propose to open a continuing discussion with all sections. In the discussion, we are anxious to discuss all phases of the dispute in the SWP. But this dispute must be understood in its correct context, as a subordinate phase of the general task of re-arming the Fourth International. Under the existing conditions in the SWP, where not a single question is discussed in good faith, we find it quite useless to address ourselves exclusively to the SWP majority. We prefer to discuss with all those who really want to discuss. We shall send you our letters and articles and await your replies.

With comradely Greetings,

Felix Morrow
for the SWP Minority