NEWS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

Anti-Authoritarian Perspectives on the Events

SEVEN ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN *ONE BIG UNION MONTHLY, A JOURNAL OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD*, JULY, 1937 TO FEBRUARY, 1938
PLUS TWO LATER PIECES ON THE EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS

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WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

Anarchism is a political theory which opposes the State and capitalism. It says that people with economic power (capitalists) and those with political power (politicians of all stripes left, right or centre) use that power for their own benefit, and not (like they claim) for the benefit of society. Anarchism says that wither exploitation nor government is natural or necessary, and that a society based on freedom, mutual aid and equal shares of the good things in life would work better than this one.

Anarchism is also a political movement. Anarchists take part in day-to-day struggles (against poverty, oppression of any kind, war, etc.) and also promote the idea of comprehensive social change. Based on bitter experience, they warn that new 'revolutionary' bosses are no improvement: 'ends' and `means' (what you want and how you get it) are closely connected.

'Pity the revolution that devours itself to obtain victory. Pity the revolution that waits for a final triumph to put its ideals into practice.' -- José Peirats

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COVER PHOTO: Barcelona, May 7, 1937, after the barricades had been abandoned by the workers

The Spanish Revolution: A brief introduction
by Charlatan Stew

The articles reprinted here cover some important history generally not discussed by leftist ideologues with loyalties to progressive political party agendas, or to authoritarian Marxist, Leninist, Trotskyist or Stalinist groups. The first seven articles were originally published during the late 1930s in *One Big Union Monthly*, a publication of the Industrial Workers of the World (the I.W.W., also known as the Wobblies). These articles offer a sample of an alternative radical perspective on the events in Spain available to anarchists and other independent anti-authoritarians in North America and other places where English was spoken during that period.

The *One Big Union Monthly* articles (published in the 1930s), along with the article by Russell Blackwell (published in 1968), together give us a glimpse of what many sincere freedom fighters learned when they joined the struggle in Spain. What they found was a people in arms ready to fight for a free society, and organized groups resisting a military coup, groups that were split between those that were fighting for an anti-hierarchical social transformation and for the creation of an egalitarian society, and those that were dedicated to preserving a Spanish Republic dominated by the privileged.

The final article is about Federico Arcos, a Spanish anarchist veteran of the revolution (written in 1996). This article provides a glimpse into what the anarchists of Spain experienced, and how it differed from the authoritarian interpretation of the events.

By way of offering some historical context, this introduction briefly reviews the social and political background to the revolution and civil war inside Spain, as well as the backgrounds to the positions taken by the western "democratic", Fascist/Nazi and "Communist" led nation-states of the 1930s.

We hope that the history presented in these articles can help us to reflect on how the various leaders of the major nation states have treated social insurgents in the past. This can further our understanding of what we can expect or hope for from governments in the present and the future. The debates between the power holders and power servers and those who aspire to power regarding the most advantageous ways to deal with social dislocations and insurgencies have never been and are not now based on concern for anti-authoritarian and egalitarian goals.

Although the political, economic, social, and personal situations of the revolutionaries of the 1930s were not exactly the same as what we experience or witness today--in North America or elsewhere, unfortunately, the structures of power, hierarchy and domination continue to have strong similarities. Struggles for individual liberty and social solidarity, human dignity, egalitarian sociability and social justice continue to be of the greatest relevance to the majority of the world's people. The choices between authoritarian/hierarchical and anti-authoritarian/anti-hierarchical political-social action still remain relevant.

Understanding and growing from the experiences of participants in the Arab Spring, or in Greece, or Spain, or in the Occupy movements of 2011, does not simply involve evaluating tactics or strategies of anarchists or authoritarians of the left or right. We need to delve into the fundamental character of the conflicts

between those who resist total domination and those who only pretend to in the current cycle of struggles. Being informed about what happened to insurgents in the past can contribute to our current understanding of the possible consequences of our and other people's decisions and the choices of groups today. And precisely because the struggles for a new social world have not yet been definitively lost or won anywhere, questions about how to most effectively go forward are still being debated. We still need to critically consider what constitutes the most just and egalitarian forms of solidarity in specific situations, locally or in other parts of the world..

As we compare and contrast conditions and social movements in the 1930's with those of today, we can gain a lot from finding out as much as possible about the positive achievements, the problems faced and mistakes made by those ordinary people in those past struggles. So, we are offering this pamphlet as a contribution to the endeavor of refreshing and reclaiming our anarchist heritage.

A Little Background on the Spanish Anarchist Movement before the Republic of the 1930s

In many ways, the Spanish revolution of 1936 through 1939 is a very inspiring event. It provides a multitude of real-life examples of how ordinary people can begin to realize a classless and stateless society. During that revolution, at least briefly, literally millions of women and men took control of their own lives and organized themselves in neighborhood and work place collectives, both urban and rural. This tremendously creative insurgency gained its strength from the previous seventy years of anarchist social and educational activities and organization building, in combination with rural agricultural communal traditions, all made more potent by the spontaneous creativity of ordinary people.

Well before the events of July 1936, a variety of Spanish anarchist groups, from anarcho-syndicalists to anarcho-communists and others, were playing a large part in movements for social justice. For three generations, they had been dreaming about, advocating and struggling to lay the groundwork for a new and more just social order, based on equality, mutuality, and reciprocity, in which each person could be valued and respected as an individual and a member of an authentic community. Although there were some differences between groups and between individuals, in general, the kind of society they all envisioned and were striving to bring to birth was one built on voluntary, non-hierarchical, self-organized collectivization in every phase of life, and, most especially, workers' control in industry, agriculture, and various community services.

Spanish anarchists generally believed that the old social order would not be defeated without armed insurrection. But, they also recognized that the means used to build the new society would have to be consistent with the ends sought, so as to contribute to, rather than undermine, the goals for which they were striving. With this in mind, they came to understand that a socially just world could not simply be won through acts of arms. They recognized that armed might cannot convince anyone of the value of any idea or way of living, and it cannot promote or nurture respectful egalitarian relationships between people. They therefore dedicated some of their efforts to creating new forms of social organization that could replace the established institutions and functions

exercised in authoritarian ways by the state and private capitalists.

They developed networks of anti-authoritarian economic, political, and cultural organizations and activities, to create communities that respected the individuality of their members, while enabling the development of individuality as a part of community. Through a variety of organizations, they combined fights for immediate improvements in wages and working and living conditions with the development of the structures and habits they deemed vital for the foundation of a free society. On a day-to-day basis, against the tide of the authoritarian order, they created voluntary egalitarian associations in which people could learn to cultivate new traditions of solidarity, cooperation and self-realization.

The Spanish Republic of 1931 through 1939

The first Spanish Republic had a very brief life, being established in 1873 and overthrown in 1874. It was very weak and was ended by a military coup. For the next 47 years a series of dictatorships ruled the country and repressed all attempts at social insurgency. But the Spanish people did not submit passively. They developed a wide variety of opposition groups, ranging from liberal republican to social democratic to anarchist. The military dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, which commenced in 1923, was willing to offer a minor governmental role to the Spanish Socialist Party and some recognition of their labor unions in exchange for their cooperation, while continuing the repression of anarchist groups, including anarcho-syndicalist labor unions. (See M. Dashar, pseudonym of Helmut Rudiger, *The Revolutionary Movement in Spain,* Libertarian Publishing Society, New York, 1934; accessed November 8, 2009 from Internet Archive, at http://www.archive.org/download/TheRevolutionaryMovementInSpain/RMS_text.pdf.)

By 1931 the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was too weak to hold on to power. This opened up the opportunity for republicans and social-democrats to cooperate in creating the second Spanish republic, which took the form of a parliamentary democracy.

But, the new Republic faced enormous challenges. A worldwide economic depression was underway. And in Spain many people were unemployed and impoverished.

The Republic's first elections were held in 1931, but none of the political parties were able to gain a majority of seats in the parliament (the Cortes). So the liberal-republican and social-democratic parties--the parties with the largest numbers of elected representatives--formed a coalition cabinet. The previous dictatorial governments had brutally repressed dissent. Many hoped that the new republican government would allow more freedom of expression for individuals and freedom for labor unions and other grassroots organizations to act. However, the coalition government proved unable to significantly improve the conditions of life for the vast majority of ordinary people in the cities or countryside. Moreover, it continued the previous dictatorship's policy of repression and imprisonment of social activists belonging to the anarchist and other working-class organizations.

In 1932, there was an attempted military coup, which was stymied. Nevertheless, the capitalist, military and Catholic church elites continued to hold

on to their monopoly on wealth and power. And, the liberal republican/social-democratic coalition government continued to be extremely careful not to truly challenge them in any significant way.

Disappointed hopes inspired continuing social insurgency. In 1932 and 1933 urban and rural working-class people throughout Catalonia, Andalusia and Levant engaged in armed revolts, hoping to inspire other revolts throughout the country. But they were repeatedly crushed by the republican government's police and military forces with great brutality. By June 1933 there were 9,000 anarchists and other working-class insurgents in prison.

In late 1932, the liberal republican/social-democratic coalition government lost political support in the Cortes, and in November an election was called. In this election, right-wing parties gained a majority and a right-wing coalition took control of the government. This began the Bienno Negro, the two black years of intensified repression against all those fighting for social change.

In October, 1934 the workers of the anarchist National Confederation of Labor (Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo, C.N.T.) joined with their fellow workers in the Socialist Party-led General Union of Workers (Union General de Trabajadores, U.G.T.) in a massive revolt in the Asturias region. Workplaces were occupied and the union members began an armed insurrection. This revolt was also crushed quite brutally and at least 3,000 people were executed. For the next few years, the right-wing coalition government unsuccessfully attempted to quell the mounting unrest. But, it was not able to maintain its support in the Cortes, and was finally forced to call an election for February, 1936.

In that election, candidates from social-democratic, Communist and left-liberal parties joined together to promote a Popular Front anti-fascist slate against the more right-wing parties. This coalition won a small majority of the seats in the Cortes, and was able to form another left coalition government.

However, only minor reshuffling of government posts took place, and the governing coalition could not agree on how to go forward with social reforms. So, the needs and hopes of the majority of the people who had voted for the left liberal, socialist and Communist politicians were generally disregarded.

As this became obvious, from February 1936 on, many agricultural workers and small landholders in the countryside took things into their own hands, initiating widespread land occupations. Workers in the industrial and service sectors in cities and towns also engaged in large numbers of strikes. Between the election in February and July there were 113 general strikes and 228 partial general strikes. There were on average ten to twenty each day by June and July.

At the beginning of 1936 there were 30,000 political prisoners. Even after the election of the left liberal-social democratic coalition government, most of the political prisoners remained incarcerated, despite demands for their freedom. Only after massive popular demonstrations were they released. At the same time, the new government continued to arrest anarchists and socialists and other activists. By July, 1936 the prisons were once again crowded with political prisoners.

Directly after the February 1936 elections, General Francisco Franco headed the formation of a coalition of anti-democratic military elites, who joined with

civilian fascists to plan yet another military coup d'état. They made no secret of the fact that they intended to overthrow the republican government and replace it with an authoritarian state system, modeled on the regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Despite the openness of these plotters, the elected politicians refused to take any concrete measures to counter them. Instead, they tried to negotiate with these military rebels.

The Beginning of the Spanish Civil War and the Flowering of the Revolution

Disregarding the liberal republican and social-democratic politicians' attempts at negotiations, on July 17th the right-wing military rebels began their coup with Franco's forces seizing control of Spanish Morocco and Franco broadcasting a "radical manifesto" announcing the impending military takeover of Spain proper. But, many ordinary people refused to stand passively by, especially those involved directly or indirectly in anarchist and socialist groups. At this time, the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. union confederation and the socialist U.G.T. union confederation each had over one million members. They clearly understood that right-wing dictatorship would mean brutal repression for all of them. (See Workers Solidarity Movement, *The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism in Action*; accessed January 21, 2012 at http://struggle.ws/spain/pam_ch1.html.)

Unfortunately, the Socialist Party and the Socialist U.G.T. were bureaucratically organized hierarchical organizations, with leaders who had strong loyalties to the social-democratic politicians in the Republican government--the very politicians who had been going along with the strategy of trying to negotiate with the military coup plotters. This posed a challenge for those members who wished to begin resisting the military coup. Many grassroots socialists nevertheless did participate in this resistance.

The anarcho-syndicalist union confederation and the other anarchist groups, on the other hand, were more decentralized organizations, in which initiatives for action did not necessarily originate with a small group of leaders at the top. Because grassroots democracy was a much greater reality among the anarchists than among the socialists, there was more motivation and more possibilities for those who felt the urgency of the situation to begin planning for resistance. In addition, the anarchist organizations had no government links. So, the anarchists had no reason to wait for direction from the Republican government compromisers and negotiators.

Consequently, anarchists in many parts of the country were ready and able to immediately begin resistance. And thanks to their initiative, many other freedom loving people in Spain also joined the resistance in general strikes and armed opposition on July 19, and together they were able to temporarily defeat the military coup in half of the country. They rapidly organized popular militias which continued the tradition of embodying their desired goals in their chosen means. The popular militias, as part of their resistance to the authoritarian military, replaced the officers with absolute power over lower ranks with elected delegates who were recallable if they lost the confidence of the ranks. Plans and policies were also agreed upon by all in each unit through open discussion. Moreover, differences in rank and pay were non-existent. The egalitarian character of the militias is documented in numerous books and articles; for example, see Abel

Paz, *Durruti: The People Armed*, trans. Nancy Macdonald (Black Rose; Montreal, 1976).

The resisters surprised the military coup plotters with a civil war, which lasted for nearly three grueling years, from July 1936 to March 1939. Moreover, the initial defeat of Franco's forces enabled and inspired widespread popular self-governing activities, involving much more than a civil war between opposing fighters. Millions of women, men and children living and working in the Spanish cities and countryside not taken by the Franco forces actually began to experiment with the creation of more egalitarian, decent and just lives for themselves and those around them. The temporary victory over the fascist rebels enabled a full scale social revolution to begin, with land and factory occupations and collectivization in agriculture, a number of industries and various community services. So in Spain in the summer of 1936 both a revolution for a new and better social world and a civil war against the military rebels led by Franco began. This was an inspiring and very important fight--and perhaps not as outdated or different from some of the struggles of today as some people might think.

For a good text on the positive anarchist role in the Spanish Revolution and civil war by the Ireland-based Workers Solidarity Movement, see *The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism in Action*, a detailed introduction to the role anarchism played in the Spanish Civil War and the anarchist revolution within the republican zone. (Accessed June 3, 2011 at http://www.wsm.ie/book/export/html/6521.)

The Nation-States between the Two World Wars

To gain a good grasp of the situation of Spain during the 1930s, it is helpful to understand what was going on inside and between the other nation-states during that period.

The nation-states and empires of the first half of the twentieth century, including the western "democratic" states, were based on the exploitation of their locally created working-classes and colonized subject peoples. Despite the democratic rhetorical idealizations that became fashionable among western elites at the end of World War I, there was little real respect or consideration for the millions they ruled over at home or abroad. (For good general background information, see *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, vol. 1: An Age Like This--1920-1940* edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1968.)

The growing power of the United States was firmly rooted in the history of exploitation of the indigenous populations of North America, Latin America and the Pacific islands, African American slaves and wage-slaves, Asian, Southern and Northern European, Eastern European Jewish and non-Jewish immigrant wage-slaves. (See Howard Zinn, *A Peoples History of the United States*, various editions.)

As far back as the mid-nineteenth century, there was ongoing social unrest in most of the nation-states. Strikes and even insurrections were frequent right up to and throughout World War I. As the war was nearing its end, in 1917 a popular revolution began in Russia. Then, in 1918 revolutions started in Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria and Germany. In Russia, Hungary, Finland and parts of Germany, local workplace, neighborhood and military councils were formed. Mutinies broke out

in the French army. Workers in major Italian cities seized factories. In 1919 there were also very serious and widespread strikes in the United States. All were brutally repressed, but very many ordinary people and elites alike throughout the world prepared for continuing social insurgency.

In this context, during the period between the two world wars, Italian Fascists, Japanese imperialists, German Nazis, and Russian Communists all assumed state power and began expanding and consolidating their brutal dictatorships. The western Democratic elites generally had little difficulty tolerating and even cooperating with the various new authoritarian regimes that were emerging, as long as they did not appear to pose any challenge to spheres of influence already claimed.

The brutality used by the Fascists and Nazis to gain and maintain control of the Italian and German governments and to intimidate and eliminate those who opposed them, was well known at the time, both inside those countries and abroad. Nevertheless, many politicians and business people in western "democratic" nation-states were primarily concerned with having political partners they could work with and developing promising business opportunities, rather than with the lives of ordinary people under repressive regimes. The Fascist and Nazi dictatorships offered both the political and the economic stability and predictability that was wanted.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s newspapers almost everywhere were reporting that the regime of Benito Mussolini was conducting a reign of terror against all opponents and dissenters. During the first few months of the regime, in the winter of 1922-1923, gangs of Fascist thugs seized or destroyed the printing plants and newspapers of the labor unions, as well as those of Italian socialist and anarchist groups. They also invaded union halls and cooperatives, and in many cases burned or otherwise destroyed them completely. At the same time, labor union, socialist and anarchist group members and their families--including children, old people and pregnant women--were beaten and even murdered. Through these methods the Fascists were able to crush the post-World War I revolutionary working class movement in Italy.

Despite their well publicized brutalities, the Fascists were admired by many highly placed western politicians. George Orwell noted just a few. (See "Who Are the War Criminals?" *Tribune*, October 22, 1943, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, vol. 2, My Country Right or Left--1940-43* edited by Sonia Orwell & Ian Angus, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1968, pp. 319-25.) Orwell discusses Winston Churchill, who held high political positions in Britain over a fifty year period, including Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as being Prime Minister during World War II. In 1927, in the midst of his political career, Churchill asserted that if he were Italian he would be wholeheartedly with Mussolini in the struggle against "bestial appetites" and the "passions of Leninism," providing the necessary antidote to Russian poison and the cancerous growth of Bolshevism (p. 320). In 1928, Lord Rothermere agreed that Mussolini was an antidote to the deadly poison in Italy and for the rest of Europe, a tonic doing incalculable good. He considered Mussolini to be the greatest figure of the age (ibid., pp. 319-20).

Whether Mussolini was crushing Italian trade unions, helping the Spanish Fascists, mustard gassing Abyssinians, or throwing Arabs out of airplanes, the British government and its official spokesmen supported his regime through thick and thin (ibid., pp. 320-321).

In *F. D. R.: A Biography,* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1985), Ted Morgan notes that even as late as the winter of 1933 through 1934, nine years after the Fascist seizure of power, President Franklin Roosevelt expressed respect for Mussolini and the Fascists in Italy, referring to Mussolini as "the admirable Italian gentleman." On July 16, 1934, Roosevelt wrote to Breckinridge Long, U.S. Ambassador in Rome, "I am much interested and deeply impressed by what he has accomplished and by his evidenced honest purpose of restoring Italy and seeking to prevent general European trouble" (p. 296). Apparently, what was most important to Roosevelt was that the Fascists demonstrated a clear commitment to protecting private property. He seems to have not been disturbed by the fact that the Fascists disregarded the rights of ordinary people to a voice in how they were treated, either by employers or government.

When the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, it was no secret that the Stormtroopers were immediately sent out to seize Social Democrats, Communists and anarchists; women and men were brutalized and tortured, sometimes to the point of death. In 1933, in his *Brown Book of Hitler's Terror*, Victor Gollancz had already begun reporting the crimes of the Nazis for English readers, with massive numbers of documents and photographs.

Nevertheless, as late as 1937, William Lyon Mackenzie King, prime minister of Canada, visited Hitler and recorded in his diary that he found Hitler to be "one who truly loves his fellow man" and a person who reminded him of "Joan of Arc." (See Wartime Diaries by Robert Fisk: The premier who thought Hitler was a 'Joan of Arc,' *The Independent & The Independent on Sunday*, 12 June 2010; http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-the-premier-who-thought-hitler--was-a-joan-of-arc-1998351.html.)

Andre Francois-Poncet was a well-respected French politician and diplomat, who, in August 1931 was named undersecretary of state and French ambassador to Germany. He continued in that post until October 1938, and witnessed firsthand the Nazi Party's rise and consolidation of power. While being critical of the Nazis' expansionism, Francois-Poncet felt that so long as there remained a chance for a wealthy Frenchman to have a share in the business opportunities being opened up in Europe by the German state, he could accept the Nazi regime. (See Christopher G. Thorne, *The Approach of War 1938-1939*; St. Martin's Press, New York, 1967, p. 9. Nearly all of Thorne's statements are based on official sources.)

Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, Lord Halifax, British Viceroy of India from 1926 to 1931, and Foreign Secretary from 1938 to 1940, openly expressed the opinion that Nazi German expansion to the East was justifiable, although he felt that it should be done by peaceful means. He also expressed sympathy for the Nazis, asserting that, "Nationalism and Racialism is a powerful force but I can't feel that it's either unnatural or immoral. I cannot myself doubt that these fellows are genuine haters of Communism, etc.! And I daresay if we were in their

position we might feel the same!" (See Andrew Roberts, *'Holy Fox': The Life of Lord Halifax*, Orion Publishing Group, London, 1997, p. 67.) Halifax praised Hitler for what he characterized as his great services to European civilization in resisting the forces of disintegration from the East (see Thorne, p. 15).

Some prominent American public figures who looked favorably on the Italian Fascist and German Nazi regimes included William Randolph Hearst of newspaper fame, who in the 1930s helped the Nazis to promote a positive impression of their regime in U.S. media, Joseph Kennedy (President John Kennedy's father and U.S. ambassador to Britain from 1938 through 1940) and Andrew Mellon, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury from 1921 through 1932. (See American Supporters of the European Fascists, accessed January 6, 2012 at http://rationalrevolution.net/war/american_supporters_of_the_europ.htm.)

Even as late as 1938, some of the top career men in the U.S. State Department, including Breckinridge Long (who was to become U.S. Assistant Secretary of State in 1939), expressed willingness to cooperate with the Nazis to combat the expansion of the influence of the Soviet Union. (See Morgan, p. 498.)

The Nazi and Fascist governments welcomed the right-wing military coup led by Franco against the Spanish Republic, and assisted them with modern weapons and trained specialists from early on. The elites of the western "democracies" did nothing to oppose this, and when asked by the Republic for help even refused to provide arms, on the grounds of so-called "neutrality." They were generally suspicious of the radical social insurgency going on in Republican Spain.

For a well-documented article carefully refuting the historical distortions of liberals and Communists with respect to the positive social activities of anarchists during the Spanish revolution and civil war, see Noam Chomsky's Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship, in the collection of his essays *American Power and the New Mandarins*, New York 1969, pp 72--126. It is also online at http://question-everything.mahost.org/Archive/chomskyspain.html.

The Russian Revolution and the Soviet State

In the summer of 1914, the Tsarist government of the Russian Empire joined World War I as an ally of the French and British governments. They were later joined by others, including the Italian government in 1915 and the United States government in 1917. Historians generally refer to this war alliance as "the Entente." The Entente sent their militaries against the German state and the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, which joined together in an alliance known as the central powers. The troops that the Russian Empire sent into World War I were generally very poorly equipped, poorly clothed, poorly fed, often treated brutally by their officers, and, not surprisingly, they were often unable to defend themselves against the assaults of the German military.

At the same time, the vast majority of people inside the Russian Empire were experiencing ever greater austerity and suffering. Everything, and especially food, grew increasingly expensive and scarce. Over time, street demonstrations and riots became more and more frequent. By February of 1917, many ordinary Russians had reached the limits of their patience. A popular insurgency overthrew the tyrannical Russian Tsarist regime; a provisional "democratic"

government was established and a Republic was to be created. At the same time local non-hierarchical organizations such as workplace and neighborhood councils (also known as soviets, the Russian word for councils) were established. The people began the process of learning how to take control of their own lives, and a social Revolution commenced.

As the war dragged on, more and more people began to demand that the Provisional government end Russian participation and bring the troops home. But, the Provisional government was under pressure from the rest of the Entente to stay in the war. General disillusionment with the new government's inability to withdraw from the war and to adequately deal with domestic problems led to more unrest. In October the Bolshevik faction of the Russian social-democratic party (led by V.I. Lenin) took advantage of the situation to seize power in the name of the working-class and put an end to the provisional government's tenure. The Russian state was declared to be a Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, based on the federation of local popular councils (or soviets). (In December 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--U.S.S.R., also known as the Soviet Union--was formed from the merger of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.)

Once the Bolsheviks seized the state apparatus, they slipped into the role of state rulers. The new government quickly evolved into a highly centralized authoritarian state under the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party. Then the Bolsheviks began to use their position as respected "successful revolutionaries" to spread their interpretations of the world situation to aspiring revolutionaries in other countries who wanted to follow their lead. (For more on the authoritarian ideology and policies of the Marxist-Leninist rulers of the Soviet state, see Iain McKay, Syndicalism, Marxist Myth and Anarchist Reality, Anarchist Writers blog, November 25, 2011; http://anarchism.pageabode.com/print/1181.)

The elites of the other states in the World War I Entente perceived the Bolshevik state as a direct threat to their internal security because the overthrow of the old regime and the beginnings of self-rule in Russia were providing inspiration for people in other parts of the world who desired the overthrow of the elites who ruled over them. Nevertheless, the Entente powers offered the Bolshevik government military and economic assistance if the Russian military were kept in the war. But the Bolsheviks realized that they could not keep the Russian military from disintegrating if it stayed in. To avoid the breakdown of authority and to formalize their status as the rulers of the Russian state, they decided to conclude a separate formal peace treaty with the German state. The other Entente state elites considered this to be proof of the untrustworthiness of the Bolshevik elite. So, after the Russian Soviet and German governments concluded their separate peace treaty, the U.S.., Japanese and, most significantly, the British government staged invasions of Russia in support of the counter-revolutionary troops fighting for the return of the old order. Although the foreign troops were relatively small in numbers, did not stay long and failed to unseat the Bolsheviks, these states helped to fuel a brutal civil war. (For more

information, see Joe Licentia, *Russia: Revolution, Counter-Revolution: An Anarcho-Communist Analysis of the Russian Revolution,* Zabalaza Books, printable PDF is at http://www.zabalaza.net/pdfs/varpams/russia_rev_counterrev.pdf.)

Under the circumstances, the Bolshevik leaders of the Russian state came to the conclusion that their main enemies were the governments of Britain, the U.S. and France, and those smaller states supported by them. This perspective persisted throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s, until 1934. Because social democrats, non-communist socialists and anarchists all became critics of Bolshevik rule, the Soviet government also judged them to be counterrevolutionary enemies.

Very many anarchists and other anti-authoritarians all over the world began by greeting the Russian revolution with great joy and hope. But, all too soon many began to feel unease and deep concern about the authoritarian takeover of the state and society by the Russian Bolshevik clique. By the early 1920s, many inside and outside Russia began speaking out against the Bolshevik government's repression of urban and rural workers, peasants, and those in the military. (For one of many examples, see *My Disillusionment in Russia* by Emma Goldman; accessible at http://libcom.org/library/my-disillusionment-in-russia-emma-goldm.)

Sylvia Pankhurst, a British advocate of women's equality and a socialist, also began by enthusiastically greeting the Russian Revolution, and participating in the newly formed British Communist Party. But as she learned more about the experiences and treatment of left dissenters, including anarchists and socialists, she became disillusioned with the Bolsheviks' rule. In July, 1923 she wrote that in Russia, "the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' has been used to justify the dictatorship of a party clique of officials over their own party members and over the people at large." In May of 1924 she wrote that the Bolsheviks "pose now as the prophets of centralised efficiency, trustification, State control, and the discipline of the proletariat in the interests of increased production... the Russian workers remain wage slaves, and very poor ones, working, not from free will, but under compulsion of economic need, and kept in their subordinate position by... State coercion." (See Mark Shipway, *Anti-Parliamentary Communism: the movement for workers' councils in Britain, 1917-1945*, St. Martin's Press: New York, 1988 and online at http://www.af-north.org/shipway%20index.htm#. Also see *Communism And Its Tactics* by Sylvia Pankhurst, http://www.geocities.com/~johngray/pank00.htm).)

During the first decade and a half following the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik seizure of power, the Soviet elites generally hoped that similar "communist" takeovers could be accomplished in the richer and more industrialized western countries. To help them along, they created an international organization known as the Communist International (also known as the Comintern or Third International). The Comintern was founded in Moscow in March 1919. At its Second Congress, in the summer of 1920, twenty-one conditions for admission were laid down as obligatory for all socialist/communist groups that wanted to be part of the organization. The Comintern was highly

centralized and totally controlled by the Russian Bolshevik Party, which in return provided member organizations with prestige, and sometimes financial and even military assistance. With the help of this organization, Communist parties were formed throughout the world and were provided with strong assistance in developing ideological perspectives that centered on and prioritized protecting the Soviet Union, sometimes even at the cost of their own repression.

At the same time, the leaders of the Russian Soviet state began creating relationships with other nation-states designed to help them develop Russian industries while providing the maximum amount of protection from its enemies. Starting in 1926, the Soviet military secretly helped to build up the German military as a counter-force to the western "democratic" states, even as the Nazis were gaining influence and strength. In *The Deadly Embrace: Hitler, Stalin and the Nazi-Soviet Pact 1939-1941* (W.W. Norton & Co.; New York and London, 1988, p. 15) Anthony Read and David Fisher note that the 1926 Friendship Treaty between Germany and the USSR was renewed in May, 1933, despite the accession to power of the Nazis, a political party with a well-established history of right-wing nationalism, bigotry and brutality.

As the Nazis proceeded to imprison and murder thousands of opponents, including Communists, along with social-democrats and anarchists, the Soviet government leaders persisted in their attempts to maintain the alliance. Even after the German Communist Party was brutally repressed in March of 1933, its Central Committee, in conformity with the leadership of the Soviet Union, passed a resolution in May, asserting that the Nazis' brutal repression of the Social Democrats was unimportant. As late as the fall and winter of 1933, an article appeared in Rundschau, the German-language organ of the Comintern, asserting that, "the ruthless suppression of the Social Democratic organizations and press does not change anything in the fact that now as ever they are the chief social support of the dictatorship of capital." (See Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party, A critical history*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1962, p. 186.)

Over the next year, as the Nazis began preparing to expand the domination of the German state to the east, trade between the two nations began rapidly shrinking, and the German military stopped utilizing the bases it had been permitted to maintain in the USSR. (See Read and Fisher, p. 15.)

Nevertheless, inside Germany, Communist Party leaders and the representatives of the Comintern warned members to refrain from acting too militantly, because that might disturb relations between the Nazi and Soviet states, and bring about conflicts which would interfere with the Soviet state's industrialization program. They were willing to try to maintain friendly economic relations with the Nazi government, and to continue some of the secret military cooperation between the two states for two years, throughout 1933 and 1934. Dedicated German rank-and-file Communist Party members were sacrificed to the authoritarian central focus on serving the needs of the Soviet state. All this was publicized by German refugees in Britain and the U.S. at the time, and has been well-documented since.

Even some historians sympathetic to the Soviet cause noted that during this

period, both inside Germany and throughout the world, Communist leaders continued to concentrate on eliminating their Social Democratic and other independent left rivals, rather than concentrating on the Nazi menace. (For two prominent examples, see E. H. Carr, *Twilight of the Comintern, 1930-1935*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1982, and Allan Merson, *Communist Resistance in Nazi Germany*, Humanities Press International, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1986.)

Only in 1934 did the Soviet Union's elite change their policies with respect to Fascists and Nazis and begin focusing on them as the prime enemy. At the seventh congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935, the organization officially directed Communist parties throughout the world to stop attacking socialists, social-democrats and left liberals, and join in broad, popular anti-fascist alliances and United Front coalitions with them to resist fascism and Nazism. (See E. H. Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War*, Pantheon Books; NY, 1984, p. 1.)

Between 1934 and 1938 the government of the Soviet Union made efforts to gain the support of the Western states against the German Nazi state. As part of this effort, the Soviet elite tried to convince the Western "democracies" that they were no longer working to destabilize the internal order of other states or colonies of states by supporting revolutionary movements. Instead, directly through their dealings with other national governments, and indirectly through the Comintern, the Soviet government proclaimed the value of bourgeois democracies as allies against Fascism and Nazism.

So, it should come as no surprise that in the summer of 1936, the Spanish Communist Party, following the lead of the Comintern and the Soviet government, proclaimed support for the Spanish Republican government (a bourgeois parliamentary democracy) as against the unfolding social revolution. They took the position that the time was not yet ripe for a social revolution in Spain because the country needed to more fully experience the development of bourgeois "democracy." They were also hoping that this position would encourage the support of the Western states. The Spanish Communist Party therefore openly opposed the revolutionary activities of the anarchists and others as "premature", and instead supported strengthening the powers of the Spanish Republican government, despite the fact that it was that very government which had tried negotiating a compromise with the right-wing military rebels led by Franco. (See Murray Bookchin, *After Fifty Years: The Spanish Civil War* in *New Politics*, vol. 1 no. 1, Summer 1986, pp 172-192, now published and online in: Murray Bookchin*, To Remember Spain: The Anarchist and Syndicalist Revolution of 1936*, Chapter 2: After Fifty Years: The Spanish Civil War http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/Murray_Bookchin__To_Remember_Spain__The_Anarchist_and_Syndicalist_Revolution_of_1936.html#toc3)

The Soviet elite were also unwilling to support the revolution in Spain because of their concerns about the autonomous character of the popular insurgency. In the summer of 1936, the Spanish Communist Party was a small group with little influence, while the anarchists and socialists had long histories and large organizations. But, When the Soviet government began providing the Republican government with weapons, military officers and political advisers, in exchange for

the Spanish government gold reserves being sent to Moscow, Soviet influence increased in Spanish government circles. (See Bookchin, After Fifty Years...)

Sadly, this increased influence enabled the Soviet government, through both the Spanish Communist Party and the Comintern representatives in Spain, to undertake direct attacks on the anarchist, socialist and other autonomous insurgents. The Comintern's secret police arrested and assassinated known anarchists, independent-minded socialists and others who opposed their growing influence. (See Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War*, p 36; Carr recognized that the Communist activities in Spain actually weakened the republic's ability to fight the military rebels.) A number of other books and articles also record that the Spanish Communist Party, in conjunction with the Comintern, had its own private prisons, and engaged in political repression from 1936 through 1939 against both the other left organizations and insurgent workers. (See Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*; Vernon Richards' *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*; and Harvey Klehr et al, *The Secret World of American Communism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, among others.)

Russell Blackwell, the author of the eighth article in this pamphlet (The Spanish Revolution Revisited), also wrote on this topic. Blackwell arrived in Spain in October 1936, and was imprisoned by the Soviet secret police (OGPU) in 1938 for nine and a half months because of his association with the dissident communist group, the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, P.O.U.M.) and with the Spanish Anarchist movement.

In 1939, after the Spanish Republic was crushed by the right-wing military rebels, the opportunistic Soviet government and Comintern leaders again changed their strategy. As earlier, their interest was in gaining the greatest benefit for the Soviet state, even if it was at the expense of all of the oppressed peoples they claimed to be dedicated to defending. This time, they decided that it would be temporarily advantageous for the Soviet Union to cooperate with the Nazi state, in what was popularly known as the Stalin-Hitler Pact. From August 1939 to June 1941 the two governments divided Eastern Europe into spheres of domination. In *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic Books, New York, 2010), Timothy Snyder describes the area the two states divided, including what is now Poland, the Baltic states, Ukraine, Belarus, and the edge of western Russia. Many towns and villages were occupied by both German and Soviet troops, one after the other. Not surprisingly, the inhabitants of this region experienced horrendous numbers of deaths and injuries, and immense physical destruction.

Despite Soviet government leaders' previous criticisms of Fascists and Nazis, for the twenty-one months their non-aggression pact lasted, those who spoke for Communist parties throughout the world took positions basically ignoring or downplaying repression of working class movements, and ongoing brutality practiced by the Nazi and Fascist states against the people under their control. In "Who Are the War Criminals?" (1943, cited above), George Orwell noted that, on the whole, the intellectuals of the left defended the Russo-German Pact as realistic, like Chamberlain's appeasement policy. (For more on this subject see Julius Gould, Comrade Speaks to Comrade in *Times Literary Supplement*:

London, March 8, 1991, page 21.)

In the US, the leader of the Communist Party, Earl Browder asserted that every nation should sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR and that the Russo-German pact was Stalin's "master stroke" for peace." The party's official newspaper, *The Daily Worker* asserted that "... By compelling Germany to sign a non-aggression pact the Soviet Union tremendously limited the direction of Nazi war aims..." (See Howe and Coser, p. 387.)

As time went on, it became more and more evident, at least to all those who wished to recognize reality, that the Soviet state rulers and the Communist parties around the world which followed their lead, did not actually act for or on behalf of the oppressed working class anywhere. On the contrary, in reality they sabotaged working class possibilities.

The International Fighters who Went to Spain

As soon as the news of the July 1936 resistance to the military coup reached the outside world, thousands of anarchists, socialists and other freedom-loving people from all over the world began arriving in Spain to help. It is possible to read about their experiences in books and articles in a number of languages, including an increasing number in English. These include Umberto Marzocchi's *Remembering Spain: Italian Anarchist Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, Expanded second edition, Translated by Paul Sharkey (Kate Sharpley Library), and George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. These dedicated people worked in the various civilian collective endeavors and many directly joined the popular militias formed by the Spanish anarchists and socialists in response to the attempted military coup. Some who were sympathetic to the anarchist cause fought with the popular militia units on the Aragon front, in the Sacco and Vanzetti Column. Others sympathetic to socialists and anarchists joined the Eugene V. Debs Unit. Others simply joined the Spanish columns wherever they could.

But, sadly, in English speaking countries, the history of the anarchists and other anti-authoritarians' role in the Spanish events has been greatly overshadowed or largely ignored. This is due to the predominance, until very recently, of historians and other narrators who have too much sympathy with one or another of the states involved. They have generally presented their side as the heroes, the opposing side as the villains, the Spanish anarchists as simply irrelevant or dangerous disrupters, and the social revolution as a mirage.

Those with rightist and centrist sympathies focus on the power plays of the Soviet Union and the Communists in Spain, while presenting the right-wing military led by Franco simply as benign nationalists and the western "democratic" states as passive bystanders. On the other hand, left-liberals and those with Marxist-Leninist sympathies present the Soviet Union and the Comintern as the heroic supporters of the Spanish popular struggle. This has meant that much of the important anti-authoritarian experience has been overlooked or presented in highly distorted ways.

During the 1930s, many of the most independent-minded radicals in the English speaking world kept up with the events in Spain by reading I.W.W. publications such as the *One Big Union Monthly*, as well as the various anarchist

publications which were available. The I.W.W.'s history of democratic rank and file self-governance, along with its established opposition to exploiters and bureaucrats, laid the groundwork for understanding the social and political struggles between the authoritarian and anti-authoritarian tendencies that were occurring in Spain.

Two decades earlier, many Wobblies had been initially enthusiastic about the 1917 Russian Revolution. They had great hopes for the Communist parties that were formed in the U.S. and other parts of the world. But, because of the Communists' dominating and manipulative behaviors, most Wobblies soon came to mistrust and distance themselves from the rulers in the Soviet Union and the Communist parties in other countries, including the United States.

In 1921, after much discussion among the membership, the I.W.W. rejected affiliation with the Soviet Union-controlled Red Trade Union International, because that organization demanded the prerogative of deciding what policies the affiliated organizations could adopt. This was totally counter to the I.W.W.'s principle of rank-and-file democratic decision-making. In the following years, even as some Wobblies identified with the Communist Party of the U.S.A., the I.W.W. as an organization continued to maintain an independent critical stance toward the Soviet Union and Communist parties. The *One Big Union Monthly* articles about the Spanish situation republished here reflect this critical understanding of the danger posed by the authoritarian left, including the Communist parties of the world and the government of the Soviet Union.

Many North Americans are familiar with the stories of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (actually a battalion), part of the International Brigades. However, it is generally less well-known that the International Brigades were organized and supported by the Soviet Union and the Comintern. While we do not wish to discount the bravery or sincerity of the individuals who volunteered as part of the Lincoln Brigade, we need to note that this organization represents only a small and highly partisan part of the story. The International Brigades did not begin arriving in Spain until the winter of 1936 through 1937. The Lincoln Brigade volunteers arrived in Spain several months after the Spanish resistance to the right-wing military takeover began, and after the arrival of many other volunteers from abroad.

In addition, the daily experiences of the Lincoln brigade participants generally differed significantly from both those of Spanish and non-Spanish fighters in the popular militias. Jason Gurney, in *Crusade in Spain* (Faber & Faber, Ltd., London, 1974), who critically discusses the International Brigades from the point of view of the British volunteers, notes that the International Brigades claimed to be a "people's army." Nevertheless, it more closely resembled a professional military because of its openly hierarchical, authoritarian military officer structure. Gurney gives many examples of participants' reports of officers demanding absolute obedience and openly resenting questions from the ranks. Gurney also notes that the officers at company and platoon level were chosen for their political views and connections. Only Communist Party members were trusted to hold senior positions (pp. 64-65, 72).

Cecil Eby in *Between the Bullet and the Lie: American volunteers in the*

Spanish Civil War (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, etc., 1969) tells of similar experiences. He found that some volunteers had been affiliated with non-Communist socialist or anarchist organizations, such as the Wobblies, and others were not affiliated with any group. However, they generally reported that the Lincoln Brigade, as part of the International Brigades, was always under the management of the Communists.

The International Brigades also had political commissars in each battalion, to manage the ranks' political education. These political commissars were particularly resented by many volunteers from the Western countries, such as those from the U.S. and Britain, who felt that they served only to punish dissenters and provide indoctrination, rather than offering the troops real information and opportunities for discussion of important issues and problems (Eby, pp. 57-67 and note 13).

For additional documentation of the Comintern control of the International Brigades, including the Lincoln Brigade, see Klehr et al, cited above.

The Lincolns' limited perspective has led to their consistent ignoring or downplaying of the roles of both the anarchists and non-Communist socialists who went to Spain to fight. They also choose to only memorialize the civil war while discounting the social revolution. This is because those who continue to identify as Lincoln Brigade members and spokespeople, even after the demise of the Soviet state, apparently still believe that only those who agreed with the Communist position were really helping the Spanish people in their fight to defeat the Fascists.

But, to present the conflict in Spain during the late 1930s simply as a confrontation between fascism and democracy is a mystification which both obscures the capitalist basis of the "democracy" being defended (then and now) and denies the reality of the existence of a real social revolution in Spain in 1936 through 1939.

However, very many observers and participants have directly challenged this perspective based on their own experiences.

Russell Blackwell, author of The Spanish Revolution Revisited, began his political life as a member of the Young Communist League in 1924. He later became disillusioned with the mainstream Communist positions and became a Trotskyist. As he explains, his experiences in Spain led him to become disillusioned with all authoritarian communisms and to become a participant in the anarcho-syndicalist movement.

The final article reprinted here (You Experienced the War, I Experienced the Revolution!) presents the perspective of Federico Arcos, who was born in Spain, and was 16 years old on July 19, 1936, the day the revolution began. He grew up as part of the community of anarchists in Barcelona. When the revolution started, Arcos enthusiastically joined in. As an active participant in the anti-authoritarian struggle, he directly experienced the revolution.

After the victory of Franco's forces, Arcos fled into exile in France. Then he returned to Spain to join the underground struggle, was captured and imprisoned, then conscripted into military service in Morocco. Afterwards, he joined the underground resistance against the Fascists in the Pyrenees. Eventually Arcos

came to North America, where he remains involved in the anarchist movement to this day, helping us to critically evaluate our history and keep the connection between the insurgencies of the past and our present struggles.

Workers War to Stop Fascism

Reports on the Events in Spain by the Secretariat of the International Workingmen's Association

Translated by Joseph Wagner

One Big Union Monthly, July, 1937

The Development of Anti-Fascist Spain after July 19, 1936

In Spain, as elsewhere, the democratic bourgeoisie proved itself incapable of overcoming fascism. The Azana regime prepared the way for the clerical and military rebellion in the same way as the Weimar Republic had prepared the way for nazism. In the meanwhile, on July 19, 1936 a strong popular movement prevented the success of the military putsch in Spain, and if the traitor generals gained the upper hand in Saragossa, Palma, Seville, it was but due to the failure of the republican authorities. In a large part of the country the rebels were defeated only thanks to the heroic action of precisely that part of the population that was most relentlessly persecuted by the Azana regime: the revolutionary workers. The labor union organization of the revolutionary workers of Spain is the C.N.T. Its tactics resulted in the July 19 victory in Catalonia. The triumphs of the workers in this economically very important region of Spain created the possibility of seriously undertaking the war against fascism.

After the victory in the streets, the column of popular militia proceeded to the other districts dominated or menaced by the rebels; and in the rear, the social transformation of the economic life was begun. In this it was the labor unions that took the initiative. The social renovation of Spain began at the bottom: it was the workers who took the direction and the responsibility of the economic organization of the region. The only function that the state had left was to give sanction to the accomplished facts.

The Position of the syndicalists and of Anarchists

With a clear view of the possibilities of the moment, the C.N.T. declared itself for the immediate realization of its own goal; libertarian communism. The C.N.T. , through its syndicates, (labor unions), undertook the collectivization of the large and medium sized industrial enterprises, and declared itself for the substitution for the old State institutions, a new economic, political and cultural organism under the control of the labor unions. The position of the C.N.T. on this subject had been clearly set down prior to July 19, but alone, the C.N.T. could not accomplish this task. Therefore it proposed a revolutionary alliance between the anarchist and socialist labor unions: between the C.N.T. and the U.G.T. , in order to be able to carry out these objectives. Starting from this viewpoint, the C.N.T.

granted the U.G.T. equal representation with itself on all committees, although the U.G.T. was not a labor union force in Catalonia prior to July 19, and after that date its growth was due to the fact that it became a haven of refuge for a certain moderate layer of the proletariat, and of the entire lower middle class.

At the time the battle was raging at the gates of Madrid and the defense of the capital city had become the crucial point of the struggle (the socialist-bourgeois government had fled to Valencia), the C.N.T. demanded the creation of a Defense Council that should replace the central government. The Marxists and the republicans refused to accept this proposition. The C.N.T. wanted the unity of the people against fascism, at all costs, and considered it its own mission to establish such a union. In order to facilitate the people's union against fascism, the C.N.T. laid aside its own tactical conceptions and consented to be represented in the central government. The workers of Madrid rallied for the second time in order to block the road to fascism and Madrid was saved.

Since July 19, the C.N.T. never ceased making sacrifices; many of its best militants died on the front and the C.N.T. did not insist on the unconditional immediate realization of its own social aims. In spite of its being a powerful revolutionary organization, it abstained from imposing its own dictatorship, which it could have easily done in large portions of the country. The C.N.T. was inspired consistently by its traditional principle of liberty and free and voluntary collaboration, in its relations with the other anti-fascist organizations that used to consider the C.N.T. as the enemy organization and treated it as such. The disinterestedness of the C.N.T. , its generous tolerance towards the others and its readiness to forego, temporarily, the pressing forward of its own particular aims, all this was taken to be a sign of weakness by the old-line professional politicians--republicans, socialists, communists--and they took advantage of this to push forward their own political plans and to lessen the direct influence of the workers on the economic life of the country and to restore the old privileges. And discontent grew among the masses of workers, particularly in Catalonia. That was the real source of the tragical events of May 3-6, where the anarchists again gave proof of their strength and of their willingness to understand.

The Road Followed by the C.N.T.

The C.N.T. is a labor union organization; it considers that the building of socialism is the mission of the economic organization of producers and consumers, and not of a totalitarian State or of some political party with a dictatorial character. If the C.N.T. had followed since July 19 a policy of understanding with the other anti-fascist sectors and had made numerous sacrifices in order to allow the common policy to be carried out, this was because it considered that in this manner it is possible to build up the libertarian and anti-dictatorial socialism. Its tolerance, its rapprochement to the U.G.T. had a constructive character and was directed towards a positive goal.

"No other organization works with so much zeal for the economic reconstruction of the country, in a socialist sense," recently wrote *Fragua Social*, Valencia organ of the C.N.T.

"The collectivization movement developed rapidly as soon as the bourgeoisie lost its economic power. Through the labor unions, the workers seized the

factories, the landed estates, the mines and the means of transportation. And that was but the natural outcome of an idea that was maturing in the minds of the workers. The workers were ready to take into their hands the administration and the direction of the national economy at the first opportunity they had ..."

"...Another proletariat, placed in the same circumstances but lacking the revolutionary tradition of the Spanish working class, would have lacked the social aim for which they should have striven, because they would have lacked the solid ideological basis which resides in the labor unions of the Iberian peninsula. The problems confronting us are not due to our lack of general orientation as was the case in the other revolutions (in other countries). The Spanish proletariat knows exactly what it wants. But we have to organize our activities, to coordinate them, so that our powerful popular movement, overcoming the difficulties of the embryonic stage of economic reconstruction, could advance towards the concrete forms of libertarian socialism. Pursuing this work, the C.N.T. consecrates its forces to the creation of national federations of industry on the one hand, and on the other hand, to the concluding of an alliance with the U.G.T. for the attainment of the economic and military tasks. The proletariat should solidly organize the economic life. The isolated enterprises and the efforts limited to certain particular spots should be condemned. The economy should rest on the industry and on the coordination of all industries."

"We should also bear in mind the fact that neither the one nor the other of the two labor union tendencies--the C.N.T. and U.G.T.--can singly accomplish that mission. The two organizations cannot act independently of each other. The U.G.T. cannot impose its will on the C.N.T. or vice-versa. If such a case would occur it would mean civil war.

"And neither can exist, simultaneously, two different forms of economy. In the factories, the workers have discovered the practical solution by mutual understanding between the followers of the two tendencies. But that should be realized also on a national scale. By contributing to the creation of industrial federations and to a C.N.T.-U.G.T. alliance, we are laying the foundation of a new Iberian economy, essentially different from all the other social experiments attempted up to now and which is a specialty of our own people."

The C.N.T.-U.G.T. collaboration policy is not a question of opportunism, but it is the very expression of the will of the Spanish syndicalists and anarchists. They are renouncing neither their libertarian aspirations nor their will to accomplish completely their social revolution. The C.N.T. has consistently followed this road since July 19, 1936. It has naturally met with obstacles on its road. The defenders of the old policy: politicians' bureaucracy and special privileges, have placed themselves against the categoric postulates of the libertarian revolution.

Counter-Revolution Makes Its Appearance

For the revolutionary workers of Spain, the struggle against fascism is merged into the struggle against the capitalist regime. Neither the hope of the problematic "aid" of the so called democratic states, nor the external political interests of Russia, could divert the C.N.T. from this point of view.

The small and middle class bourgeoisie of the country and of the cities, the artisans who are yet independent, the proletarian followers of reformistic

organizations and especially the communists, carried on an active policy for the restoration of the old economic conditions. The corrupt bourgeois parliamentarism was presented as if it was the ideal of the people fighting against fascism. A big offensive was inaugurated against the revolutionary committees composed of representatives of the C.N.T. and of the U.G.T. and often also of the representatives of the antifascist political parties, committees that had assumed all the vital economic functions, after the miserable failure of the republican authorities following the fascist rebellion.

All power to the government!

Such was the common slogan of the right and left republicans, of socialists and communists. They made use of the long duration of the fight and of its transformation into a war, necessitating the most modern means of combat and an adequate military organization, as an argument for imperiously demanding the restriction of the revolutionary initiative of the workers. The definition of the "petite bourgeoisie" who were left of the process of collectivization, was stretched. The rural landowners were set up against the workers farm collectives. One of the symptoms of this struggle was the conflict that broke out between the communist minister of agriculture (of the Valencia government) and the farm workers' collective, formed by the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., in the orange plantations of the Valencia region. In the same sense the conflict broke out between the C.N.T. union of Barcelona and the minister of provisions, also an adherent of the Third International, who brutally opposed the socialization of distribution (limited as it was to the food products), and against the socialization demanded by the revolutionary workers of Catalonia.

Terroristic Campaign

This situation led to the terrorist campaign carried on at Madrid by the communists against the C.N.T. In the region of the Center, during the last months eighty anarchist comrades were cowardly murdered. The Commissary of Public Order of the Madrid Defense Junta (abolished since) engaged in the most relentless persecutions against the C.N.T. in the region of the Center, where it is not as strong and powerful as in other places. At Almeria, the militia column chief, the anarchist Mareto, was thrown in jail and shamefully slandered. He was finally released on May 3. At Murcia, a secret communist Cheka was discovered, which had already done away with several anti-fascist inhabitants belonging to different schools of thought. The will of domination of the Third International, which never had a real influence over the masses of Spain, and whose centralistic ideology is diametrically opposed to the Spanish mentality, found a field of penetration in the socialist labor unions, the U.G.T. The Executive Board of the U.G.T. (whose seat is in Valencia) took issue against the domination of the U.G.T. by the communists in Catalonia. In the general elections within the U.G.T. the communists were defeated in Madrid as well as in the Asturias.

The contest between the defenders of the old bourgeois democracy, of the propagators of calm and of capitalist order on the one hand, and of the C.N.T. on the other hand, took more and more violent forms, especially in Catalonia.

The Conflicts in Catalonia: at the Frontiers of the Pyrenees

Already during the last governmental crisis in Catalonia--that lasted three weeks--the extent of the already mentioned opposition came to light. On this occasion, too, the C.N.T. showed itself accommodating, and for the sake of the anti-fascist unity sacrificed several demands that the revolutionary workers deemed of prime importance. The members of the C.N.T. gave then proof of their self-discipline by accepting the situation. But at that same time, certain incidents took place that seemed to be provocative.

Although the guard of the Pyrenees front was well taken care of by the workers' militia, the Central government suddenly sent several thousands of men into Catalonia as frontier troops for the replacement of the workers' guards. These troops (the carabiniers) were carefully handpicked in the preceding months by the central government and they were composed almost exclusively of the adherents of the two "marxian" parties. Their arrival in Catalonia provoked general astonishment and their placement at the frontier points as a provocation. There were violent frictions at the border. The small, purely anarchist town of Puigcerda--where the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. performed a great social and cultural accomplishment, admired even by the foreign visitors--was the center of this new conflict. The president of the Peoples' Council of Puigcerda, one of the most notable representatives of the Catalonia anarchist movement, Martin, fell under the bullets of the Catalonia separatists, who ranged themselves on the side of the troops sent by the central government.

The Death of Roldan Cortada

At that same time a new incident took place. A well known militant of the U.G.T. , Roldan Cortada, was murdered near Barcelona by some unknown persons who to this day could not be discovered, in spite of all the searches undertaken. The Regional Committee of the C.N.T. , in a manifesto that it immediately issued, condemned the murderous act. But at Mollins, near Barcelona, nine members of the C.N.T. were arrested in connection with this murder. Not finding a shadow of guilt against any of them, they were finally released. A campaign of slander was started against the C.N.T. Large peasant centers, where the C.N.T. was predominant, were placed in a state of defense and public order was maintained by armed workers. In such places where the old police--partly under communist influence--functioned, the anarchists were harassed, especially in the central quarters of Barcelona, In spite of all that, calm was reestablished in the Pyrenees region, in the agricultural centers of the Barcelona province. A compromise was reached with the central government on the basis of reducing its troops on the Catalonia-France borders to the size it was prior to July 19. The C.N.T. members, arbitrarily arrested, were released. The latent conflict seemed, therefore, disappearing. But at this moment the provocations that caused the troubles on May 3-6 occurred.

In the latest ministerial composition of the Catalonian government, the control of the public order and the interior defense was in the hands of Aiguade, a member of the left bourgeois party. The General Commissar of Public Order was the communist Rodriguez Salas. Both of them came from that same political medium whose main preoccupation during the years of 1931-1934 was to hound the members of the C.N.T. and to secure the maximum convictions for them. The

petty bourgeois nationalists and Catalonian separatists saw in the struggles of the revolutionary workers the greatest obstacles to their own political program. And there is precious little difference in principle between the left bourgeoisie and the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (P.S.U.C.), affiliated with the Third International. Both are constituted of the same social layers, pursuing the same antirevolutionary tradition of the republican politics of 1931-1934. Their representatives in the organisms of the Public Security of Spain made use of their power to realize their own political interests.

The Telephone Exchange of Barcelona was under the control of the C.N.T. and of the U.G.T. and of some delegates of the Catalonian Generalidad (government). On May 3, at three o'clock of the afternoon, Aiguade sent a strong detachment of police, under the direction of Rodriguez Salas, to "seize the telephone exchange." But the workers did not allow the police to reach the upper floors of the building. There were brawls, there were gatherings of workers in front of the building, and in a few hours the C.N.T. workers of the workers' quarters were spontaneously mobilized. "To the streets in the defense of the revolution!" Such was the watchword. Parleys were immediately instituted between the government and the regional committee of the C.N.T. and during the night an understanding had been reached. But the provocation of Aiguade and of Rodriguez Salas had in the meanwhile caused bloody incidents, which continued for three days, gravely compromising the anti-fascist unity of Catalonia. From the beginning, the attitude of the C.N.T. was purely defensive, for it was the C.N.T. that had created the anti-fascist front in July 1936 and maintained it since then at the price of great sacrifices. And now again the C.N.T. left its own aspirations and its own particular goals in abeyance, being aware that the very critical situation of Spain required that the Spanish anarchist movement contribute all its strength toward victory over the hordes of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini.

The Workers' Sections with the C.N.T.

Events of May 3 showed once again what the anarcho-syndicalist movement of Catalonia is. As on July 19, there was a total mobilization of the working population within the space of a few hours. This act was a veritable plebiscite of the streets. All the workers' quarters of the city, without exception, were transformed into fortified quarters of the C.N.T. In the workers' sections, where there were barracks, police stations, or republican or communist militia, these either sided with the workers (as was the case at Sans and at San Gervasio), or they declared themselves neutral, as was the case at the communist barracks of Sarria. The workers' sections of Barcelona remained loyal to the C.N.T. and they will continue to remain so. The old police, the republicans and marxists, were in control of the bourgeois quarters and of the central sections, inhabited precisely by that part of the population of which these parties were the emanation. But, as a whole, the police did not go against the workers. A large part of this police remained passive, only a very small part of them allowed itself to be dragged into the fight against the C.N.T. workers when the excitement of the masses and the provocations of certain elements caused the bloody incidents.

The general strike broke out immediately. Only industries producing war material continued to operate. The police and the communists attacked some

labor union halls; the revolutionary workers attacked, arms in hand, the police barracks and the halls of the parties and of the reformist unions from where shots were fired upon the workers. The headquarters of the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. was subjected to the fire of the enemy during these days. On this occasion too, the C.N.T. lost comrades of great value. The Italian anarchist Berneri was arrested at his home by the communists and one day later, being prisoner, he was murdered, shot in the back. Domingo Ascaso, the brother of Francisco (who had been killed by the fascist bullets July 20, 1936) was killed in the center of the city. The nephew of Francisco Ferrer was killed by the communists while he was escorting his mother in the street. Having been wounded at the front, he was walking with the aid of a cane.

On May 5 a commission arrived from Valencia, composed of two members of the Executive Council of the U.G.T. and two members of the National Committee of the C.N.T. Although this commission entered immediately in conference with the various anti-fascist sectors of Catalonia, it was not possible to immediately pacify the spirits. After the C.N.T. and the U.G.T. on May 6 issued a joint appeal to the workers advising them to resume work, the communists and the police force took by assault the headquarters of the Leather Workers union of the C.N.T., destroying everything found in the locality. Other C.N.T. union halls, among them that of the sanitary branch, and of distribution were also taken, and everything destroyed within. In the center of the city, members of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I. were arrested, disarmed and imprisoned, although they were authorized to carry arms the same as the other anti-fascist elements. In the workers' sections of the city, the armed proletariat took energetic measures against the police force intending to attack them. At Sans, after a violent struggle, the barracks of the civil guards was taken and 400 of the police force taken prisoners by the members of the C.N.T. unions. In the barracks monarchist and fascist emblems were found. In spite of that, these prisoners were treated humanely and after calm was re-established, they were restored to freedom, a regular procedure with the C.N.T. in cases of this kind.

Calm is Re-established

On the evening of May 5, a new Catalonian government was formed, composed of one representative of the C.N.T., one of the U.G.T., one of the left bourgeois party and one of the small peasant party. When the firing ceased and the barricades were dismantled, on the orders of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., the Valencia government sent 5,000 assault guards to Barcelona to replace the Catalonian police functioning there up to that time.

The constitutional provision relating to the autonomy of Catalonia provides that in case of permanent troubles, the central government has to take charge temporarily of the control of Public Order in Catalonia. Minister Aiguade and chief of police Rodriguez Salas were dismissed from their jobs. Thus the two notorious enemies of the revolutionary workers, who considered that "maintenance of Public Order" consists in the persecution of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., were put out of business. The new responsible heads of the Public Order, appointed by the Valencia government, and who are in charge of the police forces and of the anti-fascist patrols, gave assurance that they will discharge the duties of their

office without regard to political tendencies.

We have to warn our friends against the biased versions of these events, circulated throughout Spain as well as in other countries by the Spanish communist and bourgeois parties. According to their version, there was an uprising "against the regular government." This affirmation is absurd since the C.N.T. had its representatives (and it had them before May 3) in the Catalonian government as well as in the Central government. The C.N.T. did not rise against a government of which it was itself an integral part, and which had to be reconstructed during the trouble, with C.N.T. collaboration. The protest movement was directed against the political parties that were using their power within the government to create provocations against the revolutionary workers. And furthermore, this conflict was not in any manner the action of "irresponsible elements", or provocateurs. Our enemies hasten to qualify as "irresponsibles" not only the militants of the C.N.T., but also the populous workers' quarters of Barcelona during the troubled days; anyone who noted the beginning of the movement on that afternoon of May 3, has to admit if he is not deliberately lying (as they slanderously lied about the Spanish anarchist movement for the last 70 years), will have to admit that this was a spontaneous popular movement, a sudden revolt, a violent protestation of the masses themselves. Any of the slanderers who speak of "Trotzkyist" and fascist provocateur infiltration in certain labor unions, has not been to the workers' quarters of Barcelona in search of proofs, no matter how inconsequential, in support of his gratuitous affirmation.

Documents of the Fighting Days

At the beginning of the conflict, the Committee of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I. issued a manifesto to the population describing the Catalonian situation in the following words:

"For months past, hangs over Catalonia such a poisoned atmosphere as to make it impossible to maintain confidence between the different sections of the anti-fascist front. Besides other problems, in the matter of war and revolution, we wish to call the attention of everyone to the facts interesting the Ministry of Interior of Catalonia(Public Security). In the first hours of the revolution, the central government, through a decree, authorized the creation of committees within the police formations, whose duty was to supervise the functioning of the police and to see to the elimination of fascist elements that are still within the police forces. When the present Minister of the Interior (Aiguade) took office, he absolutely refused to recognize these committees notwithstanding their legal standing. At the time when elsewhere the fascist element was consistently excluded from police functions, in Catalonia recognized fascists are allowed to remain at their posts, on the police force, because the Minister, in agreement with certain chiefs and officers, is opposed to all modifications. Thanks to this high protection, 62 civil guards from the post of Gerona fled with ease to the border. Of the Barcelona post, 31 policemen ran away, taking away with them important documents, among them the plans of the coast fortifications. And, yet, it was known for months before their escape, that these men were fascists.

"After the Central Council of the Civil Guards (located at Madrid) was informed that a new batch of 40 men attempted to run away from the Ausias March

barracks, the Council demanded a list of the elements with reactionary sympathies that were still in the ranks of the Civil Guard of Catalonia. It was only on April 13 that these elements were excluded by a decree of the Central Government. But the Interior Minister of Catalonia prevented the execution of the central government decree of discharge, and he allowed the fascists to remain at their posts. At the same time he stiffened his opposition to the committees. On the other hand he has done everything in his power to disarm the members of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I., with the aid of the followers of certain political parties, in order to break the revolutionary power of the members of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I., power that is the best guarantee for the working people, who are not wishful for the return of the regime of exploitation and for state oppression ..."

And the manifesto concludes:

"For the restoration of confidence among the anti-fascist forces! For the victory over fascism! Against the systematic provocateurs, Aiguade and Rodriguez! For the purging of the high posts of the police force! Long live the social revolution!"

This manifesto was signed by the regional committees of the C.N.T., of the F.A.I., of the Libertarian Youth and of the Barcelona local committees of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I.

An Appeal to the Policemen

The C.N.T. had therefore serious motives to be suspicious of the Catalonian police, which, under the direction of the workers' enemies Aiguade and Rodriguez Salas, were ruling the region. In the meantime, even while the conflict was on, the two libertarian organizations appealed also to the members of the police force: "It is not against you," the appeal said "that the present protest movement is directed, but against those who are using you as a counter revolutionary instrument of their political schemes." Here is a passage of one of these broadcasted appeals:

"They placed before us the question of force and this has to be now settled. The bloody encounters on the streets are the outcome of a long and painful development of facts, the aim of which is the annihilation of the C.N.T. after this organization has given the strength and the blood of its militants and members in the struggle against fascism. Don't let them fool you, members of the police force! You know, for you have the proof, that the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. are not fighting against you. You are, like ourselves, soldiers in the anti-fascist cause. Your place is on the side of the people as it was on July 19th."

The C.N.T. and F.A.I. and Trotskyism

In the appeals published by the different organizations, after calm was reestablished in Barcelona, reference is made in a general way to the necessity of establishing the anti-fascist unity in spite of all obstacles. Attacks and accusations against organizations of the anti-fascist front were avoided. The May 3 movement in Barcelona was a spontaneous action of the workers' quarters and not the work of some individuals or of an organization, and even less that of the P.O.U.M. Let us give a few facts on this matter.

The communist party could not miss this opportunity of throwing some

accusations against its pet adversary, the so-called Trotskyites (the P.O.U.M.), a small Marxist fraction that has developed in certain Catalonian workers milieus, and which is opposed to Stalinism. We do not want to wrangle on this subject as we do not feel competent to establish the fine lines of differences between the different opposition communist groups. By its organic form of unionism, by its anarchist ideology the C.N.T. is neatly and sharply separated from the other anti-fascist organizations.

The elements that at present compose the P.O.U.M. belong to that mass, that up to 1936, considered the exclusion of the anarchist movement as an essential condition for any progress of the Spanish labor movement. The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. have nothing in common with them. Since the middle of 1936 that party drifted constantly to the left and today it shares with us certain elementary conceptions of the anarchists in reference to the importance of the civil war.

However, the two tendencies have not come any nearer concerning their essential and positive postulates.

The P.O.U.M. participated in the anarcho-syndicalist protest movement, but to present them as the determining factor of the movement, carrying the C.N.T. in town, reminds one of the tactics used by the nazis, who made political scapegoats of the Jews making them responsible for everything: for the war, the peace pact, the revolution, and the reaction ...

We have no ties whatever with the P.O.U.M. but the C.N.T. demanded that it be recognized as an anti-fascist organization. On May 9, *Solidaridad Obrera* demanded that the police return to the P.O.U.M. the print shop it had occupied, which was complied with.

To accord the P.O.U.M. the initiative and the responsibility of the protest movement of Barcelona is another calumny circulated throughout the international press.

Another version of the tragic events is the following: The position of the C.N.T. in this affair was dictated by the Anarchists of the F.A.I., but that the C.N.T. rebelled against the anarchists and stopped the hostilities. This version also is of the domain of pure phantasy. In the discussions and parleys that have taken place between the third and sixth of May, all decisions taken, all proclamations that were drawn up and published, were by common consent of all the committees of the libertarian movements of Barcelona: the regional and local committees of the C.N.T., of the F.A.I., and of the Libertarian Youth. All decisions were adopted unanimously. The protest movement of the workers did not really come from the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. but from what is known as the "Barridas," of the workers' quarters of the city, from the masses themselves. The committees of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I. were in constant consultation with the delegates of the workers' quarters ("Barridas") until the danger caused by the bloody encounters in the streets abated, when by a common accord they gave out the watchword: "Stop firing." In no case could there be a question of an opposition between the C.N.T. and the F.A.I.

Statements of the Militants Concerning the C.N.T. and F.A.I.

On the night of May 4, speeches were broadcast by the different representatives of the antifascist organizations.

Mariano R. Velasquez, the secretary of the National Committee of the C.N.T., said among others: "Comrades, anarchists, members of the C.N.T. , anti-fascist workers. In this critical hour, maintain the same attitude as on July 19th! Do not waste an ounce of the powder so sorely needed at the front! If you are not capable by your own will to do what you should do, Franco will impose on us his law. There will be no other choice for us if we do not defeat fascism, which is our duty to do. The world will spit its contempt on us if we are not masters of the situation and we do not emerge victorious from the battle."

Severino Campos, secretary of the Regional Committee of the F.A.I., wrote in *Solidaridad Obrera* of May 10, the following lines:

"We anarchists of Catalonia did not want to attack. We were on the defensive as anyone could ascertain. We figured that it was a crime to mutually slaughter ourselves in the rear, while on the front the workers of all political and unionist tendencies suffer and fight together. That we know and we shall not forget. We want the unity of all workers."

All the known militants of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I. of Barcelona declared themselves in the same sense. The workers of the workers' quarters, in spite of their deep indignation caused by the provocations which are the source of these tragic events, accepted the decision of their committees and quitting the barricades, resumed work.

The Present Situation in Catalonia

An open fight between the different anti-fascist sectors was avoided. The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. have amply demonstrated that they are still the only workers' organizations that count in the workers' quarters. But they also have demonstrated that they are not disposed to allow themselves to be eliminated by the enemies of the social revolutionary development, and by the secret agents of a foreign power.

At the end of this fight there are neither victors nor vanquished. No sanction can, should or will be taken. But the police forces should finally be purged and the suspected elements excluded. The police forces sent by the Valencia government are composed of anti-fascist militiamen of all tendencies, who have fought on the front as volunteers and who are qualified to function as policemen in Catalonia. The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. expect of them and of the present Catalonian chief of Public Order, Torres (who was formerly an officer of the confederal militia column "Tierra Liberta") an impartial attitude. They hope that all fresh provocations will be avoided.

As before, the partisans of the social revolution are opposed by those who also call themselves "communists," but for whom the great sacrifice consented to by the Spanish people should accomplish no more than the restoration of the political and economic conditions that existed prior to July 19, 1936. As before, the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. will spare no efforts to propagate among the masses the ideas of integral social transformation. The two organizations know that while the struggle in common of all the antifascists against the common enemy is on, that aim cannot be realized by competition or by violent rivalry, but it has to come as the fruit of the creative policy of an intelligent, methodical, social and cultural formation.

The Spanish anarchist movement has demonstrated a thousand times that it cannot be destroyed, and the same is true of the C.N.T. It has fought for many decades against the regimes of exploitation and domination. All the governments that have succeeded each other in Spain wanted to exterminate it. The prosecutions and the murders have not stifled the libertarian aspirations of the masses.

The conspiracies of silence, and the campaigns of slander of the international press of all tendencies, never attained their end. Slanders, like those propagated by the Spanish ambassador in Paris, Araquistan, abusing his official power, concerning an alleged absurd pact between the monarchists and the anarchists, turn against their authors.

The C.N.T. consolidates its positions and its effectives which are increasing, but one can also observe its powerful development in regions where formerly it was in the minority. It is also improving its tactics. It understands today perfectly well the teaching it received from Orobon Fernandez: "The two Spanish workers' organizations, C.N.T. and U.G.T., should never aim to devour each other, they should arrive at an understanding."

The Revolutionary Labor Alliance is the sole road towards an understanding. It is not a question if This or That will prefer to take another road. There is no other road to arrive at a solution.

But the understanding will be difficult. During many long years the two organizations had considered each other enemies, one having been on the side of the oppressors and the other on the side of the revolutionary masses.

It was only when the Spanish socialists began to lose some of their democratic illusions, after 1933, that a rapprochement on certain questions could take place. And there is still a long road to travel before a positive understanding can be attained.

Large layers of the bourgeoisie, scared and anxious to save their privileges, have taken refuge in the socialistic unions. A political current that is not rooted in Spain, oriented towards a foreign power that is making a show of its solidarity with the anti-fascist Spain, also profits by the political situation for influencing the U.G.T. to progress backwards. In spite of all, the C.N.T. is ceaselessly appealing to the socialist workers of the U.G.T., who since 1934, together with the C.N.T. members, faced the same persecutions and who are today attacked by the same hordes of Franco.

The C.N.T. Vital Nerve of Spain

After the tragic event of May 3 to May 6, *Solidaridad Obrera* of Barcelona, published the following lines:

"Every popular movement brings us a new lesson and the events that are developing have taught us that the spirit of revolt of the Catalonian people has not been exterminated, although they wanted to demonstrate the opposite to us. The Catalonians revolt against all injustices, and it is perhaps for this reason that Catalonia is the cradle of Iberian anarchism, and that it remained always loyal to that movement.

"Basing itself on the libertarian tendencies of the Catalonian people, the General Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.) was able to develop here, as it has

developed itself in all the other regions of the peninsula, in such proportions that no other organization attempting to implant artificial doctrines into our country will ever attain. And we are proud. For if we are not partisans of a narrow and sectarian Catalonianism, at the same time we are living in Catalonia, and we desire its development and its happiness and we wish that she should indicate the road leading to the social revolution which is our aim."

In a manifesto published by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. during the conflict we read the following:

"The F.A.I. and the C.N.T. do not want a dictatorship, and do not seek to impose one. But as long as one of its members is living, they will not allow, and they will not submit to any dictatorship. If we are fighting fascism it is not because we like fighting, it is in order to safeguard the popular liberties and to prevent the return to power of those who want to massacre the militant workers and to exploit the working people and of those who, without openly calling themselves fascists, want to institute an absolutist regime, absolutely contrary to the traditions and the history of our people."

In spite of the provocation which endangered the anti-fascist unity for several days, the C.N.T. remained loyal to the line fixed by the May 1936 Congress, which had already been worked out in 1934 by Orobon Fernandez. He formulated his ideas in the midst of hesitations and contradictions and of the skepticism of those who, after having made for a long time common cause with the oppressors, joined the organization which was later to conclude an alliance with the C.N.T. because such are the supreme interests of all the workers, above all special interests. Orobon Fernandez said:

"The Spanish bourgeoisie has thrown off its mask of liberalism. The counter-revolutionary examples which are presenting themselves in Europe have given it courage. Today it endeavors to fortify its political and economic monopoly with the aid of the totalitarian state. In order to vanquish this enemy, which is menacingly raising its head against the proletariat, the creation of a granite-hard proletariat bloc is indispensable. The tendency which fails to recognize this truth isolates itself and assumes a heavy responsibility before history. For to defeat--which inevitably will result from isolation--we should, without hesitation, prefer a partial proletarian victory which will lead us (without there being an exclusive domination of one or the other tendency)--to the realization of a minimum program permitting in its turn the realization of the aspirations of all the signatories of the pact of understanding, by the socialization of the means of production and by the first mortal blows against the capitalist domination. Placing itself at the head of the movement towards unity means the opening of the road Which leads to the revolution !"

"We see the things as they are, without glasses, without doctrinary prejudices. It is a question of a revolution and not of an academic discussion on this or that principle. Principles should not be rigid commandments, but subtle forms adapting themselves to the exigencies of reality. Does this platform guarantee the establishment of pure libertarian communism on the day after the revolution?

Certainly not! But it guarantees the defeat of capitalism and the crushing of its sustainer, fascism. It guarantees the edification of a democratic regime without

exploitation and without class privileges, and that will open wide the road to a libertarian society in the best sense of the word.

Class Collaboration--Old and New

by Joseph Wagner

A timely reminder of working class political experience, and A. Shapiro's Open Letter to the C.N.T.

One Big Union Monthly, August, 1937

Alone, or in coalition with more or less "liberal" bourgeois political parties, the socialists today are in control of the government machinery in a number of countries while yet in other countries they stand in line awaiting in their turn the call of the economic masters to take over the government and to carry on and administer the collective affairs of the capitalists in the respective countries.

The conclusion of the long and destructive World War brought capitalism to bankruptcy, the bourgeois regime stood everywhere discredited physically and morally and in a state of collapse; everywhere the working class was in open revolt. The only organized force that yet retained some moral prestige was the socialist movement and its trade unions, who, in one country after another gallantly rushed to the rescue of the moribund regime, until recently their professed enemy.

Naturally, the capitalists very graciously allowed the socialists to resurrect and reconstruct the capitalist regime. They were allowed and even invited to form "socialist governments." Times without number these "socialist governments" proved to the master class that they are in the best of positions to save capitalism and to safeguard all their interests not only by the use of brutal military and police forces, but also by their moral prestige over the working class acquired by nearly a century of socialist party and trade union connection within the working class.

To be sure the master class never was conspicuous by its gratitude, as soon as it imagined itself strong enough to rule without the aid of socialists these were discarded, and their governments turned over to the underworld characters, to gangsters parading in differently colored shirts. A few years of experience with the gangsterdom has, however, taught world capitalism the lesson that the socialists make the more efficient and loyal servants of capitalism after all, and at the present time the pendulum is rapidly swinging away from fascism to "socialist" or "Popular Front" governments.

Socialists the world over are proud of the role their parties are playing nowadays, and they look upon their present, internationally approved policy as the acme of "Marxism." Yet, this was not always so.

Before the end of the last century, socialists of all shades were violently and unalterably opposed to the very idea of party members participating in bourgeois (capitalist) governments, thereby making the socialist movement at least indirectly responsible for the acts of their respective capitalist governments. Even the acceptance by a party member of a minor, non-elective government job, was

frowned upon as not kosher from a social-democratic standpoint.

When, in 1900, Alexander Millerand, who with Jean Jaures, was heading one of the four or five socialist parties existing then in France, entered into the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet, a storm of protests was raised in the socialist world. National and World Congresses debated and argued the propriety of the action and in all instances the act was condemned as treason to the international socialist movement. "Millerandism" and "Ministerialism" was synonymous with treason. The arguments lasted for fourteen years, until the outbreak of the World War, when the entire socialist world suddenly became "ministerialists" and governmentalists. And so it has remained to this day.

The foregoing is all old history, but it does no harm to recall it once in a while, the more so as in our days we are suddenly confronted with a new "ministerialism" from an unexpected source. This time the anarchist world is stirred with that same old question in the anti-fascist war now going on in Spain.

It would appear that with the post-war experiences, with the experiences of Bolshevism, Fascism, Nazism, we have learned enough to avoid the old and settled disputes. But we must have been mistaken, for it seems that we have to overcome the same difficulties and misunderstandings at every instance of serious fight that we, the working class, are confronted with.

The old forgotten "Millerandism" or "Ministerialism" is and has been a burning issue in Spain ever since the present war was precipitated by the uniformed bandits of Spain. The only real revolutionary force in the present Spanish war was the C.N.T. and its ideological reflex, the F.A.I. It would have appeared an absurdity for anyone a year ago to state that the old issue of "ministerialism" could bob up--of all things--in this anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement, in the time of the acutest crisis that ever confronted not only these two Spanish movements (that are really one), but the anarchist fraternity the world over.

Perseus, of mythological fame, wore a magic cap so that the monsters he hunted down might not see him. I would like to have pulled such a magic cap over my own ears so that I may not see the internal fight in the revolutionary forces of the present Spanish fight. Unfortunately, I can read many languages and am in touch with revolutionary literature of many lands, and no magic cap can prevent me from seeing things I would not like to see. I am giving below a translation of an open letter of A. Shapiro to the C.N.T. I read similar open letters months ago, whose authors have fallen since, either fighting on the bloody battlefields, or through cowardly assassination by the Spanish Branch of the Russian Cheka. Shapiro is not dead yet, he is one of the outstanding figures of the anarchist movement of the world. He was for a number of years one of the Secretariat of the International Workingmens Association. Therefore, whatever the readers of the "One Big Union" may think of his statements, I assure them that Shapiro is sincere and means what he says.

OPEN LETTER TO THE C.N.T.

We read with more surprise than interest the minimal program of the C.N.T. "for the realization of a real war policy." The reading of the program raised an entire series of questions and problems, some of which should be called to your

attention.

Certainly none of us was simple enough to believe that a war can be carried on with resolutions and by anti-militarist theories. Many of us believed, long before July 19 (1936) that the anti-militarist propaganda, so dear to our Dutch comrades of the International Anti-militarist Bureau and which found, in the past, a sympathetic enough echo in the columns of your press in Spain, was in contradiction with the organization of the revolution.

Many of us knew that the putsches, that were so dear to our Spanish comrades, such as those of December 8 and January 8, 1934, were far from helping this organization of the revolution, it helped rather to disorganize it.

July 19 opened your eyes. It made you realize the mistake you had committed in the past, when, in a revolutionary period, you neglected Seriously organizing the necessary frame-work for the struggle that you knew would be inevitable on the day of the settlement of accounts. Yet, today you are shutting your eyes on another important fact. You seem to think that a civil war brought about by the circumstance of a fascist putsch does not necessarily obligate you to examine the possibilities of modifying and altering the character of that civil war.

A "minimal" program is not something to startle us; but a particular minimal program (such as yours) cannot have any value unless it creates the opportunity for the preparation of a maximal program.

But, your "real war policy," after all, is nothing but a program for entering the Council of Ministry (government); with it you act merely as a political party desirous of participation in an existing government; setting forth your conditions of participation, and these conditions are so bureaucratic in character that they are far from weakening in the least the bourgeois capitalist regime, on the contrary they are tending to strengthen capitalism and stabilize it.

The surprising part of your program is that you do not consider it as a means for the attainment of some well defined goal, but consider your "real war policy" program as an aim in itself. That is the main danger in your program. It presupposes a permanent participation in the government--not merely circumstantial--which is to extend over a number of years, even if the war itself, with its brutal, daily manifestations would cease in the meanwhile. A monopoly of the Foreign Commerce (have the communists whispered this to you?), customs policy, new legislations, a new penal code--all of this takes a long time. In order to realize these tasks, your program proposes a very close collaboration on all fields with the bourgeoisie (republican block) and with the communists (marxist block), while almost at the same time you state in your appeal of June 14 that you are sure of triumphing not only against Franco, but also against a stupidly backward bourgeoisie ("the republican block") and against the tricky and dishonest politicians ("marxist block").

You see, therefore, that even your minimal program is beset with flagrant contradictions; its realization is dependent on the aid of the very sectors against which that program is aimed. Even the freedom with which you state these two mutually excluding programs: collaboration with the bourgeoisie and "marxism" on the one hand and fight to finish against this same bourgeoisie and "marxism" on the other, situates your minimal program as the aim, and your declaration of

June 14 becomes a mere verbiage. We would have, naturally, liked to see things the other way.

The problem of Spain's economic reconstruction does not form a part of your program. And yet, you cannot help but know that a civil war, like the one you are going through, cannot bring the people to its aid unless the victories on the fronts will assure at the same time their own victories in the rear.

It is true--and many of us outside of Spain have known it long before July 19--the Social Revolution cannot be attained in 24 hours, and that a libertarian regime cannot be erected by the turn of the hand. Nevertheless, neither the C.N.T. nor the F.A.I. cared anything about pre-revolutionary organization and about preparing in advance the framework for the social and economic reconstruction. We claim that there is a bridge leading from the downfall of the old regime to the erection of the new regime erected on the ashes and the ruins of the old regime. This bridge is all the more full of dangerous traps and pitfalls as the new regime differs from the old. And it was precisely this period of transition that you have misunderstood in the past and that you continue to misunderstand today. For if you had recognized that the social and economic reconstruction on a libertarian basis is the indispensable condition to victory over fascism, you would have elaborated (having in view the aim to be attained) a minimal revolutionary program that would have given the city and country proletariat of Spain the necessary will and enthusiasm to continue the war to its logical conclusion.

But such a program you failed to proclaim. The few timid allusions contained in your "war program" are far from having a revolutionary character: the elaboration of a plan for the economic reconstruction that would be accepted by the three blocks could only be a naive illusion, if it would not be so dangerous; the municipalization of land is an anti-revolutionary project since it legalizes something that a coming revolution will have to abolish, since the municipalities are, after all, but cogs in the wheel of the State as long as the State will exist.

Naturally, the elaboration of an economic program for the transition period presupposes a final aim. Does the C.N.T. consider that libertarian communism is an unattainable "Utopia" that should be relegated to the museum?

If you still think (as you did before July 19) that libertarian communism forms part of the program of the C.N.T. it is your duty--it was really your duty since July 1936--to elaborate your economic program of transition, without regard to the bourgeois and marxist blocks, who can but sabotage any program of libertarian tendency and inspiration.

To be sure, such a program will place you in conflict with these blocks, but on the other hand, it will unite with you the large majority of the workers, who want but one thing, the victory of the Revolution. It is necessary, therefore to choose between these two eventualities.

Such a program will, naturally, nullify your "war program" which is nothing but the expression of a "true" desire for a permanent cabinet collaboration. But this proposition, this "war program" of yours is diametrically contrary to the traditionally revolutionary attitude of the C.N.T., which this organization has not denied yet. It is therefore necessary to choose.

The C.N.T. should not allow--as it has unfortunately done since July 19--the acceptance of the tactics of the "line of least resistance," which cannot but lead to a slow but sure liquidation of the libertarian revolution.

The ministerial collaboration policy has certainly pushed back to the rear the program of revolutionary economy. You are on the wrong track and you can see that yourselves.

Do you not think that you should stop following this road, that leads you to certain downfall?

A Soldier Returns *
by Bill Wood
One Big Union Monthly, September 1937

The *One Big Union Monthly* and the Industrial Workers of the World are heart and soul for the success of the anti-fascist fight going on in Spain but we see no reason why we should stick our heads in the sand and pretend not to be aware of the capitalist class element within the Spanish United Front government that is trying to rob the Spanish revolutionary unionists of victory.

No matter what our opinion may be as to the wisdom of the syndicalists' policy of co-operation with political government, the information and arguments contained in this letter from a rank and file fighter in the cause of working class freedom, and in other articles appearing in this magazine, cannot but be valuable reminders that there are still working class enemies among those who favor "democracy" as opposed to fascism

-- EDITOR.

Marseilles, France.

Fellow Worker:

Received your letter the other day in Barcelona. I typed three pages in reply but could not smuggle it out of the country, so I tore it up.

I am out of Spain. The reasons are numerous. I was not wanted by the government as I was in the Durruti International Shock Battalion. The government sabotaged us since we were formed in May and made it impossible for us to stay at the front. No tobacco unless you had money. All of the time I was in the militia I received no money. I had to beg money for postage stamps, etc. I was sent back from the front slightly shell-shocked and put in a hospital in Barcelona. when we registered at the hospital I told them I was from the Durruti International Battalion and they wouldn't register me. In fact they told me to go and ask my friends for money for a place to sleep. I explained to them that I was from Canada and had no friends in Barcelona, then they tried to make me a prisoner in the hospital. I called them all the lousy -- I could think of. Anyway, I ran away from the hospital one day to the English section of the CNT-FAI and the people there insisted that I see the British consul for a permit to leave Spain, which I did, though I hated to leave.

Spain is a wonderful country. At present it reminds me of the stories I have

read of the O.G.P.U. in Russia. The jails of loyalist Spain are full of volunteers who have more than a single-track mind. I know one of them from Toronto, a member of the L.R.W.P. I wonder if they will bump him off. The Stalinists do not hesitate to kill any of those who do not blindly accept Stalin as a second Christ. One of the refugees who came over with me from Spain was a member of the O.G.P.U. in Spain, which, by the way, is controlled by Russia. Every volunteer in the Communist International Brigade is considered a potential enemy of Stalin. He is checked and double- checked, every damn one. If he utters a word other than commy phrases he is taken "for a ride." This chap (ex-O.G.P.U.) is like all the other commies coming out of Spain, absolutely anti-Stalin and anti-communist. He skipped the country by flashing his O.G.P.U. badge on the trains etc.

I believe that the I.W.W. has lost some members here, as I doubt if they would keep quiet at the front in view of what is taking place.

It was only through sabotage that the government succeeded in disbanding the International Battalion of Anarchists. Four of our bunch died of starvation in one day. Our arms were rotten, even though the Valencia government has plenty of arms and planes. They know enough not to give arms to the thousands of anarchists on the Aragon front. We could have driven the fascists out of Huesca and Saragossa had we had the aid of the aviation. But the Anarchists form collectives where ever they advance, and these comrades would rather let Franco have those cities than the CNT-FAI.

Fenner Brockway, prominent labor leader in England, exposed the way the communists were treating those boys (volunteers) in the International Brigade. They will not let any of them come back unless they are racketeers of the Sam Scarlett type who will say anything they are told as long as the pork chops are coming in.

The CNT-FAI seems to have lost all the power they had in the army. There is a good fort on the top of a hill overlooking Barcelona which the anarchists captured from the fascists. When I left for the front it was still in the hands of the FAI but when I came back the communists had it. The workers of Spain are against the communists, but the latter don't care. They are making a play for the support of the bourgeoisie and other racketeers. As far as the industries are concerned the CNT has a lot of power, far more than any other organization.

Well, Fellow Worker, one day has elapsed since I wrote the above. Last night I had a head ache and I had to postpone finishing the letter. I am eating good since coming to France.

I believe the British consul is going to send me to England or to Canada. If I wasn't such a wreck I would ship on a British ship for Spain. Wages are double on the Spanish run, and ships are tied up because of a shortage of men. I have been on English ships and none of the crew would speak English.

I met two more men from the International Brigade this morning. They say many Canadians are in prison in Spain.

With best wished for the I.W.W., I remain

Bill Wood

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Counter-Revolution in Spain

by R. Louzon

in the Paris *La Revolution Proletarienne*, under the title "Notes on Spain"

Introduction and translation by Joseph Wagner

***One Big Union Monthly*, October, 1937**

INTRODUCTION

The articles on Spain prepared by me for the One Big Union Monthly, consisting largely of translations appearing in the current and two previous issues of this magazine, were not meant to serve as news articles of the Spanish War Front.

The news about the ups and downs, of victories and defeats, on the various fronts of fighting Spain are abundantly covered by the papers of all shades and creeds. Each of them colors the news according to the interests or the principles of the writer writing them up or of the publication printing them. The lessons drawn from the developments of the events differ from writer to writer and from publication to publication. That cannot be helped, and perhaps it should not. The questions involved in the Spanish struggles are much too complex to be lightly disposed of.

Neither was the intent of these articles to pass judgment over what is being done in Spain by the anti-fascists, nor to take sides with one or another of the various contending parties and groups that grim circumstances brought together in a common fight against the gory beast of fascism.

But even though we are not so situated as to take a direct hand in the great struggle on the Iberian Peninsula, we are greatly interested in it, because as workers and as revolutionists we feel that the struggle going on in Spain is our struggle as well.

Different political parties, radical groups with varying philosophies are thrown together to form the anti-fascist front. And although they have one common aim, these component groups are separated by class interests and by philosophical and political views. In the course of the war in Spain, the political supremacy of what is called loyalist Spain has shifted more than once, and before the end comes there will be very likely more shifts taking place. With these shiftings, tactics of struggle also change. The ones at the helm at a given moment are prone to claim credit for every victory that takes place while they are holding the reigns of government, blaming the opposition for the reverses taking place. The opposition looks upon it in just the opposite way.

Because of the complexity of the question, I intended to place before the

readers of the O.B.U.M. the views of serious working class observers, and who, moreover, had first hand knowledge of the situation, and speak not by hearsay, but from actual observation.

In this issue I present an article by R. Louzon, one of the founders and present editors of that admirable and well-known semi-monthly French syndicalist magazine *La Revolution Proletarienne*. The article appeared in the second July issue of the magazine mentioned.

Fellow Worker Louzon is one of the old guard of the pre-war French General Confederation of Labor. He is still a French syndicalist with the old revolutionary, non-political meaning of the term. He was personally acquainted with Haywood; has closely followed the development of our own I.W.W. with great sympathy ever since the I.W.W. was founded. In spite of his multiple activity in the French labor movement, he has been closely watching our own General Defense Committee cases and at times has made financial contributions towards them. At the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain, where Louzon is well acquainted in the revolutionary world, he went over immediately to Catalonia, to secure first hand information and to be able to write understandingly in his magazine. He has visited Spain often in the last year, and made faithful and objective reports of his findings to his readers. The following article is one of his latest.

Notes on Spain

by R. Louzon

When I wrote in this magazine nearly a year ago my "Notes on Barcelona" they were notes on Revolutionary Spain, as the subhead indicated. My notes of today, however, are on the Counterrevolutionary Spain.

I left Spain by the end of May; I returned there at the beginning of July. One month is a tremendously long time in revolutionary ... or counterrevolutionary times. During that month of June the events have succeeded themselves with great rapidity. Things that could be dimly outlined as possible hypothesis in the May days, have since been realized in an accelerated rhythm.

The present situation in Spain can be summed up in two facts:

First: total loss of power by the working class;

Second: transfer of power into the hands of the Spanish fascists, by the intermediary of the communist party.

Working Class Loses Power

When I say that the working class lost the power, I am naturally not alluding to the fact that now the C.N.T has no longer representatives either in the Valencia or the Catalonian governments. Cabinet ministers are but cogs in the bourgeois-capitalist State machinery, therefore it is not by its participation in the machinery of the bourgeois State machinery, but by the creation of its own institutions, that the working class develops its own power.

If the working class of Spain was partially in power until recently, that was due to the fact that alongside of the bourgeois State power the working class was able to impose the power of its own organs: the labor unions, workers' committees, etc.

Today, this power of the working class is nonexistent. It cannot be stated too

often, that political power is essentially--one can almost say exclusively--a power of repression; it is the police force and the armed force. Today the working class of Catalonia no longer has police or armed power.

The "Patrols of Control" of Barcelona and vicinity, of which I spoke in my former article in this magazine, have disappeared. This workers' police force, that was functioning since August 1936, alongside the police force of the State, was dissolved last month, and this time not only on paper, but in fact: all of its members have been disarmed, the most active of them were imprisoned, the leading militants have "disappeared," a euphemism signifying murdered.

The same holds true of the workers' militias. Wherever these militias existed, whose duty it was to enforce revolutionary order upon avowed or camouflaged fascists, especially along the extensive frontiers, they have been completely disarmed, their best elements were imprisoned, a certain number of them murdered.

In Barcelona and in the entire Catalonia, nothing was left in the way of organized armies except the mercenary corps of the State police: the assault guards, the civil guards, carabiniers.

The same has taken place with the army. Working under the Catalonian C.N.T. War Minister, the C.N.T. formerly had the control over the army of Aragon; after this Cabinet post was taken over by General Pozas, an appointee of the Valencia government, the commanding machinery was lost by the workers' organizations and it fell into the hands of the State.

The labor militants, the creators of the militia, who after the "militarization" were supposed to merely transfer their title from "delegations" to army "ranks," are now obliged to ask the Minister of War for confirmation of such transfers and the Minister confirms those of whom he thinks he has nothing to fear, while postponing indefinitely the confirmation of those he doubts, thus eliminating the ones and placing the others in the position of being under obligation. By this twofold scheme the entire hierarchy of the army passes under the direct control of the State.

Thus, the workers' police and army has been done away with. To be sure, there are still men on the police force, especially among the assault guards, who are at heart with the working class and with the C.N.T.; certainly the soldiers of the Aragon front and a good number of "confirmed" army officers have not forgotten their origin and when the day comes they will be on the side of the people and not with the State. And certain it is that besides the visible arms, there are plenty of hidden arms, for the Catalonian proletariat, it seems, has conserved its hidden arms. But, all that does not alter the fact that today there are no longer any regularly and publicly functioning workers armed institutions. The working class still has means of fighting the power, but it no longer possesses organs of power.

Removed from the police force and from the army, the working class is just as naturally removed from all auxiliary institutions of power. The representatives of the F.A.I. (Iberian Anarchist Federation) have been excluded from the popular courts of law, where the representation of the workers have been reduced to a feeble minority. The C.N.T. representatives likewise have been excluded from a

large number of municipal councils that have replaced the former municipal revolutionary committees (but which were nothing in reality but committees, since they had been composed of representatives of all the anti-fascist organizations, in a determined proportion) under the pretext that the C.N.T. has not repudiated their protest movement in the days of May. The district workers' committees can no longer function and there hardly passes a week without some new decree being issued suppressing the representation of the C.N.T. as well as of the U.G.T. in this or that Council or administration.

Everywhere the State, the bourgeois State, constituted in its traditional forms, re-establishes its sole and entire power. In Catalonia as in Valencia, the working class is now completely excluded from power: It has lost the power. Such is the first truth that we have to establish, but there is a second.

What the Spanish Communist Party Is

The much lauded policy of the Spanish Communist Party, as dictated by Stalin, is well enough known by now: it is the defense of the bourgeoisie and of the private property; no more expropriation is to be countenanced; the landed proprietors to be re-established into their "rights"; the small and not-so-small employers to be organized in "labor" unions. Such is the program. A program of hindrance and of destruction of the conquests of the revolution; a program of bourgeois defense.

Such a program of bourgeois defense naturally should have attracted the entire bourgeoisie, and it has not failed to do so. The bourgeoisie flocked in masses into the communist party and into its annex, the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, as well as into the Catalonian U.G.T. (General Workers Union), founded for their convenience. They joined partly because the communist party program was their program, their class program. But above all, they joined for reasons of personal security. To be suspected of fascism was until recently a very serious matter. But, by the very nature of things, the bourgeois is always in danger of being suspected of that very thing. What better way of avoiding suspicion than of having in his pocket a membership card in the communist party or in one of the locals of the U.G.T.?

The Spanish communist party and its annexes have, therefore, become bourgeois organizations not only in virtue of their program, but also by their social composition. But this first fact was bound to be soon followed by a second: Of all the bourgeois, the most interested in averting the suspicion of fascism were the very ones who were actually fascists. And that is how the communist party in its composition soon became not only bourgeois, but above all, fascist bourgeois. Whether in Valencia, where the district secretary of the Gil Robles party, among others, is at present a member of the communist party, or in villages far removed from Catalonia, the most active members of the communist party are former members of the "Patriotic Union" of the CEDA, etc. etc.

Republican Spain Passes into the Hands of Fascism

It naturally follows that the Spanish communist policy is not only a bourgeois policy, but actually a fascist policy. Through the racket in connection with the furnishing of arms to the Spanish government, the Russians having succeeded in

giving the State powers to "their" party, the fascist followers of the communist party made the party follow a policy favoring Franco, and the Russians were much too dense to notice it. The facts, however, are evident.

While hundreds of the militants of the antifascist organizations were murdered and thousands imprisoned, and while the help rendered to Spain by the foreign organizations was systematically sabotaged, the Falange, yes the Spanish Phalanx, the Phalanx of Franco, is making open propaganda and is recruiting almost openly in Catalonia. The Falangistas arrested by the workers' Control Patrols (before their dissolution) for attempts of sabotage, are now free. And while the anti-fascists arrested during the last two months, especially the foreigners, are lamentably treated, kept in airless cells from which they are not taken out for a moment, and are forced, like the prisoners in Calle Corcega in Barcelona, to go on hunger strike, the imprisoned fascists enjoy all manner of favors, so much so that the anti-fascist prisoners of Carcel Modelo of Barcelona demanded that they be granted the same rights as enjoyed by the fascist prisoners in the same prison! Finally, as they cannot absolve all the fascists without too much open scandal, the authorities decided to free them on bail of several thousand pesetas. The most notorious fascists, who are rich or who have rich friends, can thus leave the prison ... for an indefinite time.

Government of Defeat

The facts related above are serious enough, but what follows is even more so. It is openly said that the fall of Bilbao was due to treason. The fall of Bilbao is the masterstroke realized by the fascists, through the medium of the communist party, by the overthrow of the Caballero government in May.

To relieve the pressure on the Biscayan front, the Caballero government had prepared a vast offensive to the south of Madrid, where the front is not far from the Portuguese frontier, with the intention of cutting the rebel armies in two. Everything was ready for the offensive that was to begin early in May: 75,000 men had been assembled with adequate war materials on hand.

But, a couple of days before the launching of the offensive, the communist party torpedoed the Caballero government, forcing his cabinet to resign and replacing him with the Negrin government, whose first task as government head was to countermand the prepared offensive; the assembled troops were scattered and during the entire month following nothing was done to relieve the hard pressed Biscayan front. The Basque minister's letter of resignation (because of lack of aid from the central government) was prevented publication by the censors, and the Madrid journal C.N.T. was ordered suspended because it had published it nevertheless. But nothing was done to save Bilbao; it was necessary for the city to fall, for so it was decided by the fascists in the Stalinist party.

Only after the fall of Bilbao--and the fall enabled Franco to withdraw without danger a part of his northern troops--that they started an offensive, for after all it was necessary for them to appear doing something ... especially at the wrong time.

The sum total of all the above facts cannot leave room for doubt: The Negrin government is entirely dominated by treason. The cleverness of the fascists,

acting under the cover of the Stalinist stupidity, makes the Negrin government, nilly-willy a government of defeat.

If the Negrin government holds out, if the evil forces that brought them to power are not destroyed, the defeats will succeed each other continually. That will be certain victory for Franco and the certain defeat not only of the revolution but of the republic itself. This is the second truth that needed telling.

Causes for the Defeats of Russian Imperialism

The defeat of the Spanish republic will also be a defeat of Stalin. And on this subject it is interesting to note that the serious defeats suffered in the last ten years by Russian imperialism are all due to the same cause.

The Stalinist imperialism had experienced two notable defeats: that of China with the boosting of Chiang Kai Shek, and that of Germany, with the ascension of Hitler to power. Spain is reserving him a third defeat, for he will either be beaten inside of republican Spain by the other anti-fascist forces, or, if he maintains his hold over the Spanish republic, it will be beaten by Franco. But the cause of these three defeats are one and the same. Odd as it may appear, that cause is Stalin's absolute lack of understanding of the class struggle: in all three cases the policy that led Stalin to defeat consisted in his disregarding of the class antagonism.

In China he imagined himself able to marry the fish to the hare: the bourgeois Kuomintang to the revolutionary workers and peasants. To hinder such a marriage, the Kuomintang massacred everything that was Russian. After having furnished Chiang Kai Shek the means with which to conquer all China from Canton to Peking, Stalinist imperialism found itself expelled, from one day to another, by this same Chiang Kai Shek.

In Germany, Stalin imagined that the revengeful Hitler would turn to be a better support for his struggle against Poland and the other neighbors on the western border of Russia than the timid social-democrats. The two dictators could divide the existing spoils if the States emerged from the Versailles treaties, just as their royal and imperial predecessors had, in the past divided up and annexed Poland. Therefore, every time before the advent of Hitler the communists of Germany were ready for action, the Communist International sternly forbade them doing anything.

But, the attraction of the "corridor" did not cut much figure in the class interests of Hitler's backers. No matter how anti-socialist the Stalinist regime had become, the absence of private property in Russia was not agreeable to them; no matter how opposite to the October revolution Stalin's regime was, to the bulk of the world proletariat, and especially to the German working class, it appeared to be the continuation of that revolution and the symbol of their emancipation; hence the fight inside of Germany against communism and against the working class was not compatible with an alliance with Russia. That is the reason that Hitler, brought to power by the Ruhr magnates to extirpate communism and socialism in Germany, could not base his foreign policy on a Russian alliance, but on the contrary on a struggle against the U.S.S.R. From Hitler's coming to power Stalin expected a strengthening of the Rapallo treaty; the first act of Hitler was the destruction of Rapallo.

Under different forms, this same misunderstanding of the fact that the class struggle dominates the foreign as well as the domestic policies of States is the cause that leads Russian imperialism to its defeat in Spain.

It was Russia that saved Spain last November. The fact is incontestable: it is foolish to deny it or to belittle the fact. Without the Russian planes and without the International Brigade, which was a communist creation, it would have been all over for republican Spain. The blockade of Mr. Blum--the greatest treason ever committed by social-democracy in the entire course of its history--was accomplishing its work. Just as it was Russian help that enabled the Kuomintang to conquer China, it was Russia that enabled the Spanish republic to save Madrid... and the rest.

But again, the same as in China, where Stalin believing thus to best serve his imperialistic interests, ordered the communist party of China to collaborate with the Kuomintang, to uphold the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie, just so in Spain, he forced his party to defend the Spanish bourgeoisie against the revolution.

The result will be the same: as in China where one nice day, Stalin saw his followers massacred at Nanking and at Hankow by the soldiers of Chiang Kai Shek, so in Spain he will wake up one of these days to the fact that his party is but an annex of the Falange, which has secured victory for Franco.

The C.N.T. Continues to Live

In the presence of the situation as described above, what is the C.N.T. doing? How does it react to the loss of power by the proletariat and to the fascist control of the bourgeois power?

The C.N.T. is playing dead. It keeps itself carefully from reacting. The C.N.T. allowed without the least protestation the disarming of the Patrols of Control; it forbids any retaliation for the murdering of its militants (official figures: 60 C.N.T. members "disappeared"), and against the imprisonment of its members (official figures: 800 C.N.T. members imprisoned); it is opposing only with respectful interventions and legal defense.

In the meantime its forces--so it seems--are intact. In Valencia as in Barcelona, the C.N.T. press is the most widely read. One comrade even claimed--and his claim seems to be very nearly the general opinion--that the C.N.T. never was as strong as it is now, for the prestige it may have lost while participating in power, it now has regained, and the Stalinists' stupidity makes them grow stronger every day.

On the other hand, it is certain that it still retains its arms, keeping them in the most unexpected places.

Finally, the economic attainments of the revolution are being preserved almost entirely. As a general rule, the labor unions and collectives are functioning the same as before. Stripped of political power, the working class still retains economic control.

Thus in Puigcerda, of which I said last month that I don't know whether the work of collectivization that I had seen in February is still in existence, and which is one of the places where the exclusion of the workers from power was most complete and most brutal (seven murdered since the end of May, without

counting former murders; 50 imprisoned; continuous presence of 500 guards in a town of 4,000 inhabitants). The collectives are still in force almost entirely, according to what one of the local militants told me, whom I met in the middle of July: only the rayon cooperative was closed; a few tailors and certain other bourgeois elements belonging to the UGT have seceded from the cooperative; "but," added the comrade, "this was fine, for on account of them we were obliged to admit representatives of the UGT in the administration of the cooperative; now that we are to ourselves, we can go ahead more openly than before."

The C.N.T. unions in Puigcerda have been dispossessed of their hall, but they have simply occupied another hall, a little less imposing than the old one. And they are only waiting for the arrival of their paper supply in order to resume publication of their local Libertarian Youth paper, *Sembrador* (The Sower).

Thus, under the storm, the Puigcerda comrades have bent down, after the storm they are straightening out. And this is not a specialty of Puigcerda; it is, I believe, the traditional policy of the C.N.T.: "let the storm pass."

To let the storm pass and saving everything that can be saved. Advancing step by step, and maintaining its least attacked and most solid positions as intact as possible. These positions at present are the economic sectors. Not to engage its forces in order to save them for the favorable moment, when circumstances are favorable for a new offensive.

However, this is not a new tactic with the C.N.T. and the F.A.I.: it is their traditional, historical tactic. When the foreign comrades, alarmed by these repeated retreats, of these abandoning positions of primary importance without a struggle, communicate their fears to the Spanish fellow workers, they invariably receive the following answer: "This is not the first time that we are persecuted, we have known many others; after every persecution we came out stronger than before. It will be the same now as it happened in the past."

The optimism that results from the strength of the C.N.T., a strength that is not based on the mass of its members, nor on the wealth of its treasures, but, if I may say, on the morale.

Through their principles, through their manner of being and of acting, the C.N.T. and F.A.I. have deep and many-fold roots in the entire Spanish proletariat. Due to that, they dispose at any moment, an important number of active militants who can at the first favorable opportunity raise the flag and take spontaneously the necessary action. The labor union action and the anarchist morale are at present so rooted into the body of the Spanish proletariat that they cannot be separated; that bond cannot be severed without destroying the proletariat itself.

It is that, no doubt, that explains the expectant tactics followed at present by the C.N.T. and which perhaps justifies it.

Hi-Jacking the Revolution

L. Nicholas* reveals some interesting facts about the betrayal of Spanish Workers by the "friends" from Moscow.

Translation and Introduction by Joseph Wagner

One Big Union Monthly, November, 1937

INTRODUCTION

I am presenting the readers of the One Big Union Monthly another translation on the Spanish situation, written by another old-time revolutionary syndicalist, for the *Revolution Proletarienne* of Paris. The writer is entirely at home in Spain, and is intimately acquainted not only with the political situation, but with the personnel of the various workers' political and economic organizations of that country. He has written in the past many valuable and informative articles on Spain for the French revolutionary press, and continues to do so. Many months before the outbreak of the Franco rebellion, and even before the historic convention of the C.N.T. in May 1936, he predicted pretty accurately what would take place in Spain in the near future, including the present long drawn out civil war.

Perhaps a large portion of the article will seem superfluous to the readers of this magazine, as they are already acquainted with the facts; other parts will appear to be obscure. The reason for these shortcomings is that the article was written for the French reading public and I, as translator, could and would not take too many liberties with the writing of others. But I am sure that the article contains also some very valuable information for the majority of our readers. It throws additional light on the mission of the Stalinists in Spain and on the role they are playing.

The arrest and kidnapping of "Marc Rein" is not exceptional, but rather a typical case of the work of the bolshevik "comrades." Whatever the outcome of the present phase of the class struggle in Spain, when the history of it will be written, among the black pages that that history will necessarily contain, I am not sure that the blackest of these will be those furnished by Franco and his outspokenly fascists, gory beasts, I am not sure but that the first prize will be awarded to the Stalinist gangsterdom. For while the fascists are openly declared enemies of the working class, the Stalinists, as the champions of proletarian revolution, profiting by the crying need of the Spanish working class for weapons, sold them some, but at what price! They not only had to pay in gold for the arms and services received, but in addition they had to turn over the country, their army, their government, and their freedom to the Stalinist gang and allow them to set up their own private police and jails and death chambers, and to offer their best and sincerest friends and warriors as sacrifices to the hatred of the new masters in exchange for Russian arms and ammunitions.

And perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is that a portion of the leading element of that excellent proletarian militant organization, the C.N.T., are accepting the situation, are willingly accepting the Stalinist tutelage, and are proud of what they are doing.

In the light of the above, the vacillating policy of England and even of France, toward the Spanish situation will seem a little less puzzling.

In the meanwhile history is marching on, the class struggle will continue until the working class achieves complete victory, in spite of all the stumbling blocks and betrayals and desertions.

IN THE SPANISH MIX-UP

The Difficulties of the "Whites"

by L. Nicholas *

Public opinion in loyalist Spain is mainly preoccupied with the situations that are being created at the war fronts, on the one hand by the fascist advances, which after having taken Bilbao and Santander, are now seriously menacing Asturia; on the other hand by the governmental offensive in Aragon, where for the first time since July 1937 the government forces succeeded in capturing a very important position, namely Belchite.

Unfortunately, it must be conceded that the successes of the governmentals are far from equaling in extent and importance the successes of the fascists. Inevitably, therefore, the question arises: If tomorrow the Asturias are taken by the fascists, will all revolutionary resistance in the North be crushed? Will this fascist triumph be as lasting as that of Hitler in Germany and as that of Mussolini in Italy? Or will the Russian phenomenon of the Civil War, where the occupation of Siberia by Kolchak and of Ukraine by Denikin brought about the disintegration of the whites, be repeated in Spain?

There is no doubt but that one has to take with the greatest of reserve the news dished out constantly by the government dispatches, announcing riotings in all parts of the zones ruled over by Franco. And yet, on this subject there is much information coming from fascist sources evidencing that as a matter of fact, the situation in fascist-ruled Spain remains unstable and the revolutionists are continually harassing the Francoist power. One instance is the ban of Guiepo [Queipo] de Llano, published in the *ABC* of Seville and reproduced in the *Solidaridad Obrera* of August 28, which plainly reveals how extensive is the menaced zone in the fascist rear and the extent of the support of the civilian population given to the revolutionists; moreover these things are taking place in regions occupied by the whites almost since the beginning of the civil war. Part of this ban reads us follows:

Article 1. The region composed of the Province of Huelva and by the corresponding parts of the Provinces of Seville and Badajoz, up to the Seville-Badajoz road will be delimited and considered a war zone in which all services demanded by the authorities will have to be performed in the same manner as on the battlefield, when facing the enemy; these limits may be extended and they will be so as to include all the zones necessary in order to fight and to defeat the unsubmissive Marxist elements.

Article 3. (This article designates the additional offenses, revealing the existence of extremely summary Martial Courts).

The following shall be considered as acts of rebellion:

a) acts tending to furnish alimentation or any other aid to fugitive persons within the prescribed zone;
b) furnishing information on the situation of the forces, or of their movements to fugitives in the villages;
c) leaving the proscribed villages in the mountains without the possession of

documents, issued for the purpose by the military chief of the zone;

d) disobedience of any orders given by the military as well as civil heads of the zone;
e) neglect or lukewarmness in the execution of orders and of military services demanded by the chief of the zone;
f) giving shelter in urban or rural properties to fugitives considered rebels;
g) failing to inform the regular authorities of the existence of rebels, by possessing such information will be considered as rebellion;
h) traveling in the mountains or to stay there without a clear justification of the reason and the object of the travel.

Another proof of the efficiency of the action of the civil population in the rear of the white front is the account of the Italian legionnaire Albert T. de Parme, fighting at Guadelajara, published in *Libro e Moschetto*, organ of the Italian Fascist Students and reproduced by the *Nuovo Avanti* of September 18:

"In the occupied villages some of the best elements of the population whom we have respected were hostile to us; they signaled to the reds, by radio, the positions of the nationalist forces, indicating the objectives to the aviators, directing the artillery of the reds. This was done by a few traitors whom we had spared because they were unarmed. In the meantime we were being methodically bombarded both from above and from the land and we found ourselves menaced by the insidious blackguards. In spite of that our moral and material strength was not lessening.... every evening we shouted with pride our "Saluto al Duce!" Every night we sang with passion the songs of Italy, in answer to our enemy, who by means of loud speakers, invited us to go over to him in order to attain finally liberty, well being, and other such foolishness...

"This activity of the reds that presupposed a perfect knowledge of our positions, filled us with stupor, but we were entirely amazed when that same plane, flying very low over us, scattered thousands of tracts, written in Italian, stating that we were being betrayed and inviting us to pass over to their side. What did that mean? What was going on behind our backs? Why did the division command's telephone no longer answer our appeals? Why was it that our artillery, usually so prompt and precise, did not at present heed our plea for fire and failed to counterstrike the rapid and correct firing of the enemy artillery? Only much later have we learned that our telephone line had been cut by the spies and that our artillery was being bombarded from the sky as well as from the earth. Everyone of us, without saying a word, was being tormented by the suspicion of having the enemy behind his back, while on the front an unusual movement could be discerned".

Difficulties of the "Governmentals"

But the rear of the "governmentals" is also extremely divided. The main internal fight is that led by the communist party against the C.N.T.-F.A.I. The Stalinist leaders understood that they were not yet sufficiently strong to destroy the syndicalist on a frontal attack. So they consented to some concessions, preparing the spirits for the acceptance of the latest note of the Political Bureau of that party as told in *L'Humanite* (Paris) of September 16:

"...The communist party is disposed to enter into friendly conversations with

the C.N.T. in order to definitely dissipate misunderstandings and to arrive at a collaboration that will become more efficient from day to day."

It was necessary to throw out some ballast in order to keep the boat afloat. The French press announced the liberation of J. Acaso [Ascaso] (C.N.T. militant), ex-president of the dissolved Aragonian Council. Furthermore, the trial of Tortosa, which resulted in death sentences, will be revised. According to *Solidaridad Obrera* of September 9 all the defendants who were present at the trial were acquitted, only those of the accused who could not be arrested were sentenced to 15 years each.

It would be in order here to reproduce the answer of Vidella, Minister of Labor in Catalonia and member of the United Catalonian Socialist Party, to a delegation composed of the parents of the prisoners: Here are the essential passages quoted from *Solidaridad Obrera* of September 9:

"...The judges could not admit the charges based on acts of revolutionary character that sprung out of the movement provoked by the rebellious generals, for that would be placing the revolution itself on trial.

"...For these reasons, the judges not only ought not to have accepted charges of this kind, but they ought not to have accepted them when these charges came from persons whose flats were requisitioned on the ground that they were considered fascists, or that they have abandoned them themselves. The judges ought to accept only concrete charges against such persons who, instead of having acted as revolutionaries, actuated by mercenary spirit, have availed themselves of the revolutionary situation in order to eliminate their personal enemies or were inspired by the base desire of stealth.

"This thesis was accepted unanimously by the Generalidad, (the Catalonian government), and that means that the persons at present imprisoned for various causes arising out of the revolutionary facts, should immediately be given their freedom."

It would however be an error to believe that these concessions mean an intention to practice a policy of understanding between all the anti-fascist sectors. It is only maneuvering to cover up new measures of repression. Thus it is taken for granted that the members of the P.O.U.M. and the syndicalists arrested for the May events, will continue remaining in prison. In the place of Acaso [Ascaso], who has been set at liberty, we have now in the Carcel Modelo, Aurelio Fernandez, well known C.N.T. militant, ex-Minister of Hygiene, ex-director of Police, charged with participation in the attempt against Andreu, presiding judge of one of the important Courts of Barcelona. It is to be noted here that the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. have repudiated immediately any solidarity with the attempt, and that there is not the least presumption that Fernandez had any share of guilt. Tens of political refugees, Germans and Italians, tried and true syndicalists, are being conducted under escort to the border as rewards for the months they put in on the war front. The C.N.T. limits itself to sending messages to the C.G.T.S.R. (Revolutionary Syndicalist General Confederation of Labor) of France, asking that body to come to the aid of these twice outlawed revolutionists.

And on the economic field, the counter-revolutionary attacks inspired by the Catalonian United Socialist Party are developing also. A violent campaign is led

by the communist press towards the militarization of the railroad employees; it is a question of taking away even the last vestiges of the workers' right to have a say so in the conduct of that industry, a right accorded to them by the nationalization of the railroads.

Solidaridad Obrera of September 8 informs us that the dispositions of the new Administration forbids the Shop Committees from giving the workers any information which would enable them to judge as to the progress of the institution.

When it comes to the agrarian question, it is only now that it is fully understood how much the workers' collectives have been encroached upon. An underground paper, *Liberdad*, published by the P.O.U.M. and by the minority anarchists of Barcelona, in its August 1 issue describes, with much detail, a series of attacks, confiscations and arrests the collectives of Catalonia were subjected to. And, it is this paper that also gives for the first time a precise account of the kidnapping of the young Russian social-democrat, Marc Rein Abramovich, son of the militant social-democrat Abramovich, member of the Executive Committee of the Second International.

The Work of the Cheka in Barcelona

The night of April 9-10, the Cheka, of which we have previously spoken, cleverly seized the journalist Marc Rein. Rein had come to Barcelona at the end of February and was lodging at Hotel Continental, Rambla Canelatas.

But, who was this Marc Rein and what was he doing in Barcelona?

"Marc Rein" is an alias, which would betray North American nationality. In reality he was the editor of *Social-Demokraten* of Stockholm, a paper that published sensational but true information about political problems of the USSR. The great Soviet leaders were extremely embarrassed by this paper, that often unmasked their most intimate secrets, and led them to suppose that it was an important communist party member who gave out the information, furnishing all the data, details and documents.

Marc Rein came to Catalonia to see the revolution at close range. On his arrival in Barcelona he gathered around him a small group of socialists--anti-fascists and anti-P.S.U.C., who considered themselves his collaborators. He published several articles on the Spanish situation, criticizing some aspects of the activities of the C.N.T. anarcho-syndicalists; he explained that the reason he criticized exclusively the activities of the C.N.T. was because the C.N.T. is the only one that was creating something.

The G.P.U. having learned of the presence of Marc Rein in Barcelona, conceived the plan of getting hold of him. For that purpose it brought over some of its best elements with the double mission of seizing the social-democrat journalist and of perfecting the Cheka in the service of the communist party.

The night of April 9-10, Marc Rein was writing one of his articles in the room he was occupying at the hotel. Soon the phone rang; an agreeable feminine voice was heard through the receiver asking for an immediate interview on matters of great interest. Marc Rein interrupted his writing and left the hotel.

What happened?

Shipped to Russia by the G.P.U.

What became of Marc Rein? Some believe that he has been murdered by Herz's gang. (Herz is the chief of the Cheka in Barcelona according to Libertad--Author's note.) We, who are better informed, do not believe so. Well, in order to efface all trace of that "raid" that was clumsily enough performed, Marc Rein was constrained to write a letter by his own hand to one of his friends, Nicholas, whose wife is at present detained in prison, after having been horribly manhandled, and one to the owner of the hotel. In these letters the journalist is taking farewell from them, begging them to forgive him for his flight and for the expenses he has caused them. The letters seem to have been written in Madrid but it could be seen without much trouble that the date was written in by another person. This ruse does not betray much intelligence on the part of the elements working under the orders of Alfred Herz.

We said that Marc Rein was not assassinated in Barcelona. But one could be informed with more authority and knowledge by a certain Schaya Kinderman, a Polish Jew, a militant communist who lived in Barcelona for some time and who was the "chief of the foreign police of Valencia;" this function enabled him to keep track of all the movements and plans of the other parties, especially when these parties wanted to get in contact with their respective Central Committees in Valencia or in Madrid, and creating difficulties in the contacting of all non-communist parties.

Marc Rein was not murdered; it can be affirmed with certainty that he is at present in Russia, in the hands of the G.P.U., having been transported there "as a package" on board of a ship, between the dates of the 11th, and 30th of April.

The Retort of the C.N.T.-F.A.I.

When the maneuvering tactics of the communist party are too raw, the C.N.T.-F.A.I. answers with written or verbal protests; but at the same time the anarcho-syndicalist leaders are not missing a single opportunity for hinting the idea of rapproachement with the communist party and its boss, the Russian government.

Thus, the infamous speech of Commorea, in which he referred to the first heroic confederal militias as "tribes," led the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. in Barcelona to refuse the invitation of the communist party to celebrate September 11, the National Day of Catalonia, in common; yet these same leaders, a few days later, accepted a similar invitation from the Catalanist Union (which includes the communist party).

The campaign carried on in the communist press against the now dissolved Aragon Council provoked a break in the parleys between the C.N.T. and the communist party; but later and without any retraction of the insults, the parleys were resumed.

The anarcho-syndicalist officials are attaching great importance to their re-entering in the Cabinet; they are carrying on an active campaign in that direction. They seek by all means to prove that the foreign bourgeois governments would not be displeased by the collaboration of the C.N.T. in the government of Spain. They widely publicized the conclusions of their militant Augustin Souchy (ex-secretary of the I.W.M.A.) just returned from a tour in Europe. We reproduce them from *Solidaridad Obrera* of August 28:

"The liberal and democratic powers of Europe see in anarcho-syndicalism the

most authentic expression of the character of the Spanish people.

"The participation of the C.N.T. in the government is considered by them a strong guarantee of the independence of Spain.

"...A Federal Republic of a socialist character, created with the participation of the C.N.T. would be acceptable to the foreign powers."

The same in regard to Russia, the anarcho-syndicalist press is displaying, in big letters and boxed, hossanahs extolling the Stalinist foreign politics. Here are a few examples: *Solidaridad Obrera*, August 9: "The Rock of the USSR in the Pool of European Diplomacy;" same paper, of September 12: "The Voice of the Only One that Arose at Nyon;" same paper, on September 9: "The World Proletariat Should Support the Position of the USSR in its Activity."

Their concessionist policy is growing in the interior also and the leaders of the Libertarian Youth are following the same road. Only a few months ago this organization had formally refused the invitation to join in a common front of Youth; the reason for the refusal was that the Stalinists within the United Socialist Youth, who were the inspirators of this front, as a preliminary condition, demanded the non-admission of the Youth movement of the P.O.U.M., qualifying them as fascists. At that time the Libertarian Youth indignantly and categorically protested against that conception of a Youth Alliance.

However, as early as September 2, *Solidaridad Obrera* reproduced from *Ahora*, a summary of an accord, grouping the Libertarian Youth, the United Socialist Youth, the Syndicalist Youth with the bourgeois organization such as the Youth of the Left Republicans and the Federal Union of Spanish Students. The summary follows:

"This accord establishes the collaboration for unity of all the political and syndical anti-fascist forces; it pledges action by the Youth in the popular army, in the field of production and in the other manifestations of life; it determines that the Youth will intensify its efforts towards better production in the fields and in the shops, and will increase its sacrifices by furnishing fresh thousands of soldiers to the people's cause.

"For moral principle, this Alliance of the Youth will combat the use of insulting terms, slanders and acts tending to produce discord on the front as well as in the rear; it will fight against anything that weakens the unity of the anti-fascist forces."

It is plain that there was no longer question of including the P.O.U.M. Youth in this anti-fascist alliance. This changing in the attitude was decided by the Peninsular Committee of the Libertarian Youth, without a convention and without consulting the rank and file of the organization. As a result of this policy we now see Fidelio [Fidel] Miro, the young Libertarian, making speeches from the same platform with the worst of the Stalinist valets, Santiago Carillo, and this only a few weeks after the "extra-legal" murder by the Cheka of the eleven Libertarian Youths at Barcelona, after the May events; all these after the mysterious kidnapping and "disappearance" of the Libertarian Youth leader, Martinez, at Barcelona.

The National Committee of the C.N.T. is going in the same direction: it accepted the invitation of the "Friends of U.S.S.R." (an organization to serve the Spanish Stalinists) to celebrate in common the Russian national holiday,

November 11, the committee appointed its militant Alfonso Miguel to arrange in common the details of the common parade where the Spanish syndicalist workers will march arm in arm with the assassins of Andres Nin and of Berneri, in honor of Saint Stalin!

At the same time the Madrid paper *C.N.T.* reproduces from *Solidaridad Obrera* the answer to the underground tracts published by the P.O.U.M., appealing for a coalition of that body with the C.N.T., in order to create a revolutionary workers' front in opposition to the Negrin-Stalin government. The text follows:

"The comrades of the P.O.U.M. should not let themselves be misled by the advise of those who are not living our revolution, nor by their state of spirit that was necessarily the result of the treatment they received. Demagogy leads nowhere. The anti-fascist front should be defended with the greatest determination by all those who really wish to win the war and assure in the rear the conditions that will open the road for the march towards social and political progress."

How odd! The press informs us that the journal *C.N.T.* will be suspended for an indefinite period by the censure of the... government.

* L. Nicholas was the pseudonym of Nicholas Lazarevitch (1895-1975).

Failure of the Workers Alliance: A split in the Spanish U.G.T. is engineered by the Communists.

by L. Nicolas *

In *La Revolution Proletarienne* (Paris)

Translated by Joseph Wagner

***One Big Union Monthly*, November, 1937**

Readers of this magazine will no doubt recall the pact that was concluded towards the latter part of July, between the National Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.) and the General Union of Labor (U.G.T.). The entire press in loyalist Spain hailed the act as "an historic event." Yet, in the two months following the event almost no attempt had been made to put any part of the adopted plans in operation. Of the numerous Liaison Committees elected by the two organizations for the purpose of creating local united councils, the press has mention only of one case where such a thing was accomplished, that between the metal workers' unions in Madrid. The only statement issued by the National Liaison Committee to the press mentioned other cases without, however, naming the localities. (*Solidad Obrera,* September 9.)

The sabotaging of the alliance between the two unions is mainly due to the deep set hostility of the communist agents within the U.G.T.; the communists are fundamentally displeased with the pact; because of that, they are contesting the right of the General Executive Board to conclude such a pact without submitting the question first to the National Committee of the U.G.T., which is made up by the Executive Committees of the Federations affiliated with the U.G.T. It would

be a mistake, however, to believe that in their action the communists were prompted by a desire to uphold democracy within the union; they are simply relying on the fact that by devious maneuvering, of which they are past masters in all countries, they managed to obtain a majority favorable to their policy in the National Committee. They want to accomplish at any price the complete domestication of the labor union movement in Spain. They make use of every possible method in order to attain that purpose: towards the C.N.T. they are using cunning and flattery; in the Levant they did not hesitate to create a peasant organization in opposition to both the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. organizations; and in the U.G.T. itself they managed to create a split. The following are the facts:

The Stalinist agents being aware that the majority on the General Executive Board is composed of left elements grouped around Largo Caballero, decided to destroy the Board. Through the Executive committees, with communist majorities of the different Industrial Federations, an ultimatum was forwarded to the G.E.B. of the U.G.T., ordering that body, in virtue of article 33 of the Constitution of the U.G.T., to call a National Committee meeting within a week. They based their ultimatum on the fact that the signatories constituted a majority of the said National Committee. The order of business they proposed for the meeting was extremely important: Report of the G.E.B.; the aid to be given to the Popular Front government in carrying on the war; the problems of production and workers' control of industry and the adoption of the most important of them to war conditions; the intensification of agricultural production; cooperatives and collectives; the scarcity of food and the fight against speculation; the municipalization of city services; the unity of action with the CNT; election of officers to vacant posts in the unions ...

The General Executive Board answered the ultimatum through a letter addressed to the signatory Industrial Federation Executive Committees. We reproduce the essential passages of the letter from *Claridad* of September 9:

"The Executive Board received the document bearing your signature, demanding the calling of a meeting of the National Committee. We are astonished to see that you are basing your claim on article 33, since in conformity with article 9, your federation is suspended for non-payment of its taxes to the U.G.T. Seeing that at the last National Committee meeting several federations that participated, debated and voted in that meeting without having the right to do so, the G.E.B. decided that this should not be done again and so it unanimously decided to apply to your federation the first part of article 9."

(The first part of Article 9 says: "Organizations in arrears with taxes for two consecutive quarters stand suspended.")

The ruling affected nine federations, miners, leather workers, clothing, gas and electricity, drugs, wood, teaching, banks and exchange, and oil, representing a total of 200,000 workers. On September 6 the G.E.B. sent communications to all the local unions of the suspended federations, inviting them to communicate directly with headquarters in order to re-establish the bond between them.

The Stalinites retorted with a violent campaign making much of the sentimental arguments, that the exclusions were hitting at the heroic Asturian miners; they evoked all the technical arguments on the one hand contesting the

validity of the debts, on the other hand offering to pay them up. On September 24 the suspended federation committees invited all the Industrial Federations of the U.G.T. to a conference where the question of suspensions should be examined. Of the forty-two federations affiliated with the U.G.T. thirty-one answered the call favorably and participated at the conference. Three federations: Transport workers, Agricultural workers and Metal workers remained loyal to the G.E.B. The excluded federations and those in sympathy with them declared themselves the only regular organization and elected a new General Executive Board. Thus the split within the U.G.T. became an accomplished fact.

Viewed from the angle of democracy within the labor movement, it would have been more logical to have called a special convention which could have settled the issue, instead of invoking the delinquency. However, such a call for convention was difficult under the actual conditions. How can a true representation be obtained from such a highly industrialized district as Asturias where the war was raging, or from the Bay of Biscay district, occupied by the fascist forces?

Naturally, men of the Caballero type deserve to be treated with the greatest circumspection. The fact of having radically changed his political attitude three times in six years is by no means a guarantee of stability for the future. The massacring of socialist and anarchist workers in 1931 and 1932; the enacting of drastic legislation for the defense of the bourgeois republic against the workers, and then from that position flopping over to a camouflaged Stalinism, contributing to the bolshevization of the socialist party and of the U.G.T. in order to arrive finally to the idea of labor unionism free from political party domination, the road he traveled in six years was indeed a tortuous one. But, in spite of all, the left wing of the U.G.T. contains many sincere rank and file militants, and their present position of barring the road of Stalinism is in conformity with the interests of the working class.

We give below some of the arguments used by them in the *Correspondencia de Valencia*, in answer to the open letter of the Political Bureau of the communist party, tendering its "outstretched hand" to the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. The first article as reprinted by *Solidaridad Obrera* of September 17 follows:

"The document published by the 'Bureau' is one more irrefutable proof of the theoretical and practical inconsistency of that group of would-be leaders, who for so many years past was dragging after them what they call the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat, in all the quagmires, and who so often in the past acted in a manner becoming to the sixth column.

"Just as on the day when they abruptly decided to jump into the workers' alliances after having fought against them with fire and blood; just as when they suddenly decided to fight with all their energy for the democratic and parliamentary republic after having demanded, holding the knife at our throat, that we break entirely all the ties that might have attached the working class to the bourgeoisie; just as at the time when of a sudden it threw itself at the feet of the socialists after having for so long vowed that their unity with the revolutionary socialists would not be accomplished until all the reformist roots would be first pulled up; just as at so many other culminating moments of the revolutionary

development, these apostles of iron discipline and of the firm and immovable 'line,' made a complete turn and upheld that which the previous day they absolutely condemned."

The second article contains a warning to the C.N.T. We take it from *Solidaridad Obrera* of September 19, where it was reprinted:

"The communist party persists in its eternal false position; its present attitude lacks all seriousness. We were right, when speaking of the document of the Political Bureau of the communist party, we said that nobody will trust them any longer; that all they wanted was to make a toy of the C.N.T. pretending to be for unity and for the restoration of the Popular Front.

"The communist party has once more betrayed those who naively would have liked to see in that statement of the Bureau a change in their tactics. The communist party is not causing anti-fascist unity. It shook it up and broke it and today, by following their suicidal tactics, which the Bureau itself declared to be incompatible with the interest of the war and the revolution, makes the solution of the problem of unity more difficult. It creates an atmosphere of hostility, using the most repulsive methods against the two great labor union federations. These are the great merits of the communist party."

The *Correspondencia de Valencia* has been suspended since. The stranglehold of the Stalinists is so strong not only in Spain but in other countries as well, that the disappearance of Largo Caballero's publication was passed over in silence. *The People*, the organ of the French General Confederation of Labor (U.G.T.), and *Le Populaire*, organ of the French socialist party, did not even mention the fact to their readers. And yet, a few weeks before, Largo Caballero was for these papers the grand champion of Spanish democracy. What sort of a convention would that of the U.G.T. have been in such an atmosphere, where even a Caballero or an Araquistain cannot freely publish a paper or speak at a meeting? And what can be the status of the common rank and file militants?

The explanation of this despotism is that there is a widespread discontent and grumbling within the unions. The appreciations of *Claridad*, a strongly communistic paper, is extremely significant in this connection. We reproduce from its September 6 issue:

"Every meeting is a fight in which no quarter is asked or given; in which, at times, one encounters the same passion as in the battles carried on in former days with the enemy class. Every election for any union function brings forward, with bitterness and strife, all the instruments of agitation and propaganda which we workers were in the habit of using when the bourgeois governments were calling us to the ballot box. Vote soliciting for candidates, anonymous tracts containing dire threats, strange behaviors and uncalled-for manifestations. Such are the outward consequences of these suicidal battles that some forces are interested in fomenting within the locals of our glorious union. But have those trouble makers given any thought to the internal repercussions of these fights? If they have, then surely they would have put the brakes on some of their activities of which we are complaining. Such negatively aggressive policies will damage the labor unions most of all. These damages are manifesting themselves by a lack of activity, by the absence of energy with which to confront the actual and

momentous problems of today. This road leads nowhere except to the entire discrediting of the unions, making them unfit for the special tasks that are incumbent upon labor unions.

"Calmly but earnestly, we take the liberty to warn the unions. We are forced to seriously consider the situation. The present time is certainly not the proper time for us to indulge in internal fights that will weaken our forces and further divide the energies of the working class. We have consistently urged the unions that they hold regular meetings and conferences. We have done so with a positive point of view; we believed that the unions, through their meetings, could realize a constructive plan of work of which the immediate result would have been increasing material support to the government in its war work; overcoming the shortages in production by intensifying the work, putting in operation all the wheels of industry and agriculture, and generally orienting themselves towards the objectives that should be the same for all of us. But, if union meetings and conferences are to serve only for maneuvering, by using methods of Ignatius Loyola, for breaking up everything that is now united and preventing the unity of that which is still separated, then it is better not to hold these assemblies."

The Stalinites certainly must have run up against serious resistance in order to make them speak thus.

The Opinion of the Left Socialists

The Madrid socialist organization makes known its appreciation of the situation in an open letter addressed to the Executive Committee of the Socialist party of Spain. This Madrid organization has in its ranks such outstanding socialists as Largo Caballero, Araquistain, Pascual Thomas and Llopis. We are reproducing parts of the letter from the *Information Bulletin* No. 49, of the F.A.I.-C.N.T.:

"A people is invincible on condition that it is not made to lose confidence in its aspirations of liberty, on condition that it will not see emerging from its own bosom and from its collective sacrifices a new tyrannical power, and internal despotism that would freeze up its enthusiasm in the fight for freedom at home and in the long run its resistance to tyranny from the outside.

"... Its knowledge that there is a political organization that is working above anything else, for the increase of its own power, having the secret ambition of becoming the sole organization both during and after the war, shatters the morale of the fighters on the front and of the workers of the factories and fields.

"... We are referring to the Spanish section of the communist international. We are holding this party mainly responsible for the misfortunes experienced by the republican cause in the last three months, and we hold that party responsible for the even more serious disasters that will come in the near future unless an immediate remedy is found.

"... Until three months ago there was a real unity of anti-fascist action in Spain. All parties and the labor unions were collaborating directly in the control and responsibilities of the conduct of the war. That unity of purpose and action has been diminishing from day to day. By whose fault? By the fault of the communist party in the first place, because it was they who first set up a conspiracy to remove from power the people and the organizations that would not submit to the orders imported by the communists; later they slandered the very personalities

whom they have raised up on the pedestal, when they saw in them an obstacle for their partisan schemes, whether on the war front or in the state offices. They took the ridiculous attitude that political parties, and particularly the communist party, are privileged bodies of almost divine origin, charged with the mission of directing public conduct and that the labor unions were only good to do the work and blindly obey the newly selected aristocracy, as if people who follow a manual or professional calling had less capacity for the affairs of State than those whose calling is nothing but politics, and at times, what sort of politics!

"The communist party declared war to the death to those in the U.G.T. and in the C.N.T. who were opposed to its totalitarian policies, which is by no means a dictatorship of the proletariat. It broke the cordial relations existing between that party and the left wing of the socialist party since the October revolution and during the first months of the military insurrection in 1936. And now they even have the nerve to state that it is our party that has changed policy.

"The left wing socialists are now the same as they were before. They are not responsible for a single act of hostility against the communist party, but the communists are guilty of many such acts. The left socialists still desire the political unity of the two parties, subject however to three conditions which were formulated and established as a basis of discussion by a conference of their groups in April 1936.

"The united party should be at all times subject to an exclusively national direction and responsibility; in any case a national convention should have the right to terminate the unity.

"We are disavowing the campaign of force and persecution carried on by the communist party on the war fronts and in the rear; it is revolting to the socialists who are upholding the dignity of their party and their own dignity as men and Spaniards. The injustices and the favoritisms introduced by the communists were never considered favorably in Spain; the misguided leaders of the Spanish section of the Communist International should have taken this in consideration ...

"Something more was destroyed: a government that was more truly Spanish through its aims, and was the most efficient both internally and internationally than Spain has had since the beginning of the war; this government was for the unity of all the parties and of the labor unions; thus it was for the comprehension of all the parties and of the workers supporting political unity. By the destruction of that government the confidence of the soldiers on the front and of the workers in the rear was shattered. In spite of the fact that the war was a tragic affair, costing rivers of popular blood, the communist party did not hesitate to profit by it in order to further its policy of absorption and of speculation.

"If the recent unfortunate war operations at Brunete, which have been rejected several times in advance by the military technicians, who considered them fated to failure, if these operations were due only to military errors we would keep quiet about it and would only ask for the discharge and the punishment of those guilty of having wasted so much of the people's blood; but in these operations the military objectives were subordinated to petty political ends: to the glorification of some communist chiefs, who conducted them, in case they would have succeeded. The intention was to demonstrate the superiority of a government

that could come back and save Madrid, in contrast with a government accused of having deserted the city; to demonstrate also that if such an easy victory was not won sooner, this was due to the unreasonable resistance of those who confounded inaction with prudence, of those who confounded the opposition to the partisan passions of communism with the anxiety for not spilling criminally torrents of popular blood. The pitiful results have demonstrated who was right."

Summing up its position towards the communist party, the Madrid socialist organization concludes:

"A policy of division, a spectacular policy at the cost of thousands upon thousands of dead and wounded without any strategical gain, such was the policy of the communist party. If we would be as evil-minded as they, we would say that these policies are made for the purpose of creating the moral and the material conditions for a complete defeat.

"We prefer however to believe that it is only a question of errors of judgment, and of the maneuvering of poor and mechanized intelligence that can believe that victory is near and that the communist can attain it by themselves.

"If that is the case they are erring profoundly. Victory will be the result of the combined anti-fascist forces or there will be none. For, of two things one: either the communist party will alter its policy which leads to defeat or it will have to be removed from public affairs as the enemy of republican Spain."

The open letter adds that in justice it is necessary for it to state that even if the communist party is the most responsible for the present situation, yet it is not the only one. Without mentioning the socialist party by name, the authors of the open letter are accusing the socialist party of unexplainable complicity inside of that party:

"There are an infinite number of forms of treason. But that of wanting to liquidate one's own party for the benefit of another party, that is unprecedented ... of such an act only an anti-revolutionary, anti-democratic, unscrupulous minority seeking power for the sake of power could be capable."

* L. Nicholas was the pseudonym of Nicholas Lazarevitch (1895-1975).

The "Uncontrollables" in Spain
by Sophia Fagin
One Big Union Monthly, February, 1938

These last few days you have been reading, with a great deal of interest I am sure, the newspaper accounts of the fighting going on in Teruel. You have been cheered by every victory, especially in the light of the long period of military failures from which the loyalists are now emerging.

But regardless how concerned you may have been about news from the front, if you were dependent upon the ordinary sources of information, I am almost positive that you are not familiar with the nature of the military leader whose division is responsible for the decisive loyalist victory. His name is Vivencos [Vivancos]. Before the revolt of Franco, he was a transport worker in Barcelona

and an active member in the anarcho-syndicalist movement--the C.N.T. When Franco revolted Vivencos [Vivancos] joined the other thousands of C.N.T. men in their march to wrest Aragon from fascist clutches, after they had crushed fascism in Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia.

It was not long before his courage and innate ability as a fighter were recognized, and he became the commander of a column of 200 men. As the war went on, the prestige of his column rose to its present status which is second to none in the military ranks of the loyalist forces. Certainly, you will agree, others who have done less have gotten greater commendation; but the nature in which the news is repressed and the sources from which it is gotten have so worked that the knowledge of this man and many more like him are kept from the reading public.

The extent of this conspiracy of silence can be estimated if we recognize that the majority of the military leaders on the Aragon front are anarcho-syndicalists. Yet, if your only source of information about syndicalism in Spain is the capitalist or the Communist (Stalinist) press, or even often the liberal journals, you are likely to associate the term anarcho-syndicalist with the word "uncontrollable."

At the beginning of the struggle, when reporters got their information from more direct sources, or through direct observation, the tone of the articles of liberal writers about anarcho-syndicalists in Spain was somewhat different. Now when "information" is merely the interpretation of some intermediate agency, it has often little relation to the facts.

One of the reasons I want to discuss the Spanish labor organization, the C.N.T., is that it is so completely misunderstood, and the cooperative weakness of the corresponding organization in this country does not successfully counteract the misinformation by other partisans. It has thus come to pass that the militants of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., the most realistic and fervent anti-fascist fighters--those who recognize that only through a revolution in the rear can the war be carried out successfully in the front and its victories gather significance--it is they against whom the slogan "uncontrollable" has been often directed.

The origin of the slogan is not clear; its natural habitat seems to be in the communist, liberal, and capitalist press. It is a dirty and dangerous word because it has no limits and is so ill-defined that you can use it against anyone whom you cannot control, regardless of the nature of your control or how it is opposed. It is like the slogan "slacker" used against conscientious objectors during the World War--it means nothing special, but generates a great deal of heat and no light.

Another reason for which I wish to discuss the anarcho-syndicalists in Spain is that they were among the first to oppose fascism on the battlefront of Spain and they did so with such a complete fearlessness that Ralph Bates, the English novelist and their political critic has had to say, the proverb for impossible bravery in the future must be "as brave as a Spanish anarchist."

Moreover, their influence was probably the greatest single force in the Spanish labor movement, and their teaching determined the tone of all Spanish radicalism.

And finally I want to talk about them because their efforts at social reconstruction have met with much material and moral success among the

masses of the Spanish people, and they have begun a trend toward the liberation of all Spain. They are creating a new revolutionary pattern which does not make oppression a sine qua non of liberation, and dictatorship a first step to social and economic democracy...

On July 19, 1936, as we all know, one of the very popular undeclared wars of modern history broke out in Spain. It took the form of a military uprising of the army generals, who compensated for their lack of home talent with Italian brigades, German war-machinery and the paid donations of the Moorish Mohammedans--all generously offered to save Christianity from the infidel and politics from the radical.

But for many previous centuries, another undeclared war has constantly been fought, now overtly, now covertly, on Spanish soil--a war less publicized, it is true, but none the less serious; a war with as bloody battles, as significant international complications, as complete an alignment of forces. And this other undeclared war, this basic undeclared war is the CLASS WAR!

In Spain the war of the classes was particularly acute. The peasants lived as peons, or oriental farm hands, on the vast properties of the feudal lords. It was no unusual thing for them to hunt weeds and dry grasses as their only nourishment in the frequent times of famine. The industrial workers likewise suffered under extremely low living standards and the numbers of unemployed were high. Reliable authorities of every political complexion assert that Spain's middle class was so small as to be almost negligible.

On the opposite side in the class struggle there were the three parasitical classes of the church, the army and the aristocracy. The Spanish catholic church has a long history of wealth and reaction. In Spain there was one priest to every 900 in the population, a figure to be compared with Italy's one to every 20,000. The Church has been the chief capitalist, landlord and banker of Spain. As the greatest landowner, it naturally has opposed all land reform. As an investor in industrial enterprises, and the leading banker, it fought the organization of labor. Down to 1931, it controlled at least half of Spain's meager school system, and with 45 per cent of the people illiterate (compared with about 4 per cent in France) the church opposed every educational improvement. The moral disgrace of the church is testified to by the selling of papal indulgences at a few pesetas each (and when signed by an arch-bishop they could be had at bargain prices in stores announcing, "Bulas are cheap today"); their unpopularity is further evidenced by the fact that the typical dirty joke in Spain, corresponding to our "traveling salesman" number here, is about a priest. (Small wonder that every uprising for the last 100 years has involved the burning of churches and the killing of clericals!)

The army was equally degenerate. Its only function since the 16th and 17th centuries when Spain was the great colonial power has been to suppress internal disorders and to provide an officers' caste as a catch-all for the idle sons of the rich. Its ratio of officers to men is about three times as high as in the French army. Completing the lineup on the side of reaction is the aristocracy--the absentee landowners, the few industrialists, the remains of a nobility--all entirely dissociated from the Spanish masses.

Any time the workers or peasants tried to improve their miserable conditions (and their uprisings were frequent) landlord, clergy and army ganged-up together to preserve law and order and wage slavery. When the republican government came to power for the second time in 1936 through legitimate electoral channels, and mildly and vaguely threatened their hegemony, the army officers decided that things had gone too far; this despite the fact that the first republican government of 1931-3 had done little more than write a very pretty constitution of which even a mild democrat has admitted:

"The proclamation of a republic and the adoption of a constitution again settled nothing. The old feudalism remained. The village bosses--the caciques--still held their power, the Church still controlled wealth and education, the monarchists still dominated the army, the wealthy few still owned the land." 1

It is true that this government and the popular front government had made some effort to gradually relieve the army of its top-heavy useless officialdom, but the half-hearted nature of this rejection is amply described in that realistic novel by Elliott Paul called *Life and Death in a Spanish Town*:

"When the government that succeeded Alfonso's was organized, Azana, who was president in the tragic days of 1936, was made Minister of War. He knew that the Spanish army had been built up by the monarchists to take care of sons and relatives and that of the inordinate number of officers there were few who were not hostile to republican ideas. Instead of disbanding the army, which was of no use except as a threat to free government, Azana proceeded more cautiously. He retired the officers who were most flagrantly hostile to his regime, but in order not to stir them up too much he consented to pay them their full wages as long as they lived. They had done practically nothing when they were on active service, but that did not satisfy their ideal. The prospect of full pay, and no work whatsoever, was alluring. It bolstered up their disrespect of a government of the people and made them feel that their enemies, the people, were afraid of them." (p. 37-8)

So we find one of their number, General Sanjurjo going to Berlin in 1936 to discuss ways and means with Mr. Hitler, and returning a few weeks before the uprising. We find workers organizations constantly warning the government of the militaristic plot but the government knew these men personally, and felt "They couldn't--they wouldn't--do this to us," and therefore ordering neither arrest nor dismissal of any of the militarists who were conspiring; the government thereby permitted the barracks, the churches, the palace and some of the offices of the State to be converted into centers of conspiracy and they prevented the arming of the proletariat. Many provinces in Spain fell into the hands of the rebels because the civic governors did not have orders from the government to give arms to the people.

Thus we return to our starting point on the morning of July 19, 1936, with fascist troops marching into Barcelona, the nerve center of the industrial capital of Spain. The militarists reckoned on having a two- or three-day job, involving the wiping out of the most vital region of Spanish territory and the habitat of the most revolutionary workers in Spain. But they reckoned without their host. When the military emerged early that Sabbath morning from their barracks and the

churches in which they were the guests, the workers rose from their slumbers, rose to the occasion and militantly and successfully defeated the trained armies with their miraculous enthusiasm, their crude weapons, their bare hands. And on the morrow, when the professional soldiers have been routed, and their civilian accomplices--especially the factory owners--have escaped, the workers must continue production on their own initiative. They must supply and strengthen Spain so that the struggle against fascism may continue. And the only avenue left open to them is to socialize industries. Thus the revolution comes to Catalonia, and in varying degree to the rest of Spain--in the form of a war measure.

The workers, who for many years had dreamed of being their own masters, and learned and planned and fought for that dream, realized it in the first week of the fascist revolt; but socialization, freedom, equality are to them not merely war measures--they are life measures--the only way a people can survive and progress. The military uprising they saw as but a single item in the class war; victory in the battles of one meant success in the battles of the other. And so their slogan became, "War in the front; revolution in the rear."

The democratic republic had given them neither bread nor land nor security; it had not dared to antagonize the wealthy nor to crush the fascist plotters. It offered only the classic phrases of unity and liberty... and then procrastinated its way into complete debility. It did absolutely nothing during the first days of the revolt but change ministers three times, try to keep the arms from the masses of the people whom they neither knew nor trusted. Could it be this the workers defend with their lives against such odds? Could they fight so spontaneously, so fiercely merely to return to the conditions before the rebellion?

No they couldn't. Even Companys, head of the Catalonian Generalidad [autonomous regional government], recognized in which direction the wind was blowing:

"Some republicans still believe, still dream of the possibility of establishing a political and social panorama similar to that which existed before July 19. This only demonstrates their blindness or their lack of loyalty. I have said it before, and I repeat it, that the moment has come for the workers to take over political power ..." (*Information Bulletin*, January 5, 1937).

The policy of social reconstruction was advanced by that organization which contained approximately 90 per cent of the organized workers in the area first attacked. It had provided the leadership for the military offense and sacrificed its great comrades on the battlefront. It guided the syndicates in their conduct of the industries and agriculture after the revolt was quelled. It was the united revolutionary working class of Catalonia, Aragon, the Levante. It was the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T.

Background

Let us pause for a moment to review the history and the ideals of the labor organization of the National Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.) and its ideological leadership in the Iberian Anarchist Federation (F.A.I.). Spain has traditionally been the home of anarchism, from the time when the seeds of non-authoritarian communism were planted in Spanish soil by Bakunin, way back in the middle of

the last century. From then until 1910 when the C.N.T. was formally organized from the various anarchistic sections of the Spanish labor movement, its active partisans have gained expert inside information about the jails of Spain and lived much of their public life "sub rosa."

Both the terror of the state and the teaching of the anarchists made a pure and simple trade unionism impossible in Spain. Thus the C.N.T.'s aim was two-fold: 1. Under capitalism, to raise the material and cultural level of workers and peasants by direct action and the education of the masses; 2. the establishment of a new society based on libertarian communism, stressing not the conquest of political power but the conquest of the land, factories, means of production and the natural resources. It has constantly taught the workers that to turn to the state--be it autocratic or democratic--to establish advantages for the worker, is to misorient their struggles and to dissipate their energies; for the purpose and the raison d'etre of the state is to protect the interests of the class which is economically dominant, and therefore to suppress the workers. Rather has it counseled its members that through direct action alone is social betterment to be sought and social revolution to be accomplished. By direct action of the workers themselves--in their syndicates and communities--rather than by the dictatorship of a political party, however revolutionary, is society to be organized after the revolution.

Federalism rather than bureaucracy is not only the theory for the post-revolutionary society, but the pattern for the organization of the C.N.T. in practice; thus the C.N.T. is constructed from the bottom up, and much stress is laid on the autonomy of the separate syndicates. Paid officials there are, but only in the large unions where the work requires more than volunteer labor. Officers are elected for only one year, and their remuneration is strictly the same as that of the workers in the respective trades.

Recognizing that the Spanish social transformation is impossible without the peasantry and the intellectual worker, the C.N.T. unifies peasants, agriculture workers and white collar workers also--to the total tune of about 1.5 million workers in pre-July 19th Spain. There were approximately 7,000,000 workers in Spain then and about 1 million of them were organized in the other strong labor organization--the U.G.T., which is led by the social democrats. (If space permitted we would present a more complete picture of the Spanish situation--. and perhaps a fairer one--by describing the U.G.T. and other organizations--however small and uninfluential--in the labor movement there.)

Before the present events the C.N.T. and F.A.I. published not only their daily papers in Madrid and Barcelona but about 40 weeklies and 5 monthly reviews. To say the anarcho-syndicalists were completely dominant in Catalonia means that they organizationally controlled the region which contained three-fourths of Spanish industry, one-half of its wealth, and a large per cent of the Spanish populace.

The slightest acquaintance with the role of the anarcho-syndicalists in their destruction of attacking fascism and their construction of a new society should serve to destroy any superstition of them as wild-eyed visionaries, adrift on a cloud of idealism. A superficial knowledge of their tolerance, their most sincere

efforts at unity with other anti-fascist forces should serve to dispel any of the stereotypes of them as irresponsible bomb-throwing maniacs.

They take Over

We have already seen how the revolutionary change in economic relations in certain parts of Spain was a sine qua non of continuing the war, and recognized as such even by the traditional opponents of socialization. But the people of Spain and the C.N.T. were not content to wait for government requests that people continue Spanish industry and agriculture. (In fact, many of these so-called requests did not come until the people themselves had already made the required changes in ownership and production.)

Work on the social front was carried on with that same spontaneity, enthusiasm, and success as that on the military front. During the first months of the war we can recall reading one after the other inspired and astonished accounts of how industry, agriculture, and transportation, under the aegis of largely autonomous workers groups, flourished and progressed.

Let us take as an example of these accounts an article which appeared in *The New Republic* about one year ago, written by the international journalist Mr. Ravage. He tells us that the C.N.T. took over the railroads in Catalonia directly after the rebellion, and that for the first time in his long acquaintance with Spanish traveling conditions, trains were running on time. The C.N.T. management in the railroads immediately increased the rolling stock 25 per cent, doubled wages, reduced hours--and on top of all, were able to reduce fares. With all these, they were breaking even by February 2, 1937, and preparing to save for an amortization reserve. The workers' control committees, he continues, enjoy evident autonomy; in every plant, shop or office--especially in the numerous enterprises where there are both C.N.T. and U.G.T. workers, debates go on constantly. Of these Mr. Ravage says, "Their educative value to speak of no other, can hardly be overestimated. They removed the threat of discord." They had their final fruit in the pact between the two labor-union federations signed on October 22, 1936.

Unfortunately, time does not permit our indulging in many descriptive accounts of socialization in production, though the stories of the new life--in fishermen's villages and textile mills, in orange orchards and ammunition factories are all inspiring. Everywhere there has been possible a reduction of hours of labor required, and an increase in wages; everywhere volunteer labor works cheerfully far beyond the number of hours settled for.

Some notion of the extent of this accomplishment comes from the recent *Daily News* press dispatch that the Catalonian factories, running 24 hours a day, provide more than one-half the war materials made in Spain for the loyalists; moreover, the C.N.T. declares that three-fourths of the land in Catalonia, Levante and Aragon is collectivized; no more than this amount because the C.N.T. does not want to force the workers.

Libertarian in Practice

Here we get a clue of the libertarian nature of the entire social revolution. The stories of forced collectivization that have been circulated around by certain of

the press seem to have no foundation in fact. In every proclamation of collectivization one can read there is a special clause noting that small producers are privileged to work outside of the collective, if they wish; that members who have joined the collective may leave after the harvest if they so desire. This is no war communism that will have to be corrected and completely contradicted several years hence by a "new economic policy." This is no nationalization, with some distant central government sending the local syndicate an order stipulating the number of hours to be worked or how the crop is to be raised.

The autonomous but federated communities go about the humble task of eliminating insects in the orange orchards with the same earnestness and skill with which they met the task of destroying the fascist invaders in their territories. Local councils regulate money content of wages in relation to prevailing prices, but try to get uniformity throughout in the "real" wage. Wages are increased for those having family dependents at set rates. About the problem of having a uniform policy on this matter throughout the country, or at least the province, the C.N.T. spokesmen talk in their typical manner:

"Although the anarcho-syndicalist unions are in the majority in the province of Levante, they still recognize the need of coming to an understanding with the socialist unions on this plan. For this purpose, the convention recommends an intensive campaign of agitation and propaganda so as to persuade the backward workers who are still swayed by Marxist ideas."

So much for the theory and practice of the syndicalists on problems of economic adjustment. Another of the great sources of misunderstanding about the attitudes and actions of the Spanish unions is that of their stand on the problem of militarism, defense, the single command. There is a widespread notion that anarcho-syndicalists are by principle opposed to the unified command, which is related to the general feeling that they oppose organization of all kind and admit no sort of discipline.

The actual fact of the matter is that the syndicalists were the first to clamor for the unified command. In the first few months of the war we find them declaring:

"All the weakness in the organization of the anti-fascist troops are due to:
1. Shortage of armament and ammunition;
2. Lack of a common plan of war operations at all fronts;
3. Lack of unified command." (*Information Bulletin*, November 2, 1936).

What they definitely do not want, however, is a command which is dissociated from the workers or not responsible to them. They want no chance for a new military dictator to be nursed in the ranks of the anti-fascists. They want the general military headquarters to be composed of all the anti-fascist sections, and matters of policy to be referred to this headquarters.

To learn the syndicalist position regarding discipline in the ranks of the anti-fascists we can turn to no more authoritative source than Buenaventura Durruti, whose soldiers were admittedly among the bravest, whose slogan was "We never retreat," and on whom rests much of the credit for the defense of Madrid in the first months of the war. He was a leader in the moments of peace between the fighting just as he was at the front, for Durruti's battalion is known for success it had in socializing every town it passed through on the way to the front. The

column would help the local organizations to establish economic councils and coordinate the work of the syndicates or communities. Of the problem of discipline, Durriti said:

"Much is said about discipline, but little is understood. In my opinion, discipline is respect for one's own responsibility. I oppose the barrack-discipline, leading to brutality, hate and automatism. But I also deny this false 'liberty' which does not correspond to the necessities of the war, and usually is the excuse of the coward. In our organization of the C.N.T. the best discipline reigns, because our members have confidence in the comrades represented in their Committee, whom they have entrusted with the right of leadership. In war time one must submit to the chosen leader. Otherwise war operations are impossible." (*Information Bulletin,* October 15, 1936).

That he was successful in carrying out this sort of discipline is testified to by this statement of one of his militiamen, made at Durruti's funeral:

"Durruti was no general, he was our comrade. Not a very decorative position, but in this proletarian column popularity is not exploited. There is only one idea: Victory and Revolution!

"...Durruti's greatness was due to the fact that he hardly ever commanded but always educated. The comrades used to go to his tent--after his return to the front line. He explained and discussed the reason for his operations to them. Durruti did not command, he convinced. Only by conviction, a clear and precise action is guaranteed. Everyone of us knows the reason for his action and is convinced of its necessity. Thus everyone wants to obtain the best results of his action, at any price. Comrade Durruti gave the example ..."

Then the same militiaman explains how everywhere the column of Durruti advanced, they collectivized, and

"When resting in villages, the column forms a community with the inhabitants. In former times one used to say army and people, or even the army against the people. Today there are only a fighting and working proletariat. They both form an inseparable unity. The militia is a proletarian factor, its character and its organization are proletarian and must remain so. The militias are exponents of the class struggle." 2

On the Battlefields

Another long-nourished misunderstanding, springing this time from slander, and entirely unbased in fact, is the claim that the anarchists, especially in Catalonia, were reluctant to go to the front, and preferred to stay at the rear, and as it has sometimes been put, "toy with the revolution." Moreover, this libel continues, the syndicalists kept the arms from the front and saved them for the fight behind the lines with other anti-fascist elements. This is not, at least at its primary sources, a mere misunderstanding--it's a downright lie.

Perhaps the first, and one of the most well known and heroic marches of the syndicalists into other parts of Spain was Durruti's leadership, which we have just described, of a column of 9,000 through the Aragon front into Madrid--with not a defeat to their record. Vivencos [Vivancos] (whom we talked about at the opening of this discussion), Jover, Ortiz and many other anarcho-syndicalist leaders and their battalions have from the first days of the revolt fought on fronts near and far

from their homes. The Libertarian Youth Organization of Catalonia has repeatedly urged the Government to send them into battle. "We are tired of waiting for a command to go to the front," they have insisted. Yet the conspiracy of silence permits the old delusion about "anarchist" slackers to go on. Whatever delusions there may remain on the anarcho-syndicalist attitude on the subject of mobilization must be dissipated by the reading of the program put out in February of last year by the Peninsular Committee of the F.A.I. on mobilization:

"1. Mobilization of all men and women capable of war activities. For this purpose and with this aim in view, should be suppressed all activities which do not assist in the prosecution of war, especially de luxe entertainments and mere frivolities, in view of the fact that men in the trenches are often short of bare necessities.

"2. All arms to be sent to the front, and all armed to be employed only on war jobs.

"3. All idle gold or other metals should be delivered up to the War department, or should even be confiscated if the necessities of war require it.

"4. All organizations of workers and anti-fascists should pool their funds in a common stock to be used for means of the war.

"5. A unified command of all fronts, and all ministries under the control of the syndical organizations." (*Information Bulletin,* February 25, 1937).

I would prefer not to go into the details of the May uprising which has been so inadequately and incorrectly presented as a revolt in the rear on the part of the "uncontrollables." I will omit also the stealing--on a forged order--of tanks by the communists and the placing of these behind the lines--and not for use at the front!--in the Voroshilov barracks: all of which occurred before the so-called uprising of the uncontrollables and the mythical fifth column.

It should be abundantly clear now that what the syndicalists opposed was the building of an army that was divorced from the people; the placing of the control in the rear in the hands of the old police, rather than in the workers' guard, and the use of the slogan "unified command" to build a bureaucracy which would crush all that opposed it.

Humanitarian Principles

If we pass from the anarchist position on defense and militarism to the attitude on repression of their enemies and "justice," we again are heartened by the humaneness of their approach. The theory of it is well expressed by Santillan, a longtime spokesman for the F.A.I.-C.N.T. and, although later a member of the Catalonian cabinet and minister of economy, always an open critic of the practices and policies of the workers' organizations in control:

"Society has a right to protect itself against those who attack its interests. But what benefit does society get from a delinquent shut up in a cell for months and years? In the prison cells and in the prison yards I used to think about the stupid penal system of the bourgeoisie and the State. In what way have we modified or revolutionized this system ...?

"I have been present, since July 19th, at the execution of military traitors. I have even commanded firing squads. I do not repent having done so. But today, when our comrades seem to have become accustomed to the idea that the only

solution for a prisoner is to shoot him, I wish to revindicate my independence to tell you that it is time for us to think what we are doing ... As a disciplined militant, as long as the organization does not dispose otherwise, I shall approve all the sentences dictated by the popular courts, but I want to have the right to exclaim at any time that the jails do not convince me, the executions do not convince me, and that I am not convinced by the perpetuation of the old penal system. I want a new form of punishment and I don't find anything more adequate for those who have never worked than their re-education for useful labor. Instead of sentencing an enemy to 30 years of prison I would sentence him to build 10 km. of public highways, or plant 100,000 or 200,000 trees." 3

Despite Santillan's criticism the comparatively humane and scientific penal practice in Spain has won the appreciation of non-partisan observers of all sorts.

The syndicalist attitude toward government and its adjustment to the revolutionary situation has brought vituperations of every sort and from all kinds of critics--some from its own ranks. Before discussing the concrete problems of Spanish syndicalism within the last year and a half, it is perhaps wise to state clearly what form of organization of society is planned for in syndicalist theory.

There is an erroneous and widespread prejudice that anarchists reject organization completely. This is true to a very limited extent only among a very limited number of individualist anarchists. Syndicalist-anarchists especially, recognize the need for organization, as the very existence of the C.N.T. testifies.

Union Control

The anarcho-syndicalist plan for the organization of the new society is, as we noted before, pre-visioned in the present organization of the C.N.T. The ideal is one of a society of federated, autonomous syndicates in the towns and cities and communities in the villages. Every member of society is to be organized into some syndicate, even the public service workers and the military. This prevents any alienation from the workers and the workers' organizations of the army, the police force, etc.

Now, all syndicates are represented in the central committee of the labor organization, whose function is to take care of those problems which cannot be locally determined. Every effort is made to avoid bureaucracy in this organ, and preventative measures include: short terms, no higher wages than the workers in the corresponding industry, direct responsibility, and federalism rather than centralism.

The extent of autonomy in the local organ is very important in distinguishing libertarian communism from authoritarian communism. Wherever possible the individual syndicate is the authority in its area. When a problem is the concern of all, it must be referred to the national committee. Policy is determined not by the national committee but when a decision is made, the disciplined militant is expected to follow it, as you have seen from the quotations from Durruti and Santillan. There is no more guarantee that he will follow it than there is that there will be no split in the various and sundry Marxian parties.

One of the differences between libertarian notions of discipline and the so-called "revolutionary discipline" of the Marxists is that the syndicalists retain always the right of criticism, regardless how the vote goes. Santillan's quote

abundantly illustrated this.

The anarcho-syndicalist does not have a "repressive state" as such. Repression of a sort must and does exist in the transition to libertarian communism. But it is largely a matter of degree and point of emphasis that distinguishes it from the repression of an authoritarian state, be it bourgeois or "proletarian." Probably the fact that the anarchistic person is a humanist, that he emphasizes the individual--his integrity, the development of himself, as being all-important, the end toward which every effort is directed; the fact that he never loses sight of the proposition that to sacrifice an individual for the sake of the masses is to brutalize the individuals in the mass--at least to some extent, accounts for the anarchists' peculiar reluctance to repress.

There is always thorough representation of those of different opinions who have a common aim; thus, when anarcho-syndicalists were dominant in Gijon (to the score of a 90 per cent majority of the people) they turned over representation on the Gijon economic council to every organization on the basis of its existence, rather than in terms of the number of its following. You will recall also, the selection quoted on the decision regarding uniform wages in the Levante, where the minority group is consulted despite its small numbers.

Now, if the revolutionary syndicalist organization is not able to gain the support of the workers it cannot accomplish a revolution over their heads by constituting itself a repressive state. One must have the potential support of the widest masses of people before any revolution can be successful. This does not mean that one sits around and waits for unanimous vote of approval on the social revolution; it means that one does not--largely because one cannot--accomplish a revolution of the society thereafter, unless the support of the masses is behind one. That is why, although one strives to get all the workers into the anarcho-syndicalist organization, one must--if different factions do exist--give representation to all of them.

If on the basis of this discussion you wish to regard your national committee of all syndicates as a political power, there is nothing to prevent you from doing so. The syndicalists generally prefer to think of it as an administration of things rather than a government of the people. (This, of course, can only be approximated at the present time.)

Position on the State

The bourgeois state to the syndicalist is merely, as it is to the Marxist, an executive committee of the dominant class, and can therefore not be used to bring about the destruction of this class. In the pre-revolutionary situation you are to ignore the state and its machinery; for to use it is to divide your efforts that might better be expended in building a strong labor union movement, and to misdirect the attentions of the workers.

Now let us review what the anarcho-syndicalists actually have done in Spain and how their actions square, or fail to square, with their theories. And regardless of what are our personal attitudes, on concrete situations, we must agree that if the fact does not coincide with the theory, one or both must be modified; and if they both continue unmodified alongside of each other, confusion results.

Before the revolt, and during the February elections which ushered in the

popular front regime, the C.N.T. and F.A.I. did not carry on their usual anti-election campaign. They permitted, for the first time in their history, the question of voting to be a matter of individual conscience. While we can see how the tenseness of the situation and the conspicuous differences between a fascist government and one where some modicum of freedom is permitted might be a strong temptation to make a choice, we do not see how voting on the part of an anarcho-syndicalist can be reconciled with his convictions regarding the nature of the bourgeois state and the political process.

Actually the elections made little difference in the struggle for power, for if the workers did not disregard them, the fascists did; and regardless which side would have been elected, the dominance of the fascists could only be checked in a military struggle. The popular front government did not even offer (as its protagonists claim) a breathing spell or a preparation for better resisting the fascists.

It is true that the prisons were opened and 30,000 political prisoners released, and that much land was decreed to the land-starved peasants. But these were both spontaneous unofficial moves on the part of the workers themselves. After they had been accomplished, the government, seeing that the workers meant business, came in tardily and passed decrees OK'ing these steps..

At the outbreak of the revolt, as we have noted before, the Popular Front government was completely bankrupt. It did not predict the uprising, it did not prepare for it, and what is more culpable, it sabotaged those who were prepared to fight by refusing them arms. What was true of the central government was also true of the local governments. And so, after the first days of the rebellion, economic councils of workers and Committees of Public Safety and Defence arose and took care of all the new business and all the old business of the localities. The actual governments were only theoretical; they were a sort of a rubber stamp to be added automatically after things had been decided on in other bodies. No one came to the governments for advice or permission..

Labor unions increased in membership, because the only way to have a say in what was going on was to be a member of one of the unions. The labor organization stamped your passport and distributed your food and contributed to your militias. Non-workers accepted steps like socialization because there was no alternative way to keep them fed and clothed, and protected from fascism.

The justification of the entrance of the anarcho-syndicalists in these economic and defense councils seems to me to be contingent entirely upon the composition of these councils. When these were representative of the workers and soldiers--that is, a replacement of the parliamentary-geographical state--their participation seems to me to be an honest fulfillment of their aims--for they would thereby be joining with other workers to assure the victory of the revolution. As soon as these organizations gained, however, the membership of parties with no bond in any syndicate or agricultural organization--and from that step became adjuncts to the state, participation by anarcho-syndicalists seems to me to be a violation of theory.

In all their propaganda the anarcho-syndicalists were clamoring for an all-Spanish Defence Council, or Economic Council, which would coordinate the local

organizations of that sort already in existence and make possible a unified command. But while this was being publicized, the Madrid government gradually sputtered its way back into existence. It found ready loyalty among the small numbers of the bourgeois and the communists, who though almost insignificant in number were extremely bold and articulate and seemed to hold in the palm of their hand the key to Russian aid to Spain.

They traded on the vestiges of a revolutionary reputation, to achieve prominence and bourgeois support on the slogans of unity and a democratic program. The C.N.T. recognized that to antagonize these anti-fascist parties might have meant to incur harm in the war and sabotage at the rear. The C.N.T.-F.A.I. apparently took the war against fascism more seriously than other organizations and individuals who devote much of their time to mouthing slogans and discovering plots, fifth columns, and nests of uncontrollables.

Their desire for anti-fascist unity determined the position of the anarchists. Subsequent events make it clear however, that the structure of this organization, rendered possible (though not inevitable) the hegemony of political groups non-representative of the masses of the people. When that became abundantly clear to the anarchists, they moved out and have since refused to collaborate with the Negrin government.

The anarcho-syndicalists refuse to stuff anything down the necks of the workers, even if that thing be revolutionary unionism. Yet their propaganda against the Negrin government must go on, along with their fight against fascism. That they are not slighting the latter is testified to by their constant activity at the front. That they must not slight their work of exposure of the Negrin government, not only to save Spain for after the war, but to have her win the war, should be clear to all.

No civil war can be carried on for so long a time without some definite hope and proof of social amelioration for the volunteer fighters. But Negrin declares:

"Economic reforms, which have been carried out in Spain since the beginning of the civil war, have been accomplished according to the law, and once the smoke has blown away it will be seen that they have gone no further than reforms already carried out in other countries which pass for being conservative strongholds. (Edgar Ansel Mower's article in *The News*, September 22, 1937).

But this cannot be an expression of the sentiment of the people who so many times have risen in revolt and sacrificed the lives of their dearest so that Spain would be more than a "stronghold of conservation." It is the expression of Negrin and his government. That government is a menace to the fighting people of Spain.

The Negrin government, representing the most backward and bourgeois elements in the country consistently fights the gains of socialization, tries to chain the army to its control, and flirts with the exiled industrialists to induce them to return to their old position of dominance. At the same time it betrays its non-democratic nature by its suppression of those who question its correctness and its motives.

Those who teach against it, and yet fight valiantly at the front, those who may be ranked among the uncontrollables, represent the hope of Spain. Just as the

war in Spain is not a private matter, but an international one, so is the revolution. Libertarian communism in Spain would mean impetus to social progress the world over! It would be a real threat to fascism, and an inspiration to those whose government is an insipid democracy.

Notes

1. Hubert C. Herring, *Spain, Battleground of Democratic Social Action*.
2. *Memorial booklet for Durruti*, pp. 24-26.
3. Santillan, *After the Revolution*, p. 118-9.

The Spanish Revolution Revisited

by Russell Blackwell

***New Politics*, vol. VII, no. 3, Summer 1968, pages 84 to 89**

Russell Blackwell was in Spain from October 1936 until he was imprisoned by the Russian GPU in 1938 for nine and a half months and finally deported in February 1939. His career as a revolutionary started when he joined the Young Communist League in 1924. He was active thereafter in Mexico, Central America and the United States. In 1929, he helped form the Mexican Trotskyist group and was subsequently deported from Mexico. His experiences in Spain led him to anarcho-syndicalism.

The history of half a century of defeated revolutions is filled with experiences of the greatest relevance for today's radicals. Just as those of us who love mushrooms and want to survive the feast do not rush to the woods and gather every one in sight but first find out which are poisonous rather than dismissing such knowledge as "irrelevant," so should the political experiences of recent decades be sifted and studied by radicals seeking solutions to contemporary problems.

From 1936 to 1939, the Spanish Revolution and Civil War provided a laboratory for testing varied radical ideologies in action. The workers of Spain were the first in Europe to resist the tide of fascism. And they fought fascism by counterposing to it the only effective defense--their own social revolution.. Their revolutionary struggle aroused the admiration of radicals and liberals everywhere. Large numbers of refugees from Italy, Germany and Greece, who had been living precariously in Western Europe, flooded to Spain to participate in the fight for freedom. Antifascists of every radical tendency gravitated to the scene of revolutionary action.

On their arrival in Spain, most associated themselves with the Spanish organization with which they felt the closest identification. Anarchists from many countries came to the support of the embattled Spanish Libertarian movement. Many independent Marxists and other unaffiliated radicals joined the militias of the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). The Communist parties throughout Europe and the Americas recruited thousands of volunteers, not all of them Stalinists, for service in their International Brigades. These became Stalin's shock troops. They were definitely a political army and their morale and ideology

were zealously guarded by agents of the Russian Secret Police (GPU).

The inability of the Republic in its five years of existence to solve any of the basic problems of the country, had disillusioned the workers and peasants with traditional democratic processes. The remains of feudalism were still considerable; the army and the church were still powerful political forces. Everything, it seemed, remained to be done to bring Spain into the twentieth century.

The bulk of industrial workers and large masses of peasants were organized in unions of anarcho-syndicalist and socialist orientation. The need and conditions for a social revolution existed. Only positive revolutionary objectives can account for the militancy of the workers in opposing the military-fascist-clerical uprising. Although the political "Left" had won a clear victory at the polls in February, the republican politicians failed to struggle against the fascist rebellion when it broke out and in most localities refused to arm the people. In over half of Spain's cities, poorly armed people defeated the military and, virtually ignoring the constituted authorities, established revolutionary committees of a united front character for administration of the economy and the conduct of the war. In most of Spain, the republican government had in effect ceased to exist and had been replaced by a network of revolutionary committees. The various liberal capitalist parties had resigned themselves to playing subordinate roles, accepting the inevitability of a social revolution. Most of the more powerful capitalists either fled the country or went into hiding. Many paid with their lives for their years as exploiters.

Immediately there was a wave of collectivization and socialization carried out by the unions at all levels. The National Confederation of Labor (CNT) was particularly active in this movement, although most of the reorganization of the economy took place under the joint control of the CNT and the General Union of Workers (UGT). Very little--almost nothing--of the old army remained operative, militias having been formed by the unions and the villages to oppose the military advances of Franco's regular army troops.

Against this background, it was at first only the Communist Party and its satellite in Catalonia--the Unified Socialist Party (PSUC)--that actively opposed the revolution. Standing at the extreme right they claimed that there was no social revolution but simply a defense of democracy against fascism. The Stalinists opposed every revolutionary step taken by the workers and their mass organizations, attempting to direct the struggle into purely military and parliamentary channels. This was the policy of Stalin's Third International in line with the then foreign policy of the Soviet Union which feared a successful revolution in the West and was primarily interested in seeking alliances with the Western democracies. Russian military aid was the lever that enabled Stalinism to become a major influence in spite of its initial numerical weakness. Russian officers, technicians and advisers came in large numbers, chaperoned by agents of the GPU. Political blackmail was used shamelessly to impose their will on the other anti-fascist parties and labor organizations.

The Spanish Socialist Party and its trade union counterpart, the UGT, were torn by internal dissension during the entire revolutionary and civil war period. Theirs was a relatively "soft" movement and the Stalinists were able to play the

various socialist factions against each other. In early stages they used Francisco Largo Caballero whose group had the largest mass following in the unions and among the youth, and they engineered an organic unity between the Socialist and Communist Youth, affiliating the unified organization to the Young Communist International. They even attempted to merge the S.P. and the C.P., unsuccessfully, although a considerable Stalinist caucus developed within the S.P.

The largest revolutionary force was the Libertarian movement: the CNT and the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) together with the Libertarian Youth (JJLL). In this movement, also, there was division and dissension although of a completely different nature, since its "moderates" were far to the left of the most radical Socialists. Incurably parliamentarian by tradition, the latter participated in the official governmental apparatus as a matter of course. On the other hand, the anarchist entry into the governments of Spain and Catalonia was consistently opposed by large segments of the Libertarian movement. This governmental participation violated all tenets of anarchism and castrated the revolution.

The POUM, as a minority party with revolutionary perspectives, identified most closely with the anarchists, holding with them the position that the war and the revolution were inseparable. This was a new party that had been established late in 1935 through the fusion of the Spanish Communist Left led by Andres Nin, who had broken with Trotsky some years before, and the Workers and Peasants Bloc led by Joaquin Maurin. While ideologically Marxist, the POUM included many workers of a revolutionary syndicalist background and was generally labor oriented rather than politically doctrinaire.

Anarchists had long realized that between the two totalitarian alternatives there was little or no real choice. For them the revolution in Spain was a new opening in the direction of freedom. Russian state policy at that time was based on the formation of Peoples Fronts in all countries. This meant alliances with such diverse elements as Chiang Kai Shek, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fulgencio Batista and Leon Blum, and a denial of revolution everywhere including Spain. The Stalinists claimed that in Spain there was purely and simply a civil war between democracy and fascism and that to work for a social revolution was "counter-revolutionary." In the Moscow Pravda of December 16, 1936, the Russian Communist Party had boldly announced that: "As for Catalonia--the purging of the Trotskyists and Anarcho-Syndicalists has already begun: and it will be conducted with the same energy with which it has been conducted in the U.S.S.R."

Stalin knew all too well which forces stood in the way of his policies in Spain. The Anarcho-Syndicalists were the most powerful single group with tens of thousands of men already tempered in the class struggle and inspired by the vision of a stateless, classless society. Their elimination would not be an easy matter. A logical first step was to destroy the POUM which the Stalinists insisted on referring to as Trotskyist. But this was not an overnight matter either. With upward of 10,000 members, the POUM had its own armed militias. It included many militants whose probity was well established and recognized by their political competitors in the Socialist, Libertarian and Republican camps. Its

leaders were individually better known and of greater intellectual working class stature than the leading Spanish Stalinists.

There was considerable resistance--although mostly passive--among the members and some leaders of the Spanish Communist Party to the aggressive policies of repression imposed by Moscow's direct agents. The foreign Stalinists insisted on controlling and directing and held virtual veto power--backed up by the omnipresent GPU--over all major policy decisions. The Russians imposed themselves on their Spanish comrades in a manner less ruthless only in degree than that used against their declared enemies. Much of this has been documented in the book *Yo Fui un Ministro de Stalin*, by Jesus Hernandez, Mexico, 1953.

The weakening of the revolutionary forces was achieved by erosion of the conquests of the revolution itself. This was facilitated by the lack of intransigence and the opportunism of the revolutionists, who yielded position after position in the name of "anti-fascist unity." The entrance of the Anarchists and the POUM into the organs of the government, the weakening or suppression of the revolutionary committees, the "militarization" of the militias and the dissolution of the Workers Patrols, were major steps in this erosion. Each retreat by the revolution meant an advance by the counterrevolution personified by Stalinism and its allies. The POUM operated in the shadow of the CNT and was destined to go under as soon as the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement was sufficiently weakened vis-a-vis the Peoples Front government.

The armed barricade struggle of May 3 to 7, 1937 in the revolutionary stronghold of Barcelona was the culmination of a series of Stalinist political maneuvers and GPU terrorist actions and provocations directed against the revolutionary elements. The private prisons of the GPU were filled with persons known, or thought to be, opposed to Stalinist policies. Several key people of the Anarchist movement were murdered. In the Central region alone 80 anarchists were assassinated between January and May. Press censorship was greatly increased and a number of revolutionary papers were suspended.

On the afternoon of May 3, 1937 the regular police forces (Assault Guards) of the government, which were controlled locally by the Stalinists and their collaborators, attempted to seize the central telephone exchange building in the heart of Barcelona. The workers there resisted, cut off telephone communications of all police, Stalinist and governmental offices, and burned up the lines calling for support against this latest provocation against the already greatly weakened positions of the revolution. A spontaneous general strike took place as factory after factory poured its workers into the streets.

Armed workers occupied important intersections and plazas and during the night barricades were raised throughout the city, as the cobblestoned streets were torn up. For several days the workers held the city except for a few small enclaves in the center of town and the scattered precinct stations. Our people controlled the streets while the Stalinists and their allies were bottled-up in a few government buildings. With the Karl Marx barracks surrounded, the Stalinists were afraid to bring their own troops into the streets.

The other cities and towns of Catalonia were also in the workers' hands.

Several divisions at the front were prepared to march into Barcelona to defend the revolution but were assured their aid would not be required. Although no serious attempt was made to root out our opponents, they were clearly on the defensive throughout. Sniping and occasional forays accounted for 300-400 dead. The "Friends of Durruti" --an anti-collaborationist anarchist group--called for the seizure of power by the CNT, as the CNT's ministers in the government appealed for an abandonment of the barricades via the radio in Valencia. As in the summer of 1936, the revolution floundered in its moment of victory. One by one the barricades were abandoned, and several days later, Assault Guard reinforcements arrived from Valencia to patrol the streets.

The Libertarians had been no match for the Stalinists in political intrigue. For the sake of a false and self-defeating "unity against fascism," they had yielded one position after another until the revolution was lost. And with the revolutionary fervor gone, the military fight against Franco (an unequal one at best) was also lost.

After the May Days, the Stalinists were able to provoke a political crisis which brought down the national government of Largo Caballero, General Secretary of the UGT. He was replaced by Dr. Juan Negrin as Prime Minister and Indalecio Prieto as Minister of War, both right wing Socialists. The Anarcho-Syndicalists refused to participate in what they denounced as a counterrevolutionary government. The Negrin regime was hailed by the Stalinists (and by itself) as the "Government of Victory" and proceeded to lose the war piecemeal, due largely to the demoralizing effect of its anti-revolutionary policies on the morale of the people. Upon taking power, Negrin crushed the POUM and brought its leaders to trial as "fascist agents," just as most of the Old Bolsheviks in Russia, accused of being "fascist agents," had been liquidated by Stalin. The Russian GPU operated actively and almost openly. Andres Nin of POUM, many Anarchists, and a number of foreigners in anti-Stalinist Marxist groups, were murdered by its agents.

The CNT now went into open opposition where it was joined by the Left Socialists around Largo Caballero. A split in the UGT was effected by a bloc of Stalinists and right Socialists. The repression reached mammoth proportions. The press censorship was crippling and the Anarchists and Socialists were obliged to issue illegal newspapers so that they would not entirely lose their political identities. The Stalinist International Brigades were sent into Aragon to smash the peasant collectives by force of arms.

By the end of 1937, the Negrin-Stalin government was firmly in power and the counterrevolution was triumphant. Until March 1939, the war dragged on as a purely military affair. With Franco's victory, those surviving revolutionists who had been unable to escape abroad were hunted down by the fascist police. Several thousand Spanish Stalinists made it to Russia where over half died in slave labor camps and Jose Diaz, general secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, was murdered by the GPU. Within six months of Franco's victory, Stalin joined Hitler in the pact that gave the green light to World War II.

One of the most profound lessons of the Spanish Civil War is that in the fight for social justice we must fully comprehend the difference between freedom and

dictatorship. That this lesson is lost on some of our non-ideological and ahistorical new leftists, who think of themselves as revolutionaries, is evidenced by the ease, sometimes fervor, with which they hail Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Mao Tse Tung and Ho Chi Minh. It was the Fidels, the Hos and Maos of the Thirties who betrayed the Spanish Revolution, and to confuse these dictators of one-party states with anarchism is the most arrant nonsense. Anarchism means a free libertarian society without state coercion of any kind and implies the highest level of social responsibility for the individual, which explains why Cuban anarchists are in Castro's prisons. It is no accident that Francisco Franco is one of Fidel's greatest admirers. This should be as instructive to the New Left as is [the South Vietnamese] Ky's admiration for Adolf Hitler.

Today's radical youth are as entitled to their mistakes as we were to ours but the mistakes should be their own, not a repetition of the errors of the past. Their revolutionary idealism, sense of commitment, their struggle for racial equality, their fight against war and militarism are of incalculable worth. However, an understanding of the lessons of history and a positive revolutionary ideology are essential for the movement's survival and growth.

"You Experienced the War, I Experienced the Revolution!"

(excerpt from 'Detroit Seen,' in *Fifth Estate*, Number 348, Fall 1996, page 30)

"You experienced the war; I experienced the revolution!" With these words our companero, Federico Arcos, confronted three veterans of the communist-dominated International Brigades as part of a panel invited to comment on Ken Loach's film about the Spanish revolution, *Land and Liberty*, following an April 13 showing. The movie depicts revolutionary fervor in 1936-37 Spain, concentrating particularly on a frontline workers' militia. They attempt to fight together without the social stratification of rank privilege, and the communist-dominated government endeavors to "militarize" them, to return them to hierarchy and the discipline of the barrack.

Sixty years ago, on July 18th, 1936, an attempted coup by fascist army officers in Spain sparked a revolution in that country, which became a three-year protracted civil war. *Land and Liberty* is the first major international film about the Spanish Civil War in the half-Century since Gary Cooper starred in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Federico saw revolution and counter-revolution firsthand in Catalonia, including innumerable instances of communists--supposed allies in the, anti-fascist struggle--betraying the war effort and imprisoning or murdering anyone considered their rivals.

The Comintern, a council of world communist parties controlled by the Soviet Union, raised about 30,000 foreign volunteers to fight in Spain as part of the International Brigades. Over 3,000 of these were Americans, who served in the Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau battalions, and the John Brown artillery battery, or with assorted medical units. All the panelists at the film discussion besides Federico had been Brigades

members.

One of the other panelists acknowledged that his duties in Spain in the late 1930s consisted of driving a truck, and that he had not seen any revolutionary ferment as depicted in the movie. Another, a Hungarian combatant in the Brigades and now an American academic, spoke with the confident authority of a Communist turned Scholar. He was outraged that the film would question the necessity for military victory to precede revolution. For the three Brigades panelists, winning the war was the obvious and necessary priority. They took as an assumption that militarization of the "people in arms" was an absolute necessity to accomplish this goal.

Contradicting this, Federico pointed out that the principal goal of military training is to establish hierarchical social relations. Although acknowledging his respect for the idealism and sacrifice of those who had gone to Spain to fight fascism, Federico defended the film's anarchist sympathies. Marching in ranks and learning to salute merely inculcate obedience, leading to a cult of discipline.

Long before the Brigades arrived, Spanish workers had armed themselves as best they could, despite efforts of Republican government politicians, and successfully fought trained regular soldiers of the fascists. In fact, armed workers saved many of Spain's major cities for the Republic, including Madrid and Barcelona, during the revolution's early weeks.

At one point during the discussion, Federico referred to executions carried out by the International Brigades of their own men, a point hotly disputed by the academic panelist. The other two Brigade veterans seemed confused by this information, and stated they were unaware of any executions in the American battalions.

Since 1937, histories of the Spanish revolution have chronicled the counter-revolutionary violence employed by Communists during the antifascist struggle. This work has been augmented by researchers sifting through the archival collections in the former Soviet Union for details from Spain. Documents seeping out of this long process have confirmed that American commissars in American Brigades units did carry out disciplinary executions. (See *The Secret World of American Communism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, for recently uncovered information.)

The climax of the panel discussion came when Federico, in a voice breaking with emotion, proclaimed how privileged he feels to have participated in an event where, "with one heart," the people of Barcelona rose to defend their city. The loudest outburst of applause that afternoon followed.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Some Suggested Short Readings about the Spanish Revolution

Anarchist Federation, Britain, A new world in our hearts, *Organise* #66 (2006) (an article commemorating the anniversary, this time the 70th, and summarizing events with a little different and equally valuable emphasis) http://www.afed.org.uk/org/issue66/spain36.html

Andrew Flood, Two Weeks that Shook Spain. Workers Solidarity Movement, July 1996

http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/ws/spain49.html
(an article by an anarchist commemorating the 60th anniversary and summarizing events)

Diego Abad de Santillán, with an introduction and notes by Charlatan Stew, *Why we Lost the War: A Contribution to the History of the Spanish Tragedy* (excerpt, 1996, a small article by an anarchist discussing anarchist participation in the Republican government) Also available online at http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/ws/spain49.html

Workers Solidarity Federation, South Africa (2005), A new world in their hearts: The Spanish Revolution, 1936-1937 (an article commemorating the 69th anniversary and summarizing events with a little different and equally valuable emphasis)
http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/138

For those interested in more detailed and longer readings

Martha A. Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1991 (a book by a feminist scholar sympathetic to anarchism)

Noam Chomsky, Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship in *American Power and the New Mandarins* and in *The Chomsky Reader* (an article written by a well-known and respected scholar who identifies himself with anarchist ideas)
http://www.ditext.com/chomsky/1968.html

Rachel Hadfield, Politics and protest in the Spanish Anarchist movement: Libertarian women in early twentieth-century Barcelona. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3, 2001 (an article by a feminist scholar sympathetic to anti-authoritarian ideas)
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/history/documents/3-hadfield-politics-and-protest

Deirdre Hogan, Industrial Collectivisation during the Spanish Revolution. *Red & Black Revolution* 7, from the Workers Solidarity Movement, Ireland (another article by an anarchist)
http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/wsm/rbr/rbr7/spain.html

Gaston Leval, *Collectives In the Spanish Revolution.* Freedom Press, London, 1975 (a book written by an anarchist and published by an anarchist press)
http://libcom.org/library/collectives-spanish-revolution-gaston-leval

Iain McKay, A Reply to Bryan Caplan's Essay 'The Anarcho-Statists of Spain: An Historical, Economic, and "Philosophical Analysis"' also titled Objectivity and Right-Libertarian Scholarship (another article by an anarchist)
http://flag.blackened.net/liberty/spainrebut.html

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*. Penguin Books, London (1966)
(a book written by an author sympathetic to and respectful of anarchists)
http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0201111.txt
ZIP download at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300011.zip

Jose Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*. Freedom Press, London, 1990 (another book written by an anarchist and published by an anarchist press)

Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution.* Freedom Press, London, 1983 (another book written by an anarchist and published by an anarchist

press)
Lucía Sanchez Saornil, The Question of Feminism. *Solidaridad Obrera,* September-October 1935, in Robert Graham, ed., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume 1: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300CE-1939),* Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2005 (an article written by an anarchist)
Matt White, Wobblies in the Spanish Civil War. *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 42-43, Winter, 2005-2006, page 39
Matt White, Wobblies in the Spanish Revolution, part 2. *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 45, Winter, 2007, page 26
Workers Solidarity Movement, The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism in Action (a detailed introduction to the role anarchism played in the Spanish Civil War and the anarchist revolution within the republican zone. (Accessed June 3, 2011 at http://www.wsm.ie/book/export/html/6521).

What is the Kate Sharpley Library?

The Kate Sharpley Library is a library, archive, publishing outfit and affinity group. We preserve and promote anarchist history.

What we've got

Our collection includes anarchist books, pamphlets, newspapers and leaflets from the nineteenth century to the present in over twenty languages. The collection includes manuscripts, badges, audio and video recordings, and photographs, as well as the work of historians and other writers who have documented the anarchist movement.

What we do

We promote the history of anarchism by reprinting original documents from our collection, and translating or publishing new works on anarchism and its history. These appear in our quarterly bulletin or regularly published pamphlets. We have also provided manuscripts to other anarchist publishers. People come and research in the library, or we can send out a limited amount of photocopies.

Why we do it

We don't say one strand of class-struggle anarchism has all the answers. We don't think anarchism can be understood by looking at 'thinkers' in isolation. We do think that what previous generations thought and did, what they wanted and how they tried to get it, is relevant today. We encourage the anarchist movement to think about its own history – not to live on past glories but to get an extra perspective on current and future dangers and opportunities.

How we do it

Everything at the Kate Sharpley Library – acquisitions, cataloguing, preservation work, publishing, answering inquiries is done by volunteers. All our running costs are met by donations (from members of the collective or our subscribers and supporters) or by the small income we make through publishing.

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About this collection

In June, 1905 about two hundred anarchists, socialists and radical trade unionists held a convention in Chicago, Illinois, where they formed the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). The I.W.W. was and still is dedicated to creating a revolutionary industrial union, organized on the basis of industries rather than crafts, in which all workers come together in solidarity, including workers of all races, ethnicities and genders.

The Industrial Workers of the World was a major part of the social insurgency during the first decades of the twentieth century. Throughout its history, the organization has taken stances for international solidarity between all exploited people and against exploiters, borders and nationalisms. It has also opposed political parties and others who have sought to speak for and lead the working class, while endeavoring to create and cultivate the beginnings of a new and better society in the shell of the old.

As an organization centered around the principles of rank-and-file union democratic decision-making, the I.W.W. took an independent critical stance toward the Soviet Union and Communist Parties.

In 1936, when the Spanish Revolution began, the I.W.W. was inspired by the part played by the anarchist-led Spanish labor union confederation, the CNT, and the endeavor to create a self-governing egalitarian society. From the I.W.W.'s critical understanding of the danger posed by the authoritarian left, including the Communist parties of the world and the government of the Soviet Union, they were on their guard against the behavior of these groups in Spain.

The I.W.W. press, including publications such as the One Big Union Monthly, published articles about the Spanish situation, offering alternative perspectives not available in either the Communist or liberal press. This collection contains some of these articles, offering a sample of what English-speaking anti-authoritarians could read about the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930s.

In addition, the pamphlet contains two articles published later about participants' experiences. One is by Russell Blackwell, who became an anarcho-syndicalist as a result of his experiences in Spain. The final article is about Federico Arcos, a Spanish anarchist veteran of the revolution. It provides a glimpse into what the anarchists of Spain experienced, and how it differed from the authoritarian interpretation of the events.

As we compare and contrast conditions and social movements in the 1930's with those of today, the choices between authoritarian/hierarchical and anti-authoritarian/anti-hierarchical political-social action still remain relevant. We hope that the insights offered in these articles can help us in our own projects of creating a new and better social world.