

February, 1939

# VANGUARD

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# VANGUARD

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## WHERE IS THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD!

**T**HE fall of Barcelona does not spell the end of Loyalist resistance, as it is triumphantly announced by the fascist press agencies. But undoubtedly, it is the heaviest blow dealt the struggling Spanish people ever since the civil war began.

It signifies not only the loss of the most industrial city, with all the material resources of Catalonia serving as the sinews of the formidable resistance to the Italian and German invasion. It means much more than that. Barcelona was the greatest reservoir of revolutionary proletarian energy, asserting itself in the unique forms of historic struggle against Spanish reaction and, even more so in the remarkable work of social reconstruction carried on during the last two years.

It took several generations of titanic struggles to build up this reservoir of constructive revolutionary energy. Like the Leningrad and Moscow proletariat, the workers of Barcelona went through the heroic school of barricades, revolts and general strikes. They paid with the blood of thousands of their best sons for the great privilege of being in the vanguard of the proletarian struggles of the world over.

And now they are turned over to the savage hordes of Mussolini and Hitler, who, realizing too well the deep roots which libertarian socialism struck among the workers of Barcelona, have committed themselves in advance to a program of reprisals which will make all the past horrors of fascist savageries pale in comparison.

That this supreme tragedy was allowed to take place, is in the first place due to the betrayal of the French and British socialists who flouted the elementary demands of international proletarian solidarity, the *elementary considerations of their own safety* endangered by the worldwide plot of Chamberlain and Mussolini. The historic responsibility of the Blums and Citrines for the carnage of Barcelona, with all the ominous consequences which this defeat entails for the progressive forces of the world, is even greater than that of Ebert and Scheidemann who lent themselves as willing tools of the attempted policy of strangulating the Russian October revolution.

Along with all revolutionists we deeply mourn this greatest defeat sustained by the proletariat of Spain and the world. At the same time we must also remember the

necessity not only of mourning but also of fighting. The Spanish revolution is but the prelude of the great worldwide struggle into which we have entered. We still have the historic opportunity to redeem the Barcelona tragedy upon the larger stage of world revolution.

## AMERICA'S DILEMMA

**F**ROM day to day we see growing signs of a strong undertow of reaction beating against the surface of American life.

Those signs manifest themselves not only in the proliferation of numerous groupings of an openly fascist character. With all the powerful financial resources—foreign and domestic—thrown into the task of keeping alive the various fascist organizations of this country, the fascist abomination still skims only the very frothy surface of our life, it is still unable to pollute to any extent the vital currents of American society.

It is the other kind of reaction—the native reaction still adhering to the patterns of the past historic struggles but already chafing under the restraints imposed by those traditions—that makes itself felt so strongly. It is the ever intensified drive of the “60 families” for political control that is sweeping into its carefully camouflaged drive ever greater masses of the middle classes and disillusioned farmer and workers. And the sweep of this reactionary momentum may carry us well over the watershed dividing the traditional struggles of American conservatism from the overt reaction of the fascist type.

That the ruling economic oligarchy has finally seen fit to throw off the cloak of humility before the clearly manifested popular will is in itself a sign of some dangerous state of popular mind. Without this state of disillusionment and bewilderment, the aggressive challenge of the ruling economic powers would never be as unrestrained in its character as it is proving to be of late. It would never dare to come out openly with its plans for dismantling the W.P.A., for throwing millions of destitute people back into Hoovervilles, for smashing labor unions in the newly organized industries, for organizing a system of reprisals against labor, radicals and liberals of the country—were it not sure of eliciting some popular response by skillfully directing the growing wave of mass discontent against the self-defeating policies of the New Deal.

For, as in Germany, the primary cause of the tragic divorce between the democratic forces and the masses of people—a divorce already adumbrated here in America—lies in the inability of the former to attack the basic problem of putting millions of people back to work. The simple expedient of the New Deal, allowing it to prop up to some extent the stalled economic apparatus, is admittedly only in the nature of a makeshift. And when that makeshift is being carried over from year to year, it in-

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THE past year in the labor movement is characterized by a very discouraging reversal of the upward trend which had resulted in the organization of mass production industry.

No longer do we hear of great strikes and struggles against the economic masters. The labor movement, specifically, the C.I.O. and A.F.ofL., is engaged in a desperate struggle not against the employers, but against each other. The prize at stake is domination of the labor movement. In this struggle all tactics, no matter how reprehensible, are regarded justified.

Only a conscious reawakening on the part of the disappointed and outraged workers can reverse the trend. Nowhere is this inter-union warfare more evident than in the basic maritime, auto, textile, clothing and steel industries.

How can we view the defection from the C.I.O. of such formidable bodies as Dubinsky's I.L.G.W.U., the Martin followers in the U.A.W.? What is the significance of Dan Tobin's veiled threat to withdraw his teamsters from the A.F.ofL., and Gorman's split with the T.W.O.C.?

Unfortunately, these defections are not indicative of a genuine disgust of the membership with the Lewis dictatorship or the Green bureaucracy. They signify that Lewis will not share his power, and that Green's company will not admit new partners. The disappointed leaders are threatening to go into business for themselves, or at least using that threat as a bargaining point in achieving a higher status for themselves in the old line unions. The demoralizing effect of this constant shift on the workers, reduced to pawns in the game, greatly saps their vitality for effective struggle such as the C.I.O. was capable of during the early stages of its rise. This period of debilitating inner strife spells an ominous course for future events in the face of the political reaction facing America.

## On The Textile Front

The C.I.O. Textile Workers Organizing Committee has remained inactive. A significant section of the workers, especially in New England, has suffered from the eventual effects of the conciliatory tactics of the bureaucratic Sidney Hillman. Wages are low, unemployment is rife, while the bosses ride rough shod over the prostrate workers. The workers registered their protest against the do-nothing policy of their leaders by many sporadic outbreaks against the union officialdom, notably in Rhode Island, Fall River, and New Bedford, Mass.

Discontent has taken the form, however, of a movement to return to the A.F.ofL. under the leadership of Gorman. In desperation, the workers jump from the frying pan into the fire. The absence of revolutionary ideas and forces capable of crystallizing this sentiment into proper channels is primarily responsible for this condition. The inspiring days of the Lawrence, Fall River, and Paterson strikes under the banner of the I.W.W. must be revived. The

workers are anxious and ripe for the message of revolutionary industrial unionism.

## Maritime Unions

In the last issue of *Vanguard*, we took note of the fact that the independent and militant Sailor's Union of the Pacific (S.U.P.) had finally joined the A.F.ofL. and organized the Seafarer's International Union of North America (S.I.U.). Since then, events have demonstrated the folly of such a step. Already the vices for which the A.F.ofL. is notorious are inherited by its latest offspring, the S.I.U. The splendid traditions and clean record of the S.U.P. threaten to become things of the past.

All the old discredited officials of the defunct International Seamen's Union (I.S.U.), Joseph P. Ryan, of the longshoremen's union, his gangsters and racketeers, who were deposed only after a long and bitter struggle by the rank and file of the seamen, are again on the ascendancy. Harry Lundeberg, secretary of the S.U.P., and his newly found friends, the disciples of the Notorious Exile, the Trotzkyites, are making attempts to exclude these elements from the S.I.U., but with little success.

When the A.F.ofL., at its last convention, empowered Lundeberg to organize the S.I.U., he agreed to retain the very elements whom he is now trying to combat. This explains why such reprehensible strong-arm men as Wilbury Dickey ("What-a-man Epps"), Shefsted, and many others are on the payroll of the S.I.U. All attempts to eject them from the hall and divorce them from the payroll have failed. The gangsters claim that they were put there by their respective unions which have been incorporated into the S.I.U.

The dispatcher of the S.U.P. in the port of New Orleans was run out of town by the above-mentioned Shefsted and replaced by a tool of the old I.S.U. Sixty full book-members of the S.U.P. were prevented from sailing on S.U.P. ships. Their jobs were taken by finks and friends of the gangsters, who were forced to pay ten dollars each in order to get the job. The old gang is getting stronger.

The situation is further complicated because the charter granted to Lundeberg is only temporary. Upon the expiration of the charter, he must show the executive board of the A.F.ofL. that he has built a union on all coasts and succeeded in displacing the existing C.I.O. National Maritime Union (N.M.U.). He must show that he has established good relations with and absorbed all the old A.F.ofL. maritime unions which are now part of the newly organized S.I.U. He must perform the impossible task of building a union out of all the corrupt and discredited elements—the goons, fakers, politicians and finks of all stripes; people who collaborate with the shipowners and the government.

True to the traditional A.F.ofL. policy, the S.I.U. as an integral part of the A.F.ofL., must purge from its

ranks all "reds," all militants. Under the terms of agreement, Lundberg is required to do this. This explains why he refuses to ship members of the class-conscious I.W.W. Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union, No. 510 (M.T.W.) and other militants. This explains the campaign of vilification being carried on against rebellious seamen. Forgotten are the days when the M.T.W. was praised by Lundberg and I.W.W. halls were used by the S.U.P. to ship out its members on the east and gulf coasts.

The old cry of "dual unionism" is raised as an excuse to get rid of the M.T.W. members. The hypocrisy of this charge can be fully appreciated when we bear in mind the fact that the S.I.U. is trying to build a union dual to the N.M.U.

Chaos in the maritime industry, factional feuds between adherents of the C.I.O. and the A.F.ofL. have blinded the average worker to the great dangers that beset him. The fight against government regulation, government hiring halls, lags. Only a handful of militants carries on the battle. The N.M.U. is committed to the support of government regulation. The S.U.P. has withdrawn its active support from the fight against government regulation, thus conforming to A.F.ofL. tradition.

At no time was the need for revolutionary unionism greater than it is now. The last convention of the M.T.W. aware of this need, has taken effective steps to intensify revolutionary organization, to keep up the fight for union hiring halls, and against government regimentation. They realize that this is the only effective program—the one the seamen will be forced to adopt when they witness the demoralizing effect of the S.I.U. and N.M.U. programs on maritime conditions.

### Auto Union Fights Itself

The struggle for control of the United Automobile Workers of America (U.A.W.) has again broken out. The "peace" engineered by the bureaucracy of the C.I.O. was only a brief truce. The warring factions, represented by Homer Martin, the deposed president, and Richard Frankenstein, of the executive board, have used the temporary respite to marshal their forces for a decisive struggle.

Martin, in his attempt to beat the coalition consisting of Murray, Lewis, Hillman, Frankenstein, and company, has enlisted the support of no less formidable an ally than Harry Bennett, personnel director of the Ford Motor Company. It is obvious that Ford would not countenance the organization of his 100,000 workers, into a real union. Any organization of Ford workmen into a bonafide union would require a major battle. The sudden cordiality between Martin and Ford indicates one of two things: Martin connived either to form an "independent" union under Ford's control, or to use the newly organized Ford workers in order to gain a decisive vote in his favor at the next convention of the U.A.W. In either case, these negotiations undertaken behind the backs of the workers stamp Martin as a traitor to the cause of the labor movement, whose sinister role is becoming more and more apparent. Martin's role is shown by the high-handed

methods which characterize his administration.

The opposition is composed of various elements: Communists, Socialists and other politicians. Their record could certainly never stand the light of even a cursory examination. They likewise are guilty of usurpation of power and class collaboration. Without exception, *all of the members of the executive board supported the outrageous "disciplinary" clause in the contract with General Motors, by which the company can discipline any member who fails to obey company rules.* A most rigid dictatorship reigns in the locals. Large sums of money are dispensed at the discretion of the regional directors, but no concrete results in the way of improved conditions or better wages have been accomplished.

Insofar as the C.I.O. "coordinating" committee is concerned, it is certain that they are no less dictatorial than Martin. If Martin is justly accused of making common cause with the bosses in negotiating secret agreements, the same can be said for Lewis in his dealings with the Steel Trust and the mine owners. The deposed members of the executive board who justly condemn Martin for playing ball with Ford have never uttered one word of protest against the scandalous agreements which they negotiated together with Martin. This applies to the General Motors agreement, to the Plymouth and Chrysler agreements, and to many others. They have aided Martin and the C.I.O. leadership in establishing a dictatorship in the U.A.W. and are therefore no less culpable.

The other faction, with the full backing of Lewis and company, have deposed Martin and chosen Thomas, the vice-president, in his place. The expelled members of the executive board were reinstated. It will be observed, however, that in all of these manoeuvres affecting the very existence of the union, *the membership has never even been consulted.* "Their's not to reason why, their's but to do and die."

With the split, the situation in the industry is most desperate for the workers. The bosses now have the chance that they have been awaiting—the chance to smash the union.

As for the "progressives," they have failed miserably. No group presented a program to the workers which would effectively abolish class collaboration and dictatorship. Their chief concern seems to be the maintenance of their jobs and their prestige. This applies especially to the Lovestonites who are supporting Martin. They go so far as to praise a man like McCarmey, who is a fascist, and who testified before the Dies Committee. In their hatred for the Stalinists, they are willing to embrace the fascists. We hold no brief for the Communists—our stand on this subject is well known. We condemn both factions, but it would be playing directly into the hands of the fascists if we helped any clique to purge the Communists, or any other group.

With the demoralization of the U.A.W., there is a great need for a rank and file movement which alone can depose the politicians of both factions. The revolutionists must organize the rank and file and clean house.

(Continued)

**B**ETWEEN political aspirations for power of privileged minorities and the cultural activity of the people there is always an internal struggle going on, since both travel on different roads which can never merge voluntarily and they can only be soldered together by external forces and mental coercion to a seeming harmony. If the state does not succeed in directing cultural activity within its jurisdiction into channels appropriate to its own purposes and thus stunt its natural development, the culture will sooner or later burst asunder the political frames which it feels are an obstacle to its growth. If, however, the political machinery is strong enough to dominate the cultural life for a long period and to mold it into the forms it desires, it seeks other avenues of expression as it cannot be confined or forced into any political limits.

States never perish through "over-refinement of culture"; they die from the overexpansion of the political power principle to which they sacrifice gradually all the living forces of the country. Because this is the curse of every power they continuously endeavor to extend the domain of their control, whether it be the power of the church, a state or a party. The whole authority of a state is borne by this principle which gradually surpasses and chokes all other forces and so becomes the cause of its internal decay.

This is the great difference between power and culture: Every culture as long as it is not too greatly influenced in its development by political impediments results in continuous rejuvenation and a constant search for newer forms, a constant growth of the multiplicity of creative activity. Every successful deed awakes the necessity for greater perfection and deeper spiritualization. Culture is always creative and always gropes for new forms of activity. It resembles the trees of the virgin forest whose branches touch the soil and push forth new roots.

Power is never creative; it only takes advantage of the creative strength of culture to cover up its deficiencies and to increase its prestige. It always acts destructively as it always endeavors to force all phenomena of social life into the iron corset of its laws. Its spiritual form of expression is dead dogma; its physical expression, brutal force. The intellectual shallowness of its aspiration places its imprint on the bearers, who make themselves spiritless and brutal even if they originally had great capabilities.

The modern state is nothing but the embodiment of the power principle of the ruling classes, the victory of uniformity over the rich multiplicity of the life of the people; the triumph of mental drilling over the natural formation of character; the replacement of the sense of personality by a stupid cadaverous obedience; in one word, the suppression of freedom by brutal power into senseless molds. That was already recognized by Proni-

hon, when he told Mazzini, the most important representative of the idea of national unity:

"A great centralized state suppresses all the freedom of the provinces and municipalities in favor of a higher power—the government. What in truth is the unity of a nation? The absorption of separate folk-groups in which human beings live and which differ from one another, into the abstract idea of a nation in which no one breathes and no one knows each other. . . . Having taken from man every right to decide about himself, an enormous bureaucracy, a legion of employees is necessary to make this machine function. To protect it from within and without, a standing army is needed, officials, soldiers, mercenaries; these will now represent the nation. This magnificent unity needs glory, splendour, luxury and an imposing civil list, ambassadors, pensions, pork barrels, etc. In such a national unity state everybody has his hand out. And who pays the parasites? The people. Whoever says 'united nation' means a nation which is sold to its government. . . . This unity is nothing else but a form of bourgeois exploitation under the protection of bayonets. Yes, the political national unity of our big powers is the rule of the bourgeoisie. Hence the enthusiasm of the bourgeoisie for the 'unity state'."

The brilliant Frenchman recognized the moving principle of all aspirations for national unity. But our modern state socialists, from the Social Democrats to the various branches of Russian Bolshevism, can not see even today, what he foresaw clearly because his vision was not clouded by a blind belief in the state as professed by modern labor parties, a continuation of the absolutist aspirations of the 16th and 17th centuries. And, moreover, the integration of the labor movement in the sphere of the national state has contributed considerably to the present situation. The acceptance of the national state was at the same time the acceptance of the monopolistic economic order which is its basis.

Every flirtation with nationalist principles is a danger for man's future in general and for socialism in particular. Not only did the social democracy learn this at great expense, but also its woe-begotten child, the German Communist Party, which even tried to surpass the German social democracy in patriotic attitudes and nationalistic phraseology. In fact the electoral program of the German Communist Party shortly before the fascist assumption to power, was so full of nationalist slogans, that the "Volkische Beobachter," the organ of Hitler, was able to write with unconcealed malicious joy: "The new program of the Communist Party signifies our greatest victory because the Bolshevik leadership was compelled to steal our slogans which they recognize as of vital importance in their program."

This infamous game of using nationalist ideas for the supposed interests of socialism is so much the more detestable in this case since it did not spring from ten-

dencies within German Communism, but from the foreign policy of the Russian government whose representatives are always ready to come to the assistance of any reaction so long as the Stalin dictatorship profits by it. While in all other socialist parties the strong development of nationalist ideas can be traced for the most part to their many years of participation in bourgeois politics, in this case it was due to the direct influence of the new *raison d'etat* of the Russian dictatorship.

Liberalism gave the first great blow to the system of royal absolutism and directed social life into new channels. While its spiritual protagonists recognize the maximum of personal liberty as the real lever of all cultural progress and therefore strive to limit the activity of the state to a minimum, they opened new perspectives to social development which inevitably had to lead to the repression of all striving for political power by small minorities and to a competent administration of social affairs in the interest of all. The socialist movement could have inherited this fertile development of ideas by giving them a positive basis through its fight against economic monopolies, through the endeavor to place the productive activity of human society in the interests of all. By this economic complement to the liberal aspirations they could have made them a powerful factor in the conscience of men and consequently a conscious bearer of a huge social culture. Instead of that, it fought with incredible shortsightedness the libertarian tendencies of the liberal conception of society and saw in them only the political expression of the so-called Manchester principles.

Under the pretentious title of a new science, that fatalistic economic metaphysics developed in the socialist movement under the banner of Marxism which brought into discredit all principles of social justice which once formed the ethical premises of all socialist thought, declaring them utopian remnants of bourgeois conceptions. It visualized the human being exclusively as the collective bearer of immutable conditions of production under the influence of which he had to fulfil definite historical missions independent of his will. Political absolutism was thus transferred into the domain of economics and led to that fatalistic conception of social evolution which saw in every advance of capitalist imperialism a necessary step on the road to socialism, without noticing that every new phase of this evolution increased immeasurably the sphere of influence of the modern great state and the economic monopolists; and by virtue of this fact rendered more and more difficult the possibility of the social emancipation of humanity.

To a large extent this tendency, hostile to the concept of freedom of modern political socialism, prepared the groundwork for the idea of the totalitarian state. Many of its protagonists, particularly the founders of the German school, were pupils of Hegel and other representatives of the absolute state idea. Others were so strongly influenced by the traditions of French Jacobinism that they could only imagine the transition to socialism in the form of a proletarian dictatorship. Others again dreamed

of an economic hierarchy in the form of a new church or placed their hope in a new Napoleon who would open for humanity the road to the new world of socialism.

Not the conquest of power but the exclusion of every political power principle from the life of human society, is the true political aim of socialism. Recognizing the principle that the rule of man over man has had its time, the working people of all countries must accept and familiarize themselves with the idea of administration over matters and must prepare themselves and put into effect the conquest of the soil and all industrial enterprises. Every true socialist activity must consequently be based upon the idea, whether it refers to large or to small matters, of opposing economic monopoly in every domain, of extending continuously and securing the sum total of personal liberty within the framework of human society. The equality of economic conditions is nothing but a necessary premise for the freedom of man but never its substitute. Whoever encroaches on liberty commits a sin against the spirit of socialism. Socialism is the cooperation in mutual solidarity on the basis of a common aim and the equal rights for everybody. But solidarity is based on free decision and cannot be forced, if it is not to be turned into tyranny by which it destroys itself. Every practical activity leading to other results leads away from socialism and becomes incompatible with socialism.

What we are striving for is the right for every commune, every region, every ethnic group to make its own decisions. It is for this reason that we reject the visionary idea of national unity. We are federalists, which means partisans of a union of free groupings which do not separate from each other but mutually permeate and fructify each other and interlace their growth through thousands of spiritual, economic and cultural relations. The unity to which we aspire is the cultural and social unity which finds its strongest bond in the ever growing diversity of all its forms of expression. It is a unity which springs from the freedom of all human relations and rejects in principle any mechanization and spiritless uniformity. The purpose is to free the world from the tradition of absolutism, be it of an economic, political or social nature.

Liberation of economy from capitalism! Liberation of society from political tutelage! Liberation of the life of the people from the hybrid growth of the nation! Only in this way will humanity open the doors to a new social culture, which will free it from the curse of political oppression and economic exploitation.

## YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

Several months ago the "Vanguard" sent out donation lists for the Sustaining Fund. We thank all our comrades and friends for their cooperation in donating and collecting these funds. A number of lists are still outstanding, however, and we would appreciate the immediate return of all such lists.

Bundle orders constitute a very important source of income for our magazine. Immediate payment for all copies of "Vanguard" would help us immeasurably in bringing out our magazine more regularly.

**F**ASCISM under one or another of its various nomenclatures has not yet raised its ugly head openly in Great Britain, but the ground is steadily being prepared for that event. The tender friendship displayed by the country's present "National" Government toward the two totalitarian states in Europe is not a mere passing phase. It is symptomatic of the deep underlying hankering of Big Business for that form of Super-Capitalism that is the essence of all forms of fascism. The marketing boards, the quotas, the various restrictions for the purpose of creating a scarcity of certain goods in order to maintain high prices and, of course, high profits are all tentative experiments in totalitarianism.

Gradually the people are being accustomed to this increasing interference by the state in the interests of Big Business, and so subtly is the process carried on that at last, unless a halt is speedily called, the workers will awake one morning to find the shackles of fascism firmly riveted upon their limbs. There will be no violent upheaval, for Great Britain is notoriously a country of compromise. It is more than likely that the form of government ultimately evolved will be quite unlike that of Italy or Germany, but it will, nonetheless, be fascist—an omnipotent state run at the behest, and for the benefit, of large scale capitalism.

## State Worship Breeds Fascism

The ground has been prepared for the transformation in yet another way. There has been steadily growing during the last fifty years, a new idolatry—that of the State. More and more has industry been turning toward governmental assistance in its affairs. More and more have the trade unions been depending upon Acts of Parliament to secure those reforms which used to be gained by industrial actions and more and more have the people been led to look upon a highly centralized state as the first essential for a well ordered and protected life. Perhaps no one is more responsible for the inculcation of this state idolatry than the self-styled "scientific" socialists. Some sixty years ago the Liberal School of Economists held the state in vague distrust, and particularly they resented any governmental interference with the processes of industry. This attitude was, of course, in defense of their competitive capitalism, and in combatting this type of capitalism the socialists had willy-nilly to lay increasing stress on state action to curb the activities of these Liberal Capitalists and to counter the teachings of their economists.

From both sides of the fence comes this striving for the creation of a rigid authoritarian state, and this state worship is a potent factor in preparing the ground for the advent of fascism.

But whereas the one side looks to the creation of a powerful state that will function on their behalf, the other,

the workers' does not appear to have any clear idea as to what they want. Nor do they seem to realize what are the implications of their teachings. It is quite true that they abhor fascism and all its works; that they steadily set their faces against dictatorship in any form, and they give lip service, at least, to some form of Socialism. But that socialism is very, very vague. Who shall say when or how? Nevertheless, the forces on the workers' side of the fence look upon themselves as the defense against the inroads of fascism, and that being so, it is necessary to examine their lines of defense.

## Can the British Labour Movement Resist?

The most important bodies are the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement. There are the other smaller bodies, but at the present moment these two are the most influential. These then are the first lines of defense and it is their strength that is to be depended upon to check the rising tide of fascism. The Labour Party is a purely political body which regards itself as destined to take the place of the now almost extinct Liberal Party in the old game of party politics—the see-saw of government by first one political group and then by another of a supposedly opposite character. This party is composed of elements ranging from old-fashioned, ex-liberal lawyers and other middle class intellectuals down to old-time trade union officials and trade union officials of a more left-wing tendency. As can be expected, there is a great diversity of opinion and ideas in such a group, and the highlights and leading personalities are often at loggerheads on matters of policy, while the rank and file stagger about in perplexity as to which group to give adherence. It is because of this continual clash of diverse views that Party headquarters so insistently prate of "discipline" and so frequently have to institute heresy hunts within their ranks.

There are other groups in this country which are alive to the dangers of this creep of fascism, the members of which do not belong to the Labour Party and there has arisen a strong agitation for the creation of a popular front. A front composed of all the elements that stand for Democracy irrespective of color or creed. In particular this front would operate at parliamentary elections. A strong anti-government candidate would be supported by all the other democratic parties so as to make his or her election a certainty. The agitation for the creation of such a front is, of course, loudly supported by the Communist Party and by a left-wing section of the Labour Party. But the Labour Party is most sternly opposed to such a front, and they take the position that the Labour Party must keep its hands clean. There must be no collaboration with non-socialist bodies or individuals. This tender solicitude for an incorruptible socialism by such a composite body as the Labour Party is more than



ironical. It would be impudent were it not so tragic. But the agitation goes on and before long there will be another great heresy hunt.

### **Class Collaboration Dooms British Working Class**

A line of defense, but a woefully shaky one. What of the Trade Union movement? The British Trade Union movement is admittedly a powerful movement, but it could be many times more powerful had it been directed along the right lines. There are between eleven and twelve millions registered workers in the country and of that number less than five millions are organized in their respective trade unions. That leaves a large margin for organizational work, and it is rather disheartening that after 70 and more years of trade union activity there should still be more than half the workers outside the orbit of the trade union movement. But the unions these days have other matters to attend to. It is true they crave more members, but their main preoccupation is with politics. They want more members but they go the wrong way to attract them. The order of the day is amalgamation and thus the building up of huge centralized bureaucratic organizations that function in such a cumbersome creaking manner that the ordinary branch member hardly knows that he is in a union at all except when he pays his dues.

That these overcentralized organizations are not fulfilling the purpose for which the trade unions were formed is evidenced by the number of unofficial strikes which are occurring in all branches of industry. The unions, of course, blame communist agitators for these inconvenient affairs, but agitators, communist or otherwise, would be powerless did not these workers have a very real grievance. British workers are not apt to strike until pushed very hard. The fact that these sporadic strikes are taking place is fairly good proof that the unions, besides being too cumbersome for swift and flexible movement, are more interested in their political commitments. At the moment this preoccupation with matters political is shown by the eagerness of the big unions to collaborate with the government in the production of armaments; and in the setting up of a National Register for the regimentation of the workers in time of war. This register must, they say, be of a voluntary character, but, once formed, a flick of the pen—an order in council—will convert a scheme, which the unions will have helped to build up, into the most rigid form of conscription. And that in peace time is yet another step along the road to fascism. The Labour Party is but a weak line of defense—the trade unions appear to be still weaker.

The position in Great Britain today is alarmingly reminiscent of the position of the workers' parties in Germany on the eve of the Nazi coup. But there will be no *coup d'état* in England. It will be a slow, insidious change from parliamentary democracy to Totalitarianism and unless there is a speedy change of outlook, and of tactics, the workers will have to thank their own parties for having appreciably helped in making possible the change.

## **FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTION**

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**T**WO or three decades ago the libertarian movement in America distinguished itself to a degree incommensurate with the small number of its active participants. Then, as now, the burden of carrying on propaganda fell upon the shoulders of a few active comrades devoted to the ideal. But the influence and growth of the movement did correspond to the amount of libertarian work that was carried on by the militants of yesteryear. It was understood then that the libertarian philosophy lost its meaning unless it was accompanied by *Libertarian Action*. And it is just as true today that we cannot be libertarians unless we demonstrate our ideas in a practical way and lend a libertarian direction to the progressive struggles of humanity.

But the decline of libertarian beliefs in the twenties following the War proved overwhelming to the seemingly indefatigable comrades of the movement. A period of inactivity set in—known as stewing in your own juice—which was characterized by a return to nineteenth century romanticism of living an anarchist life undisturbed by the realities about you, or what proved worse, demonstrating how an anarchist life can be built (in a capitalist society) by creating utopian colonies. In a great measure the active forces of the movement today have freed themselves of this emasculating state of mind. Had such a condition continued, anarchism would by now be regarded as a curiosity of bygone days. We have a renewed faith in libertarian action today—and profiting by the unfortunate experiences of our valiant predecessors, we should recognize the implications contained in this idea and act accordingly. Libertarian Action cannot be carried on effectively and with lasting results unless there is Libertarian Organization.

### **Organization Comes First**

Within our movement the word organization has ceased to alarm some of our octogenarian minds and their nervous cohorts. Unfortunately they have been shown that too often, nothing more dangerous was being proposed than a makeshift conference of two score veterans and a handful of insolent youngsters. In more recent times no one has been seen to jump at the sound of the syllables. But to the more serious comrades of the movement, to whom the need of effective action and proper organization has become apparent, organization implies a whole series of necessary personal obligations without which no permanent libertarian foundations can be laid. We have passed the time when silly accusations of being Bolsheviks can deter us from demanding that the basis of real organization be personal responsibility of each member, diligence, promptness and thoroughness in action. Though we detest its methods and ideals, we cannot help noting here that the dynamic power of the Communist Party consists mainly in that it issues each member with a



spirit of devotion in the performance of his duty. Here such feelings are unfortunately instilled with intolerance and fanaticism. But there is no reason why we cannot have our movement consist of comrades instilled with libertarian devotion, tolerance and co-operation. For otherwise no practical work can be accomplished and Libertarian Communism will not succeed.

### **Labor Unions to the Fore**

A firm organizational structure will have telling effects on the quality of our activity. Libertarian ideas must become the ideas of the masses, its principles must become their principles. We should be fully aware that the coming struggles of the workers who will find the state and its institutions less and less responsive to their needs, will reflect of necessity a greater and greater measure of libertarian aspirations. Libertarian Action finds its natural field therefore in the mass organizations. And foremost of these are the trade unions.

There are no libertarian labor unions. They cannot be found, but they are the result of ceaseless work and struggle. Since we cannot hope to win the great masses to revolutionary unionism at present, we must work in both the major unions, the C.I.O. and A.F.of L.—*but only as Libertarian Communists*. We will not be deceived into believing that these unions will ever play a dominant progressive role. The coming period of decaying capitalism, characterized by strenuous fascist attacks against the liberties and living standards of the people, will find the existing unions impotent and unable to lend the necessary revolutionary direction to the rising militant demands of the masses. Labor will be forced at a critical period to unleash a powerful rebellious wave, thrust aside the confining walls of their reactionary unions and ally themselves with those revolutionary forces who have earned their respect and who are in greatest harmony with their growing libertarian aspirations. The future of Libertarian Communism is therefore dependent upon the libertarian work we do at present. And such work also consists in helping to increase the popularity and strength of a union like the I.W.W. whose experience and revolutionary traditions can become powerful factors in the education of the vast masses who are today in the conservative unions of the A.F.of L.-C.I.O. The lessons of union democracy and revolutionary ideology taught by the I.W.W. are stepping stones to proletarian emancipation towards which the workers will direct themselves when their conservative unions have been burst asunder by the urgent revolutionary demands of the crucial moment. We leave to our more "practical" comrades the joy of indulging in the safe popular pastime of blowing bubbles with the friends of progressive business unionism of the I.L.G. W.U. type. No honest libertarian communist can content himself merely with backing progressive union forces and neglect the building of revolutionary unions as the instrument of social reconstruction.

### **Cooperative Work Necessary**

The field of mass organizations includes other institutions, which are an integral part of human society, and therefore libertarian propaganda there constitutes part of our work. We decidedly cannot accept the position of the pure cooperativists who fall into the same category as the colonists and pure syndicalists by asserting that the goal of their cooperative movement is to thrust aside the competitive capitalist economic structure by the sweep of their successful cooperative ventures. The cooperatives are at the present time naturally incapable of performing the important tasks which will be theirs in a libertarian society. But the importance of their future role impels us to devote our energies in an effort to prepare them ideologically for the task. Greater harmony and mutual assistance between the trade unions and the co-operatives can likewise be developed which will add to their experience and service and gain for them the appreciation of the masses of the people. Not less important is libertarian work in educational and cultural institutions. The success of Libertarian Communism depends upon the degree of educational freedom enjoyed by the people, upon their acceptance of libertarian approaches which are powerful weapons against the spirit of intolerance and fanaticism engendered by modern capitalist society, and unfortunately nurtured by the Marxist schools of thought. Free Socialism can only be built on free educational foundations and we must share the burden of protecting and encouraging its development.

### **A Libertarian Milieu Must be Established**

One last point must be added whose importance is nevertheless paramount in the development and success of our movement. An organization like ours whose members are passionately engaged in social reconstruction, if it wishes to be a living force and not a sterile, inconsequential sect, must draw its forces together into a wholesome mental environment that throbs with the spirit of its libertarian aspirations. We must create a milieu that is conducive to the development of libertarian ideas. Our youth must be taught in our libertarian schools and imbibe not only its ideas but the libertarian culture as well. We should have a solid publication which can encourage our students, organizers and members in libertarian approaches and aid to the further development of our program. By these means can our movement become a potent force whose ideas shall echo through the struggles and life of the vast masses of the people. Thus:

Libertarian Communism will not succeed unless we forge a Libertarian vanguard!

The building of revolutionary unions is a task for every Libertarian Communist!

We have a job in every mass organization which we cannot afford to neglect if we do not wish to have them neglect Libertarian Communism!

A strong libertarian publication will build a strong clearminded libertarian movement!

This job is yours.

—R. W.

# REACTION IN FRANCE

## THE GENERAL STRIKE

by A. SHAPIRO

OLD EUROPE is going to the dogs. . . . Something of the kind was said by von Ribbentrop at von Rath's funeral. He was not far off the truth. Old Europe is certainly breaking down, and the events which developed this end of the pond after Munich especially—when two typical dictators and two typical democrats fully agreed on the future dismantling of democracy—show clearly that we are on a steep and slippery slope leading to an abyss.

The attempted coup of the French reactionaries on the 6th of February, 1934, seemed, for a moment, to have opened the eyes of the working class to the Fascist danger on its threshold. It reacted vigorously by a wonderful general strike. It gave birth to the famous Popular Front which died so ingloriously a few weeks ago at the Marseilles Congress of the Radical Party where Daladier—the man of that 6th of February, 1934, and the man of the 30th of November, 1938—severed all relations with the Communist Party.

The Munich conclave was the biggest defeat that France (as democracy) had suffered for a long time. Within 24 hours, France became politically isolated. The whole of Eastern Europe turned away from the country which betrayed Czechoslovakia. The armament fever which had started before Munich, reached its maximum. The latest financial and economic measures have scrapped the 40-hour week; the workman has again been heavily taxed, whereas the rich, as usual, escapes. The workman will have to pay, in 1939, at least twice, in direct taxation, what he paid last year. The millionaire will pay, at most, 5% more than he paid before. Indirect taxation—sugar, coffee, tobacco, postage, etc.—falls especially heavily on the workman's budget.

A fresh wave of strikes, with occupation of the factories—similar to those in 1936, spread suddenly, especially in the Northern mining districts of France and in the metal and automobile factories in Paris. But the government felt strong: it evacuated the factories by police force and by tear-gas. The C.G.T. did not react. The Socialist and Communist Parties did not move, but they increased their attacks against Daladier, demanding the latter's resignation.

The C.G.T. convention, held at Nantes, from Nov. 14 to 17, decided in principle for a 24-hour general strike as a protest against the financial and social decrees of the Daladier government. The fact that that general strike was not called *immediately*, without notice, is already in itself a sign of the weakness of the C.G.T. position. The new financial decrees, promulgated on November 12th, came into force on November 24th, a week after the C.G.T. convention had closed. The C.G.T. had a week in front of it. It preferred to wait one week longer . . . and lose the battle.

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These notes are written on November 30th, on the very day of the general strike. So far as traffic is concerned, everything looks normal. By decree of the government, all public services were requisitioned, rendering the situation equal to a state of war. Thus, all railwaymen, bus drivers, etc., were considered as militarized with all the consequences that such a situation entailed. The C.G.T. refused to give way and until late last night, all the Federations upheld their decision to go on with the strike. Yet, this morning the trains ran as usual; underground trains are going at normal intervals, and the autobuses have their usual number out. *All the reactionary dailies have appeared this morning.*

What has happened?

We cannot help feeling that there was too much *political* manoeuvring and too little economic considerations in the organizing of this strike. Once again, the C.G.T. proved to be lacking entirely of the necessary independence needed on such occasions. Having lost a most valuable week, between Nov. 17 and 24, the C.G.T. could only rely upon the political agitation of its friends—and masters—the Socialist and Communist Parties to give more importance to the movement. This agitation was presumably against the financial and social decrees, but it was merely a pretext, for they hoped, under cover of a general strike, to obtain the fall of Daladier's government and go to a general election from which they expected a strengthening of their parliamentary positions. And the C.G.T., trapped by this manoeuvre, could not wriggle out at the eleventh hour, although it tried its best to obtain a mediation that would enable it to call off the strike and save its face.

The general strike was to have been a *peaceful* one: no demonstrations nor meetings, no speeches, no propaganda: just a stay-at-home test . . . the old political error of thinking that a stay-at-home, passive protest was of some avail against the State.

Daladier, in whose hands the C.G.T. was thus throwing away a wonderful trump card, knew therefore that he need not worry about a second 6th of February, this time from the left wing. Certain that the strikers would not be mischievous, he became, as the hours passed by, more and more arrogant, militarized all and sundry, threatened dismissal of civil servants and refused to discuss with the C.G.T.

The C.G.T. failed to carry out *its* decision. No data are as yet at hand about the number of strikers in factories, but the importance of a general strike lies not so much in the number of closed factories as in the definite impression of the life of a large city, of a whole country, coming to a standstill. This impression is unfortunately lacking, at any rate as far as Paris is concerned. It is true that in the larger provincial cities—Marseilles, Bordeaux, Toulouse—the percentage of strikers was heavier than in Paris, as just announced on the radio.

The C.G.T. will come out seriously weakened. Its loss of prestige, at a crucial period of the country's development, is exceedingly ominous for the future. The reactionary elements have played their cards well, thanks especially to the role of the Socialist and Communist Parties, the same role which these parties have played in Germany, in Austria, in Italy and elsewhere. Now that they have made Daladier play the dirty role of henchman, the reactionaries will take the first opportunity of kicking him out of power—always with the help of the Socialists and Communists.

History is repeating itself. Marxism prepares the road to Fascism. And the labor movement is unable, as yet, to understand this fundamental truth.

France is on the downhill slope. The five million members of the C.G.T. will be rapidly dwindling and the C.G.T. will certainly not issue any membership statistics for some time. The post-war policy of the C.G.T. is, alas, bearing its fruit. The Popular Front chained its hands and doomed its opportunist policy to a miserable failure. Its loss of independence has done its undermining work. Its failure to call an economic, active strike without notice being given to Daladier was the last straw.

*December 1st.*—The C.G.T. has called for next week a special meeting of the National Confederal Committee to examine the situation. Unfortunately, that Committee will not be conscious enough of the seriousness of that situation to dismiss Jouhaux and the other leaders of the C.G.T.

The *Humanité*—the central organ of the French Communist Party—is shouting victory over faked figures, trying to hide its own discomfiture and its own responsibility in the failure.

Léon Blum frankly admits that "yesterday's day was not a victory for the labor organization," and registers only the exultant and triumphant cries of Reaction, but forgets that he was the main culprit in the attempt of drawing the working class into a losing game.

As to the Government, it is taking its revenge for the fright it had. Dismissals and revocations are pouring in against hundreds of civil servants. "Ringleaders" are eliminated.

Reaction is truly triumphant, thanks to the shortsightedness of the C.G.T. leaders, to the blind lust for power of the Socialists and to the cheap demagogy and wilful provocations of the Communists.

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## EVOLUTION OF A DEFEAT

by PIERRE BESNARD

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**I**N order to more thoroughly understand this situation, we have to go back and analyze the work of each of the successive so-called "Front Populaire" governments, since June, 1936.

So we will first examine these facts in order.

May-June, 1936 was a period which marked the unexpected awakening of the French proletariat. Completely crushed by a shocking setback in May, 1920, this proletariat, which had submitted to all kinds of provocations, salary cuts, "speed-up" and unemployment, suddenly lifted its head in a gesture of defiance. It occupied the factories, the shops, the offices. It challenged the *right of property*, it even threateningly touched the *principle of authority*. It inscribed upon a flaming banner *its right to live*, and once again demanded liberty.

Chaos was rampant among the capitalists, they were surprised by the swiftness of the workers' attack, by the great sweep of the movement which in less than a week spread throughout the country. Millions of workers, at that time still unorganized, realized their importance and their social role. Unions saw their ranks swell with an extraordinary rapidity. The government which had just been constituted under the leadership of Léon Blum, head of the Socialist Party, was literally carried into power on a wave of enthusiasm. The bourgeoisie, which today hurls vituperations at Blum—but who from their point of view certainly doesn't merit them—at that time saw in him a saviour. They were not to be deceived.

As soon as he got into power, instead of helping to develop the movement and strengthening it with a true social policy, long promised and expected, Blum on the contrary only looked for ways of bottling up the popular wave, of channelizing a profoundly deep movement which certainly presented a menace for any form of government, even socialist. In agreement with the C.G.T., which was more frightened than he was, (the C.G.T. made no effort to hide the fact that it was the character and enormous possibilities of the movement which inspired its fear) the Blum government very quietly had the factories evacuated, without employing force, and restored them to their "rightful owners." This he did by handing out promises, which, of course, were never meant to be kept.

Naively, the workers, although then complete masters of the situation, accepted the propositions of the government. Discussions then followed, at the Hotel Matignon, at the President's office, all over the place.

Of course the C.G.T. was on Blum's side in all these transactions and the General Confederation of Employers, which had just suffered a terrific defeat, although with hesitation and fear, finally agreed to participate in the famous discussions. From these conferences emerged "The Modern Statute of Work," the envy, so it seems, of all the world. Collective bargaining re-

placed individual bargaining, "abnormally" low salaries were raised; paid vacations were granted, shop delegates were instituted and legalized, arbitration was declared obligatory. So, naturally, order was restored, capitalist order, that is.

Embroiled with ever-increasing difficulties, not knowing where to turn, the Blum government, at the end of its rope, suddenly announced "la pause," in agreement with the C.G.T. and the Communist Party. Feeling the government was weakening, losing its foothold, the banking and industrial capitalists did not hesitate to take advantage of the situation. It caused financial difficulties which the government was not able to overcome, and soon the first cabinet of the "Front Populaire" fell. But not before it had devalued the franc, which was something which it had sworn not to do, which enriched the banks and reduced considerably the purchasing power of the workers.

Blum had, to the very letter, followed in the footsteps of the big French capitalists. His work terminated, he left. Chautemps, a subtle politician, one of the heads of the Radical Socialist Party, succeeded Blum and put himself to work carrying out the latter's policy. This was relatively easy. The working class, chloroformed in massive doses by Blum, offered only a sporadic resistance. Blum himself accepted the vice-presidency of the Council, and ordered his press and militant socialists to create no difficulties for Chautemps.

The unscrupulous Chautemps who achieved the illegality of strikes and thus opened the way to deeper reaction on the part of capitalism, suddenly retired. Blum took his place, a deliberate manoeuvre on the part of the capitalists to have him prove his, and his party's incapacity to govern; to have the "Front Populaire" done away with, once and for all. The result was Blum's decisive defeat. After three weeks in which he displayed extreme weakness toward the factional opposition, he had to retire and make room for the Daladier cabinet, whose leader was waiting in the background for the critical moment.

This man, who had witnessed the attempted fascist coup in February, 1934, who was one of the first to denounce the 200 families and to pillory them before the people, who had taken the Popular Front vow of July 14, 1934, renewed in 1935 and 1936, how was he now going to act? We don't have to wait long to find out. As soon as he took office he was quick to show that for a politician it's an easy matter to renege on promises. He too, was ready to be a good servant of the capitalists and above all to make up for his "lack of conduct" in February, 1934. Soon there appeared in the capitalist press, the most laudatory articles about him. He was represented as the "saviour" that the country was waiting for.

This Jacobin—who was never even a Girondin—intimated that a dictatorship, if presented as a necessary discipline for the country, would be rather well accepted in France. He attempted the manoeuvre he had been meditating a long time.

Easily exploiting the situation, Daladier judged that the moment was ripe to take the offensive. Several days later the congress of his party at Marseilles furnished him an occasion for a speech against the proletariat. The speech was particularly awkward, and not only incited the workers against him, but also a part of the militant Radical Socialists themselves. Through his Minister of Commerce, Gentin, he presented an "oriented" plan of economy, which was fundamentally that of a controlled state capitalism, while his Minister of Finance sketched a plan of decree laws which included control of exchange and marked the end of liberal economy.

Endowed with complete power by a Parliament which only remained so in name, he came back to Paris to get the ball rolling. And, as you might have expected, he suddenly changed his mind. He pushed the Gentin plan out of the picture, *the time was not quite ripe enough*, and asked his finance minister to retire in favor of Paul Reynaud, the leading light of orthodox economy, and champion of liberal economics—no doubt the last of the line.

This was the birth of the decree laws, the issue which precipitated the present conflict. The decrees were properly characterized by the people as "poverty decrees" because they affected only the workers and not the property owners.

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## THE DECREE LAWS

by Guillaume

**I**T is naturally too early to see the immediate economic effects of the financial decree laws enunciated by M. Paul Reynaud. Beyond saying that they will work inestimable hardships on the working classes by the additional taxation and the rising cost of living. The finance minister in his report laid the blame for France's difficulties to the low level of industrial production and the incredible disarray of public finances. But there cannot be any doubt in the government's mind that the added burden on the working class will not increase the consumption of goods.

The figures in his report show that out of a national income of 250 billion francs the state and public bodies are spending 137 billions and borrowing 55 billions. The finance minister has announced his intention of dealing firmly with the two situations, not by penalizing the rich but, as he fails to mention, by penalizing the poor. He asks nothing of that clique which has disrupted the country's economy and its currency by the outright sabotage of social and labor reforms, by multiple fiscal frauds.

On the budgetary side, Reynaud has imposed new taxation which is estimated to produce 8½ billion francs and arranged for economies (in public works) of 5 billions. About 10¼ billions more will be gained through changes in the balance sheet of the Bank of France. Though the 55 billion francs have been somewhat reduced, the problem is far from solved and the thought cannot escape one's mind that the real aims of the decrees are hidden behind a good deal of shrubbery. Naturally, M. Reynaud himself can add up figures, and so we have his claim that the success of his plan lies not in his budget but in persuading French capital to invest, and here is where we find the catch. French capital will have to be first assured that the reform laws are dead and that labor is sufficiently beaten down to make even Daladier's moderate government superfluous. France is being brought to the brink of deeper reaction—as the first aftermath of the Munich Pact taking effect in the internal life of France.

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## REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS IN SPAIN

by SENEX

*Synopsis of the previous article*

**I**T IS the contention of the various schools of the Communist Opposition that the situation following the Spanish events of July 19, 1936, warranted a far-going proletarian revolution of the most radical kind, with the elimination of the bourgeois and reformist elements as its starting point. That such a revolution failed to take place is laid at the door of an erroneous tactic pursued by the dominant forces of the revolutionary events—the C.N.T.-F.A.I. (Spanish libertarians) and the P.O.U.M. (Spanish Communists opposed to the Stalinist line). A correct tactical line would consist in building up Soviets, which, impelled by the logic of the revolutionary situation of July 19th would become the organs of the crystallizing proletarian power of a triumphant revolution.

This contention—as summarized by Felix Morrow in his pamphlet "Revolution and Counter-revolution in Spain," is based upon the generalized experience of the pre-October events in Russia, which could not be applied in Spain. The revolutionary mass organizations of the Spanish proletariat adopted a policy of self-limitation not because they were inferior to the Russian Soviets, but because from the very beginning they had to face a

situation which, for reasons of elementary self-preservation, imposed upon them the necessity of collaborating with the existing government. They had to take upon themselves the leadership in the conduct of the war against the imperialist invaders. A policy of defeatism adopted by the revolutionary forces of pre-October Russia toward the imperialist war would be suicidal in Spain even if adhered to for the briefest interval necessary to eliminate the bourgeois and reformist elements.

## The United Front During Kornilov Revolt

As we pointed out in one of the recent issues of the *Vanguard*, the starting point for any comparison between the Spanish events and the Russian situation of 1917 should be the Kornilov revolt, which offers many more similarities to the situation imposed upon the Spanish revolutionists than the Russian October revolution. As is known, the revolutionary forces of the pre-October period, headed by the Bolsheviks, responded to the situation brought about by the Kornilov revolt in the same manner in which the Spanish revolutionists dealt with the similar revolt of their reactionary generals. The Trotskyite critics of the C.N.T. have to do a great deal of explaining in order to make palatable to their partisans the united front with the Kerensky government and other democratic elements formed at that time by the Bolsheviks for the purpose of crushing the rebellion of the counter-revolutionary generals.

## What a Military-Technical Union with Kerensky Government Implied

"Lenin," Morrow writes in his pamphlet, "was ready to collaborate with Kerensky himself in a military-technical union. But with this pre-condition already existing: the masses organized in class organs, democratically elected, where the Bolsheviks could contend for a majority."

There is no attempt, however, on the part of all the Trotskyite writers to think out the implications of such a "military-technical union." Can modern war—and Kornilov's revolt could have easily developed into as big an affair as Franco's rebellion—be conducted on a military-technical basis only? Does it not require economic, political and social bases as well? Could the Soviets enter into a military-technical union with Kerensky's government and refuse its cooperation in economic matters? Would any sort of co-operation be possible were the guidance of the struggle left exclusively in the hands of the Kerensky government? That is, wouldn't participation in this government be imposed upon the revolutionary forces as the necessary condition for an effective struggle against the Kornilov rebels?

Had the revolt drawn out longer, the implications of the "military-technical union" with the Kerensky government would have been brought out much clearer, forcing the Soviets and the Bolshevik party along the same line of compromises which 19 years later were adopted by revolutionary forces of Spain.

For the key to the understanding of the "strange behavior" of the C.N.T. does not lie in its doctrinal premises but in the specific nature of the situation itself which placed before it the alternative of either working with the government—on conditions of its own, of course—or weakening and undermining the desperate struggle against the rebels. This in turn was aggravated by the dependence upon Stalin's government in point of armaments.

## Shortage of Armaments a Determining Factor of Revolutionary Tactics

In this connection it is quite characteristic that Mr. Morrow, who deals in his pamphlet at great length with so-called betrayals, deviations, tactical errors of the C.N.T. and P.O.U.M., has hardly anything to say about the tragic shortage of armaments in face of a foreign invasion of imperialist powers.

Where were the revolutionary forces to obtain those armaments? How could they face an army equipped with the latest armaments pouring in from Italy and Germany, if all they had at the beginning was a nondescript assortment of rifles, machine guns and a few outdated airplanes! In vain one will look for an answer in Felix Morrow's pamphlet written for the ostensible purpose of showing how the Spanish workers could have won their struggle had they but followed the advice of the Fourth International strategists.

But here is what another writer (William Kremer: "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain"), who shares the premises of Felix Morrow and other critics of the C.N.T., has to say on this matter in the capacity of an eye witness:

"It was the Russian arms," he writes, "that saved Madrid. The badly equipped militias that had retreated from Toledo and Talavera, suddenly, at the very gates of Madrid, found themselves supported by artillery and aviation. For the first time in two months were they able to meet the Fascists under reasonable conditions."

But if the Russians saved Madrid (the same holds true about the aid extended at other critical junctures), they had to be paid their price for it. That it was a Shylock price, goes without saying. That the shipment of arms was timed with the critical phases of the struggle, enabling the Soviet government to extort a heavy price in terms of political dominance—this by now has become a commonplace with every one conversant with the Spanish struggle of the last few years. But what other alternative did the revolutionary forces of Spain possess?

There is no comparison in this respect between the Spanish and the Russian situation. The October revolution followed a long war which bequeathed to the revolution not only trained military cadres, but considerable supplies of war material. In point of military supplies the disparity between the Red and White armies—if there was any—was not of decisive importance. Aviation played an insignificant role, tanks were brought in only toward the end of the civil war, and as to artillery, the lack of which is so painfully felt by the Spanish loyalists, the Soviet forces—that is the regulars and not the partisan forces—had in many cases a decided advantage.

### Could Revolutionary Tactics Change the Passive Attitude of European Workers?

It will be pointed out in this connection that accepting aid from the Soviet government upon the humiliating conditions imposed by the latter was not the only choice left to the Spanish workers. It is often alleged by the revolutionary romantics of the Fourth International that had the Spanish workers struck out boldly for an uncompromising revolutionary line, they could have dispensed with the Russian aid; the response of the international proletariat would have been so spontaneous, direct and overpowering in its effect that no government would dare to halt the flow of armaments to revolutionary Spain.

This point is brought out by Felix Morrow in his analysis of the May events in Barcelona in 1937, provoked, as is now well known, by the Catalonian nationalists, acting in collusion with the Stalinists. The C.N.T., according to our author, should have taken up the challenge of the Stalinist and bourgeois forces and made the ensuing struggle the starting point not only of a thoroughgoing social revolution in Spain itself, but of a revolutionary world conflagration triumphantly sweeping the major countries of Europe. In other words, the C.N.T. workers, upon whom rested the tremendous historic responsibility of holding the first line of defense against the fascists, should have thrown caution to the winds, indulged in a grandiloquent historic gesture, plunged recklessly into the adventure of breaking up the anti-fascist front, thus opening wide the gate to the fascist avalanche—and all in hope of immediately bringing about the world revolution.

For—much to the astonishment of all of us—we are assured that the European revolution was so palpably near during the May events that it was only the reformist degeneracy of the Spanish anarchists that stopped it from proceeding along the "inevitable" stages of development envisioned by Felix Morrow and other revolutionary strategists.

It is interesting in this connection to trace the logical steps in the glib reasoning employed by the latter in order to conjure up the vision of a triumphant European revolution just waiting around the corner, ready to burst forth at the historic opportunity afforded by the May events, but hopelessly bungled up by the Catalonian anarchists.

### Social Revolution via Breakdown of Military Fronts Against Fascism?

Had the anarchist and P.O.U.M. workers of Barcelona kept up their resistance against Stalinist aggression during the May days—Mr. Morrow assures us—the entire loyalist Spain would have been swept by a triumphant social revolution.

"Any attempt by the bourgeois-Stalinist bloc to gather a proletarian force would have simply precipitated the extension of the workers' state to all Loyalist Spain." But—the reader will ask—what of the well armed Communist police and military units, the flying corps mainly controlled by the Stalinists, the Assault Guards, the Carabineros, the Civil Guards, many of the Socialist controlled military units, the bourgeois sectors, the navy controlled by the right socialist Prieto? Would they give up without any fight? Would all those units, many of whom were drilled and trained for the specific purpose of exercising a check upon the revolutionary workers, disintegrate at the first clash with the latter? And how about the International Brigades, the preponderant majority of whom were firmly controlled by the Stalinists?

That the workers supported by the C.N.T. units stood a good chance of victory in the case of this new civil war, can be readily granted. But this would be a Pyrrhic victory at best, for it is clear that a civil war behind the front lines resulting in the demoralization of the front and the withdrawal of the troops for the participation in this new civil war would open wide the gates to the triumphant sweep of the fascists.

This rather obvious contingency is pool-pooled by the simple expedient of holding out before the reader the "ominous" implications of a tactic based upon it. "It is an argument against the working class taking power during the course of civil war." We readily grant the case as presented by the author, provided his point is that *taking power without being able to hold it*, is in itself a desirable thing, especially when it involves the fatal impairment of the chances to win in a civil war in the outcome of which the revolutionary forces are vitally interested.

Concrete situations have to be dealt with as such and cannot be conjured away by evoking sacred formulas or reduced by syllogistic reasoning. There was the concrete danger of immediate intervention by the foreign powers against the Barcelona workers. The C.N.T. press cited facts, alarming to everyone with the least knowledge of the situation. Felix Morrow does not deny those facts, but again he parries them off with a syllogism: "Every social revolution must face the danger of capitalist intervention." Ergo . . .

And wasn't the Russian revolution threatened by intervention? Didn't the European workers frustrate the interventionists in 1919-1920? Couldn't the Spanish workers expect the same efforts on the part of the European proletariat on behalf of their revolution?

### Fascist Intervention in Spain More Dangerous Than Intervention in Russia

What is generally ignored in those appeals to the historic precedent of the Russian revolution is the totally different kind

of intervention carried out in Spain and the different kind of efforts required to check it. In 1919-1920 an aroused proletariat stopped *its own democratic governments* from extending their intervention. In the case of the German intervention of 1918, the workers, although quite a power as compared to their present status in fascist countries, were quite powerless to prevent its dealing of heavy blows to the revolution.

But the Spanish situation demands on the part of the French and British workers a much more active effort than in 1919-1920. They could easily stop *their own governments* from intervening against the revolution, but they are powerless against the *indirect intervention* reverted to by their governments by way of encouraging the intervention of Mussolini and Hitler. Only a high degree of revolutionary fervor and the readiness to intervene actively on behalf of the Spanish revolution, *even at the price of provoking a war against the fascist powers*, would be adequate to meet the danger of fascist intervention.

Were the European workers ready to go to war for the sake of Spain, and, what is equally important, were the petty-bourgeoisie, peasantry and the liberal elements of the middle classes, without whose consent and willing cooperation Chamberlain-Mussolini's intervention plan could not be challenged in earnest, were they ready to go as far as to hazard an open break with the fascist powers for the sake of Spain?

### French Workers Would Not Sympathize with Breaking Up of United Front in Spain

No one with the least knowledge of the situation will say that two years ago the French and British masses of people were ready to go to war for the sake of Spain. Nor will he readily concur with Felix Morrow that had the revolutionary forces of Catalonia ousted the bourgeois parties and Socialist and Stalinist elements, "the French bourgeoisie would open its borders to Spain, not for intervention but for trade enabling the new regime to secure supplies—or face *immediately* a revolution at home." In order to do full justice to the profundity of such a statement, one has only to bear in mind that almost half of the French proletarian organization are under the thumb of the Stalinists and the rest are swayed by the socialists. France is not Spain and unfortunately the anarchists are but a small, although growing, minority. (The same holds true of the Communist oppositionists.) How could a civil war waged against the socialists and the Stalinists of Spain, in the face of the terrific danger of a fascist break-through at that, fire the socialist and communist minded workers of France to the extent of having them lay down an ultimatum to its own bourgeoisie demanding arms for the anarchist workers of Catalonia? And, of course, the ultimatum would have to be laid down in the face of the frenzied opposition of the trade union leadership (socialist and communist), of both parties who would use all powerful means at their disposal to slander, vilify, distort the nature of the struggle waged by the revolutionary forces of Spain. That in the long run the truth would come out, that a successful social revolution in Spain would have a powerful effect in freeing the French workers from the hold exercised upon them by the parliamentary socialists and Stalinists is quite evident, especially in the light of the effect which the Russian revolution had in weakening the almost monopolistic power held by the old social-democracy. But in order to achieve this effect the Spanish revolution would have to *survive* and keep on struggling for quite a long time in an atmosphere of hostility and isolation while receiving aid . . . from the French bourgeoisie.

And this aid in armaments, without which the Spanish revolution could not hold out in the face of an intensified intervention of the fascist powers, who would be egged on for that purpose by Chamberlain and the Cliveden set, this aid would be extended by the very same French bourgeoisie in the face of the course confidently laid down for the Spanish revolution by Felix Mor-

row—that "of preparing to resist imperialism by spreading the revolution to France and Belgium and then wage revolutionary war against Germany and Italy." Is there any wonder that the Spanish workers turned a deaf ear to the advice of those "strategists" who in their eagerness to "strike up a flame to light up the world" have overlooked the logic of plain ordinary common sense which warns about the impossibility of eating the cake and having it at the same time.

### Camouflaged Defeatism

For the great masses of workers are realistic even in the highest moments of revolutionary daring. They will strike up a flame to light up the world, provided that flame also light up to some extent the immediate steps to be undertaken in order to survive in the terrific struggle against the old world. The workers are not defeatists, and too often, as the history of revolutionary struggles has shown, the *over-emphasis* upon gaining points of departure of world-historic importance, the esthetic delight of high-towered historic observers at the torch kindled by a martyred generation of workers, camouflages an essentially defeatist attitude born out of a sterile romanticism.

### Note:

*This article was written before the tragic climax of the Catalonian struggle. The collapse of Catalonian resistance will afford additional ammunition to those who maintain that the revolutionary force of Catalonia had nothing to lose by choosing an extreme course. It will be claimed that nothing worse could have happened to the revolutionists as compared to their present fate.*

*But it could have been worse. THE TRAGIC END WOULD HAVE COME TWO YEARS EARLIER had the revolutionists pursued the tactics advocated by the Trotskyites. Such tactics would have placed the Spanish workers in the same position of inferiority in point of armaments which proved deciding in the tragic climax of the Catalonian struggle.*

*And whatever one's opinion of the tactics of the Spanish struggle might be, there can be no dispute about the overwhelming historic significance of this struggle. It acted as a formidable breakwater to the sweeping fascist wave. That it continued acting in this capacity for more than two years was due in no small measure to the realistic policy pursued by the revolutionary forces affording them some chances of survival as against the certainty of a total annihilation facing them two years ago.*

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# P.O.U.M. FRAME-UP FAILS

By EMMA GOLDMAN

*We are offering our readers this interesting eye-witness account of the P.O.U.M. trial by comrade Emma Goldman who was one of the few admitted to the courtroom throughout the entire proceedings. That such a trial should even take place in this tragic country whose proletariat was making such heroic sacrifices in the face of united fascist intervention was indicative of the Stalinist ulcer gnawing at the vitals of Spanish life. Whatever the outcome of the Spanish War might be, the reprehensible role of the Stalinists must be widely published and exposed to the world proletariat. From the very day of the outbreak of civil war, the Stalinist virus, the blackmail scheme of the Kremlin degenerates grew steadily in its debilitating effects on the struggle for social reconstruction. We would further like to point out that there was no truth in the rumors (spread by Stalinists and left sectarian pontiffs of spurious revolutionary doctrine, whose followers are few throughout the world and whose friends were fewer among the fighting Spanish masses) that there was a deep rift in the relations of the P.O.U.M. and the C.N.T.-F.A.I. As comrade Emma Goldman points out, the latter organized and mobilized its forces against the "Moscow trials" and lent inestimable aid to the defendants.*

**S**HORTLY after the State Attorney had completed his summing up of the indictment against the P.O.U.M. prisoners, *L'Humanité* made this comment: "Emma Goodman, the international and famous anarchist, gave her impression of the P.O.U.M. spy trial as being the fairest she had ever witnessed." I do not know what I have done to "deserve" being quoted in a Communist paper which did not know enough of my standing in the revolutionary movement even to spell my name correctly. I want, however, to assure the readers of *Vanguard* and all our comrades that I never referred to the P.O.U.M. men on trial as spies. Far from considering them as such I was convinced even before I returned to Barcelona and the opening of the trial that the charges against them prepared by Stalin's satraps in Spain were on par with the same kind of doctored evidence repeatedly used in Russia against everyone whom Stalin wishes to dispose of. If ever I had doubted the innocence of the P.O.U.M. members brought to trial, the proceedings in court during eleven days, the witnesses against and for the defence would have convinced me of the utter baselessness of the evidence used by the State Attorney. In fact I never witnessed such a crude and deliberate falsification of facts and the truth as contained in the material used against the prisoners.

The prosecuting attorney tried his utmost to make the men admit that they had received support from Hitler and Mussolini for their extensive P.O.U.M. propaganda in Spain and abroad, but that failed utterly. In other words the whole concocted conspiracy and the outrageous propaganda carried on since the May events against the P.O.U.M. as a party and its members, did not survive the light turned on it all during the trial.

I admit that similar "evidence" in Russia would have sent the enemies of Stalin to their death, but though I hold no brief for the liberality of the Negrin Government, I must say that Spain has not yet reached the brutal dictatorial condition of Russia. Perhaps this is not the virtue of the Negrin Government so much as the numerical and moral strength of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. and the socialist syndicate U.G.T. that has still kept its skirt clean from the communist scourge. It is still impossible for such heinous crimes to take place in the anti-fascist part in Spain as those staged in Stalin's dominion.

I have been in courts a great many times in my life. I therefore expected to find the same harshness, vindictiveness, and lack of fairness at the trial of the P.O.U.M. as I have known

in America in the past. I was therefore considerably surprised with the tone maintained during the eleven days. The prosecuting attorney was obviously either a communist or strongly in sympathy with the Stalin followers. He was vindictive, hard, and did his utmost to incriminate the prisoners. At the close of his summing up, he demanded no less than fifteen and thirty years imprisonment for them. The very fact that he did not dare to call for the death penalty was in itself a proof that the whole fabricated charges had collapsed.

I was particularly struck by the objectivity of the superior judge. At no time did he permit the prosecuting attorney to drag in ulterior motives that had no bearing whatever on the guilt or innocence of the indicted men. When they were cross examined and the prosecuting attorney attempted to bully them, or rush them into a statement derogatory to their party or their ideas, the judge immediately objected. On the other hand he patiently listened to a five-hour speech of the defending attorney. It was a masterly analysis of the various political parties that represent the anti-fascist front. He spoke in the highest terms of the position of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., and made it very clear that the ideology of the P.O.U.M. and the personalities on trial precluded every possibility of any connection with spying or fascism. He also related the terror imposed upon the workers of Barcelona by the henchmen of Stalin which resulted in the killing of our comrades, Camillo Berneri and Barbieri, as well as a number of other victims whose names are not even known. In other words the whole proceedings in the court during eleven days impressed me as being absolutely free from partisanship, political trickery or communist venom against the men on trial.

The readers of *Vanguard* may well ask how it comes that five of the indicted members of the P.O.U.M. were given eleven and fifteen years imprisonment respectively. The reason for the sentence is twofold. First the judges had to do something to appease the insatiable appetite on the part of Stalin's representatives. The second, to prevent the disappearance of Gorkin and his comrades as Nin and others disappeared. This is not only my impression, but also the impression of a number of people who attended the trial.

It is hardly necessary for me to impress on the readers of *Vanguard* that I do not agree with the ideology of the P.O.U.M. It is a Marxist party and I have been and am absolutely opposed to Marxism, but that cannot prevent me from paying respects to the mentality and courage of Gorkin, Andrade and their comrades. Their stand in court was magnificent. Their exposition of their ideas was clear cut. There were no evasions or apologies. In point of fact the seven men in the dock demonstrated for the first time since the demoralization of all idealists in Russia, how revolutionists should face their accusers. At the end, after the prosecuting attorney had tried their patience to the breaking point, Gorkin, Andrade, Bonet, Girnonella, Arquer, Escudore and Rebull rose to their full stature with their clenched fists held high in the air, sure of themselves and defiant against their enemies. That was indeed a splendid demonstration in the court which the people who unscrupulously prepared their undoing will not so easily forget.

In view of the fact that much was rumored abroad of the indifference of the C.N.T. to the condition of the P.O.U.M. prisoners and to their trial, it is not out of place to say that the Defending Attorney is a member of the C.N.T. and that the testimony of Federica Montseny was among the most laudatory of the character of the men on trial. Perhaps I had better quote from my notes about her statement:

"She says she knows some of the accused through their Trade Union work and through their literary production, and also as proven anti-fascist militants. She states that she was sent by the government to mediate the May events and that when full light can be thrown on this disturbance many things now obscure will be understood. *That neither the P.O.U.M. nor the C.N.T.-F.A.I. were responsible for the May events.*



"She adds that this affair had all the earmarks of being hatched in an underhanded and secretive manner to overthrow the Largo Caballero Government and thus do away with the proletarian influence in the government. This naturally hurt the workers' cause.

"In answer to the questions of the prosecutor she says that upon arrival from Valencia they held a meeting in the Generality to appease the excited spirits and to keep the situation in hand so that events would not follow the course mapped out by its provocateurs. They were convinced that these events were a manoeuvre against the interests of the popular masses."

I cannot emphasise enough that it was the quiet and determined stand of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. to secure a fair trial for the P.O.U.M. members and to give them every comradely assistance which has no doubt prevented a more severe sentence than the one imposed, but I feel certain that an amnesty will no doubt be granted to the men in not too distant a future. I know for a fact that the C.N.T.-F.A.I. are already working for it. But it is but right that workers in every country should send a protest to Negrin against the sentence and demand an amnesty.

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## COMING EVENTS

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FRIDAY, FEB. 3, at 8:30 P.M., Phila., Pa.—GALA DANCE given by American Youth Branch of the S.I.A. Carlos Ramos and his orchestra. Boslover Hall, 7th and Pine Streets, Phila. Refreshments. Admission 35c.

FEB. 11, SAT. NITE—PARTY for the *Vanguard*, at the home of Mollie Bogin, Mohegan Colony, Grampound, N. Y. All comrades and friends invited.

FEB. 18, SAT. NITE—PARTY for the benefit of the Vanguard Group, at Comrade Ida Cohen's home, 324 East 19th St., N. Y. C., Apt. 12. Friends and comrades are cordially invited to come.

DANCE and ENTERTAINMENT, FEB. 18, given by Galelei Youth Group at the Galelei Club, 118 Cook St., Brooklyn. Admission 25c.

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## AMERICA'S DILEMMA

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(Continued from page 2)

evitably produces the state of hopelessness and defeatism prevailing now in the ranks of the former enthusiasts of the New Deal.

The basic premise of the framers of the New Deal has proven to be wrong in the light of the latest economic developments. The premise was that an essentially sound economic system—that of American capitalism—can be brought out of its temporary difficulties by broadening its consumption base, by lifting the submerged third of the nation to the level of good consumers. That was to be done by extensive borrowing, public works, by extending social services, by propping up here and there the sagging sectors of the economy.

The failure of this policy is obvious. A crushing public debt reaching a state of saturation, a subsistence level for millions of state-employed people, a state of dangerous tension in an economy stabilized at a low level of productive capacity and ready at any moment to plunge into a terrible crisis—all that is known by many and is felt very keenly by millions of people in the form of a growing realization that *something must be done*.

Something must be done in order to put millions of people back to work at regular wages and not doles, to expand industries and not freeze them at a depression level, to open the door of opportunity for the young people eagerly looking for a chance to get some hold upon life.

Only a socialized economy can do it *and it is time to come out boldly with an immediate program of social control over industries, social control over investments, a directed economy based upon workers' and farmers' control*.

Enough of this myopic policy of trailing behind a bankrupt New Deal with its maudlin hopes for a rejuvenated capitalism! Enough of this hair-splitting, doctrinaire, historically impotent socialism, ever putting off the time of its realization, forgetful of its mission even when there is a crying need for it. A way must be found to stir up the slumbering hopes of the masses of people for a way out, right now, from the economic morass, to put forth a *realistic, concrete* program for the economic rehabilitation of the country along the lines of public ownership of the means of production.

This is the only effective answer to be given to the growing forces of reaction, which realize too clearly the direction of popular aspirations by demagogically exploiting the slogan of "setting the wheels of industry a-rolling" and "putting the unemployed back to work at regular wages."

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