

# The Tragedy of Spain

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## The role of foreign capital

July 19<sup>th</sup> was the anniversary of the day on which a gang of militarist adventurers rose against the republican regime in Spain and, with the assistance of outside powers and foreign troops, plunged the country into a bloody war. This murderous war has thus far devoured nearly a million human lives, among them thousands of women and children, and has transformed wide stretches of the country into desert wastes. The profound tragedy of this bloody drama lies in the fact that it is not just an ordinary civil war, but a struggle, as well, between two different foreign power-groups that is being waged today on Spanish soil. Two hostile imperialist camps are struggling for the natural resources of a foreign country and the strategic advantage of its coasts. The prosecution of this war is, moreover, having an unmistakable influence on the struggle of the Spanish people for freedom, and this influence is today constantly manifesting itself more clearly in the intestine warfare between the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary forces of the country.

One cannot understand the significance of these occurrences at all unless one takes sufficiently into account the powerful influence of the foreign capital that is invested in Spain. Here is the key to the attitude of England and France and their so-called "policy of neutrality," and at the same time the explanation of the ambiguous role which the government of Soviet Russia has played from the beginning, and still plays in the bloody tragedy of the Spanish people.

A point of decisive importance lies in the relation between Spanish agriculture and the industries of the country. So far as the ownership of the land is concerned, the soil of the country was before the revolution almost exclusively in the hands of Spanish owners, although the conditions in individual sections of the country were very different. In many provinces, especially in the north, small landowners constitute the overwhelming majority of the population; in others, in the Levante, for example, and in Catalonia, the soil is worked by small tenant farmers who have no proprietary rights in it; while in Andalusia and Estramadura the whole countryside belongs to a few large landowners, who operate it with hired labor.

In industry, however, a very different condition prevails. While retail trade and the small industries are found chiefly in the hands of Spaniards, the large industries and the most important commercial enterprises of the country are almost without exception controlled by outside capital, English capital being most strongly represented.

English capital is very extensively interested in the rich iron mines in the vicinity of Bilbao, even where the mines are nominally in the possession of Spanish owners. The very rich iron mining district of Orconera is almost completely under the control of English capitalists; the same is true in numerous other iron regions,

especially in the iron works of Desirto. The greater part of the dock facilities at Bilbao is owned by English capitalists; likewise the railways which carry the ores to the coast. English ship lines complete the connection between England and the Basque iron fields. Spanish iron plays a tremendous part in England's present rearmament program. And it is a fact that from the outbreak of the Fascist revolt till the fall of Bilbao the export of iron from there went to England exclusively.

Another important factor in Spanish mining is the English Rio Tinto Company, which exploits the richest copper mines in Spain, in the Huelva province. The home office of this company, which commands a capital of £3,750,000, is in London. Its president is Sir Auckland C. Geddes. The company was founded in 1873, and its concession from the Spanish government has no time limit. It has issued 450,000 shares of common, and 350,000 of preferred stock, representing altogether a million and a third pounds sterling. The Rio Tinto Company also owns rich sulphur and iron mines. Of the 540,000 tons of copper which Spain produces on the average every year, by far the largest part comes from the Huelva field. In August, 1936, this district fell into the possession of the rebels; but the Burgos junta hastened to assure the Rio Tinto Company by a special decree, that its rights would not be infringed and that the copper which the Fascist army required for military purposes would be paid for at the average market price.

Among the owners of the Rio Tinto Company we find the House of Rothschild, which is interested, besides, in numerous other large industrial enterprises in Spain, for example, in various railway lines, of which the most important is the Madrid-Zaragoza line. But the Rothschild family is very especially interested in the rich quicksilver mines of Almaden in the province of Ciudad Real, with which there is nothing to compare in the whole world. Spain is known as the world's largest producer of quicksilver, while Italy holds second, and the United States, third place. In 1934 Spain produced 1160 tons of this precious stuff; America only 532 tons. Quicksilver is one of the most indispensable requirements for warfare. One can understand, therefore, why foreign powers take such a great interest in Spain.

English capital is also prominently interested in the Spanish aluminum industry and in a whole series of industrial undertakings in Spanish railway building and machine construction. The well-known firm of Vickers-Armstrong is heavily interested in the "Sociedad Española de Construcción Naval" (Spanish Naval Construction Company), in the "International Paint Company," and in Spanish war industry. With these facts before his eyes one understands why the London city press has from the first displayed outspoken sympathy for the bloody enterprise of the Spanish military camarilla.

Another powerful factor in Spanish industrial life is the "Société Minèrere et Métallurgique de Peñarroya" (Mining and Metallurgical Company of Peñarroya), which has its home office in Paris and commands a capital of 309,375,000 francs.

This company was founded in 1881, and its concession from the Spanish government runs until 2003. The president of the company is Charles Emile Heurteau, known as one of the leading men in the capitalist Mirabaud group and closely associated with French war industry. Its managers are Frédéric Ledoux, interested in a long series of Spanish industrial enterprises, and Dr. Aufschlager, one of the best-known representatives of the German armament industry. On the board of directors of this organization are found a number of well known big European financial figures: Pierre Mirabaud, former manager of the Bank of France, Baron Robert Rothschild, Charles Cahen, brother-in-law of Baron Antony de Rothschild, Humbert de Wendel, director of the “Banque de l’Union Parisienne” and the international Suez Canal Company, the Italian, Count Errico San Martino di Valperga, and the two Spaniards, Count Ramonones and Marquis Villamejor, who are among the richest men in Spain.

The company has a monopoly on the operation of numerous mines and the industries connected with them and is especially heavily interested in the Spanish lead industry. Its name acquired ill-repute during the World War when it became known through an interpellation in the French Chamber that all the lead produced in Peñarroya was reserved for the German government, although the company’s most prominent representatives were good French patriots. But business is business.

This is only a short extract from a long list of the interests of outside capital in Spain. There are a whole lot more of them. Thus, it is generally known that the telephone exchange at Madrid is in the hands of an American company, while the Barcelona telephone system is under the control of British shareholders. But it would take too long completely to exhaust this important subject. We are only concerned to show that it is necessary to put a proper valuation on the powerful influence of the foreign capital invested in Spain, if one wishes to get a clear picture of recent events in that unhappy country.

It is self-evident that the representatives of foreign big capital must be keenly interested in the political developments in the Spanish situation. And here is found the answer to the question: Who has been providing the mutinous generals, who commanded no resources of their own, with the necessary financial means to keep their bloody crime against their own people going? Señor Juan March, the richest man in Spain, though he is in closest touch with foreign capital, would not have been able to do this alone. Everyone who was informed at all about internal conditions in Spain knew from the first where the money came from. It was no secret that the foreign managers of capital invested in Spain had every interest in supporting the conspiracy of the generals in order to put down the revolutionary labor movement of the country, which was spreading more and more vigorously, and which might endanger their Spanish monopolies. Of course it did not matter to

these men who governed in Spain. They were interested exclusively in the security of their invested capital and were ready to support any government that furnished the necessary guaranties for their purposes.

## The role of Germany and Italy

If the present occurrences in Spain had manifested themselves before the World War, the English government would certainly not have hesitated for an instant to aid the bloody work of the rebellious generals quite openly in order to protect English capital in Spain, as they had often done in similar cases. But the World War, with its inevitable political and economic consequences, had created a new situation in Europe, which had been greatly intensified by the victory of Fascism in Italy and Germany. The victory of Fascism had not only brought with it in those countries a powerful military establishment; it had also been the signal for a revival of the old imperialist ambitions, whose supporters were constantly on the lookout for fresh sources of assistance to enable them to extend their new system within and without and successfully overcome any opposition by England and France. And these new forces were incalculable, since they did not care a damn either for the prescribed formulas of the old diplomacy nor for solemn treaties, and shrunk from no means that promised the result they desired.

It was only natural that Spain's enormous riches in iron, copper, zinc, quicksilver, sulphur, magnesium, and other valuable minerals should powerfully arouse the avarice of the Fascist states. It was no secret that England was not yet sufficiently prepared for a new war, and that France could hardly undertake one without her military support, so Hitler and Mussolini played their high trumps in an effort to extract the greatest possible profit from the situation.

It is generally known that not only were Italy and Germany informed in every detail of the planned Fascist uprising in Spain, but that they furthered it by every means at their disposal, so as to create constantly greater difficulties for England and France. General Sanjurjo, the soul of the Fascist conspiracy, who at the very outset fell a victim to his own treacherous behavior, just before the occurrences in Spain, had paid a visit to both Hitler and Mussolini, and it was clear that the conversations in Berlin and in Rome had not been about a projected picnic.

If it had not been for German and Italian Fascism the rebellion of the Spanish generals would have caused the English government no headaches. A military dictatorship and an eventual return to monarchy would even have been welcome to the clever politicians on the Thames after it had been proved that the weak republican regime in Spain, afflicted, as it was, by constant convulsions, would not be able permanently to provide the necessary political security for the inter-

ests of British capital. In London they had long been accustomed to believe that no changes worth mentioning in the internal policies of Spain and Portugal were possible without calling the English government into council. Both countries had long ago lost their political and economic independence and no longer played any part in the politics of the great European powers. They would, therefore, without doubt have put the necessary means at Franco's disposal to bring the Spanish people to their knees and in general to lay down the law for them, so as to provide the necessary guaranties for British interests.

But today things were different. Behind Franco are the political demands of Hitler and Mussolini, who insist on their rights to the mineral resources of Spain and to strategic points for the domination of the Mediterranean. For, to the painful surprise of British diplomats, Mussolini has openly declared that the Mediterranean is an Italian sea. They don't easily forget a thing like that in England. Under these circumstances a victory for Franco would not only be a serious threat to British monopoly in Spain; it might even, given the right conditions, develop into a grave danger to the British world empire.

They know in London very well that the statement which is being made again and again with ever increasing emphasis that Franco has promised Mussolini the Balearic Isles and is ready to turn over certain strategic points in Spanish Morocco to Germany and Italy in compensation for the assistance he has received, is not just idle rumor. And they are also very well aware in England, who it is that is using all his skill in stirring up the anti-British tendencies of Arabian nationalism in Egypt and Palestine to make more trouble for England in the Near East.

And that Franco and his fellow conspirators stand much closer to Germany and Italy than to England and France is also a matter about which they have no illusions in London. The Spanish military camarilla planned their revolt in collusion with Hitler and Mussolini and have carried it out with their assistance. Besides, they were intellectually and emotionally much more closely allied to the two Fascist powers because of intrinsic kinship with their reactionary purposes and with the brutal barbarism of their methods. Backed by Italy and Germany, Franco could lead his trumps against England and France and at the same time permit himself the use of language which had never before been heard in Spain addressed to a great European power.

The English government could, therefore, not for an instant mistake the seriousness of the situation. If they had been certain in London that the defeat of Franco would lead merely to the firm establishment of the bourgeois republic, they would in all probability have taken a different attitude from the beginning. They would not in that case, by excessive readiness to yield, have made Hitler and Mussolini ever more shameless in their pretensions and have encouraged them in a course on

which there is, for a dictatorial government, no turning back, because its prestige is linked with the personal success of the dictator.

But the Fascist revolt in Spain led to a release of the social-revolutionary forces of the people, which had been bottled up for many years and which now burst forth suddenly, and before their time. Spain was ripe for the revolution. However, the inner corruption of the old monarchist regime, which had been inaccessible to reason and which resisted even the slightest reform, had entailed that the revolution must today take on a much more comprehensive and more profoundly social character.

## **The situation in Spain before the revolt**

The republic had in a few years worn out its prestige with the people. The eternal irresolution of the republican party politicians, their dread of any decisive step, which led to a steadily growing recombination of the old reactionary elements of the country, the systematic persecution of the labor movement, which was directed with especial brutality against the C.N.T. (Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo — the anarcho-syndicalist labor unions), eight or nine thousand of whose members were from time to time introduced to the prisons of the republic, the bloody incidents of Pasajes, Jerica, Burriana, Epila, Arnedo, and Casas Viejas, and particularly and above all, the bloody suppression of the uprising in Asturias in October, 1934, by African troops, with its horrible accompaniments — all this had contributed in richest measure thoroughly to disgust the Spanish people with the republic, which was for them only a new facade, behind which lay hidden the same old powers of darkness.

And, as a matter of fact, the clerical and monarchist elements were raising their heads ever more threateningly and were seeking with stubborn persistence to reunite their scattered forces and to regain their lost position. When, then, after the fall of the Samper ministry in October, 1934, three members of the “Catholic Popular Action” founded by the Fascist, Gil Robles, were included in the new Lerroux cabinet, everybody knew in what direction they were headed, and there could be no further thought of a parliamentary solution of the political and social crisis. The uprising in Asturias was the immediate outcome of the situation, and its cruel suppression, with its utter disregard of every principle of humanity, only poured oil on the flames, and opened an abyss between the government and the people which could never again be bridged.

That open reaction could never attain to victory without encountering the desperate resistance of those great masses of the people which found their revolutionary point of departure in the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. (Iberian Anarchist Federation),



was inevitable. What had been possible in Germany was unthinkable in Spain. The guaranty for this was found in the revolutionary and libertarian character of the Spanish workers' and peasants' movement, which had thus far maintained itself by years of obstinate struggle against all reactions. In fact, a few months after the occurrences in Asturias, there swept over Spain a new revolutionary wave, which also put its stamp on the elections in February of 1936.

The victory of the so-called Popular Front was in no respect a vote of popular confidence in the republic, but merely a proclamation by the great masses that they were in no mind to abandon the field to the reaction without resistance and allow it to set up the monarchy again. That the elections could not bring any effective solution of the situation and that the conflict between revolution and counter-revolution would have to be carried on outside of parliament, was clear to everyone who could see at all. And it very soon became clear also that the new Popular Front government was not competent to deal with the situation, and it was quickly confronted with problems which it neither could solve nor had any desire to solve. That the forces of reaction had no intention of allowing an electoral defeat to end the matter, but were now fully determined to work out a real decision by the armed hand, was revealed very soon after the assembling of the new parliament. The frank appeal of the Monarchist deputy, Calvo Sotelo, to the leaders of the army to overthrow the republic was the first move in which the coming events cast their shadow before them.

It is generally known today that President Azaña was informed of the intentions of the generals; but the cabinet did not move a finger to avert the danger that threatened. Just as the thoroughly criminal indecision of the republican government had in 1932 been responsible for Sanjurjo's military revolt, so this time, also, the so-called Popular Front government permitted the militaristic brigands to weave traitorous plans in peace, without taking a single step to oppose them. When the first news of the uprising in Morocco reached Spain, the government was actually just on the point of turning over the war ministry to General Mola. But it was then too late; Mola was already leading his troops on Madrid to administer the *coup de grâce* to the republic.

All of these things were well known in Spain. The anti-Fascist press, and especially the daily papers of the C.N.T., had often raised its voice in warning against the approaching danger; but the Popular Front government, with impudent frivolity, flung all precautions to the wind. Then after the Fascist revolt had broken out and had been put down in Barcelona in a few days by the heroic resistance of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., thus ridding Catalonia of the enemy and bringing to naught the fine-spun plan for overcoming Spain by a well-directed strategic surprise, it is easy to understand that the workers of Catalonia could not stop half way, if they did not wish at the next opportunity to be once more exposed to the same

danger. And so there ensued the collectivization of the land and the taking over of the industrial plants by the workers' syndicates; and this movement, which was released by the initiative of the C.N.T. and F.A.I., swept on with irresistible force into Aragon, the Levante, and other parts of the country. The revolt of the Fascists had started Spain on her way to a social revolution.

It was this turn in affairs which filled the managers of the foreign capital invested in Spain with profound anxiety for the future of their monopolies. If the revolt of the generals against their own people had been purely a Spanish affair, the English government would certainly not have hesitated to protect the interests of British capital in Spain. The turning over of a whole people to the hangman would have caused the English diplomats no serious pangs of conscience, so long as the desired purpose could be achieved.

## The role of England and France

The policies of Hitler and Mussolini had put the Conservative government of England in a difficult position. The complete defeat of Franco would open un-dreamed of vistas to the new course of development in Spain and give a powerful impulse to the work of social reconstruction already begun. A decisive victory for Franco must, however, on the basis of all reasonable presumptions, work out even more disastrously and greatly strengthen the political position of Italy and Germany in Europe. On the one hand it might be even more dangerous to the English monopolies in Spain than a social revolution, which might under the circumstances perhaps be obliged for a longer or shorter term to make certain concessions to foreign capital in order to avoid a violent clash with foreign powers. On the other hand, moreover, it could but entail for England and France political consequences of unpredictable scope. In his speech of June 27<sup>th</sup> in Wurtzburg, Hitler had expressly stated that Germany had the greatest interest in Franco's victory, as she urgently needed Spanish ore for the carrying out of her four year plan. In the official report this passage in Hitler's address was, it is true, greatly softened, to wipe out the bad impression in England; but they knew there anyway what the game was being played for. The excited debate over the Spanish situation in the English Lower House showed this very clearly. In 1935 Germany had drawn vast supplies of iron and copper ore from Spain; but the military preparations in England greatly reduced the supply from this source.

But Italy is, if possible, even more interested in the natural resources of Spain than is Germany. Her production of iron and steel runs at present to a million tons a year, while three million tons are needed annually for her actual requirements, and the deficiency has to be made up from abroad. Spain, however, produces every

year seven million tons of iron. Under these circumstances one can easily understand how Mussolini's mouth must water for the rich iron deposits of the Basque provinces.

But in the present struggle of the great European powers over Spain not only the treasures of her soil and her mines are involved, but much besides. A decisive victory for Franco would throw Spain completely into the arms of Italy and Germany and give to the power policies of Mussolini and Hitler a point of support that would put England and France in the greatest danger. The domination of the Spanish coasts by a combined German and Italian fleet with suitable harbor facilities for the air-forces of both countries, would cut France off from her colonies and greatly imperil the transport of French colonial troops from North Africa in case of war, if it did not make it utterly impossible. This is apart from the fact that a Fascist neighbor beyond the Pyrenees would make the defense of the French frontier much more difficult.

For England, moreover, the strategic position of Gibraltar would in such a case have lost its value. And a limit would also be put on England's domination of the Mediterranean, and English hegemony in the Near East would be deprived of its strategic basis. Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and even India would be directly threatened, and the supplementing of nationalist propaganda in those countries by a well devised Italian propaganda would do the rest. They're not going to forget Mussolini's speech to the Lybians, in which he played himself up as the protector of Islam and the movement for Arabian unity, so very quickly in England.

And in this situation lies the explanation of England's whole attitude on the Spanish question. It determined the so-called "neutrality policy" of the English and French diplomats, which seems unintelligible only to those who think that the present struggle between two different power groups in Europe is concerned only with abstract problems like democracy and Fascism. To one who is naive enough to judge the thing from that point of view the seeming blindness of the English and French statesmen must of course cause a severe headache; but he will not have understood the heart of the question at all.

Political catchwords like Fascism and democracy will perhaps play a part in the coming war, just as the slogan, "war of democracy against Prussian militarism," served its purpose in the World War. That Russian tsarism was then on the side of "militant democracy" might, to be sure, have seemed rather suspicious even to the credulous, if in that great era of hypocrisy one's own thoughts had still been able to play any part at all.

No, the conservative potentates on the Thames are neither blind nor slow of understanding. Who says they are, deceives himself and others, and proves by it only that he himself is blind to facts as they are. Those men know very well indeed what they are doing. They may miscalculate and be taken by surprise by events,

which in the last analysis are stronger than their fine-spun diplomatic network; for the hazardous game of dictators is just as incalculable as is revolution, which has its own logic. But they really are not blind.

The tactics of English diplomacy has always been to play one power against the others in order to maintain England's hegemony on the Continent. These tactics were determined by the position of world power of the British Empire. England could keep her hold on her colonies, scattered over every continent, only so long as she was able to guarantee them protection against foreign attack. But this is possible only so long as English prestige in Europe remains unshaken. The instant when England loses her political influence in Europe there will be no more certainty of the internal cohesion of her world empire.

As long as the sea supplied natural fortifications for the mother country and the English coast could be protected against any attack from without by a strong fleet, it was relatively easy for the English holders of power to maintain their dominant position in Europe. And besides, the tremendous economic superiority of the British Empire put into the hands of her statesmen the necessary instrument for exercising an effective influence on the policies of the continental states and preventing a strong anti-British coalition on the Continent. Napoleon had experienced that to his sorrow. But by the conquest of the air and the tremendous development of modern war technique the old status has been completely altered and an invasion of the British Island Empire is entirely within the realm of the possible, provided a strong alliance of the great powers of Europe should combine for the purpose.

For this reason England is today more than ever dependent upon strong alliances to meet this peril. In this connection the helmsmen of the English state are not worried at all over the choice of allies, so long as they serve her purpose. That is the reason why the whole English foreign policy since the World War, from Sir John Simon to Anthony Eden, has been just a simple sabotage of the so-called "League of Nations" which kept her hands free for the alliances which would offer her the greatest advantage in any given circumstances.

English diplomats pursued these same tactics with relation to the Spanish question from the very beginning, after having first rendered France and Prussia compliant to their purpose. On the one hand they left no means untried to make a victory for the social revolution in Spain impossible; on the other hand they permitted the government in Valencia just enough support to prevent a quick victory for Franco, which just at the moment could but be of great advantage to Italy and Germany. It is to the interest of England and France that the murderous war shall take its course until, at the proper moment, it can be ended by a compromise which shall give to neither side the possibility of dictating the terms of the peace which they wish to force upon the Spaniards from without.

The longer the war lasts the harder it must become for Hitler and Mussolini to continue their support of Franco, the more completely will the material resources of Germany and Italy be drained with time and the two powers weakened for a world war. It is very well known that economic development in Germany and Italy during the last two years has taken on a character that is leading them at constantly increasing speed toward a catastrophe. But Franco is wholly dependent upon the assistance of the two Fascist states as long as he refuses to accede to the secret conditions offered by England and France. Today he is demanding from his allies 125,000 more men, five hundred flying machines, fifty batteries of artillery, with a corresponding number of tanks, so that he may be able to open a new offensive against Madrid, and at the same time on the Teruel front. The struggle for Bilbao cost him 20,000 men and twenty percent of his war supplies.

Even if Germany and Italy should decide to render him this further aid, that will not alter the general situation. England and France will then take the Valencia government under their arm to restore the disturbed equilibrium. The Loyalist offensive which was instituted on the Madrid front and in the south immediately after the fall of Bilbao is the best proof of this.

## Under the lash of foreign powers

In this game of chess in Spain the English diplomats have been doing everything possible to avert the danger of a European war, which just at this time cannot be desirable for England. They have calmly put up with all Hitler's and Mussolini's brazen effrontery, a thing which must seem incomprehensible to many; but they have never for one second lost sight of their goal. They were ready to purchase peace "at almost any price," as the English foreign minister, Eden, expressed it; but they were also very clear in their own minds as to just how far they would go in this dangerous game. Chamberlain's speech before his constituents in Birmingham on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and Eden's speech in Coughlan on the same day abolished the last doubt as to this.

Both speeches were directed at the addresses of Hitler and Mussolini and left nothing to be desired in clarity. Eden stated that England had no interest of any kind in Spain's form of government; but he promptly added: "*That does not mean, however, that we shall not be interested if British interests within the land or maritime borders of Spain and in commercial lines of communication along the Spanish coast are brought into question.*" The British foreign minister left, therefore, no doubt that England is unwilling to concede to any European power a dominant position in the Mediterranean, since this would of necessity imperil British hegemony in the

Near East, nor that his government is determined in case of need to turn to war as a last resort to protect the vitally important interests of the British world empire.

It is no secret that England has hitherto left no means untried and has brought the strongest kind of pressure to bear upon the Spanish government to bring about an understanding with Franco at the proper time. This was the only way by which Franco could be induced to withdraw from the influence of Italy and Germany and accept the conditions of peace proposed by England and France. For this purpose Anglo-French diplomacy maintained connections with both sides, and foreign agents swarmed over Spain to create the necessary sentiment for an agreement. When the fall of Madrid seemed inevitable they even got in touch with General Miaja in an attempt to win him to a military dictatorship, for which he seemed to the outside diplomats to be the fitting person. Miaja rejected the proposal for reasons best known to himself.

All these maneuvers did not remain hidden from the Spanish revolutionaries. The daily C.N.T. press and other organs of the anti-Fascist front carried almost every week a new exposure of the underground activity of the foreign diplomats and their henchmen in Spain. And the big bourgeois dailies abroad took all possible pains to make an understanding with Fascism seem plausible to the vacillating elements in Spain. Thus the great conservative paper "Le Temps" in Paris wrote very significantly during the recent crisis in the Valencia government:

"It is by no means out of the question that certain elements of the anti-Fascist front would lend a willing ear to conciliatory counsel from beyond the Pyrenees. The fall of Madrid and the resulting political disturbances could but be favorable to the formation of a coalition government of Left Republicans and Socialists of Prieto's type. Such a government would be more receptive to the proposal for a reciprocal understanding and would serve republican Spain better shall would a hopeless war."

The ousting of the Caballero cabinet and the talking over of the government by the bourgeois-Communist Negrin cabinet, which occurred just afterwards, shows how exceedingly well informed the editors of "Le Temps" were. Without doubt the statesmen in London and Paris believed that their time had come and that the Negrin government would furnish them the basis for bringing their plans to realization. It is known that England had made use of the Basque government to enter into negotiations with Franco. It was thought that by this means it would be possible to prevent the fall of Bilbao, where England's immediate economic interests were most seriously threatened. If these negotiations led to no result it was because Hitler and Mussolini were also intensely interested in the possession

of the Basque iron fields, as in them they would get into their hands a strong card against England. The fact that Italian troops and German fiers played the decisive role in the battle over Bilbao shows how important the conquest of that city was to Germany and Italy. It was not Franco, but the German General Faubel who captured Bilbao. Contrary to the wishes of France and England, the end of the war was thereby once more indefinitely postponed.

It was and is the goal of the Anglo-French statesmen to terminate the war at the first favorable opportunity, and through an understanding between the conservative Loyalist circles and Franco to force upon Spain a form of government that will respect the ancient privileges of England and will be strong enough to protect foreign capital against the attacks of the "extremists." The extremists, however, are in this instance the great masses of the Spanish workers and peasants, and above all, of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., which had proclaimed the slogan that the war could only be carried to a victorious conclusion if it was waged in the spirit of social revolution and brought to the people a complete transformation of the social conditions under which they live. It was the danger of this which caused the conservative government of England its greatest anxiety and which, in the efforts of the workers and peasants at socialization, had taken on a tangible form. To eliminate this danger was and is her most important task. What means to this end the English Tories have in view Winston Churchill set forth undisguisedly in his proposals for the solution of the Spanish question, when he spoke of the necessity of a five-year "neutral dictatorship" to "tranquilize" the country. Later they could "perhaps look for a revival of parliamentary institutions."

The Spanish workers and peasants know from experience what such a "tranquilizing" would be like. The gruesome suppression of the revolt in Asturias in October, 1934, and the horrible massacres by the Fascist incendiaries in Seville, Zaragoza, Badajoz, Málaga, and many other places, to which tens of thousands of men, women, and children fell victims, speak a language that is too clear ever to be forgotten. They know in Spain what "neutral dictatorship" means.

The whole horror of the much-praised capitalist order lies just in this: Without pity and devoid of all humanity it strides across the corpses of whole peoples to safeguard the brutal right of exploitation, and sacrifices the welfare of millions to the selfish interests of tiny minorities. Spain is today the victim of imperialistic foreign powers which are fighting out their differences on the backs of the Spanish people and, without a trace of moral consideration, plunging into ruin an entire country, in which, in right and conscience, they have nothing to look for. Without the interference of foreign powers the revolt of the Fascist brigands would have been disposed of in a few weeks, as it had the enormous majority of the Spanish people against it.

Foreign tyrants like Hitler and Mussolini, who have transformed their own countries into wildernesses of intellectual barbarism and graveyards of freedom, provided the Fascist hangmen of Spain with the means of forcing war on the country and throttling their own people. But the “great democracies” of Europe have tied the hands of the Spanish people and exposed millions of human beings to all the horrors of mass murder, so that, at the chosen hour, they may convert to the advancement of their own purposes the results of a resistance whose heroism is unexampled in history. And Stalin’s government renders willing henchman service to these objectives of imperialist powers and makes itself the defender of the counter-revolution against the great masses of the Spanish workers and peasants.

This is the third time that foreign powers have interfered with the armed hand in the struggle of the Spanish people for its human rights and have supported the cause of the counter-revolution against the liberation of the people. In 1823 the invasion of a French army crushed Spanish liberalism and brought Riego to the gallows, delivering the country over to the damnable tyranny of one of the bloodiest despots that ever defiled a throne. In 1874 English and Prussian warships helped General Pavia to strangle the first Spanish republic. Today the same drama is being re-enacted on a larger scale.

## The role of Russia

That England and France should have taken such an attitude with respect to the Spanish war is no surprise to anyone who takes into account the deeper-lying causes in social affairs. Both are great capitalist states whose internal and foreign policies are determined by principles that look only to economic privileges and considerations of political power. That is, indeed, the curse of the present social system, whose inevitable logic operates more disastrously with each new stage of its development. The caste of power-politicians has never let itself be guided by ethical principles. To suppose that its representatives today are any more sensitive to the dictates of social justice and humanly worth-while aspirations would be unpardonable self-delusion.

Of greater significance is the attitude of the Russian government toward the Spanish question. Not that we had the slightest illusions on this side either. We had foreseen the inevitable results of the Bolshevist dictatorship from its first beginnings, and the later developments in Russia have confirmed our conceptions in every respect. The so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat,” in which naïve souls wished to see a passing but inevitable transitional step to real socialism, has, under the domination of Stalin, developed into a frightful despotism which lags behind the tyranny of the Fascist states in nothing, goes, indeed, beyond them in many re-



spects — a despotism which suppresses all free expression of opinion with bloody brutality and deals with the lives and fate of human beings as if they were inanimate objects.

Unfortunately only a small minority had from the beginning a correct estimate of the occurrences in Russia; while even today there are in every country still hundreds of thousands who are completely blind to the Russian reality. We are not speaking now of the hired foreign scribes of the Russian government, who with brazen faces and no scruples of conscience defend even the most revolting crimes of the Russian autocrats and, at command, exalt to the heavens today what only yesterday they were trampling in the mud. No, we are thinking of those thousands of honest, but unfortunately utterly blind, human beings who with unexampled fanaticism work toward a goal that would mean the brutal extermination of all freedom and all human dignity.

The reaction of today not only finds expression in systems of political power whose living symbols are tyrants of the stamp of Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin. Its actual strength is in that blind faith of the great masses which justifies any atrocity so long as it is perpetrated by one particular side, and recklessly condemns everything that opposes this contemptible violation of human personality. This is the dictatorship of unreason, which neither recognizes nor respects anyone's opinion, and which at command lets itself be swept along into the vilest actions, because it is wholly destitute of personal responsibility. This blind fanaticism which finds in any critical judgment a sin against the infallibility of the dictator is also the reason why those masses are quite unable to perceive the great political transformation that has been going on in Russia since the death of Lenin, so that they plead with the same fanatical zeal for things which only a few years ago were denounced by the Russian autocrats as "counter-revolution" and "treason to the proletariat."

Not that it is our purpose here to play up Lenin against Stalin, as so many do today who have broken with Moscow and have taken refuge in one or another of the numerous Communist oppositions. Lenin, Trotsky and all the others who have fallen victims to Stalin's regime were merely pathbreakers for him. They prepared the foundation on which so-called "Stalinism" was later to rise. He who finds freedom a "bourgeois prejudice," who defends hypocrisy, deception, and cunning as permissible instruments of warfare, as Lenin did openly, thereby destroys all ethical ties between man and man, annihilates the trust of comrade in comrade, and must not wonder when the seed he has sown bears the fruit that it bears. The great transformation which Stalin brought about one step at a time was only the logical result of the work of his predecessors. Today this change is not manifesting itself in Russia alone; it puts its stamp on all the tactics of the Communist parties abroad, which have never been anything but instruments of Russian foreign policy. This

is revealed today with impressive clarity in the attitude of the Stalin government on the Spanish question.

During the first three months of the Fascist uprising the Russian press hardly troubled itself at all about the occurrences in Spain. Stalin had his hands full standing his former friends against the wall and systematically bringing to its conclusion the liquidation of the old Communist Party in Russia. If he had really been at all concerned to come to the aid of the Spanish people in their desperate struggle against Franco's hordes, he would have had the best opportunity to do so in the first few months of the anti-Fascist war, for just then the battling masses stood almost weaponless before a foe armed to the teeth, to whom German and Italian Fascism was furnishing all possible assistance. Irun and San Sebastian fell only because their defenders lacked the military equipment with which to continue their heroic resistance. If Franco was not then able to overrun Spain as he had expected, it was not Russia who was to be thanked for it, but chiefly the heroic resistance of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., which cleared the enemy out of Catalonia, and by doing so saved Spain — a fact which at the time was acknowledged without reserve by everybody, and which even Franco's press did not deny.

Russia's first intervention in Spanish affairs was her signing of the so-called neutrality pact, which originated solely in the imperialist interests of England and France. The moral significance of this pact at first lay merely in the fact that it put the Popular Front government growing out of the elections of February, 1936, on the same footing with the mutinous generals who had committed high treason against the republic and were seeking to overthrow it by force, a thing which, for example, the republican government of Mexico did not do. When the Communist Party in France at first raised a mighty outcry against this pact and accused the French government of betraying the Spanish republic, Leon Blum needed only to call attention to the fact that Russia had been the first power to sign the pact and that therefore the charge of treachery recoiled upon Stalin.

Russia was bound to France by a military rapprochement the point of which was directed against Germany. Germany was therefore leaving no means untried to get this alliance broken off, and to this end was bringing every possible kind of political pressure to bear upon France. Russia was well aware of this danger and was, therefore, making every effort to nullify Hitler's policy, even to setting herself up as attorney for the imperialist interests of England and France in Spain. It was not the celebrated "class interests of the proletariat," but the national interest of the Russian state which led Stalin to take this attitude. And England and France were now in a position to play off Russia against the ambitions of Hitler and Mussolini while they went on spinning their own plans, plans which had as their object to prevent a conclusive victory for Franco and at the same time to block the social revolution in Spain.

Communist workers in other countries were naturally not in a position to see through this cunning game behind the scenes and were happy because Russia was from time to time sending the Loyalist government larger or smaller supplies of weapons and provisions. They naturally had no inkling that this, also, was done with the approval of France and England, who respected the provisions of the neutrality pact just as little as did Hitler and Mussolini and tacitly approved the importation of arms into Spain just to the extent that this suited their purposes. But what the Communist press diligently concealed from its readers was the fact that *the Russian government never delivered a single cartridge to the Spaniards that had not been paid for dearly and in cash with the gold of the Valencia government.*

But Russia did not content herself with sending now and then a shipload of weapons to the Spanish Loyalists. Her secret agents and, more particularly, her official representatives in Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona worked by every means to stir up discord in the ranks of the anti-Fascist front and to exert pressure on the Spanish government to induce it to lend a favorable ear to the whisperings of Anglo-French diplomacy. The Stalin government was here quite deliberately furthering the secret activities of the great capitalist powers and the cause of the counter-revolution against the efforts at liberation of the Spanish workers and peasants. England and France could not have asked for a better agent. Exactly where their own efforts aroused a justified distrust the Russian agents could operate in full publicity, as no one would suppose that the alleged “fatherland of the proletariat” would lend itself to such a base betrayal of the cause of a splendid people. With complete justice the English Member of Parliament, McGovern, stated at the last congress of the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain:

“The working class of Spain not only had to meet with the forces of Franco, Italy and Germany, but with more cunningly organized support from the British ruling classes. *London big business is solidly lined up behind Franco.*

“Undoubtedly Russia had given valuable aid, but it should never have been accompanied by any kind of political domination. *It was a shameful thing that the accompaniment of arms had been the attempted domination of the whole political movement in Spain*”

## **The great transformation in Russia and its consequences**

As to both internal and foreign policy Russia stands today with both feet in the camp of the counter-revolution. Stalin has organized his own Thermidor in order

to rid himself of the last representatives of Old Bolshevism who could in any way be dangerous to his plans. But these plans culminate in the renunciation of all the former political principles of the old Communist Party of Russia and the setting up of a sort of Soviet aristocracy which rests upon the new bureaucratic machinery, freed of all the old elements, in order to make the great masses of the peasants and the industrial workers amenable to its domination. The so-called "democratic constitution," the greatest farce that the world has ever seen, merely serves to veil the real intentions of the Russian autocrats and give them a different aspect as seen from the outside.

This change in the nature of the Russian dictatorship must also, of course, have its influence on the attitude of the Communist parties abroad. That a radical swing to the right has set in here, and that the Communist parties today advocate things which only a few years ago they were violently opposing, even the blindest can see. But the deeper-lying reasons for this change, which slaps in the face all the old party principles advocated by Lenin and his friends, remain hidden from most people.

When, in his day, Lenin came forward with his "twenty-one points" to weld the Communist parties of the whole world into one iron-bound, centralized organization which would be blindly obedient to every order from the Moscow Central, he had a definite purpose in view. He wanted thus to give the proletarian movement in every country a fixed direction and to safeguard it against any coalition with bourgeois or so-called Menshevist parties. Wherever a revolutionary situation developed in any country the workers were to set to work immediately to seize political power for themselves, and through a system of soviets on the Russian pattern proceed to the expropriation of the land and the industrial plants without entering into any compromise with other factions. Russia was, moreover, to afford every possible moral and material assistance to these efforts.

It is not our task here to pass critical judgment on the worth or unworth of such tactics; we are concerned only in establishing the fact in order to show that between the present tactics of Stalin and his adherents and the principles advocated by Lenin there are no points of contact whatever, but that they differ as much as do fire and water. It was chiefly these tactics of Lenin which brought about the complete break with the big Socialist parties abroad, whose leaders Lenin fought tooth and nail and publicly pilloried as "betrayers of the proletariat." In Germany, for example, where the Social Democrats held to the theory that it was first necessary to consolidate the republic internally and externally before it would be possible to proceed through social reform to the establishment of socialism, their tactics were combatted by the Communists by every means possible and with fanatical bitterness. The adherents of Social Democracy were branded as "Social-Fascists" and counter-revolutionaries, and every ordinary Communist in Germany was firmly

convinced that in comparison with the Socialist Party, Hitler was the lesser evil. The word “Menshevism” came to epitomize every kind of treason against the working class. From the Communist point of view the “Menshevik” was public enemy number one and had to be fought by every means available.

And today? Everything which only a few years ago was damned to the bottomless pit by the Communist International is now for Stalin and his followers the acme of political wisdom. Stalin has become the executor of the will of the once-hated Menshevism and tries to outdo it in concessions to the bourgeois world. The whole idea of the popular front is just a sweeping repudiation of the principles laid down by Lenin and the Old Bolsheviks. One might perhaps object that it is at any rate a step in advance if Stalin and his following abroad have convinced themselves of the untenability of those old principles and have therefore set out along new lines. That would be correct, if along with the new insight there had occurred a change in disposition; if they had finally decided to respect even the opinions of others and to quit playing the part of red popes. But it is just in this regard that there has been the least change.

Stalin, who is today making the most far-reaching concessions to the shallowest reformism and to the defenders of the bourgeois state, has transformed Russia into a vast slaughterhouse and persecutes his real or fancied enemies of the left with the pitiless obsession of an oriental despot. The same man who is today supporting in Spain the interests of his imperialist allies and defending the bourgeois republic against the struggles of the Spanish workers and peasants for social liberation, is having his miserable hired scribblers abroad shamelessly malign and drag through the mud the heroic fighters of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., who are bearing the brunt of that struggle, just as he does with his political opponents in Russia. The same man who set himself up as the attorney for the so-called United Front is today with cynical deliberateness destroying the anti-Fascist front in Spain so that in the interest of foreign capitalists he can attack the Spanish revolution from the rear.

## **The attitude of the Communist Party in Spain**

During the first three months of the great struggle for freedom, when Russia was not bothering herself about Spain at all, the social revolution pursued its course with elemental fury and spread from Catalonia to all the other sections of the country which were not in the possession of the enemy. The peasants made themselves masters of the land, and the city workers, of the industries, and themselves set about the socialization of production without waiting for the decrees of political parties. They set to work with innate devotion and a painful sense of responsibility to build up a new Spain and end, once for all, the bloody peril of Fascism. While the

element that was capable of fighting was hastening to the front, the workers and peasants left behind were trying to set up a new social order and so to pave the way for socialism. This state of affairs changed, if not all at once, yet rapidly, when Russia appeared on the scene and dispatched her official representatives to Madrid and Barcelona to begin their underground burrowing in the interest of England and France. Since Spain was from the beginning prevented by the famous neutrality pact from any considerable importation of arms from abroad and consequently had to avail herself of any slight assistance she could find, the Russian agents had a relatively easy job forcing their conditions on the government in Madrid and Valencia. This was the easier for them because the bourgeois Republicans and the right wing of the Socialist Party were not very well disposed toward the efforts of the workers and peasants at socialization anyway, and had put up with them only because they couldn't help themselves.

The Communists, however, under orders from Moscow, at once lined up with the right. They, who previously had never been able to speak contemptuously enough of the C.N.T. and the Anarchists because of their "petty bourgeois" tendencies, suddenly turned defenders not only of the petty bourgeoisie, but of the Spanish big bourgeoisie, against the demands of the workers. Immediately after the occurrences of July, 1936, the Communist Party had proclaimed the slogan: For the Democratic Republic! Against Socialism! As early as August 8<sup>th</sup> of last year the Communist Deputy, Hernandez, had violently attacked the C.N.T. in Madrid because of the taking over of the industrial plants by the workers' syndicates, and in that connection had declared that after Franco had been beaten they would soon bring the Anarchists to their senses."

But they were telling the Communist workers abroad that their comrades in Spain were not participating in the socializing of the land by the workers simply because they had to win the war before they could think of the realization of socialism. In reality the Communist Party in Spain is only carrying out the orders from Moscow and, under those orders, has postponed the realization of socialism to an undetermined date because it simply does not accord with the imperialist plans of Stalin's allies. Anyone who is still in doubt about this will have his eyes opened fully by the following words of Santiago Carillo, one of the most prominent members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain:

"We are fighting today for the democratic republic, and we are not ashamed of it. We are fighting against Fascism, against foreign intruders, but we are not today fighting for a socialist revolution. There are people who tell us that we must come out for a social revolution and there are those who proclaim that our fight for the democratic republic is only a pretext to conceal our real purposes. No, we are not carrying

out any tactical maneuver, nor have we any kind of concealed intentions against the Spanish government and world democracy. We are fighting with complete sincerity for the democratic republic, because at present we are not making any drive for social revolution, and *this will still hold true for a long time after the victory over Fascism*. Any other attitude would not only favor the victory of the Fascist intruders, it would even contribute to the transplanting of Fascism into the remaining bourgeois-democratic states. For the Fascists have declared that they will under no circumstances tolerate a dictatorship of the proletariat in our country.”

The same people who today devote themselves with such suspicious zeal to the safeguarding of the bourgeois-democratic world against Fascism and who cannot find enough hypocritical words with which to assure the so-called world-democracy of the honesty of their intentions, had not cared a damn when their methods plunged Hungary, Germany, and other countries into ruin and smoothed the road for Fascism in them. If they pursue another course in Spain today it is because the national interests of the Russian state are today closely linked with the imperialist ambitions of England and France. To maintain this alliance the holders of power in Russia lend themselves to the most contemptible betrayal of the Spanish workers and peasants.

For this noble end the agents of Russian Soviet diplomacy are now working at high pressure and with all the revolting hypocrisy of a thoroughly Machiavellian policy, which came to fullest bloom in Russia under the sign of the dictatorship and later served as a model for Hitler and Mussolini. For there is no form of government so favorable to the complete disintegration of every moral principle in a people as dictatorship, which suppresses with brute force any honest criticism of public evils and transforms entire peoples into herds of dull-witted slaves. Under such a condition, maintained by fear, falsehood, deceit, political murder, and an infamous system of espionage which makes a public virtue of betrayal and infects even the intimate family circle, the innate trust of man in man is undermined and all moral responsibility toward one's fellows is smothered at its birth.

Until the July events of last year the Communist Party scarcely played any part in Spain. It counted altogether about three thousand members. Its objectives were alien to the general character of the people and had no prospect at all of permeating the great masses of the workers and peasants. In Spain the trade-unions, not the political parties, had from the first played the most important part in the labor movement. Thus, the Socialist Party was for decades unable to strike root at all outside of Madrid and was known in colloquial speech only as “the microscopic party” (el partido microscopico), until by the organization of the U.G.T. (“Union

General de los Trabajadores,” General Labor Union) it little by little succeeded in gaining a foothold in the great industrial districts of the north and in a few rural districts in Andalusia and Estramadura.

Therefore the Spanish Stalinists now endeavored by the work of secret cells to win in the political and trade-union organizations of the Socialist Party a field which they would never have been able to conquer under their own flag. They succeeded in this way in capturing a few U.G.T. trade-unions in Madrid, Valencia, Malaga, and a few other places, but even with these successes they could not think of instituting any action of their own, as they had no influence worth mentioning over the great majority of the U.G.T. workers, while the local organizations of the powerful C.N.T. were completely closed to them.

In Catalonia, where the Socialists and their trade-union subsidiary, the U.G.T. before the Fascist uprising played no part whatever, the Stalinists, using the catchword of the United Front, succeeded in tricking the Socialist Party and in calling into being the so-called P.S.U.C. (“Partido Socialista Unido de Cataluña,” United Socialist Party of Catalonia), which soon joined the Third International, and despite its Socialist coat of arms is just an instrument of Moscow. With the arrival of the official representatives of Russia this underground boring very notably increased. What the Spanish Stalinists had to learn in this respect was soon taught them by Señors Rosenberg in Madrid and Antonov-Ovséenko in Barcelona.

In every country in Europe and America there exist hundreds of so-called “neutral” organizations which serve only the purpose of disguising the game which the wire-pullers in Moscow are playing behind the scenes; there are even a whole lot of well-known periodicals on both continents, which can look back on many years of liberal tradition and which have today come completely under the influence of Moscow. The same contemptible game is being repeated in Spain. Russian insinuations found willing ears in bourgeois and right Socialist circles and were making themselves heard more and more clearly among the Catalonian Nationalists as well, and deep in the ranks of Caballero’s government in Valencia.

## **The communist U.G.T. in Catalonia**

The agents of Moscow were now concerned above all else in finding a broader basis for the execution of their plans and in building up everywhere, organizations which they could at the proper time play off against the C.N.T. and even against the U.G.T. Long before the July events the C.N.T. had made sincere efforts to bring about an alliance with the workers of the U.G.T. After the victorious suppression of the Fascist revolt in Catalonia, C.N.T. leaders set to work with all their energy for this goal, which they rightly regarded as the first prerequisite for victory over the



Fascists and as the necessary basis for the development of a new social life infused with freedom and the spirit of socialism. Just to take up any of the daily or weekly organs of the C.N.T. or the F.A.I. is enough to convince one that here we are not dealing with the hollow phrase-mongering of professional demagogues, but with the expression of opinions inspired by the loftiest motives, which just by reason of its sincerity is able always to find the right word of conciliation.

The agents of Russia now sought by every means to defeat these efforts for the unity of organized labor, as they recognized very clearly that it was from this direction that the greatest danger to the carrying out of their plans threatened. Out of their practical collaboration in the management of the socialized plants and the rural co-operatives there had grown up between the C.N.T. and the U.G.T. a friendly relationship which was all the time being strengthened in the war against the common enemy and by immediate necessities of daily life. This was especially true in those sections of the country where this collaboration was not disturbed by the interference of political parties from without, and where the U.G.T. had for years had behind it a genuine workers' element, as in Asturias, Castile, Andalusia, and the Levante.

The situation in Catalonia, and especially in Barcelona, where the U.G.T. had hitherto never been able to gain a foothold and never counted more than a few thousand members, shaped itself very differently. A peculiar change set in there after the July events. The necessity of belonging to a trade-union organization impressed itself even on those classes which had previously had no connection with organized labor, had often, indeed, even been hostile to it. In that stirring period after the defeat of the Fascist revolt, when the armed patrols of the workers' syndicates were standing guard and looking after the public safety, the membership card of a trade-union played an important role and, one might say, served its possessor as a pass.

So it came about that thousands of small managers, tradesmen, local politicians, saloon-owners, government employees, etc., flocked into the U.G.T. unions, which naturally were more to their liking than the old storm-tried organizations of the C.N.T. And this went on at greater pace as the Communist P.S.U.C., under whose political guardianship the syndicates of the U.G.T. in Catalonia stand, came out more plainly with its attacks on the efforts at socialization of organized labor. Thus the U.G.T. in Catalonia gradually became the catchbasin for all the reactionary elements who were interested in the restoration of the old conditions.

The Stalinists, the actual originators of this strange development, today are telling their credulous followers in foreign lands that the U.G.T. has a membership of 450,000 in Catalonia. This, of course, is just one of the ordinary propagandist lies which those delightful fellows, under Russian guidance, manage so cleverly. They wanted in this way to make the public forget as far as possible that behind

the Catalan Federation of the C.N.T. there stands a million organized workers, who are the backbone of the Spanish labor movement. Still it is not to be disputed that the U.G.T. is today a serious hindrance to the C.N.T. in Catalonia, and that under the special protection of the Negrin government in Valencia it had grown into a grave danger to all the economic and political achievements of the Spanish working class. However, what the Communist wire-pullers in Spain are careful not to mention to their adherents abroad is that the present U.G.T. in Catalonia is not a workers' organization at all, but a tool of the reactionary bourgeois elements who are trying by every means to further the counter-revolution in that country.

The most important component of the U.G.T. in Catalonia at present is the G.E.P.C.I. (an alliance of the Catalan small industrialists and tradesmen), which was formerly among the most outspoken opponents of organized labor and is today the most loyal ally of the Communist P.S.U.C. The central office of this organization is located in the premises of the Catalan textile-mill managers, Calle Santa Ana, Nr. 2. Moreover, the president of the so-called "textile workers" section is none other than Señor Gurri, former president of the association of Catalan textile manufacturers. One also finds there Señor Fargas, previously known as one of the richest and most brutal employers in Barcelona, with whom the C.N.T. has waged many a hard-fought contest. Besides these there are found here a lot of well-known personalities out of the old managers' world of Barcelona, such as Señor Armen-gol and many others who today carry on their light-shunning existence under the protection of the Stalinists of the U.G.T. These are the men who are today, at home and abroad, accusing the C.N.T. of "treason to the interests of the proletariat" and whose implacable hatred is directed at everyone who opposes the restoration of the old capitalist order.

In other parts of the country, as, for example, in the Levante, the Stalinists have revived the notorious "sindicatos libres," in which under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were gathered the most depraved elements in the district to do the required dirty work for the employers. From their ranks came the so-called "pistoleros", whose job it was to terrify the workers by assassinations and other infamous crimes. Many a valuable life fell prey to these bandits who are now the most valuable allies of the Spanish Stalinists.

After the Communists had in this manner gained for themselves the necessary foothold in the country there began a regular crusade against everything that the workers and peasants had accomplished and, in particular, a systematic boycott of those industrial plants conducted by the C.N.T. and U.G.T. syndicates and the rural village co-operatives. Anything was right for these men that served to spread the spirit of disintegration and to bring to maturity the secret plans of their taskmasters. These people, who, over night, had forgotten their old principles and started

caroling the siren song of the United Front in every tongue on the globe, are the ones who by their vile intrigues have broken the anti-Fascist front in Spain.

## The constructive socialist work of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I.

Socialists of all schools, sincere liberals and bourgeois anti-Fascists who had an opportunity to observe on the spot the splendid work of social upbuilding of the Spanish workers, have thus far passed only one judgment on the creative ability of the C.N.T. and have rendered to its labors the tribute of their sincerest admiration. None of them could help extolling the native intelligence, the forethought and prudence and, above all, the unexampled tolerance with which the workers of the C.N.T. had performed their difficult task. So said the Swiss Socialist, Andres Oltmares, professor in the University of Geneva, in a rather long essay from which we take the following:

“In the midst of the civil war the Anarchists have proved themselves to be political organizers of the first rank. They kindled in everyone the required sense of responsibility, and knew how by eloquent appeals to keep alive the spirit of sacrifice for the general welfare of the people.

“As a Social Democrat I speak here with inner joy and sincere admirations of my experiences in Catalonia. The anti-capitalist transformation took place here without their having to resort to a dictatorship. The members of the syndicates are their own masters, and carry on production and the distribution of the products of labor under their own management with the advice of technical experts in whom they have confidence. The enthusiasm of the workers is so great that they scorn any personal advantage and are concerned only for the welfare of all.”

And, speaking of the adaptation of industries to the war needs, Professor Oltmares declared that in the matter of organization the Catalonian workers' syndicates “in seven weeks accomplished fully as much as France did in fourteen months after the outbreak of the World War.” He might have added: and as Russia had *not* been able to accomplish after two years of Bolshevist dictatorship.

Quite a number of similar reports by impartial and honest observers found their way into the press of every country *except Russia and the Fascist states*. However one may look upon the C.N.T. from the point of view of world philosophy, he cannot refuse recognition to the unlimited willingness to sacrifice and the constructive

spirit of its members. But not only Socialists and honest correspondents of bourgeois papers were obliged to take cognizance of these facts; even Mr. Antonov-Ovsénko, the Russian consul at Barcelona, was unable to avoid expressing the same view. Thus in an interview he granted to a correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian," published on December 22, 1936, we find:

"The Consul, of course, denied the well known fact of the interference of Soviet Government in the internal politics of Catalonia. But at the same time he expressed greatest admiration for the Catalan workers, *especially for the anarcho-syndicalists.*

"The sobriety of the Catalan workers surprised and gratified the Soviet Consul no less than their extreme common sense and adaptation to realities. Recalling that it had been necessary in Petrograd in 1917 to flood the cellars of the palaces to prevent drunkenness, Ovsénko related his astonishment at visiting a champagne factory outside Barcelona, which had not only been raided but kept in the most perfect state by the workers' committees.

"The anarchist movement,' the Soviet representative stated, 'was obviously rooted in the Catalan working class, but its best representatives were astonishingly able to realize the needs of the present situation... Their strength is unparalleled in the anarchist movement in any other country. Despite certain fanaticisms the typical worker in the C.N.T. was chiefly interested in working under decent conditions, and for this reason would fight to death against Fascism.'

"The Consul has no doubt that the Catalan workers are capable of reconstructing the wrecked industries, their unaided work in the harbor and factories showing that they are capable of running industry themselves. He was impressed with the fact that the political crisis in Catalonia had been resolved in two days with the minimum of disturbance."

Since then seven months have gone by. At that time one still had to proceed with caution so as not to make the Spanish workers and peasants shy off, for, though they knew very well how to fight and to build, they had no experience in the deceptive arts of crafty diplomacy. Their whole lives had moved along roads where one's word was one's word and man's trust in man had not been flung to the dogs, as in Bolshevist Russia.

That the Russian consul's asseverations were never meant seriously, recent events in Spain have clearly shown. They were, from the first, designed to throw

dust in the eyes of the working people of Spain and the world and to trick them with statements which the consul did not himself believe. If one can bring any reproach against the leading persons in the C.N.T.-F.A.I. it is that they accorded these false "brothers" a greater confidence than they deserved, and that under the pressure of desperate circumstances they let themselves be drawn into making concessions which could only prove disastrous to them later. Actuated by a thoroughly noble sentiment, they undervalued too greatly the subterranean machinations of a secret enemy who threatens today to prove more perilous to them than open Fascism. The fact the Russian press, for reasons that are easily understood, never uttered one least little word about the efforts of the Spanish workers and peasants at social reconstruction, which the Russian consul at Barcelona "admired" so much, in itself speaks volumes.

In Spain, however, the attacks of the Stalinists were directed not merely against these efforts, but against all the accomplishments which had been born of the events of July, 1936. It was they who zealously urged upon the government the suppression of the workers' patrols by the police; it was they who played themselves up as defenders of the middle class, in order to turn these against the workers; it was they who suggested to the government at Valencia a censorship of the press under Russian supervision; it was they who at the time of the heaviest battles against Franco and his German and Italian allies provoked one governmental crisis after another in Valencia and Barcelona in order to bring their secret plans in the interest of England and France to fulfillment; and it was they who sought earnestly to concentrate all power in the hands of the central government in order to institute through this agency that "neutral dictatorship" for the "tranquilizing of the country" which had been so warmly recommended by the leader of the English Tories, Winston Churchill.

The Communist press of the whole world and its allies among the so-called neutral powers are trying by an infamous propaganda of falsehoods to deceive their readers as to the real state of affairs, telling them that the attitude of the Spanish Stalinists is dictated purely by the need to avoid driving the middle class and the small land-owners into Franco's arms, as the "ridiculous socializing campaign" of the C.N.T. is doing.

But in this respect also matters are really quite different. The C.N.T. from the beginning regarded the petty bourgeois and small farmer as natural allies in the struggle against Fascism. Its press has all along pointed out that during this transition period it recognizes any economic form which does not have as its objective the exploitation of man by man. For this reason it has put no obstacles in the way of family management in the country or of small enterprises in the city. To be sure the C.N.T. attacked with all its energy speculators and cut-throats with union cards

in their pockets who wanted to profit from the confusion; and that is altogether understandable.

In its work of socialization the C.N.T. has imposed upon itself the greatest moderation and has gone about its task with a tact and prudence that only pure malevolence would dare to deny. Wherever small farmers have preferred individual operation to agrarian collectives, they have been left their free choice. Their small pieces of land have not been touched; they have even been enlarged in proportion to the size of the families. It is a fact that after the great days of the July revolution many hundreds of small employers and small farmers voluntarily put their plants and their land at the disposal of the workers' syndicates and hailed the social revolution with genuine enthusiasm. In Aragon, for example, an overwhelming majority of the small farmers declared for collective agriculture. There exist there at present about four hundred collective enterprises, of which only ten have joined the U.G.T., while all the others belong to the C.N.T. syndicates.

In reality a very friendly relation has existed for a long time between the C.N.T. and the anti-Fascist bourgeoisie. This did not change until the disruptive work of the Stalinists set in, and the Communists began to play up the petty bourgeoisie as their trump cards against the workers. Only then did it become possible for "Trebball," the Communist Party sheet in Barcelona, to proclaim with proletarian pride that "the totality of the petty bourgeoisie" was organized in the Catalonian U.G.T. This was written by the same men who earlier had used tones of profound contempt to designate their Socialist opponents of both the right and left as "petty bourgeois." With bitter irony, but most convincingly, the daily paper "CNT" in Madrid characterized this Jesuitical duplicity of the Communists:

"The Communist Party wishes to make us believe that the revolution is to be furthered by favoring small businessmen, safeguarding private ownership, standing up for the interests of small industrialists, excluding labor organizations from a share in the government, sabotaging the village collectives of the peasants, showing oneself amenable to the wishes of foreign capital, and, above all, by denying that the present situation in Spain is favorable to a social revolution. That same Communist Party is doing this, which only a few years ago, when it was setting itself for the first time to disseminate its ideas in our country, had assigned to the social revolution the first place on its order of the day.

"In other words: For the Communist Party the revolution will be made with the help of the counter-revolution, and the counter-revolution with the help of the revolution. And if anyone says that this is non-

sense, he is reminded that we are not here setting forth our own views, but the latest theory of unadulterated Marxism-Leninism.”

## **Moscow’s campaign of lies against the C.N.T.**

Norman Thomas, the well known leader of the Socialist Party of the United States, who recently returned from an investigating trip in Spain, relates in “The Nation” that there is a joke current there to the effect that when anyone is too conservative to join the Left Republicans he joins the Communists. In reality, however, this is not a joke, but a stubborn fact that there is no way of getting around. Concerning the role of the Communist Party in Spain there is only one opinion among men of every political shade. Thus, the Liberal “Manchester Guardian” states:

“The Communists in Spain are the Right wing supporters of the government. They are in a sense conservatives, seeing that their declared aim is to re-establish republican democracy...

“The anarchists, who command the majority of labor in Catalonia, are the only party which puts revolution first. They, alone of all the Spanish political movements, remain true revolutionaries, with the exception of the rather vweak P.O.U.M.”

Even the conservative “New York Times” was obliged to confirm this:

“The Communists are today perhaps the most moderate faction in Spain, and in comparison with the Anarchists, who stand to their left, they are flatly conservative. Notwithstanding this, the prospects for a Communist regime after the Russian pattern are very small, as the Anarchists are too strong.”

And Dr. Trabal, one of the best-known Catalonian Nationalist leaders, who a short time ago joined the Communist P.S.U.C., declared with cynical frankness:

“Yes, I am now among the Socialists. But let no one tell me that I have changed my position. I stand just where I always stood. It is the Socialists and the Communists who have changed their position. With their help I can go on working for my ideals.”

While the Spanish Stalinists were aligning themselves with the Spanish bourgeoisie against the mass movement of the workers and peasants, there began in the Russian press a savage campaign against the so-called “Trotskyists” in Spain

and the C.N.T., which for cowardly deceit and meanness of sentiment excelled anything that the most perverted fancy could invent. It is extremely significant that just at the time when the Russian consul at Barcelona was assuring the "Manchester Guardian," in the interview referred to, that "for these reasons Russia could not but look sympathetically upon the Catalan workers' movement. It certainly has no intention of preventing their working out of their own salvation in the manner most suited to their national characteristics" — just then "Pravda" thought it fitting to report:

"So far as Catalonia is concerned, the cleaning up of Trotzkyist and Anarcho-Syndicalist elements there has already begun, and it will be carried out there with the same energy as in the U.S.S.R." (Pravda, December 17, 1936)

And these cowardly and conscienceless attacks stiffened just in the measure that the Stalinists, with the aid of the official representatives of Russia, succeeded in gaining ground, until at last the Spanish correspondent of "Pravda" published in that paper a sensational article, which we here reproduce verbatim:

"The central organ of the Anarchists in Barcelona, 'Solidaridad Obrera,' carried in its March 16<sup>th</sup> issue, an insulting attack on the Soviet press. It is significant that the writer directs his attack more particularly at those reports in the Soviet press which related to the counter-revolutionary activities of the Trotzkyist P.O.U.M., and makes the assertion that 'these injurious tactics are meant merely to rouse dissension in the ranks of the anti-Fascist front in Spain:

"This obscene defense of the Trotzkyist traitors proceeds from those shady elements which have sneaked into the ranks of the Anarcho-Syndicalist organization. They are the former colleagues of Primo de Rivera in the 'Fascist Phalanx' and the Trotzkyists. It is no secret that these plague spots flourish best today in 'Solidaridad Obrera'; for it is known that the actual literary director of this sheet is Canovas Cervantes, former editor of the Fascist paper, 'La Tierra.'

"These agents of Franco have today intrenched themselves behind the Anarchist organization to destroy the Spanish Popular Front; but they are not going to succeed. The Anarcho-Syndicalist masses every day understand better the necessity for an iron discipline and a strong people's government. That is the reason why these enemies of the Spanish people have crept into the ranks of the Anarchists and are combating the Popular Front with redoubled frenzy.



“It is no accident that just at the moment when the Italians are setting themselves for an offensive on the Guadalajara front, the tricky Trotzkyists are preparing an armed revolt against the Valencia government. It is also necessary to note that the sheet, ‘Nosotros’, in Valencia is pleading every day for the release of all those who are in jail for taking part in an armed uprising, among whom are to be found a number of outspoken Fascists. And this demand is always accompanied by threats against the government.

“The anti-Soviet story in ‘Solidaridad Obrera’ is proof that behind the central organ of the Anarchists stand Trotzkyists and the agents of the German secret police. This fact has already alarmed those leaders of the Catalanian Anarchists who seriously intend to combat international Fascism.” (Pravda, March 22, 1937)

With such contemptible charges, every word of which is a deliberate lie thought out with cynical calculation, dishonorable calumniators, who in the service of their political patrons have made lying a trade, dare to belittle a movement which by its heroic resistance has saved the country from the attacks of the Fascist conspirators; a movement whose adherents are fighting and dying with unexampled bravery on every front; a movement which produced a Durruti, whose name will live in Spanish history when only a monstrous blot of shame will stand for the breed that now slanders his comrades. They will never forget in Spain that it was chiefly the militia of the C.N.T. which, under men like Mera, Palacios, and Benito y Vallanueva, hurled themselves at the enemy before Madrid and blocked his way with their bodies. “And without Durruti and his heroic troops Madrid would today long have been in the hands of the Fascists,” as “Frente Libertario,” organ of the confederated militia could assert with full justice.

No other movement has made such enormous sacrifices during the frightful war against Fascism as the C.N.T.-F.A.I. None has lost so many of its best in this desperate struggle. Everyone knows this in Spain. Their bitterest opponents cannot refuse them that recognition. The five hundred thousand who made up the last escort of their comrade Buenaventura Durruti, fallen by a cowardly assassination, gave powerful expression to this universal conviction.

## **The fight against the P.O.U.M.**

That the hatred of the holders of power in Russia is directed today with especial bitterness at the P.O.U.M. is easy to understand. To Stalin, who for a considerable time has been busy exterminating the last remnants of the Old Bolshevism in Rus-

sia and getting rid, one after the other, of his former comrades, who under Lenin used to hold the highest positions in the Soviet state, it could not, of course, be pleasant that there should be men in foreign countries who were unwilling to believe that nine-tenths of the old and most influential leaders of the Bolshevik Party are in the service of Hitler and the Japanese militarists. Still less could it please him that there should be heretics who just could not swallow the nursery tale of a conspiracy on so large a scale that it had been sabotaging the Russian industrial system day and night for years, had its men in the highest circles of the Russian army, and even in the G.P.U., and yet could not bring itself to act, but calmly let its alleged leaders one by one be stood against the wall.

The leaders of the P.O.U.M. ("Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista," Workers' Party of Marxist Unity) have all come from the Communist Party. As a result of their past experiences they were better informed concerning the secret machinations of the Russian politicians than anybody else, and they were not shy about sharing their information with the public. For this reason the P.O.U.M. was for a long time a thorn in the flesh of the Stalinists; the more so because the official Communist Party in Barcelona had earlier never been able to show as many as three hundred members, while the great majority of the Catalonian Communists were in the P.O.U.M. organization. This was changed only after the Stalinists succeeded in cozening the Socialist Party of Catalonia into setting up the P.S.U.C.

There was never any intrinsic relation between the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. people. This must be emphasized, as the Stalinist press is today purveying to its readers the falsehood that the P.O.U.M. has very strongly influenced the attitude of the C.N.T. in Catalonia. There could really be no talk of such a thing, as the two factions are diametrically opposed in their theoretical basic principles as well as in their methods and their organizational objectives. The P.O.U.M. was always a small party, counting in all Spain scarcely more than thirty thousand members. Its tendency was Bolshevikic; its adherents believed that only a single political party should undertake to conduct the revolution. The P.O.U.M. embraced in its ranks hair-splitting Marxist factions of the most diverse types, from the Catalonian followers of Caballero to the Trotzkyists. Still it would be incorrect to designate it as a "Trotzkyist" party, for Trotzky himself had repeatedly spoken out in sharp condemnation of the tactics of the P.O.U.M. people. From the beginning the P.O.U.M. had taken a hostile attitude toward the C.N.T., as all the productions of its press and all the public announcements of the organization reveal most clearly.

This attitude was quite natural, for the C.N.T. had been from the first, the outspoken opponent of any guardianship over the labor movement by political parties. Its socialism was of a constructive sort and was based on the trade-union organizations of the workers and peasants. It was not the result of an abstract theory coming from the study-closet, but the vital product of long and sacrificial strug-

gles, out of which the ideas of social liberation had grown of themselves and had in the course of years taken on organic form. The C.N.T., with its two million members, is a mass movement and reveals a very definite current in the history of the country, which can look back on an ancient and glorious tradition intimately interwoven with the deeds and thoughts of the Spanish people. The P.O.U.M., however, was a foreign factor in the Spanish libertarian movement and was, therefore, never able to strike root among the great masses of the Spanish workers and peasants.

The P.O.U.M. people tried at first to penetrate into the U.G.T. of Catalonia, and they even succeeded in getting possession of a few important posts in it. But as the Stalinists of the P.S.U.C. gained ground there, it became just so much harder for the P.O.U.M. people to retain their places, and at last they were completely forced out of the U.G.T.

After the first of the big political trials of the so-called "Trotzkyists" in Moscow, the attacks of the Spanish Stalinists upon the P.O.U.M. were redoubled and steadily grew more hate-filled and malevolent. In Madrid, the Stalinists broke into the quarters of the P.O.U.M. Youth and destroyed everything they could lay their hands on. The government even suppressed the P.O.U.M. paper for a time and under pressure from the Russian embassy excluded the P.O.U.M. from representation in the Committee of Defense of the revolutionary militia, an act which called forth the unanimous protest of all the other revolutionary factions.

In Barcelona, where the P.O.U.M. was stronger than in other cities, its leaders made a sharp response to the malicious attacks of their Stalinist opponents. On November 27, 1936, "La Batalla," the organ of the P.O.U.M. in Barcelona, carried an article about the back-stairs politics of Russian diplomacy in Spain, in which it declared: "It is unbearable that, under the pretext of affording us certain assistance, some one wants in return to force upon us definite political forms and presumes to dictate Spanish policy."

This article let loose a veritable flood of the vilest accusations in the Stalinist press. There was no deed of infamy that was not charged to the P.O.U.M. Even the Russian consul at Barcelona took part personally in these disgraceful proceedings and attached the P.O.U.M. as an instrument of Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini — a wretched calumny for which not a shadow of proof can be adduced. These occurrences led to the famous crisis in the Catalonian government, deliberately provoked by the Stalinists in order to force Andres Nin, leader of the P.O.U.M., who held the position of Minister of Justice there, out of office. That finally happened in December of last year under immediate pressure from the representative of the Russian government, who made the assistance of his government dependent on it — and against the unanimous protest of the C.N.T., which wished at any cost to avoid the disruption of the anti-Fascist front.

After the bloody May events in Barcelona, there finally arrived for the Stalinists the hour in which they could give their revenge on the P.O.U.M. free rein. On orders from the bourgeois-Communist government at Valencia, all the unions of the P.O.U.M. were dissolved by the police and its most influential leaders arrested and taken away to Madrid. The scandalous campaign of lies in the Stalinist press pointed to the intention of staging on Spanish soil one of those infamous “espionage trials” after the Russian pattern.

Whatever one’s attitude may be toward the ideas and objectives of the P.O.U.M., one cannot deny that in the war against Franco and his allies, its adherents took their places like men and fought bravely. On July 19 they fought shoulder to shoulder with the workers of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. They did the same in Madrid and on the other fronts. A large number of their best men lost their lives in those battles. Maurin, one of the founders of the P.O.U.M. and, next to Andres Nin, the most influential leader of the movement, was shot by the rebels. José Oliver fell in Galicia; Germinal Vidal and Pedro Villarosa died on the Aragon front. One could hardly suppose that they would sacrifice their lives in the war against Fascism, if they were in the service of Franco and Mussolini.

The government’s measures against the militants of the P.O.U.M., and especially the transparent maneuvers of the Stalinists, have elicited numerous protests from the most diverse sources both in Spain and in foreign countries. The National Committee of the C.N.T. in Valencia appealed to President Azaña, the Cortes, and the Minister of Justice in an open letter demanding justice for the arrested leaders of the P.O.U.M. in manful and vigorous language. Even under present conditions it is hard to believe that Spain will become the scene of one of those judicial comedies which for the past few years have been a part of the political orders of the day in Russia.

## **Gangster terrorism and Russian chekist methods in Spain**

But the Spanish Stalinists and their Russian prompters did not rest content with sowing discord in the ranks of the anti-Fascist front and assailing the popular revolution with open and secret boycott. They proceeded to clear unpleasant opponents from their path by assassination and to intimidate the populace by a system of secret terrorism. There is today not the slightest doubt that terrorist groups exist in many parts of Spain which operate after the method of the Russian Cheka.

Last April the C.N.T. succeeded in uncovering such a Chekist cell in Murcia and in arresting its most important members. For months the populace had been

alarmed by the sudden disappearance of residents, a large number of whom belonged to the C.N.T. When the local police made no effort to get to the bottom of the matter, the C.N.T. took things into its own hands. It turned out that all the people arrested in connection with the affair were members of the Communist Party. We quote from a public statement that was signed by representatives of the Popular Front the Libertarian Youth, and the Provincial Committee of the C.N.T.:

“We have been awaiting a disavowal by the Communist Party and its press of the arrested members of the ‘Cheka’ who had been working in co-operation with the governor of Murcia. We have not yet seen anything of the kind. Therefore we are now going to speak plainly and say to those who are trying to import terror-systems and political dictatorships into Spain from abroad that they are reckoning without their host. The Spanish people have not the souls of slaves and will never put the guidance of their fate into the hands of tyrants. We are today fighting to drive the foreign intruders who are laying our country to waste, from our soil. We shall know also how to drive out those other elements who wish to introduce among us political terror-systems which belong to the past and are repugnant to the thought and feeling of our people.”

In Castile, and particularly in Madrid and its vicinity, where the C.N.T., before the revolt of the Fascists, had only a strong minority of the workers behind it, much has been changed since that revolt. Whole groups of the U.G.T. went over to the C.N.T., so that the latter is today almost equal in membership to the U.G.T. in the central part of the country, and includes, moreover, the most active elements in the labor movement. Such a development was naturally unwelcome to the Stalinists, because it was in the highest degree favorable to the alliance with the U.G.T., which the C.N.T. incessantly advocated. It is therefore very understandable that in that same Madrid and vicinity, where the influence of the Communist Party is strongest, especially since it succeeded in driving the followers of Largo Caballero out of the leadership of the U.G.T., no means was left untried to hinder the advance of the C.N.T.

Thus, Cazorla, Communist representative on the Madrid Committee of Defense, availed himself of his position as chief of police to initiate a savage persecution of the militants of the C.N.T. This went so far that one day he had one of the most successful military leaders of the C.N.T., Verlardini, Chief of Staff of the Mera Division, arrested as a Fascist. Of course, he had to be released at once, because even General Miaja characterized Cazorla’s action as inexpedient (“improcedente”). So the Communist Cheka set to work still more energetically. From February to April

of this year *more than eighty members of the C.N.T. fell victim to these cowardly assassins* in Madrid and vicinity.

In the village of Villanueva in the Province of Toledo, the headquarters of the field-workers' organization of the C.N.T. were raided by order of the Communist mayor, and sixteen of the C.N.T. workers were murdered by the Cheka. Similar proceedings took place in the neighboring town of Villamayor, which had likewise a Communist mayor. When the C.N.T.-F.A.I. press demanded a rigorous investigation of these proceedings, the Stalinists set every agency at work to prevent it. "El Mundo Obrero," the central organ of the Communist Party in Madrid, defended the mayor of Villanueva to the uttermost and proclaimed him an "honest and sincere anti-Fascist." That, however, could not prevent the Communist mayors of both Villanueva and Villamayor along with the other murderers of the sixteen field-workers being, under the pressure of public opinion, brought to trial before a people's court. At this trial incredible things came to light, such as the horrible rape and murder of a mother and daughter, which shook the entire population to its depths. The people's court sentenced the two Communist instigators of this frightful crime to death. One can understand why the Communists are today urging the abolishment of the people's courts so strongly.

On May 24 of this year two persons, accompanied by the Communist mayor, appeared at the home of Gonzales Moreno, secretary of the C.N.T. of Mascaraque, and told Moreno that they were messengers from the Lister Brigade and were under orders to arrest him and take him to the city of Mora de Toledo. Moreno at first refused to obey the order, until the Communist mayor of Mascaraque promised to accompany him. But when Moreno had climbed into the waiting auto, the mayor calmly walked off. Next day Moreno was shot behind the Christ Church in Mora de Toledo. In this case there was involved just an ordinary act of revenge, for Moreno, who had formerly been a member of the Communist Party, had left it to join the C.N.T. "Solidaridad Obrera," from which we take this account, commented:

"Including this new victim there have now been sixty people murdered in Mora de Toledo. Among them were men and women who had done nothing except to belong to the C.N.T. and to condemn the criminal acts of the Communists which kept the neighborhood in terror. Such horrors are not to be explained by the antagonism of different political convictions, nor even by the lust for power of certain advocates of revolution. The perpetrators of crimes so base are simply provocateurs in the service of Fascism. We demand the punishment of the guilty persons. Those in responsible positions in our organization have always admonished the comrades to dignity and self-control. Now, however, we feel ourselves obliged to bring the horrible crimes which threaten

to plunge anti-Fascist Spain into a fraternal war to the knowledge of the public, so that the Spanish people may know who are the real provocateurs among the working class.” (Solidaridad Obrera, July 1, 1937.)

These are only a few facts from a long list that since the May events in Catalonia has been growing at a frightful rate. The instigators of these crimes, who today are to further Stalin’s political plans with wanton hands shattering the anti-Fascist front, are directing all their efforts toward driving the C.N.T. to violent resistance and so dealing a deathblow to the social revolution in Spain. The C.N.T. has risked its best human material to bring the war against the foreign intruders to a victorious conclusion. Its leading spirits know only too well that on the outcome of the war depends not only the fate of Spain, but the fate of their own movement. This awful responsibility has driven them to things whose dangers cannot be overlooked. In their honest effort to weld all revolutionary forces together against the threatening Fascism they could not bring themselves to attack the enemy within their own ranks with the same healthy vigor which they had so gloriously displayed in their open battle with Fascism. The less so as they could not fail to recognize that an open war within the anti-Fascist front could but be to the advantage of Franco and his allies.

Their conscientiousness toward a foe who from the very beginning had a definite object in view and was not bothered by conscientious scruples, led the C.N.T. into a situation which might perhaps have been avoided if the danger had been recognized and correctly estimated earlier. Those are matters about which it is hard to pass judgment from without. Besides, it must not be forgotten that in such situations, where decisions of far-reaching importance have to be made every moment, not even the best of us has any magic safeguard against mistakes. Far be it from us, therefore, to look for real or fancied blunders at a moment like this, when the whole movement is threatened from every side with the most serious dangers.

## **The ends the dictatorship serves**

The role that the Russian government has played in Spain from the beginning, and still plays, is clear to anyone who is not smitten with absolute blindness. But there is also another reason why the Russian autocrats and their servile following abroad hate the revolution of the Spanish workers and peasants from the bottom of their hearts. That is the libertarian spirit by which it is actuated, and which is in itself merely the product of a movement which in the long and difficult struggle of its development has made freedom the basis of its efforts and has vigorously fought every form of dictatorship.

It is the great moral merit of libertarian Socialism in Spain — which today finds its mighty expression in the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. — that from the time of the First International, yes, even before that, it has fostered in Spanish workers a spirit which prizes freedom above all else and has made the intellectual independence of its adherents the most important factor in its existence. The libertarian labor movement of Spain has never lost itself in the labyrinth of an economic dialectic, and so its intellectual buoyant force has never been crippled by fatalistic ideas, as has so often been the case with Socialism in other countries. Nor has it wasted its capacity for action in the dreary routine tasks of bourgeois parliaments. Socialism has not been for it a thing that can be dictated to the people from above by some state or party bureaucracy, but an organic process of growth which proceeds from the social activity of the masses themselves and finds in their economic organization a basis which binds together all creative forces and still imposes no artificial restrictions on the initiative of the individual.

It was this spirit — out of which was born the nineteenth of July — which seized with irresistible power upon the entire working population, and even laid hold on elements which had previously had no connection with the work of the C.N.T. And it was this spirit by which the workers, peasants, and intellectuals were guided in their efforts to rebuild the social life of the country upon new principles, and which gave to their creative work that characteristic expression which had not before been seen in any other country.

But the C.N.T. never misused the strength it possessed, and still possesses, particularly in Catalonia, to suppress other schools of thought and force its will upon them. Instead it did everything in its power to unite the anti-Fascist elements for the battle against the common enemy and the reshaping of the social life. They had no thought of limiting freedom of opinion or of denying to others on the ground of their factional inclinations the freedom which they claimed for themselves. They welcomed every sincere criticism and remained faithful to those principles of freedom which they had always professed.

For a year now the Spanish people have been engaged in a desperate struggle against a pitiless foe and have been exposed besides to the secret intrigues of the great imperialist powers of Europe. Despite this the Spanish revolutionaries have not grasped at the disastrous expedient of dictatorship, but have respected all honest convictions. Everyone who visited Barcelona after the July battles, whether friend or foe of the C.N.T., was surprised at the freedom of public life and the absence of any arrangements for suppressing the free expression of opinion.

For two decades the supporters of Bolshevism have been hammering it into the masses that dictatorship is a vital necessity for the defense of the so-called proletarian interests against the assaults of the counter-revolution and for paving the way for socialism. They have not advanced the cause of Socialism by this propaganda,



but have merely smoothed the way for Fascism in Italy, Germany and Austria by causing millions of people to forget that dictatorship, the most extreme form of tyranny, can never lead to social liberation. In Russia the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat has not led to Socialism, but to the domination of a new bureaucracy over the proletariat and the whole people.

If today the agents in Spain of the Russian Stalin-regime are threatening to destroy everything that the workers and peasants have achieved, and are directing their whole energy toward putting all power into the hands of a bourgeois-Communist party dictatorship, they are not doing so to serve the interests of the proletariat, but to further the onslaughts of the counter-revolution and to serve the ends of English and French capitalism.

What the Russian autocrats and their supporters fear most is that the success of libertarian Socialism in Spain might prove to their blind followers that the much vaunted "necessity of a dictatorship" is nothing but one vast fraud which in Russia has led to the despotism of Stalin and is to serve today in Spain to help the counter-revolution to a victory over the revolution of the workers and peasants.

## **The advance of the counter-revolution**

That after a victorious war against Fascism, Spanish history would not just start on again from the point at which the nineteenth of July surprised it, was plain to everyone who had an eye for realities. Only the Communists did not want to see it, must not see it, since they were working in the service of Russia; but Russia was looking after the business of her imperialist allies. Spain had entered upon a social revolution. No one could suppose that the rebellious workers and peasants after a successful conclusion of the war would patiently submit themselves once more to the old yoke and surrender the social achievements which they had bought so dearly with the blood of their best. On the other hand, however, no one could suppose that after the end of the war the Spanish bourgeoisie would forbear to try to regain whatever there was for them to regain. That while things were in this state not everything would run along smoothly was also plain to everyone who could see.

The further the great transformation in economic and social life proceeded and brought agriculture and industry under the control of the workers' syndicates, the harder would it be for the old powers in Spain to re-establish the old conditions. And this was just what the foreign capitalists dreaded most and were seeking by every means to prevent. But no one had rendered them such invaluable service in this matter as the Russian government and its instrument, the Communist Party of Spain. It was they who had everywhere put the most serious difficulties in the way

of the constructive activity of the workers' syndicates and who today are wantonly seeking to destroy a work which is of the very greatest importance for the social development of the country.

Everywhere where the membership of the U.G.T. was made up of genuine workers and peasants its representatives worked beside the workers of the C.N.T. in the management of the industrial and agricultural enterprises in the most perfect harmony. Only where the Communists had gathered the whole of the petty bourgeoisie into the U.G.T., as, for example, in Barcelona, did it seek pettily and contemptibly, in order to prepare the way for the return to the old capitalist conditions, to nullify by secret or open sabotage the magnificently conceived work of socialization which the C.N.T. had begun. When the C.N.T. in Catalonia took over the Ministry of Defense and in exchange turned over the responsibility for the supply of food-stuffs to the U.G.T., the Communist minister, Comorera, undertook by every sort of demagogic trick to undermine the work of the syndicates and to put the control of the food supply for the city of Barcelona into the hands of the small retail tradesmen and the middlemen. At the same time the Communists and the bourgeois press were waging an incessant war against the constructive work of the C.N.T. and were holding it responsible for all the evils which their own representatives were causing. Even though they were having no luck with the great masses, still this systematic work of disintegration served to poison public opinion and to instill in the ranks of the anti-Fascist front a spirit that could but operate ruinously. In January of 1937 they even organized in the little city of Faterell a revolt against the C.N.T., which was of itself of little importance, but which showed what these people were capable of.

It might perhaps be objected that our account rests only on reports in the C.N.T. press and is therefore not impartial. That would, however, be a serious mistake. One finds this same opinion expressed even in those papers whose managers just shortly before the Fascist revolt were roundly damned by the Communists as Mensheviks and "traitors to the proletariat." Thus, "Adelante," organ of the Socialist Party in Valencia, wrote with bitter irony, concerning the treachery of the Stalinists:

"At the outbreak of the Fascist revolt the labor organizations and the democratic elements in the country were in agreement that the so-called Nationalist Revolution, which threatened to plunge our people into an abyss of deepest misery, could be halted only by a Social Revolution. The Communist Party, however, opposed this view with all its might. It had apparently completely forgotten its old theories of a 'workers' and peasants' republic' and a 'dictatorship of the proletariat.' From its constant repetition of its new slogan of the parliamentary

democratic republic it is clear that it has lost all sense of reality. When the Catholic and conservative sections of the Spanish bourgeoisie saw their old system smashed and could find no way out, the Communist Party instilled new hope into them. It assured them that the democratic bourgeois republic for which it was pleading put no obstacles in the way of Catholic propaganda and, above all, that it stood ready to defend the class interests of the bourgeoisie." (Adelante, May 1, 1937.)

That this is not saying too much is shown by the fact that the female Communist leader, "La Passionaria," in Madrid, openly advocated an alliance of the Communist Youth with the Catholic Youth organizations. The same paper ("Adelante") a little while ago sent a special questionnaire to the secretaries of all the field-workers' trade-unions of the U.G.T. in different parts of the country, in which, along with other questions, were the two following: 1. Who is opposing the peasant collectives? 2. Is the work of the Communist Party in rural districts helpful or harmful to the activities of the trade-unions? The result of the inquiry was as follows:

"The replies to these questions revealed an astounding unanimity. Everywhere the same story. The peasant collectives are today most vigorously opposed by the Communist Party. The Communists organize the well-to-do farmers who are on the lookout for cheap labor and are for this reason, outspokenly hostile to the co-operative undertakings of the poor peasants.

"It is the element which before the revolution sympathized with the Fascists and Monarchists which, according to the testimony of the trade-union representatives, is now flocking into the ranks of the Communist Party. As to the general effect of Communist activity on the country, the secretaries of the U.G.T. had only one opinion, which the representative of the Valencia organization put in these words: 'It is a misfortune in the fullest sense of the word'."

There is no doubt that all these underground machinations met with the approval of the Left Republican and Communist ministers in the Valencia government. This reveals itself not only in the deliberate sabotaging of the new co-operative economy in city and country, but also in the systematic boycott of the Aragon front by the central government, in which the Russian embassy in particular and, no doubt, its English and French colleagues as well, had a hand. On the Aragon front there stood for the most part C.N.T. formations. Therefore it was sought to prevent at all costs, equipping them with large armament. For months

the front remained without flying machines, tanks, and heavy artillery. Its defenders had to depend almost entirely on hand-arms and machine-guns, and were deficient even in these. And yet an offensive on this very front would have been of the greatest strategic importance. It would not only have been able to prevent the fall of Bilbao, but would in large measure have relieved the brave defenders of Madrid. The C.N.T. press had been denouncing this outrageous game for months. Miguel Martin Guillen, one of the military leaders of the C.N.T. in Aragon, even spoke of outright treachery:

“Send us weapons, armored cars, airplanes, etc., and all Aragon will be ours! Less treachery and a better comprehension of the actual situation! Less politics and more action, and Huesca, Teruel, and Zaragoza will fall into our hands! We can no longer endure being condemned here to forced inactivity. Still less can we endure the cowardly and underhand attacks from certain political circles, which reproach us for our inaction, whose cause they know only too well. Fewer intrigues and more impartiality...” (Orientaciones Nuevas, May 22, 1937.)

It is a fact that as we write these lines, Franco, with great technical superiority, has opened an offensive at Teruel, against which whole troops have been sacrificed uselessly because they lacked the large armament necessary for a successful resistance. But England, France and Russia were just as little interested in a decisive victory for the Loyalists as they were in a victory for Franco. And it was still less to their liking to arm the Aragon front, where the C.N.T. was most strongly represented. And while the Aragon front was being systematically boycotted, the Communist press in foreign countries was telling its readers that the C.N.T. men did not want to fight, those defenders of the same front where once stood Durruti, who had been called “the hero of the Aragon front.”

## **The prelude to the May events in Catalonia**

When, before the fall of Bilbao, it looked as if Franco was minded to accede to the proposals of the Anglo-French diplomats for mediation, it concerned the latter above everything to render the Valencia government well-disposed toward their plans. They had already been employing all the instruments of political pressure to that end and, no doubt, had found an open ear in certain circles of the old government. But Largo Caballero had at least learned that acceding to the plans of England and France would be equivalent to outright betrayal of the Spanish people, and he was not willing to lend himself to that. For this reason he refused to yield to the pressure from without and accused his Republican and Communist opponents

in the government of “having shown too great receptiveness to suggestions from certain exalted circles beyond the Pyrenees.”

That was enough to bring about the fall of the Caballero government. Again it was the Communists who provoked the crisis in the Valencia government in order to help the Negrin government into the saddle, a government consisting exclusively of bourgeois Republicans, Catholics, Right Socialists, and Communists, and which is therefore only too much inclined to accede to the wishes of the foreign imperialists. *And again it was the Russian ambassador who made further assistance from his government dependent on the overthrow of the Caballero cabinet.*

That the new government, whose first act was to exclude the two big workers' organizations, the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., from representation, openly serves the ends of the counter-revolution recent events in Spain and the persecution of the best fighters in the anti-Fascist front, have sufficiently proved. It is significant that in its first manifesto the new government announced that in the interest of the war it was particularly “necessary that the present cabinet be of an exclusively political character.”

Of course! Only politicians of the worst sort can bring themselves to sacrifice the interests of the Spanish people to the pretensions of foreign capitalists and to rob the toiling masses of the fruits of the revolution. The Communists, however, readily lent themselves to these reactionary proposals and offered a façade behind which the old powers of darkness today are waiting their hour. On this “La Correspondencia,” organ of the U.G.T. in Valencia, comments sarcastically:

“It almost gives the impression that the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. play a very unimportant part in the affairs of our country. Their members have the right to make their contributions and die at the front like good fellows. In all other matters, however, they are to leave the politicians a free hand and permit them to lead them where they will.”

But even before the recent crisis in the government at Valencia had reached its end they poised for a mighty blow at the revolutionary workers of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., so as to prove to the foreign capitalist powers that it was their firm intention to put an end to the efforts of the syndicates at socialization. As always, so this time also, the Stalinists were the executive instrument for the professional bourgeois politicians and middle-class reactionaries whose intentions coincided with those of the foreign imperialists.

That in the May events in Catalonia we are not dealing with a revolt of the Anarchists and the P.O.U.M., as the foreign press almost unanimously reported, was clear to everyone who had even a glimpse into the conditions. The assertion that the C.N.T.-F.A.I. in alliance with the P.O.U.M. intended to seize the entire governmental power in Catalonia was, in fact, so silly that it could only impress people

who had not the faintest glimmering as to the actual state of affairs in that province. If the C.N.T.-F.A.I. had really entertained any such plans, they had for a long time after the nineteenth of July the best opportunity to put their wishes into effect, for their tremendous moral and physical superiority over every other faction was such that simply no one could have resisted them. They did not do so, not because they lacked the strength, but because they were opposed to any dictatorship from whichever side it proceeded.

Over 120,000 members of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. were fighting in its military formations on every front. An uprising in the hinterland would have been contemptible treachery to these men, who at every instant were risking their lives to prevent the advance of Franco and his allies. Moreover, the C.N.T. was represented in the Generalidad of Catalonia, and people do not usually revolt against a government in which they are themselves participating. Every effort of the C.N.T. after the nineteenth of July was centered on winning the war and the revolution. They were by far the strongest and most sacrificing factor in the anti-Fascist front, influenced by no partisan political interest of any kind and having in view solely the social liberation of the great masses. Their whole behavior in the desperate struggle against the hordes of Fascism bears splendid testimony to this and can be interpreted in no other way.

No, the occurrences in Catalonia were not the result of an "Anarchist and Trotskyist conspiracy" against the government, but of a long and carefully prepared plot against the Spanish working class in which the Communists and their allies, the Catalan Nationalists, played the most important role. The most important, not the sole part, for all the reactionary elements collaborated in this conspiracy, from the compromise-ready politicians of Valencia and Barcelona to the most exalted circles of foreign diplomacy. The plans had been made for months, as is clearly shown by numerous indisputable facts.

Thus, on March 5, 1937, there appeared at the arsenal in Barcelona, a group of men who, presenting an order from Vallejo, the director of war industries, demanded the delivery of ten armored cars. The superintendent of the arsenal complied with the order. Later, however, doubts arose, and he telephoned Vallejo to ask whether he had given such an order. It was then revealed that the whole thing was a fraud and that Vallejo's signature had been forged. It was quickly discovered that the armored cars were in the Voroshilov Barracks, the military headquarters of the Communist Party. At first, they simply denied the fact there. But when the Catalan Prime Minister, Tarradellas, intervened and threatened a search by force, they had to admit the theft. What was the purpose of this act? One does not steal armored cars unless one intends to use them. But against whom else could they have been employed in Barcelona if not against the workers of the C.N.T. and F.A.I.? No

human being who is in possession of all five of his senses will deny that one only undertakes a trick like that if he has some special plan in his mind.

But that is not all. "Pravda" reported as early as March 22 that the P.O.U.M. was preparing an uprising against the government in Valencia. That was, of course, a deliberate lie, and on top of that, a thoroughly stupid lie; for the P.O.U.M. was only a small organization, which had no influence with the great mass of the organized workers. To think that such a body could plan an uprising against the government is simply an insult to human intelligence. But in Russia even the stupidest lie is quite good enough.

But it was not only in Russia and in the leading circles of the Spanish Communists and the Estat Catalá that people were so suspiciously well informed about the coming "uprising." In diplomatic circles abroad they were likewise possessed of the best possible "information" about the matter. Diego Abad de Santillan, who for a while held the office of Minister of Economy in the Catalonian government and who is known all over Spain and South America as one of the most honorable of men, whose regard for truth and sense of responsibility no one can question, shortly after the occurrences in Barcelona issued the following statement, which speaks for itself:

"There is no doubt that the recent events were the result of a deliberate plot, such as has never before been seen in the history of the social movement. This is plain from the fact that two weeks before they happened, people were talking about them in foreign diplomatic circles and were prepared for their occurrence. It was discussed there quite openly that now that the C.N.T.-F.A.I. had been forced out of the leading positions in Madrid and Valencia the Anarchists in Catalonia were to be given a fight. The same statements were being made in Paris by persons who stand very close to the Catalonian government.

"And how else can one explain the sudden arrival of foreign warships in our harbor just a few hours before the outbreak of hostilities? Is not that another proof that we are here dealing with a plan determined in advance? Long before the first shot was discharged in Barcelona, English and French cruisers were hurrying toward the port as if they had a prophetic presentiment of the things to come. If one takes all this into consideration, one asks oneself how much faith in the triumph of the anti-Fascist cause still exists among those people who invoke foreign protection against the workers of their own country?"  
(Solidaridad Obrera, May 13, 1937.)

The bloody occurrences in Barcelona were merely the last in a long series of unheard-of provocative acts having for their sole purpose to incite the C.N.T. and

the F.A.I. to retaliation, so that later the moral responsibility for the inevitable consequences could be shoved off on them. Thus, the government in Valencia, all on the quiet, organized a special troop of revenue officers, carabineros, made up entirely of Communists and Right Socialists. In April of this year a section of this troop was suddenly sent into Catalonia to occupy the French border, which up to then had been guarded by the workers' militia of the C.N.T., who were everywhere with unimpeachable punctiliousness looking after the public safety. This act, which had even no legal justification, can only be interpreted as a provocation directed against the C.N.T.

On April 27, the carabineros, without any reason whatever, brought on a clash with the residents of the little city of Puigcerda, whose population consisted exclusively of Anarchists, in the course of which Antonio Martin, President of the City Council, and two comrades of the C.N.T. were shot by Catalanian Separatists. The town was known for its exemplary economic and political arrangements, which had even been highly extolled on several occasions by correspondents of foreign newspapers. Still the C.N.T., even this time, did not let itself be drawn into retaliatory measures, since it was well aware of the enormous responsibility that rested on its shoulders. If, along with all this, one takes into consideration the continual crises in the Catalanian government which were being provoked by the Communists, one understands at once that the alleged "revolt of the Trotzkyists and the Anarchists" in Catalonia was in reality a well-planned assault of the counter-revolution, by which it was sought to batter down the strongest bulwark of the Spanish labor movement and clear the field for the schemes of the foreign imperialists.

## **The May events in Catalonia**

The immediate cause of the events in Catalonia was an openly provocative act of the Minister of Public Safety, Artemio Aiguadé, a member of the Catalanian Separatists, who had taken over this post in the newly formed cabinet only a few weeks before. At three o'clock on the afternoon of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Commissar Rodriguez Salas, a member of the Communist P.S.U.C., appeared with a strong division of police at the central telephone exchange in Barcelona and stated categorically that he had orders from Aiguadé to occupy the building. The telephone central, like most of the other public buildings in the city, stood under the control of the C.N.T. and U.G.T., together with an official delegate from the Generalidad, and this state of affairs had long been recognized by the government.

When, therefore, the workers protested, Salas ordered his men to disarm them by force. On the first floor luck was with him in this, because the workers were



simply taken by surprise. In the second story, however, he encountered the energetic resistance of the C.N.T. men. Shots were fired on both sides, and the police were unable to force their way further. Meanwhile a huge crowd of people had gathered in the street, attracted by the shooting. The general excitement, however, reached its height when armed P.S.U.C. men suddenly appeared in the adjacent streets and began erecting barricades. An outcry went up then all over the city and quickly spread to the most remote suburbs: "Treason! Treason! To arms! We've got to defend the Revolution!"

All this occurred quite spontaneously. The workers felt that a malicious assault on them had been arranged and resolutely prepared to defend themselves without waiting for the decision of their organizations. In the turn of a hand, the suburbs were converted into armed intrenchments. It was plain from the very beginning that the whole of organized labor was on the side of the C.N.T., just as in July, 1936. So strong was the general resistance in the Barcelona suburbs that the police there, as a whole, remained neutral; likewise the Republican, and even the Communist, militia, as, for instance, the soldiers in the Communist barracks in Sarria. In many sections they went straight over to the people, as in Sans and San Gervasio the Guardia de Asalto likewise did. In Sans the workers took four hundred of the Guardia Civil prisoners and held them in the C.N.T. headquarters. It is characteristic that these and all the other prisoners taken by the workers were promptly released when the fighting was over, while such known members of the C.N.T. as fell into the hands of the other side were murdered in cowardly fashion.

Only in the heart of the city, the section where the old middle class resided, did the Communists and their allies remain masters of the situation; and even there only because the workers from the beginning confined themselves strictly to defense and made no direct attacks, as they might easily have done. The Regional Committee of the C.N.T. was concerned above everything else to bring the fighting to an end and to prevent its spreading to other sections of the country. Delegations hurried to Prime Minister Tarradellas and Minister of the Interior Aiguadé and demanded the withdrawal of the bands of police. They were assured that no order had been given for the occupation of the telephone central. This was a manifest lie, for it was later established that Aiguadé had given Salas the order. A short time before the outbreak of hostilities a C.N.T. operator at the exchange had taken in a telegram which was addressed to a well-known Catalonian Separatist politician in France and consisted of the words: "Estic bé. Tot marxà." (I am well. All goes nicely.) The Regional Committee was therefore at once certain that there had been here not just an unfortunate misunderstanding, but a well-planned attack on the organized workers for the purpose of expelling the representatives of the C.N.T. from the Generalidad and bloodily destroying their organization. This conviction was only too well justified, for, it developed later, the same things were going on

in other Catalonian towns and were being managed in the same way. The committee found itself in a difficult position. Its members were well aware that the spreading of the conflict would deal the anti-Fascist cause a crushing blow. On the other hand they could not possibly expect the workers to allow themselves to be calmly butchered by a cowardly band of conspirators. The committee therefore concentrated its efforts from the very beginning on the defence, and demanded the immediate dismissal of Aiguadé and Salas by the government, thus restoring peace as quickly as possible. When the government hesitated, the general strike was proclaimed, from which were exempted only those workers engaged in industries of war. This is but an additional proof of the great sense of responsibility which motivated the working classes of Barcelona. Had the government accepted this only too reasonable demand, peace would have been restored within a few hours, for the workers certainly had nothing to gain by killing each other. By their disruptive tactics the Communists and Separatists prolonged the negotiations, thereby aggravating the situation needlessly.

In the suburbs practically no fighting took place. In Sans, Hostafranchs, San Gervasio, etc., the workers merely disarmed the police and the Guardia Civil and concerned themselves only with their own defense. Meanwhile the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. issued appeals to the populace informing them of the true state of affairs and calling on them to end the fighting. In an appeal to the police they say:

“The C.N.T. and F.A.I. are against every form of dictatorship, nor are they minded to force their own dictatorship on others. As long as our adherents live they will never submit to a dictatorship. We are fighting against Fascism, not because we like to fight, but because we wish to assure freedom to the people; because we wish to prevent the return of those forces which are merely looking forward to massacring the militant workers and establishing the exploitation of the people. And we are fighting against all those, who do not, indeed, call themselves Fascists, but nevertheless wish to establish a system of absolutism which stands in contradiction to all our traditions and to the history of our people.”

And in a manifesto to organized workers of every faction, we read:

“Men and women of the people! Workers! We are speaking to you frankly and honestly, as we have always done. We are not responsible for what is happening today. We are attacking no one, We are only defending ourselves. We did not begin this fight, nor did we provoke it. We are only replying to the accusations, the calumnies, and to the

violence that is sought to be done to the C.N.T.-F.A.I., the irreconcilable fighters of the anti-Fascist front.

“We have never concealed our aims, and we have given sufficient proof of our worth. *Why do they want to exterminate us?* Is it not suspicious that we are being attacked here while our formations in Madrid, in Andalusia, in Viscaya and Aragon are constantly supplying new proofs of their courage and their strength? Workers of the C.N.T. and U.G.T.! Remember the road that we have traveled together! How many of us have fallen covered with wounds, in the open streets and on the barricades! Lay down your arms! Remember that you are brothers! We shall conquer if we are united. If we fight one another we are doomed to defeat!”

That is not the language of conspirators, but of men who recognized their responsibility, and who were cravenly assailed because with unshakable fidelity they defended the freedom of the Spanish people.

When the C.N.T. militia on the Aragon front got word of the events in Catalonia, without delay they sent one of their best fighters, Jover, to Barcelona. They were ready at once to go to the assistance of their basely betrayed brothers. The National Committee of the C.N.T. prevented this. That certainly was not the conduct of men who had designs to overthrow the government and put themselves in exclusive possession of public power. On May 4<sup>th</sup> delegates from the National Committee of the C.N.T. and U.G.T. arrived from Valencia to help restore peace. On May 5<sup>th</sup> the government at last decided on an armistice. Aiguadé and Salas were removed from their positions. The old government retired and a new one was formed in which one representative each from the C.N.T., the U.G.T., the Left Republicans, and the small farmers had a seat. But, though after the armistice was decided on the workers removed their barricades in the suburbs, the Communists were constantly provoking new clashes in the heart of the city, as they doubtless had been informed that the Valencia government had decided to interfere. Thus, a division of the Guardia Civil, after the syndicates of the C.N.T. had already ceased fighting, suddenly attacked the quarters of the Libertarian Youth. The Youth defended their home with grim contempt for death and in doing so lost six of their best comrades.

In this way the C.N.T.-F.A.I. while the negotiations for an armistice were still in progress lost a number of their best comrades, all of them murdered by Stalinist assassins. On the afternoon of May 5, the two Italian Anarchists, Berneri and Barbieri, were arrested by Communists, and during the following night both were shot. Camillo Berneri was one of the finest minds in the libertarian movement of Italy, a man of blameless character and broad political outlook. As a young professor in the University of Camarino, he had left Italy after Mussolini's accession to power

and had since lived abroad as a political refugee. Immediately after the nineteenth of July, 1936, he hastened to Barcelona and formed the first Italian free troop for the war against Fascism. His clear vision quickly recognized the ambiguous role of the Russian government, and he warned his Spanish comrades against the approaching danger. In the periodical, "Guerra di Classe," which he conducted, he published an article under the title, "Burgos and Moscow," in which he laid bare the underground machinations of the Stalinists, so that the Russian ambassador in Barcelona lodged a protest against it. After that the agents of Moscow hated him from the bottom of their hearts, and he paid for his article with his young life, the victim of a cowardly assassination.

And in those bloody days Domingo Ascaso also fell by the hand of an assassin. He was the brother of Francisco Ascaso, one of the first to lose his life in the battle against the Fascists on July 19<sup>th</sup>, and for a long time Durruti's closest friend. Murdered also was Francisco Ferrer's nephew, who had returned from the front, wounded, a short time before. He still walked with a crutch and was accompanying his mother on the street when he was shot down before her eyes by cowardly murdering hoodlums. These are just a few names from a long list who were maliciously massacred at that time. *Five hundred dead and fifteen hundred wounded; that is the bloody audit for which the organized workers of Barcelona have to thank Stalin's policy.* And all of that — we keep repeating it — because the Russian government has to show itself well-disposed toward Anglo-French imperialism; because Russia has contemptibly betrayed the cause of the workers and peasants in Spain, and its adherents there stand squarely in the camp of the counter-revolution.

If Stalin's agents and their allies, the Catalonian Separatists, have, still, not succeeded in carrying out their dark plots against the organized workers of Catalonia, this is owing only to the determined resistance of those workers, who did not quietly permit the elements without conscience to wantonly destroy their life work and break up their movement.

## **Before coming events**

One thing, however, Stalin's followers in Spain have achieved. They have shattered the anti-Fascist front and have delivered Catalonia to the Negrin government. To achieve this end they have allied themselves with the most reactionary elements of the old regime, of whom a large number are nothing but Fascists in disguise. When on July 19<sup>th</sup>, of last year the organized workers of Barcelona put down the Fascist revolt and took the land and the factories under their own management, many of those people who now stand on the side of the Communists left Spain in great haste and took refuge abroad; ahead of all the others, the leader of the

Catalonian Separatists, Señor Dencás, who very significantly, fled to Rome, later to help the Stalinists arrange the “uprising” in Barcelona.

In June of this year the National Committee of the C.N.T. in Valencia issued a public statement on the events in Barcelona, in which the underground activities of these people were nailed down, and it was proved by a long list of assured facts that many of the prominent leaders of the Estat Catalá, like Aiguadé, Dencás, Casanovas, Lluhi Vallesca, Ventura Cassols, Sancho Xicotta and many others were maintaining secret connections with Fascist circles in France. In this open indictment the committee stated: “We are assuming full responsibility for every word that is said here. No one will be able to dispute these facts. The individual cases which we cite here are based on trustworthy information and are the result of exact knowledge of the true state of affairs.”

None of the persons so seriously accused has thus far attempted to mitigate the force of this public indictment by the National Committee of an organization which numbers over two million members in Spain. But this does not in any way concern the leaders of the Communist Party in Spain and their Russian prompters. They have a definite mission from the Russian government to fulfill, and anyone who will be helpful in this is welcome to them. And after the occurrences in Catalonia they did not cease their ruinous work, which had as its first objective to force the C.N.T. out of the Generalidad of Catalonia. How they are going about this is shown by the following secret circular from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain to their agents in Catalonia:

“Crisis. Provocation of the same. Motives: We can rely upon the transient aspect of the present government. But our party demands the presidency. The new government will display the same characteristics as the government in Valencia; a strong government, a ‘Popular Front’ government, whose chief mission it will be to foster the desire for peace in the minds of the people and to call to account the instigators of the recent counter-revolution. (The occurrences in Barcelona are meant. — Author.) The C.N.T. will be permitted to participate in this government, but under such conditions that they will feel obliged to refuse co-operation. Then we can represent ourselves as the ones who wish to co-operate with all factions. If certain inconveniences should arise from this, they will not fall on us, but on those who on other occasions have been in the same position.”

This secret document was published in Madrid by the daily “CNT” on the same day on which the Communists in Catalonia provoked the recent governmental crisis, and with the result, moreover, that the C.N.T. withdrew its representatives from the government. Comment on this infamy is superfluous.

For the time being reaction is marching on in Spain. The press is subject to an intolerable censorship. Hundreds of the best fighters of the anti-Fascist front are languishing in the jails. The dissolution of the P.O.U.M. and the arrest of its leaders was the first stroke. And while the reactionary Negrin government is leaving no means untried to strengthen itself internally, increasingly stubborn rumors of Franco's efforts toward a rapprochement with England and France continue to make their appearance in the foreign press. World famous papers like the Paris "Temps," the "New York Times," and "The Daily Herald" in England have repeatedly hinted during the last few weeks that Franco is thinking of adopting a new course in his foreign policy and intends to part with his former allies, Germany and Italy. The "Manchester Guardian" of July 13, was able to report that Franco's agents in London and Paris are actively seeking to raise a loan there. The paper speaks of a sum between twenty-five and fifty million pounds sterling and comments: "It is not known whether these negotiations have thus far been successful."

That for a considerable time negotiations have been in progress to end the war in Spain by compromise at the first suitable opportunity is beyond the slightest doubt. England's sudden advances to Italy also point to this. According to a report of the "Cosmos" international news agency the Belgian Prime Minister, Van Zeeland, is also playing an important part in these proceedings behind the scenes. That the Negrin government, which was brought into existence by direct pressure from England, France, and Russia, has knowledge of all these things is a matter of course. If one takes all this into consideration the real causes of the bloody May events in Barcelona are much easier to understand.

On the other hand, however, the bloody reaction of the Negrin government, which is entirely under the control of Russia and her imperialist allies, has effected a great internal transformation, which becomes more obvious every day. The left wing of the Socialist Party under Largo Caballero, which today is being fought by the agents of Russia just as bitterly as the C.N.T., is now aligning itself sharply against the treacherous disintegrating labors of the Communists and their bourgeois retinue. The enormous majority of the U.G.T. is on this side and is just about to form a revolutionary alliance with the C.N.T. for the defense of the achievements of the revolution. "The U.G.T. of Catalonia is not our U.G.T., the U.G.T. of Spain," declared Hernandez Zancajo, one of the most prominent leaders of the U.G.T., and the words were echoed with a roar by the fighting men of the movement.

However, in spite of all the reactionary machinations of the government, the C.N.T., together with the F.A.I and the Libertarian Youth, is making important gains in all sections of the country. The workers and peasants do not intend to surrender their social conquests to the reaction and are preparing to defend them. What the Monarchist reaction did not succeed in doing in seventy years Stalin's despotism and its Spanish agents will not succeed in doing either. A movement which is so

deeply intergrown with the lives of the Spanish people and which constitutes one of the most important parts of that life, cannot be throttled by the methods of the Russian Cheka.

The Negrin government is trying by all the devices of a ruthless censorship, which is completely in the hands of its Russian taskmasters, to keep these matters from the knowledge of foreigners. But they are not succeeding even in that. The mysterious disappearance of the P.O.U.M. leader, Andres Nin, which the government hushed up for weeks, has roused a storm of indignation. Nin, who after the May events in Barcelona was arrested with other leaders of his party and taken to Valencia and from there to Madrid, has vanished without a trace. The government at first stated that he had escaped from his guards, but nobody in Spain believes that fairy tale. Instead they are everywhere convinced that he was murdered by Russian Chekists either on the way to Madrid or in Madrid itself. Even in the camp of the bourgeois Republicans they are beginning to resent Russia's guardianship, which is becoming constantly more unbearable as time goes on. The Nin affair has called forth even in these quarters protests such as one would not previously have expected there. They are getting tired of being the wards of a cowardly mob, for which any crime is good enough so long as it serves the ends of Moscow.

Spain today faces a new decision. They feel that on both sides; for the present situation is unbearable and can but lead to certain catastrophe.

For twelve months a brave people has been sacrificed to the eelfish interests of imperialist robbers and their Russian henchmen. It is high time for the Libertarian world to understand that and to wake up to the fact that the fate of Spain will be the fate of Europe. Never has a people fought for its freedom more heroically. Never has a people been worse betrayed by open and secret enemies. It is Spain's great tragedy that she has hitherto been so little understood: the story of the sufferings of a people that is bleeding from a thousand wounds and still will not give up the fight, because it knows that it carries in its breast the precious growth of freedom and human dignity on which the future of all of us depends.

New York, August, 1937.

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The Tragedy of Spain  
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